

**First Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature**  
**of the**  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
**and**  
**PROCEEDINGS**  
**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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authority of  
The Honourable George Hickes  
Speaker*

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Ninth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
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CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
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DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
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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.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
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JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
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LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
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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**

**Thursday, October 18, 2007**

**The House met at 10 a.m.**

*PRAYER*

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

**SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS**

**Bill 208—The Elections Amendment Act**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that Bill 208, The Elections Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi électorale, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this bill which deals with election signs. Of course, these election signs are something which all of us as politicians are very familiar with. This bill would make it illegal to take down, mutilate, deface, cover up, alter an election sign that's put up on behalf of a candidate.

This legislation, Mr. Speaker, is badly needed in Manitoba at the moment. It is modeled after similar law in Saskatchewan, and I will just refer you to the Saskatchewan law which says as part of their election act, no person shall unlawfully take down, cover up, mutilate, deface or alter a poster or sign set up or displayed by or on behalf of a candidate.

What we are seeing in Manitoba is that, economically, Saskatchewan is moving ahead of what's happening here and, certainly, in aspects of managing electoral law like this, Saskatchewan is ahead of where we are. We have had too many years of governments which have put us behind. What we're trying to do, as Liberals, is move us up and, at least in this instance, be equivalent with Saskatchewan, but in other instances, with some of the bills we are putting forward, we are trying to move Manitoba ahead of Saskatchewan and take a leading position. As for instance, our bill to ban plastic bags, which is ahead of where Saskatchewan is and that's really where we should be instead of behind Saskatchewan, as we are in this instance.

Why do we need this legislation? Well, the facts are simple. We have a crime problem in Manitoba and as Giuliani showed in New York, as others have shown in many, many other jurisdictions, the place to start is by going after the problems with graffiti, with petty crimes, with all sorts of—what the government of the day has too often dismissed as minor offences because they're not murders or auto thefts, that they're not concerned about them.

Well, we as Liberals are concerned about them. My colleague has spoken up and I have spoken up, for instance, about the importance of having shoplifting and various other crimes going to justice committees. This is another example of an offence which could go to a youth justice committee where it's a young person. This is the kind of thing which should be going on and we should be paying attention to what some people call minor offences. So we need to address the smaller thefts, the smaller criminal activities that are going on in our society, and in doing so and addressing these effectively, we're going to have a larger impact on crime in this province.

It is also beholden upon us, as political leaders, to lead the way. We have had a problem, as we well know, in the 1990s with vote-rigging, people trying to manipulate elections in illegal ways. We need to take the high road and make sure we are putting in place, at every step of the way, legislation which will show to people in Manitoba that we have electoral law which makes sense, which makes sure that people who are involved in politics are held up to a higher standard because people at the political level need to be leaders and need to lead by example. Not that we are perfect, far from it, but we need to do what we can in setting the laws with respect to political processes at a higher level, partly because we see democracy as so important to our province. We have a problem, at the moment, that people are losing some faith in democracy, are not voting as much, and we need to change that.

Mr. Speaker, this legislation should be taken seriously, and I hope that we have individuals from the other parties, each of the parties, ready to talk on this legislation and to provide their own comments and thoughts. I believe that we can take a step forward and move in a positive direction for

Manitoba with this legislation. We certainly should be doing this now to give us plenty of lead time for the next provincial election. I would suggest that, with all-party support, we could pass this at this particular legislative session and we could demonstrate to Manitoba voters and Manitoba citizens that we are moving this initiative forward.

\*(10:10)

I know that in his earlier comments, I think, when I asked the Premier (Mr. Doer), he was very dismissive of this, but I suggest that the official opposition and the government should take this very seriously. Certainly, from our perspective, having worked, the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and myself, in many, many elections, we have seen over the years some very poor practices by members of the governing party and the opposition party with respect to election signs. I don't want to name individuals, but I can tell you that there have been numerous occasions of problems, of one candidate's hundreds of signs being stolen and vandalized. In other instances, representatives of candidates were taking signs back to their own party election offices where time and time again there have been abuses with respect to the dignity with which election signs are treated.

And certainly it would be a positive step forward. Some of the vandalism which occurs with respect to signs, you know, is not necessarily always on behalf of an opposing candidate as it were. I mean, some of this is gratuitous vandalism or thievery done by kids who are picking up on what others are doing. And certainly, you know, this is not appropriate. We have even found one instance where it was, with reasonably good evidence, reported that a member who's a well-known prominent in a political party in this province hired and paid a professional to go around taking down signs. I mean, this is clearly inappropriate and wrong.

And so it is time that all members of this Legislature stand up for appropriate action and stand up in unison to say that the theft and vandalism of election signs is wrong. It needs to be wrong not only morally but it needs to be wrong in law, and we propose to put it into law. That is why we are bringing forward this legislation today, and I hope that I will find support from all members of this Legislature to take this forward.

**Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto):** It's a pleasure to get up and put some words on the record about the bill that's been brought forward by the Member for River

Heights. You know, in a spirit of fairness and non-partisanship, I think everyone in this House can agree that the Member for River Heights works hard. I may not agree with what he's doing, but he does work hard. There are days when he puts forward ideas that may be helpful to Manitobans. This, unfortunately, is not one of those days.

Now, in a spirit of good will, I too take the defacement and the theft of election signs very seriously, but in a spirit of good will I would like to offer the Member for River Heights a couple of bits of advice. Let's call it a sort of top 10 list of some ideas which may indeed soothe his soul on an issue which clearly has touched him. Number one, for the Member for River Heights, just because you don't see any of your election signs in an area, doesn't mean there were any to begin with. And I know, for example, in the area of Wolseley, the Liberal candidate, for whatever reason, declared a few weeks before the campaign that she was not going to put up any signs, and I'm sure it troubled the Member for River Heights to drive through Wolseley and not see any signs, but indeed there was a perfect explanation, an odd explanation but at least a perfect explanation for why there were no signs.

I know in Minto I had the same opponent as I did in the previous election. He was using the same signs, but it still took him two or three weeks to actually get to the garage or the basement or the Liberal ad agency or wherever they were being held to put any up. So I suppose the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) might have been very concerned in Minto that someone was taking his candidate's signs; the fact was, his candidate simply hadn't gotten around to putting any of them up.

But it wasn't just in Minto and Wolseley, it was a lot of other places where, even late in the campaign, you wouldn't see any evidence that there even was a Liberal candidate. I had a great day in Southdale with our tremendous candidate, now the Member for Southdale (Ms. Selby), a successful candidate and a historic breakthrough for New Democrats. Indeed, as you went up and down the streets, there were signs from the NDP, there were certainly a lot of signs from the Conservatives, and there weren't any from the Liberals. One would think maybe there was some evil campaign out there, but the simple fact, Mr. Speaker, was nobody in Southdale was going to vote for the Liberal Party.

Of course, the same thing occurred in Kirkfield Park, where I had some tremendous opportunities to

go door-to-door with another tremendous candidate, another tremendous woman that's been elected to this Legislature and indeed, you'd be very hard pressed to find a Liberal sign. It might be because the previous Liberal candidate in the previous election was actually going door-to-door with our NDP candidate because he'd seen the writing on the wall. So, that would be the first point I'd put forward.

Number two is a very short and very succinct point for the Member for River Heights to remember, and it is that boulevards don't vote. I know every party has some areas in the province where it's tough sledding. Certainly, for New Democrats, there are fewer and fewer of those areas, but they do exist and to this day, there are some points in southern Manitoba where it is tough, admittedly, for us to get our signs up. It's also tough, I know, for Conservatives in the northern part of Manitoba, and a growing number of seats in Winnipeg where it's tough. But, if you're a Liberal, it's tough to find any private property anywhere in the province that is actually going to put up a sign.

**An Honourable Member:** How many signs did you have up, Andrew?

**Mr. Swan:** Well, you know, the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) wants to talk. He wants to talk about Minto. I will, hopefully, if I have time, address that after I'm finished soothing the soul of the troubled Member for River Heights.

Now, for Liberals, of course, it's very difficult, so they will put up signs on any piece of public property they can find in the hope that somebody, perhaps, will take pity on their candidates and vote for them.

Number three is kind of the rural corollary of that, and I know that the Liberals don't have any rural members. They really have no presence in rural Manitoba, but they've still tried putting up signs. So point No. 3, for the troubled soul of the Member for River Heights, is that ditches don't vote either.

Number four, and I know this is more of an issue close to the heart of the Member for Inkster, but indeed, fences don't vote either. I know I had the chance to drive up and down Keewatin Street a couple of times and, indeed, every party, in fairness, put up a number of signs on the back of people's fences on Keewatin. I wouldn't be surprised if there was more than one person who took down a sign on their fence, on their property, who didn't even know it had been erected in the first place. So, keeping in

mind that fences don't vote is also a way to prevent your signs from being defaced, vandalized or taken down. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Swan:** Now, well, I hear the Member for Inkster. I'd mentioned that fences don't vote, neither does the Hamburglar nor Grimace either, which should be something that the Member for Inkster should keep in mind when he's doing his constituency work. *[interjection]*

**Mr. Swan:** Well, the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) has now weighed in. So let's get a bit more serious. If you're going to put up an election sign that has something other than your candidate's name, maybe what you're saying should be true.

I drove up Highway 8, up the Veterans Memorial Highway, if I may add, and there, right outside the Perimeter Highway, was a sign, I guess directed at cottagegoers, saying, vote Liberal, save Lake Winnipeg. Of course, I enjoy speaking to people in the Interlake and they generally said to me, you know, that's really strange the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) would put that on his signs because, not only as a Cabinet minister in the federal Liberal government, he also was the member for Selkirk-Interlake, and in his brilliant time as an MP for the area, how much money did the federal government spend on Lake Winnipeg? Zero.

I'm not advocating anybody taking down somebody's election sign, but if you put something which is blatantly untrue on your sign, it stands to reason, there may be people out there who take offence to it.

\* (10:20)

**Mr. Swan:** Now, point No. 6—*[interjection]*

You know, I'm so glad to have the members, the independent members of this House being so interested in the debate. It's a true pleasure.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Swan:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. When I need a lesson on credibility from the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) or the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), I will certainly let them know.

The next point, again, being far more serious, Mr. Speaker, the sixth point is that if you put up a sign, you should get permission from the person who owns the property. I know that in my own riding of Minto, I had a number of people calling my

campaign office apologizing for the fact that a Liberal sign had magically appeared on their lawn without anyone having given permission. I suppose that, in the Member for River Heights' (Mr. Gerrard) unusual world, if those people took down an illegally erected sign, that would be an offence under this bill. You need to get permission first. I know it's something that may be new for the Member for Inkster, for the Member for River Heights, something that we certainly take into account.

Point No. 7, if you're going to put up a sign in an area, don't assume that everyone who belongs to a particular organization wants a sign. I know there's been a long history of Liberal paternalism in this country and they assume that everybody who belongs to a certain organization might want a sign. Unfortunately, they're wrong.

The next point, No. 8, is make sure that your signs really are still there. I remember one election when the Liberals decided to go for white signs, which was a great idea until it snowed, but if you squinted, you could still see that the Liberal sign was there, although their support did melt away like the snow in the spring.

Number nine: When the election's over, take your signs down. I know driving around the province, even weeks, months after the election, you would still see Liberal signs hanging around. I don't know if the Member for River Heights would suggest that taking down a wayward Liberal sign two months after the election would be an election offence. That might be the case.

Finally, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, your signs would be a lot better off if you have ideas and if you have candidates that people actually care about and are prepared to support, and that's been a great big problem for Liberals in this province for many, many decades.

So, certainly, we take the issue of signs seriously, but, you know, I think the Member for River Heights should go back and think about this. He can have a big caucus meeting with the Member for Inkster, think about this and maybe they could come up with some strategies that would perhaps minimize or even have the problem, from their point of view, disappear.

It's been a pleasure to speak to this bill and hopefully provide something to soothe the Member for River Heights' soul. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I had not intended to speak on this bill, but the Member for Minto kind of motivated me to get up and put a few comments on the record.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when we start debates on bills, it would do us all good to do a little bit of research before we get up in our places and speak because sometimes we put our foot in our mouth if we don't do that research.

I think we just evidenced some of that in the last speech, because I know that the Member for Minto is relatively new to the House and doesn't have a lot of experience in terms of knowing what has happened in the past, but I take him back to a time when his party was in opposition in 1999, poised for forming government in the election campaign and were putting out signs about saving the Manitoba medicare program with a \$15,000 amount. They were going to reduce hallway medicine. They were going to reduce all the waiting lists, and all of their signs carried the message that they were going to reduce all of this and save Manitoba health with \$15 million.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when he talks about the Liberal candidate putting out a sign that says, save Lake Winnipeg and vote Liberal, he should reflect back on some of the signage that his party has put out across this province which was not only false but was misleading to many, many Manitobans. So if you live in a glass house, you should be careful about throwing stones, and that's the only advice I can offer the Member for Minto.

Mr. Speaker, I've had signs torn down, and I want to tell the Member for Minto that I actually caught an NDP supporter ripping down my signs and ripping them in shreds because he felt that a billboard that was near his property belonged to him when, in fact, it belonged to his neighbour. The neighbour had allowed me to put the sign on. But, because every time he drove by the sign, he couldn't ignore it, he thought that he had every right to take the sign down and rip it in shreds. Well, it was clear that he was an NDP supporter; he told me that himself directly. So, when the member of the Liberal Party brings forward this bill, maybe they have reason to bring it forward because maybe there are more NDPers out there who've been defacing and tearing down signs across the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, although this bill is not targeted at any particular party, the problem is that there is evidence where signs have been defaced. We've lost

signs in every election. I've put up signs and I go back there a few days later and they disappear, and there's an NDP sign up there. I asked the property owner, who authorized the NDP sign? They said, well, we didn't. So, this thing goes on all the time. When the member brings forward this bill, I think he does it genuinely. I think he does it in trying to ensure that those kinds of election programs and election games, if you like, are respected because all of us compete for votes, and all of us compete through advertising. We compete through signage, and we compete through our own programs that we have developed in our election strategies.

Mr. Speaker, because we are a democracy, and because we respect each other, and we respect each other's property, I think that this should be extended to things like election signs as well. This bill is not going to change the face of this province. It's not going to change the face of Canada. All this bill is going to do is ensure that there's a bit of caution for those people who want to go ahead and deface property. This is not unlike any property that belongs to anyone else.

Now, the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan) says, well, ditches don't vote, fences don't vote, boulevards don't vote. We know that. But I have seen as many Conservative, as many NDP, and as many Liberal signs on fences, in ditches, on boulevards. Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that in this last campaign, the NDP candidate that was running against me was just a little bit late. She was about a day late with her signs. Of course, she didn't have any signs up till about the third week in the campaign, but when she finally did get the signs going, where did she put the signs? Right next to mine. Everywhere I had a sign, she put up a sign. Now, was that on public property? If I put up a sign in a ditch, she put one 10 feet beside it. Then, all of a sudden, I'd see some of my signs disappear and only hers were left. Well, who would I assume took those down? So, I'm not pointing any fingers, but just figure it out for yourself.

So you see, Mr. Speaker, we play these games. All of us are guilty of them. We play these games, whether it's our campaign teams, whether it's people that we know, whether it's our good supporters who perhaps are affronted by a sign, that all happens. So, do I support this bill? Do I think it's going to change the face of the world? I don't think it's going to change the face of the world, but if it gives us all a little more comfort in knowing that when we put up a

sign it's not going to be defaced, maybe it's a good thing for all of us.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\* (10:30)

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** It's a pleasure to speak on a bill that is so political. It gives us an opportunity to share some election stories and to actually be a little political here for once, which is always enjoyable.

I thank the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard). I was actually in a debate about disabilities issues during the election, and I thought he came up with one of the best quotes in the entire election campaign. This is what he said, and I'm glad that he has a sense of humour. He said, vote for us; we haven't screwed up anything in decades.

The Member for River Heights said that this legislation is badly needed. Well, I've been a candidate in six elections and I've been elected five times, and I don't think it's badly needed. I think from time to time there are problems, and I would admit that these problems happen to all parties not just the one or two parties but to all three. I think that the legislation is not needed because people can be charged with destroying property and people could be charged with trespassing, because most signs, at least in our area, are on private property.

Now we've had some interesting experiences in Burrows, like elsewhere, during election campaigns with the signs, and I think sometimes the sign crew kind of attracts really aggressive people who get involved in what we call a sign war. I don't like the term "sign war" because that leads to a certain kind of thinking. I remember the former Member for Pembina told me once that his philosophy was take no prisoners, which is also militaristic language. I don't even like using the expression "campaign" or "campaign headquarters" because that's military language as well. I prefer to say that we work out of a committee room. But the sign war is kind of a mentality that takes over, and so your sign crew wants to put up more signs than the other guys, and sometimes the other guys have more signs, including in Burrows.

I've been a candidate two or three times where the other guys had twice as many signs as I did, and bigger sometimes, and my volunteers were saying, Doug, you don't have enough signs up. I remember when Judy Wasylycia-Leis lost the federal election in 1993, her son who was about, I don't know, eight

or ten at the time said the reason she lost was, he said, mom, you didn't have enough signs. Well, that probably suggested she didn't have enough support to win either, but in 1997 she rectified that and has been a federal member of Parliament since then and a very good member of Parliament, former member for St. John's in the provincial Legislature.

I remember one particular campaign, 1999, where my opponent probably had more signs than he had votes and many— [interjection]

Well, actually he did me a big favour because he was an inspiration to volunteers. I had Conservative supporters and Liberal supporters volunteering for me in 1999, and I welcomed them to my campaign.

The number of signs that my opponent had up didn't make any difference whatsoever and in fact a lot of them—[interjection] Well, I kept reassuring my supporters, look, don't worry about the signs. Signs don't vote, as the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan) so eloquently said. We know that a lot of signs get put up without permission. We know that sometimes people are afraid to take down signs that are put up without permission and we know that from time to time signs disappear.

For example, in one election we knew who our opponent was going to be, so we started phoning sign locations and we had 200 or 300 sign locations identified before the writs were dropped, and so we were the first ones with our signs printed from the last election, and we were up and out and running. For the first two weeks we were out-signing our opponents about 10 to one. So what happened to my signs? Well I would drive down Inkster Boulevard and every night 10 or 20 signs would disappear, on Inkster, on Redwood, on Mountain, on Selkirk, on McPhillips, on Arlington until my opponent caught up and then what happened? My signs stopped disappearing.

In fact, I remember a civic election where one day I was helping our civic NDP-endorsed candidate, and we were driving down Inkster—no we were driving down Burrows Avenue, which is also a boulevard, and there were about eight signs on every median all the way down Burrows Avenue for a particular candidate running against our NDP candidate. I said to our candidate, wouldn't it be just like that guy with all these signs to have all his signs disappear some night and then the next day there'd be a story in the paper, and we sort of laughed about it. Well, the next day we picked up the *Winnipeg Sun* and wouldn't you believe all his signs had

disappeared on Burrows and there was a picture and a story of him and his son putting up the signs that had been taken down. Gee, I wonder who might have been involved in that. Well, we don't know, but knowing the character involved we can make certain conjectures.

So, sometimes signs disappear, but, you know, I don't think we should worry about it too much. It's not a big problem. I think we need to be concerned about other things that have happened. For example, I remember in 1990, I think The Elections Act had been changed and so candidates did not have to have Authorized by Official Agent on the literature. I believe it was Swan River where the opponents of our candidate, the now-Member for Swan River, had literature dropped in villages and towns of the Aboriginal platform of the NDP. They photocopied it and dropped it in mailboxes in non-Aboriginal communities. Subsequently, The Elections Act was amended and so now all literature and signs have to say, Authorized by Official Agent, which is a good check and balance on people doing, maybe not illegal things but stupid things.

Then, of course, we remember the 1995 vote-rigging scandal, and we remember the judicial inquiry and we remember the judge who said he'd never met so many liars in his life. I think I was the first one to quote that in the House because it resulted in a point of order, and the Speaker ruled that it was not a point of order because it was a quote from a document from a judge, in fact, so it was acceptable to say in the House. I think that quote has probably been quoted many, many times since the judicial inquiry finished.

Then, in 1999, there was the smear campaign in the Interlake—interesting, there have been a lot of problems in the Interlake. We also remember in 1999 that the Conservative candidate in Rossmere overspent his spending limits and was convicted of violating The Elections Finance Act.

So, I think there are much more serious matters that need attention. I think most of them are covered off in The Elections Act and The Elections Finance Act. I think we have very good legislation in Manitoba. While there are problems from time to time with signs disappearing, I don't think that this remedy is needed at this time.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I was surprised to hear from the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan) his general lack of feeling any obligation, especially given the area that he



represents, to get on the record talking how important it is to support actions that would downplay petty theft and vandalism. In listening to his speech, one would think that he endorses petty theft and vandalism. We'll have to kind of re-read that to see if I missed out on something in his speech, but given his background, I would have thought that he would have commented in terms of how important it is to ensure that there's a consequence to actions.

This is something which his Premier (Mr. Doer) constantly talks about. This is something—and Mr. Speaker, for the Member for Brandon East, or is it West? I think it's Brandon East; I'm not sure—the NDP member, right? From his seat, he likes to chirp, resign, and I understand why he chirps that. He should be used to being in the back benches. My advice to that particular member is, unless Cabinet increases to 34, there's a very good chance you're not going to make Cabinet.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) somewhat takes me off topic. The bottom line is that we're talking about an issue in which this government, in principle, talks a tough line. They talk about consequences to youth problems in our community. Just in Question Period the other day, the Premier was standing up talking about it.

They fly to Ottawa. They try to get all-party support to talk tough on crime. Then, when we have a piece of legislation that deals with issues of petty theft and vandalism, we get—I believe the legislative assistant, possibly, to the Premier. I'm not too sure who he's legislative assistant to, but anyway, we get the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan) standing in his place talking about, well, Liberal signs this way, NDP signs this way, and nothing at all in regard to discouraging petty theft or vandalism. That, in essence, is what this bill is all about.

\*(10:40)

I would encourage the government to look at the bill, unlike the Member for Minto, and look at it as a serious bill that does, in principle, send the right type of message that we should be sending. Having said that, you know, I listened actually to the Member for Minto as he spoke. I take exception to some of the things that he had indicated. He tried to talk about what people put on signs. I would suggest that he not question the degree in which other political parties put things on signs. All he needs to do is to reflect on what his own political party puts on signs. You see, I was around when they bannered their signs with

health care, No. 1. And remember the issue of hallway medicine, Mr. Speaker, what a total and absolute disgrace. This government did nothing to deal with the hallway medicine. They're the ones that coined the phrase "hallway medicine." They're the ones that had health care on their signs in black. They wanted it to stand out and it did.

What about in the last election? Was it Gary Doer running in all these constituencies? I'm sorry, Mr. Speaker. Was it the Leader of the New Democratic Party that was running on it in all the elections? Did you see your colleagues' signs, the Member for Minto?

**An Honourable Member:** All over the province.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** You did. Then you would have seen the picture of your leader on those signs.

**An Honourable Member:** We're happy to have him.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** So you're not ashamed of your leader. I can think of a lot of things to say about your leader and most of them are not necessarily positive.

Mr. Speaker, the problem is you put whatever you want to put on your signs, and that's fine, go ahead and put it. But when you start attacking candidates—not talking about the issue of vandalism and theft—and you start attacking what people are putting on their signs that is somewhat of being—you know, you can sense a bit of hypocrisy that is there. It's not okay for opposition parties or Conservatives or Liberals to put things on their signs, but it's okay for you to put things on your signs.

**An Honourable Member:** No, that wasn't the point.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Well, that's the point that people will receive because if they read your speech, you are being critical because you said, well, what they said there wasn't right. Well, what you put on your signs wasn't right. *[interjection]* Well, yes, I would be speechless too, Mr. Speaker.

Then the member talks about putting up signs and where those signs should go. He even came up to Inkster. I know him and his wife campaigned everywhere except Minto, at least maybe the Member for Minto might have campaigned in Minto. I won't talk about taking constituents for granted. I know he wasn't the only one that was driving around in Inkster.

You know, it was interesting, Mr. Speaker, I was on Egesz Street knocking on doors and there was the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) knocking on

doors on Egesz. Well, interesting the Liberal candidate that was running in Burrows lives on Egesz, the same street that I met with the Member for Burrows. That particular night he was out campaigning in Burrows.

It's not the arrogance of how many votes and so forth. It's the issue of respecting your constituents in being there and asking for their support during election time. I can understand why it is leaders have an obligation. I'm not as convinced that MLAs or incumbents should take their own constituents for granted to the degree in which they don't spend the type of time they should be spending in their own constituencies, and I don't care how many votes you won by, and whomever it is that you might think you are. I think it's disrespectful for the constituents which you represent.

Mr. Speaker, my plurality has been very good in a number of elections, but I campaign every day and I knock on doors every day in my own constituency because I don't take my constituents for granted. The same thing cannot be said about some MLAs, I suspect. But that's for them to live with. If they feel that they're more of a party MLA, so they've got to campaign in those constituencies and avoid their own, well that's fine. If they perceive that they represent a party and not a constituency, that's fine, that's up to them.

I, for one, put my constituents first and foremost. They can put whomever it is that they want and that's who they will be accountable for, but it takes me a little bit off. The Member for Minto (Mr. Swan) says Keewatin. Not everyone on Keewatin had my—Weitzel is the street that they actually live on. Their backyard is Keewatin and if they want to show their support by putting their sign, my sign, on their fence where more people can see it, there's nothing wrong with that, right?

You know, Mr. Speaker, the only candidate that put up signs on boulevards in Inkster that I'm aware of was the NDP candidate. *[interjection]* Well, I do. Inkster Boulevard, very corner lot. It was actually a funeral home that was under construction, as an example.

Mr. Speaker, it's throwing rocks in glass windows, and as opposed to taking the type of shots that the Member for Minto took, I wish his focus would have been on the principle of the bill, and the principle of the bill was about petty theft and vandalism. Does the government support petty theft and vandalism? If you listened to the speech from the

Member for Minto, you would be of the opinion that this government does support it, Mr. Speaker.

Well, whether it's election signs or any other issue dealing with crime, the Manitoba Liberal Party does not support and believes that we need to take action where we can to provide that consequence, to provide that deterrent, and we're disappointed that the government doesn't even recognize the principle of this particular bill and speak more towards it and the benefits of passing a private member's bill.

Mr. Speaker, I see my time has run out. I thank you for the opportunity to be able to say a few words.

**Mr. Speaker:** Before recognizing any other member, I want to remind all members, when making comments please put them through the Chair.

**Ms. Flor Marcelino (Wellington):** I was content on being quiet and listening to the beautiful exchanges, but then the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) mentioned something that I thought I should comment on.

He was harping on why our signs contained the face of our leader. Well, maybe the face of our leader, compared to the two other leaders, is more good-looking and we are very proud to show the face of our leader. But that's not the point that I wanted—

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for Inkster, on a point of order.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'm sure that the member would want to be somewhat politically correct. One could almost say that that's a sexist comment.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Inkster, he does not have a point of order. It's a dispute over the facts.

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**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for Wellington has the floor.

**Ms. Marcelino:** As I have said, that is not my point.

My point is—oh, first, I also caught something or many things there actually. The diatribe sounded too much judgmental. How did the Member for Inkster know that several candidates, for example, are calling from Burrows, did not spend enough time in

Burrows campaigning? Unless you're watching him all the time you could say that, but that's not true.

Anyway—

**An Honourable Member:** Was Andrew's wife working with you?

**Ms. Marcelino:** I don't need to answer that. Anyway—*[interjection]* Well, people have choice if they want to volunteer. It so happens if we have more volunteers than other parties, it's not our problem. We are happy for them.

Also, about asking permission, the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) mentioned that he personally asked permission from his constituents to put up signs. I know of several instances wherein his sign was on the front lawn, and I heard personally from people that they didn't ask for the signs.

\* (10:50)

**An Honourable Member:** Either your brother or your cousin, he even said yes.

**Ms. Marcelino:** I have several.

If only all of us should not take for granted the residents. Although your signs were there before, don't assume that the coming election, your sign should be there again. I have several cases of that.

**An Honourable Member:** Your family member said yes.

**Ms. Marcelino:** It's not my house anyway. *[interjection]* I'm not doing anything first.

Anyway, I find, if only we were to catalogue all the breaches, like defacing of signs, stolen signs, if we were to catalogue that, I'm sure our party would be able to bring volumes of documents about signs being defaced, stolen, crushed. I know, with the brief time I had, because of the goodness of many volunteers who provided their time, we were able to put up our signs in two days for the most part. Then, all of sudden, we saw signs gone, and when we saw a sign gone, and it's even in a fenced lot, the sign was gone. It's a corner sign, very important for us, and then in the mailbox was another candidate's material. But, anyway, we didn't mind that, because we believe that people will recognize—well, signs are important, but people will also give more value to the candidate, whoever is the candidate. So, there might be little signs or there might be signs all over, but it's the candidate that is being evaluated or judged.

Also, I find this bill a little bit superficial because it's hard to, well, in some cases you get the evidence, but in most cases, people who took out these signs are youngsters, teenagers. Would it be worth your time and effort and even money pursuing litigation against teenagers who might just be having a joy walk?

But the more substantive election reforms have been undertaken by this government. So let's deal with the more substantive ones than these superficial ones, like substantive and meaningful changes to The Elections Act have been brought in by this government to improve voter turnout and to strengthen the electoral process overall. Specifically, significant improvements to the accessibility and transparency of the electoral system in Manitoba have been implemented in addition to new mechanisms respecting citizens' electoral choices and banning floor crossing have been put in place.

About access, I have heard that many seniors were happy that we have made available, voting has become family-friendly since advance polling restrictions have been removed and the hours of advance polling stations increased. A lot of seniors like this, especially when malls were open for advance polling. They could get their families with them to the mall and then cast their vote. Anyone can now vote in the week prior to the election for any reason at any of the advance polling stations in the province.

In addition, the number of advance polling stations has been increased and several super polls have been created in locations such as the malls, as I've said, and the Winnipeg international airport. So, those sympathizers or friends of the Liberal Party who want to vote before going to their trip can vote at the Winnipeg international airport. You should thank the government for that.

Absentee voting has been increased to students and public employees who are working outside of the province or country. More dedicated polls within apartment blocks have been created so residents are not forced to leave in order to cast their ballots.

Polling subdivisions have been made smaller in an effort to garner greater voter participation. The result of smaller subdivisions is that people are not forced to travel as far to vote, particularly in the northern Manitoba and rural areas of the province. I know several of my colleagues here would also want to speak on this, so I'll stop for now.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. David Faurichou (Portage la Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) for bringing forward this bill because it recognizes the fact that every one of us has spoken of this morning in that we do all put out signage to tell persons of our candidacy and it is very disappointing, dismaying and a lot of extra work to replace and restore the signage that we put up one day, and to find it disappears or has been dislodged the very next day. The honourable member recognizes this fact and so has everyone else that's spoken here this morning.

But, honourable members from the government's side of the House have taken this as an opportunity to speak about legislators here in this Chamber and to bring discredit to their motivation regarding their participation. It's a little wordy description, but effectively, the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan) took it upon himself in an attempt to belittle the honourable Member for River Heights for trying to bring forward a bill that recognizes a problem that all of us know exists. I want to credit the honourable Member for River Heights.

So there I will leave my debate, but I would like to see more penalties, more education in this regard so that we don't end up seeing that our signs disappear. There's an investment. People volunteer their time to put up these signs. People volunteer their hard-earned resources to have the signs printed or also use valuable natural resources to construct these signs and a recognition that we should make the extra effort to attempt to bring penalty to, in an attempt to preserve those investments, I think, is of worthy note.

So, thank you ever so much, Mr. Speaker. I do appreciate the opportunity to participate in the debate. So, I think, in conclusion, the honourable Member for River Heights recognizes a problem, has proposed a solution, and I think it is worthy of consideration of all honourable members of this Chamber. Thank you.

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** Well I can see, Mr. Speaker, that we have a tremendous amount of time to speak to this bill and perhaps there'll be another opportunity for me to add my comments about Bill 208, The Elections Amendment Act. But I want to start by thanking my sign crew, in particular, for the hard work that they have done every election—five now—on behalf of the party in Transcona and also for myself personally as a candidate. I do know that the

Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), his cousins and relatives in Transcona vote NDP and take NDP signs. So, I thank them for that as well. Mr. Speaker, it's perhaps a sign of the wave of the future, maybe the Member for Inkster will one day want to take an NDP sign.

\* (11:00)

But, we have made many changes, Mr. Speaker, through our term of government, and have, in fact, brought about some very positive reforms with respect to the election process in Manitoba. But since my time is so brief—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 11 a.m., we will now move on to Resolution: TILMA and Benefits for Inter-Provincial Trade of Meat and Meat Products. The honourable Member for Arthur-Virden—

The honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on House Business?

#### House Business

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** Yes, Mr. Speaker. In accordance with rule 31(9), I would like to announce that the private member's Resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the Resolution on Age of Protection, sponsored by the honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat).

**Mr. Speaker:** It's been announced that for private member's resolution next Thursday will be Age of Protection that will be brought forward by the honourable Member for Minnedosa.

#### RESOLUTIONS

##### TILMA and Benefits for Interprovincial Trade of Meat and Meat Products

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** I'd like to first introduce this bill on Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement for Interprovincial Trade of Meat and Meat Products, and I move, seconded by the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) that this resolution be debated today.

As well, I would like to introduce this resolution, seconded by the Member for Lakeside, and I would read the resolution to the House.

WHEREAS the governments of British Columbia and Alberta have entered into the Trade,

Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA) to reduce barriers to trade; and

WHEREAS there are interprovincial barriers to trade that are limiting the ability of many Manitoba businesses and workers to enjoy the benefits of increased trade with other provinces, including the lucrative markets of British Columbia and Alberta; and

WHEREAS increased trade with British Columbia and Alberta would provide a benefit to the provincial economy, and our businesses and workers; and

WHEREAS certain sectors such as the meat and meat products sector currently face exceptional challenges related to trade; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's meat and meat products sector deserves access to as many available markets as possible for their products, as a means of compensating for the NDP's shortcomings related to this sector; and

WHEREAS federally inspected meat and meat products can be traded within and across provincial borders; and

WHEREAS provincially inspected meat plants can only sell products within the province of Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the restrictions on the sale of meat products in Manitoba is only one of the many examples of how interprovincial trade barriers are costing Manitoba's businesses and workers.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider joining TILMA to encourage increased trade opportunities for all businesses in Manitoba, including the producers of meat and meat products.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, seconded by the honourable Member for Lakeside, WHEREAS—dispense?

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, this most important resolution is one that would benefit in particular the agricultural industry in regard to the movement of meat and meat products that I pointed out specifically in the resolution that we're putting forward today. But it affects all trade in Manitoba, not just that from an agricultural perspective.

*Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

This is a recommendation to the government of Manitoba that we move forward in enhancing trade opportunities with our neighbouring provinces, and an example is already before us, Madam Deputy Speaker.

I referred to, in the resolution, that the governments of British Columbia and Alberta have entered into a Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement to reduce barriers to trade. Madam Deputy Speaker, I've said in this House many times that a well-known prominent Manitoban by the name of Mr. Arthur Mauro chaired a trade relations committee to look at reduction of interprovincial trade barriers in Manitoba a number of years ago and made many recommendations and particularly in the agricultural field found that there were 144 trade barriers in agriculture alone between provinces in Canada.

So while we continue to see the federal governments of all stripes try to increase trade opportunities, particularly with the recent comments in the Throne Speech by the federal government of today, and I'd like to quote, Madam Deputy Speaker, or just mention, I won't quote, but mention the comments from the Speech from the Throne of October 16 by the federal government: It is often harder to move goods and services across provincial boundaries than across our international borders. This hurts our competitive position, but more importantly, it is just not a way a country should work. They go on to say that they will enhance in the budget, in the Throne Speech, in the coming days, opportunities to use the federal trade and commerce powers to make our economic union work better for all Canadians.

Well, we in the province of Manitoba should take the same opportunity to improve opportunities for trade within our provincial boundaries and with our neighbours. One of those areas is we just passed a bill in Second Reading in the House—it went through committee last night—Bill 13, the organic products marketing one where the reason that that bill is in Manitoba, Madam Deputy Speaker, is to enhance the certified products here in Manitoba to make sure they're certified so they can be sold inside of the province of Manitoba. The federal bill already allows for those products to be sold outside of Manitoba, recognized as certified products in the rest of Canada, and that's in relation to what the federal

Throne Speech was referring to the night before last, and we need to continue to have such opportunities enhanced in the province of Manitoba.

British Columbia and Alberta brought this forward in April of 2006. The agreement came into effect this past April. It reduces trade between their provinces. Madam Deputy Speaker, the estimated growth of British Columbia's gross domestic product, by eliminating unnecessary trade barriers in its labour force, has been estimated to grow by \$4.8 billion, and up to 78,000 jobs could be added to its economy.

Now, regardless of how well any economy is growing, to put those kinds of jobs into it and that kind of domestic growth is a significant plus for any particular trade region. This trade region that's been developed of some 7.7 million people by these two combined provinces is the largest trading zone outside of the province of Ontario that we have in Canada, Madam Deputy Speaker.

With over 40,000 people having left under the NDP rule here in Manitoba, roughly the population of Brandon, we've got a problem that we can no longer ignore. We know that there are a lot of immigrants coming in under the Nominee Program that was set up by the previous Conservative government, and we encouraged that and enhanced that and want more of those people to become Manitoba and Canadian citizens. I have a couple of cases in my own constituency that I'm dealing with to try and make sure that those are enhanced so that these people can continue to become solid Canadian citizens, Madam Deputy Speaker, because they certainly want to. They recognize the opportunities here for themselves and their families and we need to encourage that at every opportunity.

Entering into a TILMA, if I could use that as an acronym, Madam Deputy Speaker, will make it easier for Manitoba businesses to supply goods and services to the markets in Alberta and British Columbia so we can prosper without exporting jobs and wealth. While there is trade going on, this bill is all about reducing the red tape in many of those areas and providing opportunities to enhance that trade.

If we fail to move forward on trade, this will be strike three in regard to our opportunities here in Manitoba. Of course—

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order please. If you want to have conversations, would you please use the loge. I'm having trouble hearing. Thank you.

The honourable Member for Arthur-Virden has the floor.

**Mr. Maguire:** Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I was just referring, of course, to the three strikes. Of course, this is World Series season, and the first two strikes against us in Manitoba are the high NDP taxes that we have, the highest personal taxes west of Québec, high business taxes, high education taxes on property, and, of course, the excessive red tape.

\* (11:10)

Even the City of Winnipeg is recognizing the need to reduce red tape as all others are. A fine example might be the City of Brandon that's restricted its business tax for a number of years, eliminated it. That's a plus for Manitobans. These types of red tape, if you will, excessive management of these circumstances need to be eliminated wherever possible. Some of it is needed, I would concur with that. But the third strike that we have is limiting the amount of trade opportunities that we have. We need fresh energy and new ideas to keep these young people in our province.

Madam Deputy Speaker, federal Minister Flaherty has also indicated, the Finance Minister, that he is a fan of the Alberta-B.C. agreement, urge other provinces to emulate it. If they can't, they should join it. If they can, rather, they should join it.

During a meeting with provincial Finance ministers last June, the provincial Finance Minister agreed to form a new working group focussed on whether the Alberta-B.C. pact could be applied elsewhere. I know that the government is aware of this. They have to be aware of it because the Premier (Mr. Doer) has what they called western premiers' conferences before they go to the national premiers' meetings. The ministers on the government side of the House all have western ministers' meetings, ministerial meetings, before they ever go to any of these national meetings as well. The co-operation is already there, starting to get together and have meetings, but all too often, as I have witnessed in my critic responsibilities for transportation and trade, there's been a lot of lip-service paid to some of these areas but not much walk. So, we would encourage the government, wherever they possibly can, to work with other partners in providing these types of formal agreements, perhaps, and making the arrangements easier for trade to take place.

Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the key areas in regard to Manitoba and the particular resolution that

I put forward today on trade of meats and meat products is also around the area of federal inspections versus provincial inspections when it comes to beef of course. A federally inspected plant can export product across Canada into other provinces as well as the rest of the world. However, if you're only a provincially inspected plant you can only sell that meat product, the same meat product, within the boundaries of Manitoba. So, because of the red tape and the excessive costs and, of course, competing in a bigger marketplace, many of our plants that we have in Manitoba today will not go to the extra expense of becoming federally inspected. So we need to work with other provinces to make sure that perhaps we could have a larger zone where either the provincial jurisdictions were allowed to be traded across Canada as well or else the federal jurisdiction is one that would allow for interprovincial trade in these meat products as well, because, of course, once you've met inspection such as the bill that we are just putting through the House now on certification of organic products, once your meat has met those certification standards, it should not matter whether it's a provincial or a federal jurisdiction. It would certainly enhance our trade opportunities and cut down the amount of delay in making sure that those products are sold into our households and consumers would be able to attain that product extremely easily.

So with that, I would urge the provincial government to consider the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement as brought forth in the other provinces and encourage them to have join into that kind of agreement to—

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

**Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade):** I appreciate the member bringing this resolution to the House. The only good part that we believe is that it's nice to see that the members of the opposition are finally catching up to the government on this important issue. Why I say that is that maybe the members don't know that our Premier is actually the co-chair on bringing the trade barriers down, not in a bilateral agreement but across Canada.

The member was partially correct when he said yes, it's important to have additional trade. The members opposite might know that we have 76 percent of our products and services exported beyond our borders. We are a trade province; we continue to

be a trade province. Now, I'm happy to let the members know that we've had some of the highest increases in trade under the NDP government than we have ever had, far better than what we had under the previous Tory government.

So I agree that we need to continue to do more, but we are working very, very hard. And we have a choice. We can bring down the barriers between one or two provinces, or we can bring barriers down around the country. I know the members opposite may think that the sun rises and falls on Alberta, but as a country we have a market of 35 million people and we have to look at a market of 35 million, not four or five million. And then what we have to do is look at a market of the entire world, and as a province we have been very focussed not on solving a small problem but solving a bigger problem. And the bigger problem is trade barriers with Ontario, trade barriers with Alberta, Saskatchewan and across the country, because I believe that as a small country of 35 million people we need to break down barriers, and we have been leading the charge on breaking down barriers.

And, by the way, when you say what changes have happened, I'm pleased to let the member opposite know some of the economic activities usually done. In his speech he talked about breaking down red tape. It's nice to see that a number of business organizations have said that the Manitoba burden on red tape is one of the least in the country, but when I was Minister of Industry the first time, we focussed on reducing red tape, not making a report and not acting upon it, but what we did was we actually got feedback from small businesses, medium-sized businesses, and large businesses and manufacturers. And so you'll notice that BizPal has been rolled out not only in one or two communities, but we're trying to move it forward all across the province. I'm happy to say that three years ago we invited the City of Winnipeg—they're now partners with BizPal. We're conducting more and more on-line business transactions—taxes, forms, all that are now conducted on-line. We've also taken and gone through with businesses and through our department where we've seen whether the forms could be simplified, saved on-line through Google Save, et cetera, so that people are doing less red tape. I'm pleased to see that the NDP government's doing that, and I'm also pleased to see that we are moving forward on the whole area of business.

The members opposite might not understand this, but throughout the '90s the small-business tax

rate was about 9 percent. We've moved from that level to 2 percent, so we went from one of the highest small-business tax under the Conservatives, who speak nicely but don't deliver, to one of the—well, actually it's the lowest small-business tax rate. And, to make sure you know this, I'll repeat it. Under the Conservative government, it was one of the highest small-business tax rates in the country. In 1999 it was 8 percent. We've moved it to 2 percent this year, and so that's a 75 percent reduction.

The other thing that you need to know, Madam Deputy Speaker, is that there used to be about a \$200,000 threshold on small business and it's gone to a \$400,000 threshold, which means that we've included more; we've given them breaks. We've also raised the threshold on the health and education levy. We've also moved forward on many taxes, whether it's the capital tax, whether it's the payroll tax, we have moved forward. So, although they speak and speak loudly about how they're the friend of business, their actions speak much louder than words because they did nothing, and we've moved forward on the red tape issue, on the tax issue, on the capital issue, and even on the infrastructure.

\* (11:20)

As far as trade, Madam Deputy Speaker, the member might not understand this, but when you take an isolated issue and try to solve a problem, that might not work well. He's talked about solving the issue of bureaucracy, and I agree with him. I find it strange that the Conservative government, which is the federal government, requires federal meat inspection to transport meat. I think that it's passing strange, and he's right, that it is inspected provincially and maybe to break down barriers we only have to inspect it once. We don't have to have a provincial-level inspection and a federal-level inspection. So I agree on harmonization. I know I've been very active on the harmonization of environmental regulations. I've been very active on harmonizing regulations, so I would invite the member opposite to talk to his federal cousins and talk about decreasing taxes. I think the federal Conservatives should follow the NDP lead in Manitoba—and I've said this to them—where they drop the business taxes, they work on breaking down the red tape, and I encourage him to talk to his federal cousins in that regard. I agree that if it's inspected once by the provincial, why do we need a second level of inspection federally. Maybe we talk to our federal cousins because we brought it up. I encourage you to move forward on that.

I also look at other things like—TILMA is an interesting discussion. It's moved forward between B.C. and Alberta, but again, when I talk about the country—I'm a proud Canadian. I'm a proud Manitoban, I'm a proud Canadian, and I think we need a national solution. So when we talk about all the areas, it's not just about meat and meat products.

Now, I don't want to lead this most august group astray. I think what we have to do is make sure we have markets, not for just meat, but meat and meat products, and I agree we have to break down the barriers. We have to look at where all services don't have barriers, whether it's in Canada or outside Canada.

I think what we have to do is look at mobility agreements on whether there's a certain profession in one province; I believe we have to work to break down the barriers so that person can transition across the country. Our province has argued that case. We've argued about mobility of a lot of things. I want people to understand that the domestic trade between provinces and territories is \$300 billion. So, although the member opposite talked about the trade in B.C. and Alberta, it's a country-wide issue. We have goods and services going to Ontario, Saskatchewan. We have a huge trade going with Nunavut and we want to continue to have. I believe we need a national agreement.

I believe that the \$8.3 billion trade between Alberta and B.C. is large and it is important, but \$300 billion is even more important, and we want to make sure we have our share of the—not only interprovincial but international trade. So we look at a Canada-wide approach. We need a strong effective national agreement. We need consistent and fair regulations. We need to break down barriers, and I agree with the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) that we do that. We need to make sure that regulations are just and fair and I think we have to work with all people in the Legislature to make sure that occurs. I think that as far as meat, people must know that live cattle can move from one jurisdiction to the other. We're talking about meat products and this would enhance our meat industry if we can do that. So, I look forward to seeing that.

But it's a bigger issue, so I agree in the one issue we need to move forward in, and I think we need to move forward in the larger issues as well. Thank you very much, Madam Deputy Speaker.

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** It was interesting to listen to the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau).



He talks about catching up. Well, I can tell you, the Province of Manitoba, the way they've caught up is got \$4 billion in transfer funds from the federal government, and if that's their way of catching up it's sure a poor way of showing leadership to the people of Manitoba.

He talks about the government taking down the trade barriers, and there's one way to do that and that's to look at the other provinces in order to try and figure out a way in which you can actually do that, and through TILMA is one of those ways. We're not saying that you have to join the B.C.-Alberta trade agreement. What you do have to do is look at those opportunities so that you can in fact have a good look at them in order to work relationships. Currently, there's an NDP government in Saskatchewan, probably for a very short time—we certainly know and hope that there'll be change there—so that they can again have a good look at the opportunities that are afforded to people to the west of them in Alberta and British Columbia.

They make a lot of the fact that the jobs that are being created by the—78,000 jobs are being created as a result of TILMA. I mean, that's substantial. If you're going to see your province grow, you're going to have an opportunity to see it grow, that's by working together in harmony with other provinces, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The member also talked about the other trade barrier as far as taxes. We're the highest-taxed province in western Canada. We have hundreds of thousands of barriers, trade barriers, regulations in regard to establishing businesses with the province of Manitoba. We have the highest personal tax in western Canada. We have the lowest personal exemptions. If we talk about trying to make the province grow, and that's what this is all about, is trying to make Manitoba competitive, make it a place to live for our children and our grandchildren, we're going to have to take advantage of those opportunities, Madam Deputy Speaker.

We've been bringing forward a resolution on this side of House for interprovincial meat trade and this particular resolution that's brought in by the member for Virden, and I thank the member for that resolution, I think it's an excellent resolution and look forward to hearing the members from the other side of the House put things on the record that are going to be useful to the people of Manitoba and by this particular resolution, is going to allow the

province of Manitoba to be competitive in that relationship.

I know the interprovincial meat program was started being brought forward, actually by the Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) and that had to do with interprovincial meat trade right after BSE had broken out. We on this side of the House are very clear on our stand on that, whether you go to Saskatchewan and buy a steak and take it to the lake or a package of meat from Winnipeg and go to the Lake of the Woods or wherever you want to take it into another province, it doesn't make sense. The only way it's going to work is having interprovincial trade, and by doing that, we open the doors for increase in livelihood within the province of Manitoba, making us more competitive and by increasing the slaughter capacity, the processing capacity within the province of Manitoba is a way of doing that.

We talked last night about Bill 13 in regard to the organic growers. We talked about certification of certain products in the organic field. That's another step in the right direction. We want more value-added. We want to be able to look back and say, this is what we need to do in order to make Manitoba grow and prosper.

*Mr. Rob Altemeyer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

And that is a step in the right direction. I know that we had a presenter last night in that regard that was a direct seller. That brought up a bit of red flag. We know that those people have to be looked after. A lot of people have market gardens. In fact, we all enjoy those. We go to the—I know the Member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick) has a large market garden in her area. We've got to make sure these people are also protected in a way that's going to be beneficial for all Manitobans.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, that your leader has stated that he's not planning on signing on to a TILMA agreement. He's looking for a national solution and the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) talked about a national solution. That's fine talking about a national solution, but it's called working together. What the member for Virden has done is brought forward a resolution that's talking about patterning that of what Alberta and B.C. have done.

You look at the credit union side of things alone: That there is going to be something like \$3 million a month just in increased revenue from the credit

unions where they can do interprovincial trade in those particular two provinces.

I know our leader has urged the Premier (Mr. Doer) to sign on to the agreement, and I know that Alberta has a very lucrative economy. We should be able to learn from those two provinces that have done a fantastic job in order to bring that economy into harmonization. And that's what we need to do, whether it be with Ontario, a fair credit to the Member for Assiniboia. He talked about "partneringships" with Ontario.

But having said that, we have not seen the leadership that we need from this province in order to bring Manitoba into a competitive level. We can't live on transfer payments. We can't continue to have \$4 billion out of a \$9-million budget to rely on. We need to rely on our countries—our provinces in order to work together, in order to bring harmonization and make our province grow a natural growth, rather than through transfer payments.

We need to be a have province, not a have-not province. We've talked about that time and time again. By doing that, by doing the things that we talked about in this resolution—and sure, we focussed on meat trade, that's just one aspect of it. We focussed a little bit, as I said, on the organic growers. We have an opportunity within the province of Manitoba to get more value-added, more opportunities for our young people to be able to stay at home, create those jobs.

I know that, you know, United States is our biggest trading partner. We have enough regulations there, as well, going back and forth across the border in order to create the economy we need in order to make sure we're sustainable. So, Mr. Acting Speaker, with those short few words, it would be interesting to take this motion, resolution to a vote. I'd be happy to do that as soon as the members are finished their comments.

\* (11:30)

**Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Water Stewardship):** Mr. Acting Speaker, I too am very pleased to put comments on the record today. The TILMA agreement is one of concern. It's an agreement that was negotiated behind closed doors. None of the stakeholders were brought into the process at all. It was an agreement that was announced, simply visited upon the people of B.C. and Alberta. I know there was a lot of concern raised in British Columbia where there is a strong labour

movement, where there is a strong educational sector, where there is a very strong First Nations presence. None of these stakeholders were spoken to. None of them were consulted. None of them were brought into the process, and that's very concerning.

When we look at the agreement between British Columbia and Alberta, we look at an agreement between two somewhat similar economies. When we look at the country of Canada, and I've had the very fortunate experience of living in many different places in Canada, we know that there are differences in economies, that there are differences in what makes an economy thrive in St. John's, Newfoundland, as opposed to Nunavut, as opposed to downtown Winnipeg, as opposed to Alberta. When we look at an agreement that is so focussed on those two jurisdictions and the amalgamation of those two jurisdictions, I immediately see that other areas of the country would not be able to adapt. I see that other areas of the country would not be taken into consideration, and there is irrelevancy in what is included in TILMA when we look at our entire country.

It is a regional agreement. It is not an equal substitute for a national initiative which is really what we need here. We need to have the stakeholders at the table. We need to have the provinces and territories. We need to make sure that we're talking to our stakeholders here and that the stakeholders across the country are being consulted as well. Trade between provinces and territories is approaching some \$300 billion annually. That is the economy of our country nationally.

Our chief interest in achieving a national agreement is to reduce interprovincial trade barriers as the provinces' trade flows both east and west, and I think here in Manitoba, we are in a unique situation. We enjoy a unique vantage point in which we can see both the east, both the west, and the North as well, because we are the geographic centre of Canada. A regional agreement such as TILMA does not take into account the broad spectrum of our community of Canada.

TILMA also is very new. It has not been tested. There will be, I'm sure, within the next little while, concerns raised as to how TILMA was not only developed but is being executed, and there is still a lot of discussion around the process of interpreting. We're not at the interpretation stage yet, but the process of how to interpret concerns around TILMA and certainly its full implications are not near known.

In Saskatchewan, the standing committee on the economy conducted public consultations to determine the state of internal trade in Saskatchewan. These public consultations included discussions on the Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement, or TILMA as it's more commonly known, signed by the government of Alberta and British Columbia. After careful study, the Saskatchewan government concluded that TILMA is not for Saskatchewan, and that was part of a Saskatchewan government release, August 1, '07, so very recently.

Even the leader of the Saskatchewan Party, Mr. Acting Speaker, who is quite extreme in views, not only economic but also social development, even he—his name is Brad Wall—has said that his party will not sign on to TILMA if elected, and that statement was made on CBC news, June 29, '07, which brings in, too, another concern, what about social programs? What about the social safety net? What about making sure that we're taking care of each other? What about the hard times that people can go through? To my knowledge, this is not part of the TILMA agreement.

I think it's also important to recognize that there is a national discussion going on. The Council of the Federation has made progress in strengthening internal trade, and as the minister for STEM pointed out, our Premier is, again, showing leadership on a national level in this area.

So the meeting of the Council of the Federation in August had our Premier (Mr. Doer) endorse the following five-point plan that will help to improve internal trade in Canada. There's labour mobility which premiers agreed that governments will work together in all regulated occupations to bring them into full compliance by August 2009. Ministers of labour market are engaged right now on a national level to ensure resources are in place, to facilitate negotiations, and to develop a compliance and communication strategy so that all remaining regulated occupations are aware of this requirement. Dispute resolution—very important, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The premiers directed ministers responsible for internal trade to develop an effective enforcement mechanism. This is before any agreement would be signed. That did not happen with TILMA. The goal is to implement panel results successfully without resorting to the court system and will include an appeals mechanism. The premiers also agreed to energy. Premiers will establish a negotiating group

of ministers to reconcile and finalize wording for the energy chapter of the AIT and report proposed wording to the Council of the Federation by December 2007, and that shows that there is the correct floor-planning going into this to make it an effective agreement.

Agriculturally, premiers directed Ag ministers to undertake immediate work on Agriculture and Foods Goods chapter and report back to the Council of the Federation with a progress report on wording, again by December 2007.

Reconciliation and Regulations: Premiers agreed to harmonize transportation regulatory codes and eliminate those standards and regulations that are unjustifiable barriers to trade in the transportation sector and instructed ministers responsible to do this work by July 2008.

So the premiers invited the federal government as a signatory to the Agreement on Internal Trade, or the AIT, to participate in this five-point plan with the understanding that any resulting agreement must be fully honoured and upheld, as should all agreements between the federal government and provinces and territories.

So what are some more of the potential problems with Manitoba? The TILMA agreement, again, is between Alberta and B.C., two relatively equal jurisdictions in population, GDP, and geographic size. TILMA was negotiated to the best common interests of the two signatory partners, again, leaving out the rest of the country, and in many ways, this is an agreement to negotiate an agreement. So there's so much that's been left out of this agreement that is being worked on by the Council of the Federation.

It applies across the board to entities under provincial governments including municipalities, post-secondary institutions and school boards, again, none of whom were consulted, none of whose considerations were taken into account. And it does not apply to the federal government's actions or inactions within either jurisdiction and therefore is not inclusive.

I hear some comments about the Manitoba economy coming from the other side. Let me just put some stats on the record. We're enjoying a growing economy. StatsCan confirms that in 2006 Manitoba's economy grew by the third highest rate of any province at 3.3 and well above the national average of 2.7. The Conference Board is forecasting growth

in 2007 at 3.4 percent, fourth best behind Newfoundland, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

The Conference Board September '07 *Metropolitan Outlook* has Winnipeg seeing the third fastest growing economy among larger cities in the country at 3.7 for 2007. People are entering rather than leaving, which means more people in the shopping malls and better manufacturing results. This is from the *Winnipeg Free Press*, Mario Lefebvre, director of *Metropolitan Outlook*. Barry Rempel, CEO, the Winnipeg Airports Authority, summed it up by saying: It's a pretty exciting time to be in Manitoba. What appears to be happening is virtually all sectors of our economy are clicking on all cylinders. This is July '07.

Other indicators of our strong economy: Manitoba continues to exceed all other provinces in export growth with an 18 percent increase in the first eight months of '07. Nationally it's up only 3.9 percent. Retail trade for the seven months of 2007 is up 9.3 percent, fourth best in the country compared to a national growth of 6.3 percent. Total capital investment in Manitoba will be up 11.3 percent in '07, second best in Canada, and more than double the national average of 4.6 percent.

\* (11:40)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Rob Altemeyer):** Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

**Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake):** Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on this bill. I welcome the opportunity but I do have to say, regretfully, that I will be speaking in opposition to this resolution put forward by members of the opposition.

I mean that most sincerely because we have worked together in times past in here on resolutions, just a short time ago, as a matter of fact. The Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), I believe, introduced a resolution on drainage which was flawed in the beginning, but we corrected it for them and cleaned it up a little bit, and at the end of the day, we sent the unanimous message from this Legislature that we need the federal government to contribute to drainage infrastructure and we did it on a day when the Prime Minister was here in Manitoba. So we do have a non-partisan spirit at times.

But on this occasion, I'm afraid I do have to speak out in opposition, largely on the basis that this is a regional approach to trade at a time when this

country needs to take a national approach instead. We have the Council of the Federation that the Premiers have formed a few years ago. We have a very good agreement on internal trade in the works, with a five-point plan, covering off issues such as labour mobility, dispute resolution, energy, agriculture, regulatory improvements, and so forth.

So I really have to wonder, Mr. Acting Speaker, why we should be going down the regional approach as opposed to a national approach, and why this particular agreement. We had two provinces, got together, B.C. and Alberta—large rich provinces, I might add—cooked up a little deal amongst themselves and now expect that other provinces further to the east are just going to fall in line.

I think it's noteworthy, members opposite should recognize that the province next to us, Saskatchewan, has come out in opposition to this TILMA proposal. Not only the government of Saskatchewan, but the leader of the opposition, Brad Wall, leader of the Saskatchewan party, also indicated that they would vote in opposition to joining TILMA. So I think that is a lesson that members opposite should take to heart. Even the Conservative Party in Saskatchewan, the de facto Conservative party, would be in opposition to this as well. I think they probably recognize that this would be an abdication of provincial jurisdiction, that this would denigrate the national position and, in a sense, jeopardize the integrity of our federation.

On those grounds alone, I would have to speak in opposition to this. Really, it's focussed just on one particular area. We can look east and we can look west from here in Manitoba. When you look at trade westward, it's approximately \$8 billion with the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, whereas, when you look eastward to Ontario and Québec, we're looking at in excess of \$12 billion. So why are we thinking of making deals with one entity to the exclusion of the other? It's just not logical in any way, shape or form on that basis.

*Mr. Daryl Reid, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

I would really like to speak about the meat aspect of the proposal because I was a member of this Legislature back in 2003 when BSE came upon us. The lesson learned at that point in time in dealing with the province of Alberta is forever ingrained in my mind because we thought we had a deal with Alberta with the BSE Recovery Program, which had to deal with cattle, with meat, that was cooked up by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, the Province

of Alberta and the federal government. We thought we had a deal with them and Manitoba ended up with the short end of the stick on that program.

The current Member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon) well knows that. He's a cattle producer himself. He knows that we were unable to access hardly any of the money under the BSE Recovery Program, that all of it went to the big packing houses in Alberta and we were left twisting in the wind here. So I wouldn't be scurrying back to Alberta to make any trade deals with them because when we had a chance to make a deal on meat we got shafted by the people in Alberta. That was thanks to the leadership of people like Betty Green who was the representative for Manitoba on the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, a good Conservative, ran against me twice in the Interlake, and her support dropped dramatically throughout this crisis. In the election that was on in 2003, she dropped from 3,000 votes in '99 to 1,400 in '03, a strong indicator that the ranchers of the Interlake were opposed to their movements as well.

Now, when Parliament attempted to call the packers to task before the agriculture standing committee, what happened? What happened? The Conservatives blocked it. When we wanted to open up the books and see all the money going into their coffers, what happened? I don't know if it was the Conservatives; I think it was the Alliance or was it the Reform Party? It was the Conservative-Reform-Alliance Party. That's what it was. Remember that? The CRAP party went out of their way to block that from going into Parliament, and eventually it died and we were unsuccessful at opening up the books. Howard Hilstrom, the Member for Selkirk-Interlake, sat on that committee and played his role in that fiasco as well.

I remember during the debate when we trying to get some slaughter capacity enhanced in Manitoba here how hard Conservatives fought against that in this province. They were responsible for the decline of slaughter in the first place, and when we attempted to get some slaughter capacity up and going with the Ranchers Choice plant with the \$2 check-off and all that, these guys fought tooth and nail to scuttle this project. I was there. I was in Grosse Isle when Mr. Hilstrom stood up and called for civil disobedience, a disgraceful act.

#### Point of Order

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Daryl Reid):** The honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, on a point of order.

**Mr. Maguire:** On a point of order, Mr. Acting Speaker, the member is putting erroneous material on the record in regard to this. The debate on the \$2 tax on cattle came solely from the cattle producers of Manitoba. The minister was acting against the wishes of all Manitoba cattle producers at that time, and the government, when they finally found out that 92 percent of the cattle producers were against the \$2 checkoff, they made it voluntarily refundable.

So I wanted to just straighten the record out on this Member for Interlake.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Daryl Reid):** The honourable member does not have a point of order. It's a dispute over the facts.

\* \* \*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Daryl Reid):** The honourable Member for Interlake.

**Mr. Nevakshonoff:** That just boggles the mind, Mr. Acting Speaker. Conservatives were not against the checkoff. I was in Brandon when Betty Green was charging the microphone. The former member for Ste. Rose, Mr. Glen Cummings, was pushing Mrs. Green out of the way to get to the microphone to speak against the checkoff. As I said, Howard Hilstrom, a former lawmaker himself and law enforcer as a former RCMP officer, preaching civil disobedience which was abominable. So for the Member for Arthur-Virden to suggest that the Conservatives were not opposed to the \$2 checkoff is ludicrous to say the least.

And the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), I recall with the Ranchers Choice how hard they tried to scuttle that project. When there was a glitch with the register of co-operatives, how quickly they jumped on that and were putting press releases out trying to encourage ranchers to pull their money out of the Ranchers Choice plant.

So really, Mr. Acting Speaker, this Resolution that they have put before us today is utter nonsense. This ultra-Conservative deal cooked up between B.C. and Alberta is not for Manitoba, so I speak in opposition to this bill, and I hope that all the members will as well. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

\* (11:50)

#### House Business

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader):** Mr. Acting Speaker, I ask for leave of the

House to seek arrangement to withdraw the Resolution for next Thursday, Age of Protection, and then to announce next Thursday's Resolution.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Daryl Reid):** Does the honourable member have leave to withdraw the resolution that was previously announced. *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Hawranik:** In accordance with rule 31(9), I'd like to announce that the private member's Resolution that will be considered next Thursday is a resolution on Agricultural Input Costs sponsored by the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Daryl Reid):** It has been announced that the Resolution to be considered next Thursday will be the Agricultural Input Costs. *[Agreed]*

\* \* \*

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Acting Speaker, I'd like to put some comments on the record with regard to the resolution that was sponsored by the member for Virden. The resolution basically talks about opening up the borders between Manitoba and other jurisdictions in Canada for trade in meat products.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the words of the Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) and, you know, goofy comes to mind when I think about what he put on the record. But when you really want to look at the relevance of a resolution in terms of putting comments on the record, you should at least keep in mind that the people back home may pick up a *Hansard* and may read what you put on the record. And I think that we should probably help the member out by really telling his constituents how foolish some of the comments are that he puts on the record here in the Legislature. He says he represents the people from the Interlake, but I know people from the Interlake, and they wouldn't be too appreciative of some of the things that he's put on the record here today.

Mr. Speaker, when you talk about interprovincial trade, one of the barriers that we have had as a province is to try to move our products from Manitoba into Saskatchewan, and unfortunately I live right alongside the Manitoba-Saskatchewan border, and I know that any abattoir that processes meat in Manitoba cannot sell those products in Saskatchewan. They can sell them in Manitoba. I don't know why these regulations were ever put in

place, but I guess there were reasons. Nevertheless I think we have arrived at a time in our trade history that we should at least be able to open up the borders interprovincially so that products can move freely within Canada. It appears that some of our products can move more freely between Canada and the United States than they can between some of our provinces. And that's just not right.

And, Mr. Speaker, what this resolution is calling for is for us to join other provinces that have now looked at this issue and enabled the trade between provinces to occur as it should. And the member says—*[interjection]* the member says he's going to speak against this resolution. Now, is that really representing his constituents in the Interlake who produce cattle, who produce meat products, and who would like to be able to trade with either people in Ontario or people in British Columbia or people in Saskatchewan? *[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Interlake would do well to open both ears and close his mouth because he isn't being recognized to speak in the House right now.

Mr. Speaker, the issue here is the resolution calls for interprovincial trade in meat products and other products. Now this member has put comments on the record which do not reflect any of the hopes and dreams and aspirations of people who produce these products in the Interlake. I know that. So he is completely off base. But that's okay. We understand that that is where he comes from, and that's why he sits where he does, but maybe I'm getting a little too sensitive here on this issue, so I should maybe address the topic as it is.

Mr. Speaker, I think the resolution here is a worthy one. Now, let's not—let's take some of the politics out of this and look at the essential elements of the resolution. Let's see whether or not there is agreement in this House to at least address this issue in a way that allows Manitobans to be able to trade freely with their counterparts in other jurisdictions and other parts of this country.

Mr. Speaker, if this resolution is not acceptable in its form, then why isn't the government coming up or why isn't the government joining the governments of British Columbia and Alberta, who have entered into an agreement to reduce barriers of trade? Why wouldn't Manitoba do that? What is restricting us from taking that step and why is it that Manitobans are now going to be treated differently than people who trade in Saskatchewan and in Alberta—or, in

British Columbia and in Alberta? Is it a philosophical thing? What is the holdup here in terms of moving ahead with a concept of this?

Now, Mr. Speaker, I know that perhaps the Member for Interlake didn't read the resolution. I don't know because he went off on a tangent that talked about everything else except what was in the resolution. So, perhaps I should send him a copy and if he read it, maybe he would want to speak again and maybe he would speak in favour of the resolution.

The THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED in this resolution simply says: "THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider joining TILMA to encourage increased trade opportunities for all businesses in Manitoba, including the producers of meat and meat products."

Now, is that so objectionable to members in this House?

We are simply encouraging—we are encouraging—the government to take a look at this and to ensure that Manitobans, businesses in Manitoba, producers in Manitoba, processors in Manitoba have the same opportunities, have the same access to markets as other jurisdictions do.

Mr. Speaker, there are all kinds of products that are traded back and forth, but why should there be barriers interprovincially? We have joined a free trade agreement. Now I know, philosophically, where the Premier (Mr. Doer) comes from because I remember well the free trade debate, and the Premier stood in this House and railed against free trade. I wonder if that's his position today because he was the dog in the manger when it came to free trade, and I wonder where he is today on that issue. Perhaps this is why the party that's in power today, the government today, is not supporting the resolution here and is not supporting the concept, because if you can't support the body of the resolution, certainly, you should be able to accept the concept

and the THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED. How can you be against that? How can anybody in this province say that Manitobans should not have the same access to markets as other jurisdictions do; that's just unfair.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is a good resolution. It does offer opportunity and if the government were to join the governments of British Columbia and Alberta in joining TILMA, and TILMA stands for the Trade Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement. If we could join that, it would give all of our businesses in this province an opportunity to be able to access markets where they can't access them today.

So, with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I rest my case, so to speak.

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** Mr. Speaker, I realize I only have a couple of minutes to address the resolution and some of the comments from the previous speaker, but I want to point out that, you know, in 1987, when we brought in the Free Trade Agreement internationally with the United States, what we had there was we had an international agreement, but we had trade barriers across the country, and we've been arguing this case for a long, long time now, and my prediction is that in another 20 years, we're still going to be arguing the case because these agreements are going to take many, many years to negotiate.

The downside is that we are going to be giving influence, we're going to be giving powers and control away from the provincial government when we try to negotiate a national—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 noon, we will recess and reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, October 18, 2007**

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