

First Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stu	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
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.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARCELINO, Flor	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	N.D.P.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 14, 2007

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYER

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS
INTRODUCTION OF BILLS
Bill 204—The Personal Health
Information Amendment Act

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that Bill 204, The Personal Health Information Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les renseignements médicaux personnels, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, this bill will provide for much quicker access to medical records where an individual is in an institution, a hospital or a personal care home, instead of the current situation which allows up to 30 days for access to information, medical information which is readily available. This bill will make sure that it's available within the first day.

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

Bill 205—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that Bill 205, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, this bill would improve the democratic procedures around the appointment of individuals to sit on the Board of Manitoba Hydro, the province's most important Crown corporation. It would provide for screening of appointees by a legislative committee prior to their appointment being finalized.

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

Bill 201—The Liquor Control Amendment Act
(Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Prevention)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I would move, seconded by the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), that Bill 201, The Liquor Control Amendment Act, be read now for a first time.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Member for Inkster, seconded by the honourable Member for River Heights, that Bill 201, The Liquor Control Amendment Act (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Prevention), be now read a first time.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, this bill would make it an obligation for government to put labels on bottles and signs in bars indicating the dangers of alcohol and the results of fetal alcohol syndrome. It's something that we can do in terms of promoting education of a very important disorder. Thank you.

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

PETITIONS

Lynn Lake Friendship Centre

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency is a provincially mandated First Nation child protection and welfare agency. Operated under authority of the provincial Ministry of Family Services and Housing, the mission is to help keep children, families and communities safe and secure and promote healthy citizen development and well-being.

Lynn Lake is located 321 kilometres northwest of Thompson, Manitoba, on PR 391. There is no social worker living and working in the community. The goals of the ministry are implemented from a distance and supplemented with infrequent and short visits from a social worker located in Thompson.

The Lynn Lake Friendship Centre is a designated safe house and receiving home providing accommodations, services and care to children and

families experiencing difficulties in a safe environment. The designated safe house and receiving home are forced closed at this time due to outstanding accounts payable due from Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency.

Failure to have a social worker based in Lynn Lake providing immediate and sustained services and forcing the receiving home and designated safe house to close, children and families experiencing difficulties in Lynn Lake and area have their health and safety placed in great jeopardy.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh) to consider restaffing the social worker position in Lynn Lake in order to provide needed services to northwestern Manitoba in a timely manner.

To request the Minister of Family Services and Housing to consider mediating outstanding accounts payable due to Lynn Lake Friendship Centre by Cree Nation Child and Family Caring Agency in order to allow the designated safe house and receiving home to resume regular operations and services and continued utilization of these operations and services.

This is signed by Garth Montgomery, Hellar Hrechka, Marie Rose Dumas and many, many others.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

* (13:40)

Provincial Trunk Highway 10— Brandon Hills Estates

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for the petition:

Provincial Trunk Highway 10 serves as a route for an ever-increasing volume of traffic including heavy trucks, farm vehicles, working commuters, tour buses, campers and the transport of dangerous goods.

Provincial Highway 10 access travelling south to Brandon Hills Estates is not only unsafe for school students who must cross the busy highway but also

for turning vehicles who must cross a solid line to enter the park community.

Traffic levels are expected to escalate further due to projected industrial expansions.

Highway upgrades to Provincial Highway 10 are occurring within a short distance of this site. Priority should be given to this community based on the dangerous access to highways for residents.

We petition the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) to act in the situation by considering construction of turning lanes that would reduce the danger posed in traffic access to Brandon Hills Estates, which is home to 85 residents.

This petition signed by John More, Verona More, Dana Laursen and many, many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

Crocus Investment Fund

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

The background to the petition is as follows:

The government needs to uncover the whole truth as to what ultimately led to over 33,000 Crocus shareholders to lose tens of millions of dollars.

The provincial Auditor's report, the Manitoba Securities Commission's investigation, the RCMP investigation and the involvement of our courts, collectively, will not answer the questions that must be answered in regard to the Crocus Fund fiasco.

Manitobans need to know why the government ignored the many warnings that could have saved the Crocus Investment Fund.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his NDP government to co-operate in uncovering the truth in why the government did not act on what it knew and to consider calling a public inquiry on the Crocus Fund fiasco.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by Harvey Douglas, Joyce Douglas, Bob Douglas and many, many others.

Cancer Treatment Drugs

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Colon cancer is the second leading cause of death.

Colon cancer affects both men and women almost equally.

Avastin and Erbitux are two drugs that have been shown to work and offer hope to patients who suffer from the disease.

CancerCare Manitoba is offering Avastin to patients on a case-by-case basis, claiming the cost to be too much to give all patients the prescribed treatment.

Consequently, patients and their families are often forced to make the difficult choice between paying for the treatment themselves or going without.

The CancerCare Manitoba Act stipulates, and I quote: "The objects of the corporation are the conduct of a program of diagnosis of, treatment of and research in . . ."

The principles of the Canada Health Act under the criteria list universality. One hundred percent of the insured residents of a province or territory must be entitled to the insured health services provided by the plans on uniform terms and conditions.

Several other provinces are providing access to these two drugs for colon cancer patients.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) and the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to consider providing CancerCare Manitoba with the appropriate funding necessary to provide the standard of care treatment, Avastin, to all colon cancer patients.

To request the Premier of Manitoba and the Minister of Health to consider accelerating the process by which new cancer treatment drugs are added to the formulary so that more Manitobans are able to be treated in the most effective manner possible.

Signed by Tom Forrest, Lorraine Forrest, Barb Bilenky and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I'd like to remind our guests in the gallery that participation is not allowed by the visitors in the gallery and that also includes applauding.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: I'm pleased to table the annual reports of the Legislative Assembly Management Commission for the years ended March 31, 2006 and March 31, 2007. Copies of the reports have been placed on members' desks.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): I am pleased to table the *Five-Year Report on the Status of Forestry, April 2001 to March 2006*.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth): Mr. Speaker, I'm pleased to table the Annual Report of the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund 2006.

As well, on behalf of the Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy (Ms. McGifford), I am pleased to table *Adult Learning Centres in Manitoba 2005/2006 Annual Report* and the Manitoba Student Aid 2005/2006 Annual Report.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery. I want to introduce our interns who are finishing up with us. I want to, first of all, introduce Brendan Boyd, but he's not able to be with us because he's undertaken a new responsibility and new challenges. I'm sure that the interns with us today will be going down that path very shortly.

I want to take this opportunity to introduce Christine Esselmont—please, stand up when I introduce you—Emily Grafton, Arne Thorlacius, Marie MacLellan, Akosua Matthews. I wanted this opportunity to introduce you because I want to thank you, on behalf of all honourable members, for the wonderful job that you have done and the great contributions you've given to your respective caucuses. I know that the work you've done and the services you've provided and what other duties that you undertook, you did in such an excellent fashion, and I'm sure that all members appreciated your effort. We wanted to have this opportunity to wish you well, thank you and good luck in your future endeavours. I'm sure you will do very well.

Also, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery where we have

with us today Keith Penhall, chair of the Deer Lodge Centre Foundation.

We have Dennis Sands from Crawley, West Sussex, England, Kay Sands and Tony Aston of Horsham, Sussex, England. These visitors are the guests of the honourable Member for St. James (Ms. Korzeniowski).

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

In the public gallery we have from Garden Grove School 23 grades 4 and 5 students under the direction of Mr. Jim Lapp. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Public Housing Management of Properties

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): I would like to, in addition to the thanks to the interns who have served all of us so well, just say thank you as well to the pages, table officers and other staff of the Assembly for their excellent work that they do on our behalf as legislators each and every day as we reach the end of this short sitting of the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier relates to the long history, under the NDP, of problems with respect to Manitoba Housing and public housing units under the management of this provincial government. We've seen, as we look back, mismanagement at the organizational level with allegations of misappropriated dollars and kickback schemes.

In 2002, the Auditor General released a report which found that comprehensive inspections, repairs and preventative maintenance of Manitoba Housing units weren't being effectively completed. In 2003, a year later, yet another Auditor General's report pointed to low morale, poor communication and an atmosphere of distrust and suspicion within the Manitoba Housing Authority itself. The Auditor, furthermore, found in that 2003 report that previous recommendations had not yet been implemented.

Last summer the Manitoba Housing Authority quietly posted a request for proposals to conduct an operational review of the Housing Authority.

Manitobans learned about this review only because of a leaked Cabinet document.

We learned yesterday, Mr. Speaker, that this review will not be completed on time, contrary to earlier statements by the government and the minister, which speaks to the low priority placed on Manitoba Housing, public housing, by this NDP government. Perhaps, most disturbingly, we've seen troubling incidents of violence, drug activity and gangs in people's homes, the same places where parents are trying to raise young children.

We've heard about mould, bedbugs, insufficient heating and cooling systems, mouse droppings and infestations of ants. Now, Mr. Speaker, in 2007, Manitoba Housing tenants are fed up with the lack of maintenance, lack of cleanliness, lack of security and lack of action from this government.

Will the Premier finally take responsibility for the appalling state of public housing in Manitoba and personally show leadership in ensuring these problems can no longer persist?

* (13:50)

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, as the member may or may not know, when we were elected in 1999, we initiated Neighbourhoods Alive! housing projects throughout Manitoba. The former government had a few housing projects and no maintenance in the Manitoba Housing projects. It was our view under Neighbourhoods Alive! that community-based housing projects and individual ownership or participation in housing is essential for the dignity of housing and for the long-term sustainability of housing. The old ways of doing things where there were big housing projects, they have to be maintained, was replaced by our view to have more community-based ownership.

We've rebuilt many parts of Winnipeg, Brandon, Thompson. I know members opposite did not have any housing dollars in Brandon or Thompson. We've had a great deal of success working with communities, not the government building something and then people having to live in it. We have tried to make a very definite shift to our philosophy of having community-based ownership.

To some degree that has been very successful in rebuilding neighbourhoods. We're going to use some of that same model for the housing projects that we have announced prior to the election and in this budget. The \$130 million, some of it will go to assisted housing; some of it will go to other housing

projects. We acknowledge that the old housing has to be continued to be maintained and, Mr. Speaker, we also have expanded Neighbourhoods Alive! to a number of other communities since our last budget.

I also want to point out that the old ways of holding land banks, the old days of having land banks, we have worked very strenuously to have sustainable green development around the Seine River area, and I want to congratulate the ministers on those housing projects. I also know that we are proceeding with the Waverley West project, again another example where we will be developing that housing. We are putting into law a guarantee that any profits that are made above and beyond the sale of that surplus land within the city of Winnipeg limits will be reinvested in inner city housing for the benefit of people in Manitoba.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to hear an acknowledgment that the old NDP approaches to massive public housing projects that he was part of when he was in government previously have proven to be an utter failure. But it doesn't change the fact that over the past eight years, while he's been at the helm of the government, he has had both the opportunity and the responsibility to ensure an acceptable standard of housing for those Manitobans who are living within Manitoba public housing units. While changes in the way that we go about approaching public housing, ensuring more community control, and certainly tenant control and ownership are important, there is a responsibility to take care of those who are attempting to raise children and to get by within existing Manitoba public housing buildings, many of which were built by previous NDP governments.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to say to the Premier that the answer given today, most of which is backward-looking, is of little comfort to Ruby Therrien, who is with us today, a young mother with a 15-month-old baby, who waited two months to get into a Manitoba Housing unit. When she tried to move in she found that not only was the unit in a sorry state of disrepair but that it was ridden with mould and mouse droppings.

The Manitoba Housing Authority under this NDP government told her that they always do inspections before tenants move in. They told her that the unit was left in, and I quote: decent condition. They told her that they would clean the unit, and when Ms. Therrien moved in two days later she stayed overnight and woke up to find that she

was covered in bites from the bedbugs that had infested that unit. She has again moved out and is now staying at a friend's place as she waits for another unit to become available. She's supposed to move into a unit this weekend, but after the experiences she's already had she's quite understandably worried about what will be waiting for her.

So will the Premier take the responsibility for this sorry situation, apologize to Ms. Therrien and others like her who are attempting to raise children in these very difficult circumstances created under the watch of his government? Will he offer his personal guarantee that this state of affairs will no longer persist?

Mr. Doer: First of all, I would like to say to Ms. Therrien that we will investigate, and I will ask the minister to immediately investigate this specific complaint from the individual. If the conditions described by the member opposite are true that should not be the standard of moving into a home, and I'll ask that we follow up on that issue.

I know, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite feigns interest in children. I know he was also a member of a government that clawed back the child poverty benefit and reduced the nutrition costs for children by a considerable amount. I also know—

Some Honourable Members: Oh. Oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I do believe that some of our community-based housing activity, in Health, in Neighbourhoods Alive!, community-based ownership, community-based activity is a reflection of our new views and has been in part, put in place, since we're in government.

We work with neighbourhoods and, Mr. Speaker, that's in sharp contrast to the member opposite whose only housing announcement in the last number of months is to build a lake in Point Douglas, to build a marina and bulldoze 700 homes in Point Douglas. That's his housing philosophy, ours is more community-based. If there are individual concerns with this lady, we will guarantee we will follow it up and make sure that those things don't happen.

Mr. McFadyen: Well, Mr. Speaker, normally I would say that the best defence is a good offence, but that was absolutely shameful as a reply. I'm going to resist the temptation to respond to the personal shot.

I will encourage the Premier to go back and take a look at the facts in terms of what had been said on the record in the past with respect to Point Douglas and other issues. When he knows what the facts are, he may want to return to the House and apologize for the misleading information that he's putting on the record which is unduly creating fear within communities in Manitoba.

Rather than going on the offensive, given that he's been the Premier for almost eight years, and he is the person who has been responsible for the state of Manitoba Housing, he is, in effect, the slum landlord-in-chief responsible for Manitoba Housing.

I wonder if the Premier would today indicate that he accepts responsibility, that he is prepared to apologize for being the biggest slum landlord in Manitoba, and will he commit himself today to addressing not only the concerns of Ms. Therrien which need to be investigated but the hundreds of other Manitoba families who are dealing with similar, unacceptable circumstances?

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before recognizing the honourable First Minister, I want to caution the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition. When addressing members in the House, it's by the portfolios they hold or members by their constituency, and it should be nothing else but that.

Mr. Doer: I know the member opposite doesn't want to take responsibility for his own promises on Point Douglas. I have said that I will investigate the individual case that has been raised. There have been others in the media before. I take those very seriously. The minister takes them very seriously. We have put \$100 billion in maintenance into housing in Manitoba. It hasn't kept up with some of the deficits we inherited in housing projects from members opposite, but still we are responsible for that, Mr. Speaker.

I would also point out that we built 4,900 or participated in 4,900 new housing projects in Neighbourhoods Alive! which is quite a bit different than the old model of housing, the large projects. We have worked with community-based groups, activists in communities, home-owners, potential home-owners, potential people in the communities in Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson because we believe community-based ownership, as opposed to the old way of government ownership, is a better way for us to go. That has been the way in which we tried to work in housing.

We've announced another \$130 million again which will give people in their neighbourhoods more housing options, more affordable housing options. We've raised the minimum wage that, of course, was left negligent by members opposite to try to get people a living wage, but if there are specific cases of mould or mouse droppings in a home, I will make sure that the minister investigates the specifics. I heard another case in the media and that is unacceptable for Manitoba families.

* (14:00)

Balanced Budgets Use of GAAP

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance requested a report from Deloitte & Touche regarding the reporting of provincial budgets and compliance with GAAP, generally accepted accounting principles. The report recommends that Manitoba's budgets be balanced over a four-year period. In Interim Supply, the Minister of Finance stated that he would be implementing all of the recommendations of the report.

So I ask the Minister of Finance: Will he commit to balancing every budget every year using generally accepted accounting principles or will he be content with deficits as he had in the 2003-2004 year?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we have balanced the budget every year for the last eight years. We will balance the budget this year. We will balance the budget next year. We will balance the budget the year after that, then we'll have an election budget and we'll balance it then, and then we'll go back to the people and seek a new mandate so we can balance four more budgets.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, the record of this Finance Minister is clear. In 2003-2004, the Auditor General stated that the Finance Minister ran a \$604-million deficit in this province. The minister then promptly tried to discredit the Auditor General. Implementing the Deloitte & Touche report will allow the Minister of Finance to potentially run deficits in three out of every four years.

So I ask the Minister of Finance: Will he commit to balancing every budget every year using GAAP and not every four years as recommended by Deloitte & Touche?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, we do know that the members opposite used to keep two sets of books,

one according to balanced budget legislation. They ignored GAAP requirements. They did not put the pension liability on the books. They did not do anything to address the pension liability.

We have given a commitment to the Auditor General of the Province, supported by the members opposite, that we go to full GAAP treatment on the budget. This year's budget was presented on a GAAP basis. It was balanced. Next year's budget will be presented on a GAAP basis. It will be balanced. All the budgets in the future will be on the full summary entity of the government, and they will be balanced budgets, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hawranik: The Auditor General in 2004 stated that the government ran a deficit of \$604 million. At the same time, the Minister of Finance claimed to have a \$13-million surplus. This Minister of Finance kept two sets of books. He's the one, Mr. Speaker.

He has the habit of discrediting Statistics Canada, as well, when it produces results that are not favourable to the NDP. Today Stats Canada also reported that this Finance Minister produced a deficit in 2004. They agreed with the Auditor General. This government is responsible for at least one deficit during its term and it can and will produce more, Mr. Speaker.

So I ask the Minister of Finance: Will he commit today to balance every budget every year using GAAP?

Mr. Selinger: I'm glad the member did refer to the StatsCan study which looks at how governments did on balancing budgets on a fully consolidated basis, and our performance was the second best in Canada, Mr. Speaker. In addition to having the second best performance on a consolidated or what's called a full summary basis, we also balanced every year under the balanced budget legislation which is currently the law of the Province of Manitoba.

We made a promise in '99 we would do that. We made a promise in '03 we would do that, and we have committed, going forward, to doing full summary budgets which will be balanced every year. We will continue to get credit-rating upgrades as we have five times in the last eight years.

Grace Hospital Emergency Room Staff Levels

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, an observation unit is an area attached to an ER where patients are kept if they need a longer

observation time. Many ER patients end up here and it takes the pressure off the ERs.

Can the Minister of Health confirm that the observation unit at the Grace Hospital closes frequently because of a nursing shortage and it is causing incredible pressure, more pressure than they already experience on the Grace ER?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, we've had a number of conversations in this House regarding emergency rooms and the Grace ER specifically, and certainly the running and conduct of those ERs is left to the medical professionals who are doing excellent work every single day in those hospitals to ensure that people are getting the care that they need.

Members opposite have said to us on a number of occasions and to people in the neighbourhood, in trying to invoke fear in them, that that ER is going to close. It's not going to close, Mr. Speaker. We're committed with the hospital and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority to ensure that that happens. I remind the members opposite, the only party in Manitoba to ever close a Winnipeg ER was a Conservative Party.

Manitoba Nurses' Union Workload Forms

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, there are ERs closed throughout Manitoba. The minister doesn't want to acknowledge that.

Nurses can fill out forms if they have concerns about workload or safety issues which are then forwarded to the MNU. Nurses tell me that many such forms dealing with unsafe care at the Grace ER have been sent in.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health if she could tell us if she or her staff have had any discussions with the MNU about the content of these forms.

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, certainly we have conversations in our department, as part of government every day, with people representing nurses, whether it's the college or the union, people representing doctors, doctors themselves and people representing the regional health authority that would be in charge of running ERs across Winnipeg. Of course, we're having conversations with those people.

As an aside, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite asked the other day about numbers concerning nurses. I'm happy to confirm for her today this third

party independent analysis of nursing numbers demonstrating for her once and for all that over 1,500 nurses fled the province during the time that they worked; 1,000 that they fired and 500 more that left the province. I'll table this now.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, I see this Minister of Health has graduated with honours from the NDP school of rhetoric.

Two days ago, the Minister of Health in this House said and I quote: I don't spend a great deal of my day looking at the ideas and the movements made in health care by members opposite, end quote.

So I ask her: If she's not listening to the red flags that we are raising about the Grace Hospital ER, if she's not listening to the comments that we are bringing forward from doctors and nurses who are talking to us, will she commit today, right after QP, to phoning the MNU and finding out what is in the content of those workload forms that they have been collecting about safety issues at the Grace Hospital ER?

Ms. Oswald: Again, as I say to members opposite, we speak—what—with the MNU, with the college of nurses on ideas and ways that we can build our system, Mr. Speaker, including health human resources, building that force. That's why during the election campaign, we committed to hiring 700 more nurses and opening a hundred more training seats. As for context in my comments, very simply, I said that I didn't want to take advice from members opposite on losing 1,500 nurses from the system. Pretty simple.

Grade 3 Assessment Report Province's Results

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Well, Mr. Speaker, in a recent grade 3 assessment report that came out on numeracy and English, when compared to last year, students are worse off in six of nine categories.

Why is the Minister of Education continuing to fail our children?

* (14:10)

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth): Mr. Speaker, in the province of Manitoba we've seen graduation rates go up by 10 percent since we've been in office. Compared to members opposite, what we do is we assess the entire system. When they were in government, they chose not to assess the entire

system. They were selective in the amount of assessment that went on for reporting results to the general public.

Just recently, in fact, we have launched a resource that will assist for summer learning and summer retention of learning for the students going from grade 2 to grade 3. Every single student in Manitoba will be receiving that in grade 2, Mr. Speaker, at the end of this school year. Not only that, we are going to be reviewing the results that we have been investing in the numeracy grants to support learning outcomes, and we continue to invest in the students in the province of Manitoba.

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, Mr. Speaker, I find it passing strange perhaps that the minister has decided that today he is concerned with the education of our children when he said in a *Manitoba Teacher* article—more than just a couple of weeks ago, he said, and I quote: We express the hope that more emphasis can be put on the quality of education. This is the Minister of Education. He goes on to say: In my first four years, I've spent more time talking about taxes than the quality of education and there's something wrong with that.

Well, hallelujah. The Minister of Education has finally figured out what his job description is. Perhaps had he known that four years ago, students wouldn't have been worse off than they are today.

Why does he continue to fail our students in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Bjornson: Frankly, Mr. Speaker, the reason I've talked mostly about taxes is because members opposite only ask about taxes. They rarely ask about the quality of education. If the members opposite want to know why I left the teaching profession to get into politics, it was thanks to the policies and practices of the members opposite that got me interested in politics.

I have not once heard the members opposite refer to quality of education issues. Oh, pardon me, there were a couple of references to assessments and to testing, but the members opposite are a one-trick pony with respect to testing. They talk about standardized testing and nothing else. We talk about assessment as learning, for learning. We talk about international results through the PISA test where Manitoba rates very well. Canada rates very well.

More students are graduating in Manitoba. They have more resources and that's because of this government, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, I find it passing strange that the Minister of Education sees fit to find his job definition from the opposition as opposed to the Premier (Mr. Doer), who is his boss. I would think that the Minister of Education would have known that his responsibility is to the students of this province.

Even back in 2002, the previous Education Minister, the minister of Brandon East, even he knew what his job description was before he was kicked out of Cabinet. He was concerned back then about what was happening. He said, I quote: The results obviously point to a need to improve student outcomes. It does show we have work to do system-wide.

Well, Mr. Speaker, even the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) understood his job description before he was fired from Cabinet.

When will this minister understand what his job description is and start making positive changes for students in Manitoba?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, Mr. Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Bjornson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will assure members opposite that I understand my responsibilities as Minister of Education. I also understood my responsibilities as a teacher in the province of Manitoba. The government of the day, when I was a teacher, did not understand education. They do not understand education today and all they talk about—I heard their education platform. Their education platform during the election is strictly on taxes and, oh, a \$10-million investment in elite schools.

We're investing in all students in Manitoba. We're seeing the results: 10 percent higher graduation rates, high achievement on the PISA test at the OECD. We are succeeding. We have more work to do. We will continue to do so, Mr. Speaker.

Spirited Energy Advertising Campaign Effectiveness

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, it was exactly one year ago today that Spirited Energy was unveiled to Manitobans, and the thud of this lead balloon hitting the ground was deafening.

I'll share a couple of early reviews from local newspapers to refresh everyone's memory:

"Branding plan fails to sizzle;" "Underwhelmed;" "Partisan Paint Job Can't Hide Woeful Reality;" "Completely Ineffective;" "Empty and Generic." And my personal favourite, "lame-o."

Mr. Speaker, despite spending \$2.4 million of taxpayers' money, the Spirited Energy campaign is really not meeting its objective when, according to Stats Canada, Manitoba has lost 300 full-time jobs between May 2006 and 2007.

Is this what the Minister of Competitiveness calling Spirited Energy a success story?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): It gives me the occasion to thank the honourable member opposite.

After she condemned us on our great activity for the new Husky plant in Minnedosa, I noticed in the last campaign material within the Progressive Conservative Party, she has chosen to have many of us in her pamphlet. I want to thank her very much for that spirited community spirit; spirited energy for the new Husky plant. I want to thank her for putting us in her brochure. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Rowat: Despite the overwhelmingly negative review, the government continued with the campaign. They conducted secret focus groups on the campaign and refused to release the results, perhaps because they were overwhelmingly negative. We asked for the focus group material last November through Freedom of Information. Now 204 days later, we're still waiting for that focus group data. My daughter went from grade 6 to grade 7 in 200 days so I'm really wondering.

If they're so convinced that it's a success, I ask the Minister of Competitiveness: Why are the NDP evading and refusing access to a simple focus group data that has been outstanding for well over 200 days?

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, one should look at focus groups such as the price of one's house, which has gone up tremendously. One should look at a focus group of the number of people employed from 1999 to now has gone up almost 60,000 people. One should look at the focus group of the participation in the economy; 70 percent was the highest in the country participation rate in Canada, one of the lowest rates of unemployment, not only

for the average employment but for youth. Those are all trends that we should be proud of.

We do have spirited energy. We're moving forward. We have the lowest hydro-electricity rates in the world, and you know what? We're moving forward. We have a growing economy, and we do have spirited energy.

Mrs. Rowat: Mr. Speaker, in 1999, we had the lowest unemployment rate in western Canada and now we have the highest rate. Aside from the government misleading Manitobans, they're saying there was a million dollars in private money when actually a great deal of this private money came from publicly owned Crown corporations.

Aside from the fact that they have chosen to evade and deny a FIPPA request and aside from the fact that even the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) voted to have the Auditor General investigate the spending in the campaign, the fact is it's easy to see that a year later the campaign has been a failure.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Acting Minister of Competitiveness: Why does this government continue to stand by and use taxpayers' money to fund a campaign that has been resoundly criticized as a failure by Manitobans?

* (14:20)

Mr. Doer: Again, I listened to Mr. Robson on the radio today talking about the Spirited Energy stage at the Manisphere location. I notice that since last year Brandon has now adopted the Spirited Energy campaign.

I want to thank the volunteers, the business volunteers, Bob Silver. I want to thank Ash Modha; I want to thank Dave Angus; I want to thank Graham Starmer; I want to thank Gail Asper, and I want to thank the many other business volunteers that had come forward with this idea.

I think it's really important in this Legislature to pay tribute to the business leaders that are spending their own time and effort. I'm surprised that members opposite would condemn this great list of business leaders. We applaud them. They condemn them. We'll applaud them again, Mr. Speaker.

Letellier Bridge Project Time Line for Completion

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, the fall tendering schedule lists the Letellier bridge with a tentative date of August 29. Sadly, this bridge is

unlikely to receive the work that it needs before the end of the construction season meaning residents in the area will endure another winter without proper access. The bridge project is described as a rehabilitation. This would lead one to assume that the bridge will not be replaced but simply repaired.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation if this is the case, and when the start and the completion dates are expected to be.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to, certainly, remind the member opposite about our commitment we made to transportation and to infrastructure, \$4 billion over 10 years.

I would like to tell the member opposite: Move your lawn tractor because we're going to be paving Highway 75 right to Emerson. So I want to put you on notice now. You don't want to get any asphalt all over your new tractor, so please move it aside while we pave Highway 75 right to Emerson.

Provincial Road 201 Road and Bridge Upgrades

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, the bridge crossing the Red River on Highway 201, near the Roseau River First Nation, has been under a weight restriction for over two years. It is in such state of disrepair that it could be closed completely at any time. It is my understanding that the rehabilitation of this bridge could involve expropriation of land currently occupied by the farmers and the First Nations.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm when negotiations began with the farmer whose residence is a fifth generation dairy operation will be moved? And further, is there an agreement in place with the Roseau River First Nations on the east side of the bridge?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. Unlike members opposite, we do work with First Nations communities, our neighbours and municipalities on a lot of the projects that we're putting forward.

You know, unlike the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) during the election campaign, when asked: What are we going to do about additional money in transportation? Nothing, nothing, we're just going to do what the NDP is going to do. In fact, we made \$800 million in reckless tax promises and tax

cuts. That would have put in jeopardy the new \$400 million we had put into infrastructure.

I just want to let the member opposite know that we are committed to transportation and infrastructure in this province. We have the budget to back it up. Is he going to vote for the budget when these numbers come up and this budget comes up? Let's see where the opposition stands.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, I want to bring to the attention of this House, at this point there's been no negotiations with the landowners of fifth generations. There's been no negotiations with the First Nations. Now either the minister's senior members or senior staff have not been forthwith with him, or the minister has been misleading this House.

Are there any negotiations? None. The businesses in the area are hampered by the lack of access and the unreliability of the highway. Value-added opportunities in rural Manitoba could reverse the depopulation of rural communities. To achieve this there must be proper infrastructure in place.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister confirm whether the Provincial Road 201 and the bridge will be upgraded?

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, there are many highways in the province we're going to be working on, including Highway 75, which I pointed out earlier, \$83 million; Highway 10, \$61 million; Trans-Canada, \$62 million; PTH 16, the Yellowhead, \$41 million; PTH 2 and 3, about \$60 million.

Mr. Speaker, a lot of these highways run through a lot of their constituencies. We look after transportation issues around the province, every corner of the province. We have members that represent every corner of the province. We're for all of Manitoba, not just a small segment of the population that they stand up and represent.

Public Housing Management of Properties

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are all too aware of the drastic deficiencies currently present in Manitoba housing units. In spite of the fact that I have raised these issues many times in this Chamber and during the election, in eight years, the NDP have done remarkably little.

Indeed the Premier (Mr. Doer) has only provided rather pathetic excuses for the horrific management under his eight-year stewardship.

I would ask the Premier: How long will it take until he realizes that the government when it's landlord should be an exemplary landlord not the worse landlord in the province?

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before recognizing the honourable Minister of Family Services, I remind members that the questions and answers be please put through the Chair.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, I don't think I have to remind the member opposite that before the House today is a proposal under the interim budget for a strong, new, robust and fresh approach to public housing in Manitoba called Foundations. I know that he knows about it because he copied it during the election campaign. Then we feel quite flattered that he recognized that it has value to low-income Manitobans, that we move forward with a \$76-million investment in public housing and, in fact, in this year alone, we're going to be doubling our investment in maintenance. We think, indeed, that Manitoba must be a model landlord, and we are bound and determined to make sure we have a much stronger approach by way of Foundations.

Security Concerns

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Sadly, Mr. Speaker, the mice in this province are covering his investments with lots of droppings and extending their sad view of his efforts in Manitoba Housing. The sad part is, in spite of extraordinary comments, rhetoric about justice, about anti-crime action, what we have seen is Manitoba Housing units with drugs, prostitution, all sorts of other problems.

Why is the Premier (Mr. Doer) continuing to put those who are most vulnerable in our society at most risk of being victims of such criminal activity?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, you can tell the real intent of people not by what they say but what they do. When you have your hands on the lever, when you have the power of decision making like the member opposite who just spoke did in Ottawa, we saw how he turned his back on the investment in social housing in Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for River Heights, on a point of order?

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the minister must be relevant, not go back into archeological digs. The reality here is that in the election this party was labelled as being mostly wrong and intellectually dishonest. It's time they opened up to that.

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

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Family Services, to continue.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, so, to reiterate, indeed, we will accommodate the member opposite flip-flopping today on the interim budget vote, if he votes for the interim budget, if he does so with the understanding that there's a new investment in public housing in Manitoba. But it's not just a matter of investments in the infrastructure of public housing, it's a matter, and I wish the member would reflect on this, of the shameful stigmatizing that he did about people that live in public housing, stigmatizing them, saying that they were incubators for crime. Shame on the member.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, it is a very sad day when the minister and the Premier (Mr. Doer) and their government continue to put the most vulnerable people in our society in the most hazardous positions of all in the Manitoba Housing units. After a lot of pressure, I recognize that the government moved to 24-hour security at 170 Hendon and at some other housing units. The problem is they then backtracked and, instead of having 24-hour security, they only had partial security during the 24-hour period. It was likened by residents as to putting a dam across half the river, not very good in terms of holding back crime and victimization in the case of what's happening in Manitoba Housing.

When will the minister fully restore 24-hour security to 170 Hendon and all the similar units under his jurisdiction?

* (14:30)

Mr. Mackintosh: The member may not be aware that there was a pilot project, I think, for a few weeks on security. As a result of that, Mr. Speaker, security was enhanced significantly at Hendon and, in fact, just a few weeks ago security was expanded during the weekend hours based on the calls that were made

and the times during the week and day that the calls were made.

Mr. Speaker, I remind members opposite that since the year 2000, 4,900 affordable housing units have been built or renovated in partnerships with other governments and non-profits. Rent controls have been maintained. The shelter allowance has been improved.

In the budget, the new four-pillar, low-income housing strategy was introduced. I know the member has copied parts of that during the election campaign. We thank him for that recognition.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's now time for HOMEWorks! and the investments in public housing through Foundations, and go to work as well as new investments in homelessness strategies. This is the government that is doing its level best to work with low-income neighbourhoods and not to stigmatize them.

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

Before we move on, I want to make a little statement here. In anticipation of the Assembly recessing today for the summer, I'm requesting that all members empty the contents of their desk before leaving today, in anticipation. Members are encouraged to use the blue bins located here inside the Chamber to recycle their *Hansards* and copies of the bills. Any other material you have to recycle should be placed in the larger blue bins in the two message rooms.

I just wanted to share that information with members, and I would thank you for your co-operation if, indeed, today is the last. But that's just in anticipation.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Portage la Prairie, on a point of order.

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to page 155 in *Hansard*, yesterday's Question Period. It was regarding a response by the First Minister (Mr. Doer).

Hansard was unable to determine what the First Minister's response was, and it is logged in the *Hansard* as "inaudible." It is a very important response. It pertains to children in care in the province of Manitoba, and I'd ask perhaps if you

could review *Hansard* tapes and perhaps be able to determine what the First Minister's response was so that *Hansard* can adequately record the proceedings that were heard yesterday.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. I will check with *Hansard* and report back to the House on that. I'll pursue it further.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Ted Paranjothy

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to inform the House about an exceptional young student from Fort Richmond Collegiate. In April and May, Ted Paranjothy won the sanofi-aventis regional, national and international BioGENEius challenges, becoming the first Canadian to ever become the top high school bioscientist in North America.

In addition to his incredible accomplishments in the field of cancer research, Ted has won numerous awards for his leadership and involvement in the community including the United Way Community Service Award, the Manitoba Association of School Trustees Student Citizenship Award and the TD Canada Trust Scholarship for Community Leadership Award.

Ted is a well-rounded and extraordinarily busy individual. He is actively involved in activities at Fort Richmond Collegiate where he is student council president. He has served as co-chair of Amnesty International and Charity Clubs. He also volunteers at St. Amant Centre, the Manitoba Institute of Cell Biology, Victoria Hospital and the St. Boniface Research Centre.

Ted's cancer research is focussed on producing non-toxic alternatives to chemotherapy. He has spent two years working with apoptin, which is a protein that can induce cell suicide. With the help of University of Manitoba Professor Dr. Marek Los, Ted has isolated a fragment of apoptin that can be used to selectively kill cancer cells without harming healthy ones. He has already secured a patent and co-authored two publications in biomedical journals about its use.

Despite offers from top universities, including MIT and Harvard, Ted plans to attend the University of Manitoba in the fall to continue his research. He says he has a lot to give back to the community which has helped him. He envisions good citizenship as putting the welfare and concerns of others above himself.

Mr. Speaker, I ask all members of the House to join me in congratulating Ted Paranjothy for his achievements. He's truly a remarkable young man, and we are fortunate to have him here in Manitoba. Thank you.

Avastin Availability

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, colorectal cancer is the second leading cause of cancer death in Canada. This year over 20,000 Canadians will be diagnosed with the disease, and nearly 9,000 will lose their battle with it.

Today I presented a petition to the House on behalf of concerned colorectal cancer patients and survivors signed by over 1,500 people. Some of those people are in the gallery today. This petition calls on the government to fund the cancer drug Avastin for all eligible patients rather than a select few.

Last spring the government increased CancerCare Manitoba's drug budget by \$13.3 million. Yet, sadly, most patients eligible for Avastin are still not receiving it. CancerCare Manitoba decides on a case-by-case basis who will receive the drug and who will not. This petition calls on the NDP to provide CancerCare Manitoba with the funding it needs to ensure all colorectal cancer patients who are eligible for this drug actually receive it. If an oncologist prescribes it, a cancer patient should not have to plead for access to it. CancerCare Manitoba should have the drug budget it needs to provide it. This is something our caucus is proud to have proposed during the last election campaign. Sadly, the NDP did not propose a similar plan.

I would like to recognize Ms. Kai Arnot who authored this petition and who is a strong advocate of equal access to Avastin for all eligible patients. I would like to thank all 1,500 Manitobans who signed this petition. I'm honoured to present it on their behalf.

I call on the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to take note of the exceptionally strong support this petition has received and give serious consideration to its request. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Fisher Branch Falcons Baseball Team

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise in the Legislative Chamber today to tell of a very special event which pays tribute to the sporting tradition in the community of

Fisher Branch. I'm referring to the induction of the Fisher Branch Falcons team of 1954 to '59 into the Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame in Morden on June 22 of this year.

The banner year for the team was 1957 when the team won over \$1,600 in prize money at a time when top prize was \$150. The original team was started some time in the 1930s and was finally disbanded in 1962 or '63. It was revived again in 1992, thanks to Clifford Skibinski, to compete in old-timers tournaments, including the old-timers national in Medicine Hat, Alberta, in 2004.

Many stories abound of the exploits of this team, but one of the most memorable is the time coach Metro Melnyck got into a heated argument with Chatfield Cardinals giant Joe Ledochowski. Joe finally lost his patience with Metro, so he grabbed him and threw him over the fence. However, Metro grabbed onto Joe's uniform and tore off a chunk of it as he went over. Years later, when Chatfield held a baseball reunion, Joe brought the torn uniform and Metro brought the missing piece.

Although many of these famous players are no longer with us, they do live on in spirit and in the hearts of all who witnessed their glory days.

On behalf of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, I wish to congratulate and salute all the members of this Hall of Fame team. Mr. Speaker, if I may, I would like to table the names and positions of the players for the official record. Thank you.

Montcalm 125th Anniversary

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, on June 13, I had the pleasure of attending the 125th anniversary celebration for the Rural Municipality of Montcalm. In the heart of the Red River Valley, this great rural municipality is the home of the villages of St. Jean Baptiste, St. Joseph, Letellier and St. Elizabeth. Residents of the Montcalm area are resilient and self-reliant, having dealt with a history of flooding. Numerous times they have worked together to fight the flood waters and rebuild afterward.

Many of the family names that were present in the R.M. of Montcalm during its inception in 1882 are still common in the area. The Fillion family, the Lafond family, the Marion family and the Sabourin family have members that have served as elected officials for over three generations.

A highlight of the celebration was the recognition of the many contributions of retired elected officials. A road was named in the honour of Warner Jorgenson, who had served with the Progressive Conservative Party as an MP from 1957 to 1968 and as an MLA in this House from 1969 to 1981. I was also pleased to unveil a plaque in honour of my predecessor and a native of R.M. of Montcalm, Jack Penner. Jack proudly served as a Progressive Conservative MLA for 19 years, from 1988 to 2007.

On behalf of the constituents of Emerson, I wish to thank Warner Jorgenson, Jack Penner and other elected officials, from all levels of government, who have tirelessly served that area.

The current reeve, Roger Vermette, councillors and all past and current residents can be very proud of this significant milestone. The R.M. of Montcalm has 125 years of proud history in our province and has an exciting future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:40)

Wolseley Arts Festival

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the creative participants and organizers of the first annual Wolseley Arts Festival. The festival was held from June 1-3 at the Robert A. Steen Community Club. The display of talent and imagination was characteristic of all that Wolseley and West Broadway are known for, bold creativity and a celebration of community diversity.

Works showcased included visual, performing and literary arts and crafts submitted by 67 different artists from the Wolseley, West Broadway, area. Some of the art even came from Wolseley's youth, including students from Mulvey, Wolseley and Laura Secord schools, as well as the very popular community art program, Art City.

The festival's opening night was evident of the whole weekend's success, with artists, volunteers and community members enjoying each others' artistic perspectives and creations. During the weekend, the activities included a popular outdoor stage that provided a venue for the many performing artists. Personally, I enjoyed the opportunity to meet the many different artists and performers and to learn more about their work.

I would like to commend the volunteers and especially the main organizers of this wonderful

occasion: Aynsley Anderson, Laura Daniel and Jim Palmquist. An event of this size always requires a lot of organization and planning to make it look flawless and for everyone to be able to enjoy themselves. As I said in my own remarks on opening night, I was very pleased to end up as the first donor to the inaugural Wolseley Arts Festival, and I very much look forward to supporting this vibrant celebration of the arts in our community in the years ahead.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (14:40)

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you might canvass the House and determine if there is leave for me to bring in, for the government to bring in a motion.

Mr. Speaker: Is there a leave of the House for the honourable Government House Leader to bring in a motion? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Chomiak: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the House through you.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen),

THAT the following Sessional Orders apply to this and the next session, despite any other rule or practice of this House:

"Specified Bills" defined

1. In these Sessional Orders, "**specified Bills**" means

(a) In relation to the fall sitting of the 1st Session of the 39th Legislature, government Bills that appeared on the Notice Paper on June 14, 2007, and are distributed in the House on or before October 12, 2007; and

(b) in relation to the spring sitting of 2nd Session of the 39th Legislature, government Bills that are distributed in the House on or before May 1, 2008;

but does not include a supply Bill or a *Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act*.

Spring session of the 1st Session, 39th Legislature (ending on June 14, 2007)

2. The House must, if necessary, sit beyond the usual adjournment hour on Thursday, June 14, 2007, to conclude the business of interim supply for the 2007-08 fiscal year as follows by 6:00 p.m. on that day;

(a) By 4:00 p.m. on that day, all questions on resolutions respecting interim supply in the Committee of Supply must be put, and the Committee's report must be presented to and received by the House.

(b) By 6:00 p.m. on that day, all stages for passing *The Interim Appropriation Act, 2007* (including all related motions and all three readings, but not including royal assent) must be completed.

If the Committee of Supply, the Committee of the Whole, or the House has not concluded any item or stage described above by the required hour, the chairperson or the Speaker, as the case may be, must interrupt proceedings at that time and, without seeing the clock, put all questions necessary to dispose of the required items without further debate, amendment or recorded vote.

Royal Assent of *The Interim Appropriation Act, 2007* must take place before the House adjourns on that day.

Fall Sitting of the 1st Session, 39th Legislature (Sept. 25, 2007 to Nov. 8, 2007)

3. Subject to rule 2(2), the 1st Session of the 39th Legislature is to resume on Tuesday, September 25, 2007, and is to adjourn on Thursday, November 8, 2007.

October 16, 2007

4. By the end of Tuesday, October 16, 2007, the Committee of Supply must complete its consideration of the estimates (including supplementary estimates, if any) for the 2007-08 fiscal year, other than the concurrence motion.

At 4:00 p.m. on that day, the chairpersons of the Committees of Supply and of the whole House must interrupt the proceedings and immediately put all questions necessary to dispose of the remaining matters without debate, amendment, adjournment or recorded vote.

5. At 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 16, 2007, the Speaker must interrupt the proceedings and, without seeing the clock, call for Second Reading of bills for any specified Bills that have not yet been moved for Second Reading. Every minister responsible for such a Bill must be given the opportunity to move a motion for Second Reading of each such Bill for which he or she is responsible. After the motion is moved and spoken to by the minister, the debate of the motion stands adjourned, without a motion for adjournment, in the name of the Whip of the Official Opposition, whether or not he or she is present in the House.

October 23, 2007

6. At 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, October 23, 2007, the Speaker must interrupt the proceedings and, without seeing the clock, put all questions required to conclude the Second Reading stage on all specified Bills then at that stage. The questions must be decided without further debate or amendment.

October 25, 2007

7. The House must, if necessary, sit beyond the usual adjournment hour on Thursday, October 25, 2007, to conclude the business of supply for the 2007-08 fiscal year as follows by 6:00 p.m. on that day:

(a) By 4:00 p.m. on that day, the question on the concurrence motion in the Committee of Supply must be put, the Committee's report must be presented to and received by the House, and the question on the concurrence motion in the House must be put.

(b) By 6:00 p.m. on that day, all stages for the passage of the following bills (including all related motions and all three readings, but not including royal assent) must be completed:

The Appropriation Act, 2007

The Loan Act, 2007

The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2007

If the Committee of Supply, the Committee of the Whole, or the House has not concluded any item or stage described above by the required hour, the chairperson or the Speaker, as the case may be, must interrupt the proceedings at that time and, without seeing the clock, put all

questions necessary to dispose of the required items without further debate, amendment or recorded vote.

Royal Assent of *The Appropriation Act, 2007*, *The Loan Act, 2007*, and *The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2007* must take place before the House adjourns on that day.

November 6, 2007

8. At 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, November 6, 2007, the Speaker must interrupt the proceedings and, without seeing the clock, take all steps necessary to conclude the Report Stage on all the specified Bills that are then at that stage.

If a motion for a Report Stage amendment was previously moved, the Speaker must put the question necessary to dispose of the motion without further debate or amendment.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Chomiak: The Speaker must allow each motion—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement to dispense? *[Agreed]*

The Speaker must allow each motion for a Report Stage amendment for which notice was given in accordance with subrule 138(6) to be moved. Immediately after the motion has been moved and spoken to by the mover of the motion, the Speaker must put the question necessary to dispose of the motion without further debate or amendment.

Subrule 138(7) does not apply.

November 8, 2007

9. At 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 8, 2007, the Speaker must interrupt the proceedings and, without seeing the clock, take all steps necessary to conclude Concurrence and Third Reading on

(a) each specified Bill for which a Concurrence and Third Reading motion has previously been moved; and

(b) each specified Bill for which a Concurrence and Third Reading motion may then be put under subrule 138(14), if the minister responsible for the Bill wishes to put the motion.

In the case of a Bill referred to in clause (a), the Speaker must put all questions necessary to dispose of the motion without further debate or amendment.

In the case of a Bill referred to in clause (b), the Speaker must allow the motion to be moved. Immediately after it is moved, the Speaker must put the question necessary to dispose of the motion without debate or amendment.

Royal Assent of all bills that have had Third Reading agreed to must take place before the House adjourns on that day.

At the conclusion of business on that day, the Speaker must adjourn the House without a motion for adjournment. Subject to rule 2(2), the House is not to meet during the following week.

Fall Sitting of the 2nd Session, 39th Legislature (Nov. 20, 2007 – Dec. 6, 2007)

10. Subject to rule 2(2), the 2nd Session of the 39th Legislature is to begin on Tuesday, November 20, 2007, with a Speech from the Throne.

11. If the Speaker has not put every question necessary to dispose of the main motion for the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne under rule 45(5) by 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 6, 2007, the Speaker must do so at that time.

Spring Sitting of the 2nd Session, 39th Legislature (Apr. 9, 2008 or sooner – June 12, 2008)

12. Subject to rule 2(2), the 2nd Session of the 39th Legislature is to resume no later than Wednesday, April 9, 2008.

May 15, 2008

13. At 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 15, 2008, the Speaker must interrupt the proceedings and, without seeing the clock, call for Second Reading of bills for any specified Bills that have not yet been moved for Second Reading. Every minister responsible for such a Bill must be given the opportunity to move a motion for Second Reading of each such Bill for which he or she is responsible. After the motion is moved and spoken to by the minister, the debate of the motion stands adjourned, without a motion for adjournment, in the name of the Whip of the Official Opposition, whether or not he or she is present in the House.

May 22, 2008

14. At 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, May 22, 2008, the Speaker must interrupt the proceedings and, without

seeing the clock, put all questions required to conclude Second Reading on all specified Bills then at that stage. The questions must be decided without further debate or amendment.

At the conclusion of business on that day, the Speaker must adjourn the House without a motion for adjournment. Subject to rule 2(2), the House then stands adjourned to 1:30 p.m. on Monday, June 2, 2008.

June 5, 2008

15. The House must, if necessary, sit beyond the usual adjournment hour on Thursday, June 5, 2008, to conclude the business of supply for the 2008-09 fiscal year as follows by 6:00 p.m. on that day:

(a) By 4:00 p.m. on that day, the question on the concurrence motion in the Committee of Supply must be put, the Committee's report must be presented to and received by the House, and the question on the concurrence motion in the House must be put.

(b) By 6:00 p.m. on that day, all stages for the passage of the following bills (including all related motions and all three readings, but not including royal assent) must be completed:

The Appropriation Act, 2008

The Loan Act, 2008

The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2008

If the Committee of Supply, the Committee of the Whole, or the House has not concluded any item or stage described above by the required hour, the chairperson or the Speaker, as the case may be, must interrupt the proceedings at that time and, without seeing the clock, put all questions necessary to dispose of the required items without further debate, amendment or recorded vote.

Royal Assent of The Appropriation Act, 2008, The Loan Act, 2008 and The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2008 must take place before the House adjourns on that day.

June 10, 2008

16. At 5:00 p.m. on Tuesday, June 10, 2008, the Speaker must interrupt the proceedings and, without seeing the clock, take all steps necessary to conclude Report Stage on all the specified Bills then at that stage.

If a motion for a Report Stage amendment was previously moved, the Speaker must put the question

necessary to dispose of the motion without further debate or amendment.

The Speaker must allow each motion for a Report Stage amendment for which notice was given in accordance with subrule 138(6) to be moved. Immediately after the motion has been moved and spoken to by the mover of the motion, the Speaker must put the question necessary to dispose of the motion without further debate or amendment.

Subrule 138(7) does not apply.

June 12, 2008

17. At 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 12, 2008, the Speaker must interrupt the proceedings and, without seeing the clock, take all steps necessary to conclude Concurrence and Third Reading on

(a) each specified Bill for which a Concurrence and Third Reading motion has previously been moved; and

(b) each specified Bill for which a Concurrence and Third Reading motion may then be put under subrule 138(14), if the minister responsible for the Bill wishes to put the motion.

In the case of a Bill referred to in clause (a), the Speaker must put all questions necessary to dispose of the motion without further debate or amendment.

In the case of a Bill referred to in clause (b), the Speaker must allow the motion to be moved. Immediately after it is moved, the Speaker must put the question necessary to dispose of the motion without debate or amendment.

Royal Assent of all bills that have had Third Reading agreed to must take place before the House adjourns on that day.

Priority of actions to be taken

18. Where

(a) these Sessional Orders require the Speaker or a chairperson to take any action at a specified time; and

(b) at the specified time, a point of order or a matter of privilege has been raised and is under consideration by the House or committee;

the point of order or matter of privilege is to be set aside, and no other point of order or matter of privilege may be raised, until the required action has been taken and all matters relating to the required action have been resolved.

Interruption of proceedings

19. Where these Sessional Orders require the Speaker or a chairperson to interrupt proceedings to take any action, the interruption is to take place and the action is to be taken whether or not the Orders of the Day have been called.

No deferral of vote

20. Subrule 14(4) does not apply to a division to be taken on a question required to be put under these Sessional Orders.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Government House Leader, seconded by the honourable Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), that the following session orders apply to this and the next session despite any other rule or practice of the House.

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

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

Is it the pleasure of the House for *Hansard* to record it as printed? Is there agreement on that? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, just in relation to the motion that we've adopted, I simply want to say that that's the first step in what we anticipate to be a number of negotiations to modernize things here in the Legislation. I thank the Government House Leader for past negotiations and look forward to future negotiations.

* (14:50)

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I now move, seconded by the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that under rule 36(1) the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the urgent need for the Province of Manitoba to take immediate action to protect the land on and near the site of Upper Fort Garry from further residential and commercial development as a provincial heritage site of national historic value.

Motion presented.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if it would be possible to canvass the House on this matter to see if there would be agreement to recognize the importance of this issue, while at the same time allowing the House to deal with other important business, if there would be unanimous consent for the Liberal Leader and a member for the official opposition and a member for the government each to speak to this motion.

Mr. Speaker: For clarification for the House, when MUIs are brought forward, the person that brings forward the MUI and one member from each recognized party have 10 minutes to debate the urgency of the MUI.

But was the honourable member wishing to speak to the contents of the MUI or the urgency of the debate? I'm not clear on that. Would the honourable member clarify that for me please?

An Honourable Member: The contents of it.

Mr. Speaker: The contents of it.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, we were going to waive the provision of dealing with urgency and speak to the matter with the full agreement of the House.

Mr. Speaker: So is there agreement of the House to deal to the contents of the MUI and disregard having to speak to the urgency of the MUI? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I bring this forward today because it is a very important matter for all of us here in this Chamber and, indeed, for all Manitobans. The Upper Fort Garry was initially built in 1835, and from 1835 to 1870, a matter of 35 years, virtually all law and political governance, not only for Manitoba but for western Canada occurred within Upper Fort Garry.

For this period, commerce in the Red River colony was also centred at and adjacent to Upper Fort Garry, and for this period much of the social life of the community was also centred at Upper Fort Garry.

So, when we're looking at the importance of Upper Fort Garry, it has been described correctly as the most important fort in all of western Canada because of its role, and it has been described as the most magnificent fort in all of western Canada.

Certainly, the history of the fort itself was not restricted solely to inside the fort. It is important to

recognize that it was not only inside, but the area immediately around the fort was incredibly important for all Manitobans and for the backgrounds of all Manitobans whether they were voyageurs, Métis, First Nations people who came to trade, people who were passing through.

So, for this period of 35 years of the history of what is now Manitoba, this was a fundamentally, tremendously important site.

Indeed, it was recognized in the fall of 1869 by Louis Riel when he formed, with many other people in the region of Manitoba, a provisional government. It was recognized that Upper Fort Garry was the centre of governance and, indeed, it became the centre of government activity and the headquarters for the provisional government which lasted from the fall of 1869 through August of 1870. After Manitoba became a province in 1870, Upper Fort Garry continued to be important for a little more than another decade particularly, and from 1872 to 1883, it was the site of the residence of the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba.

Now, it's important to recognize that much of the site of Upper Fort Garry was located within the boundaries of the block between Broadway and Assiniboine Avenues on the north and south, and Main and Fort Streets on the east and west, and part of the fort extended out over and indeed across Main Street itself. This positioning of the fort on one of the most important arteries in Manitoba, Main Street, is important today in the context of restoring this Upper Fort Garry site to a condition where it will be visited and viewed by hundreds and thousands and, I expect, millions of people coming through Winnipeg and Manitoba, and be a major draw from a historical perspective for Manitobans and for people visiting Manitoba. In an ordinary day, there may be as many sometimes as 50,000 people coming by Main Street. Just imagine the impression of having an important historic site that people will recognize and see the importance of as they go down Main Street, and the importance of what can be called teachable moments as mothers and fathers talk to their children about the history of our province passing by.

At the moment, sadly, the north gate is sort of sequestered and not very visible from Main Street, but therein lies the opportunity today to do something. Indeed, it is most urgent that action is taken because recently, a committee of the City of Winnipeg has made a decision of the committee to recommend selling a portion of this critically

important site to a developer to build a 15-storey apartment block, a high-rise apartment block, right on the Upper Fort Garry site. There are alternate places for such a 15-storey apartment block, and it clearly does not belong in this Upper Fort Garry site. Would you put such an apartment block a metre away from the Lincoln Memorial in Washington? Never. Yet we have some people considering doing this on the Upper Fort Garry site, and I say the site because it's not just a fort, it was the immediate area which was so important for the history and the commerce and the government.

Fortunately, we have a group of people who are called the Friends of Upper Fort Garry, 37 individuals who have come forward and indicated that they are ready to raise \$12 million, \$9.5 million of which would go toward fixing up this site, and \$2.5 million would form an endowment to make sure that the operations and maintenance of the site would continue on an ongoing basis.

* (15:00)

It is an important effort and important contribution of the Friends of Upper Fort Garry, leaders, many of whom in our community. Indeed, I think it is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make sure that this site of Upper Fort Garry is preserved and presented as an important contribution to our history.

It's important to recognize the contribution of the First Nations people who came and visited, traded in the area. It's important to recognize the contribution of Métis people. It is important to recognize the contribution of many of the fur traders who were part of this, who came from Scotland and other places and Québec and French Canada. Certainly, we need to make sure that this site is saved and preserved and presented to future Manitobans in a way that reflects the importance of the Upper Fort Garry site to all Manitobans.

I believe that the concept which is being put forward by the Friends of Upper Fort Garry is an important step forward, that there needs to be continuity in the relationship of the Upper Fort Garry site to the Assiniboine River, to The Forks site. Indeed, it may be best as part of The Forks site, that there be opportunities at the Assiniboine River to have York boats going back and forth, maybe even to the Manitoba Legislature and to other places.

The participation of people from Norway House First Nation has been suggested because of their

expertise and knowledge in building and operating York boats. Certainly, there is tremendous opportunity now, once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, to do something that's very important for the future of Manitoba and for the future for all Manitobans.

So I have asked for this debate, which is an urgent one as well as a vitally important one, and I'm pleased that there will be speakers from all parties to speak to this motion. I hope, at the end of today, we will come to a joint view of the importance of the Upper Fort Garry site because it is so important to the province of Manitoba, not just to the city, action by the provincial government to make sure that this site is fully available and fully preserved and fully presented in the future to people in Manitoba. Thank you.

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): I rise to put a few words on the record on the issue and thank the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) for raising it. We certainly all recognize the historic importance of Upper Fort Garry, which stood on the site that is under discussion today from 1832 to 1882. Currently, as we know, only the north gate remains, hidden behind a gas station at the corner of Broadway and Main.

We know that there are plans currently in the works to build residential housing on the site. The proposal has certainly been crafted in a way that would see the north gate remain intact but has certainly raised concerns with several prominent members of our community.

The group known as Friends of Upper Fort Garry has committed to raising certain funds in order to develop the site with interpretive centre and other ways of properly allowing for an appreciation for the great history of that fort and that particular era in our province's past. The group includes many prominent Manitobans, including former Lieutenant-Governor Liba, former premiers Filmon and Roblin, as well as former Governor General and Manitoba Premier Ed Schreyer, Lieutenant-Governor Pearl McGonigal, ex-Mayor Norrie, businessmen George Richardson, Len Asper, John Buhler, Bob Chipman and Bob Silver.

We would add our support, Mr. Speaker, to the words of the Member for River Heights in terms of the importance of preserving our history and, certainly, as a Legislature, encouraging the relevant parties to take a hard look at what is being proposed and do whatever is reasonable to preserve our history.

The issue is clearly an important one. It is a time-sensitive one. We know that, with the passage of time, decisions will be made and actions will be taken that will make the development on that site irrevocable. Certainly, we would be concerned about the loss of such an opportunity to preserve this important site.

The MMF under the leadership of David Chartrand has also written on the issue to the *Free Press*, calling for the preservation of this site. We certainly recognize the words of president Chartrand, and the history of that site as being profoundly important to all Manitobans, but to the Métis people specifically.

We also know that there is, certainly, a sense of a significant amount of public support for the preservation of the site and, the development of its potential as a place for historic learning and preservation of important elements of our province's history.

I would also though say, Mr. Speaker, that, as legislators in this Chamber, we certainly have every right to put views on the record with respect to such a development as this. I think we do want to indicate our concern and our support for the appropriate development of the site, but recognize also that the City of Winnipeg has primary responsibility for development decisions.

We certainly are concerned when we see any level of government, and in particular municipal government, go through a process of inviting parties to submit proposals to only change the rules of the game at some later date. So what I would express is the hope that the City of Winnipeg will be successful in good-faith discussions, negotiations and dealings with the developers involved in submitting their proposals; that we can find a win-win solution that will allow for the construction of new rental housing development in the province of Manitoba on terms that are acceptable to those developers who invested time and energy into their proposal, and also hope, as I have said, that the objective of preserving the site as an important historic site for the benefit of current and many future generations of Manitobans can be preserved.

So I would simply say that we call on the City to work in good faith with all interested parties including the Friends, including the developers who have submitted their proposal, and that they work toward a win-win solution that preserves this site, but

is also fair to all parties that have invested time, energy and money into this process. Thank you.

Hon. Eric Robison (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, allow me to thank the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) for bringing this matter to our attention.

We read with interest the letter that the MLA for River Heights wrote to the Premier. Allow me to just add a few things. We, too, would certainly want to support the City in attaining two goals. The first, of course, is preserving our heritage as Manitobans and encouraging more people to live downtown. I believe that we've made that position very clear.

I just want to say that the Province has, indeed, worked with the City to ensure that the redevelopment of the site be subject to an archeological impact assessment, which is what has to occur prior to any development occurring. So we want to ensure that any artifacts that may be uncovered will be preserved and protected under the province's Heritage Resources Act.

Now, also, the archeological impact assessments were conducted, as I understand it, back in 1982 for the restoration of the gate and the reconstruction of the north wall, in 1996 and 1997 for the reconstruction of the original Main Street bridge, and in 1988 for the reconstruction of Main Street.

* (15:10)

I want to say that, as a Manitoban, Mr. Speaker, I agree that preserving our rich history is a priority, I believe a priority for all members in this Chamber. That's why our government and the Province of Manitoba protects the historical integrity of the Upper Fort Garry site through the impact assessment provisions of The Heritage Resources Act that I just described.

This means that the Province will be involved in the redevelopment of the site to protect any human remains or artifacts that may be unearthed, including the site of the proposed apartment building which lies outside the original footprint of the fort.

We, too, understand the significance of this site. Our elders from Aboriginal First Nations in this province tell us about what transpired there, being that it was the first place of commerce. It was the place where the First Nations of this country gathered in this region of what is now known as Canada, and it was also a place that treaties were made between First Nations prior to the arrival of

Europeans into the homeland of the First Nations of this country.

I want to say that the north gate itself is protected by the City of Winnipeg and the Province. The Province supports the City's efforts to move ahead with a proposal that appropriately honours our heritage at the same time achieving the important goal of getting more people to living downtown which ultimately, Mr. Speaker, I believe every member in this Chamber supports.

The government, the Province also applauds the efforts of the Friends of Upper Fort Garry for their commitment and their vision. We believe that a 15-storey apartment complex will actually enhance their vision for a world-class interpretive centre by providing eyes on the site around the clock to deter any kind of vandalism that has marred the site in the past in what we've read in recent reports in newspaper columns and newspaper reports.

Let me say in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, that our Premier met this morning with the mayor of the city of Winnipeg and has conveyed our government's willingness to work with the City of Winnipeg to ensure that the integrity of Upper Fort Garry is maintained and that the historical significance of Upper Fort Garry is maintained for the generations to come. Thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, that should take care of the matter that was raised and we will now move on to Grievances. Any grievances? No? Okay. Now we'll move on to Orders of the Day and then we will set out our agenda.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable First Minister, on a point of order.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I think—everything is good. Fine. I withdraw my point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Well, on the point of order raised by the honourable First Minister, that was the briefest point of order I've dealt with in this Chair to this date, but the honourable member obviously does not have a point of order.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

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

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to the motion that was recently passed by this Chamber, we will be moving to finalize Interim Supply this afternoon. In addition, we will be dealing with several matters that we will be asking unanimous consent of the House concerning these matters, as well as we will be seeing His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor at the latter part of the afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there is leave of the House to move forward in terms of the Interim Supply bill. *[interjection]* I wonder if we might move back to Committee of Supply.

Mr. Speaker: We will be moving on to Committee of Supply. The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply to consider resolutions respecting the Interim Supply bill.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Interim Supply

Madam Deputy Chairperson (Marilyn Brick): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

The committee has been considering the first resolution respecting operating expenditures. Are there any questions?

Point of Order

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Just on a point of order, Madam Chair, if I could just—just to clarify that it would be all right with members opposite that we've agreed to go forward with Education now but that we still have the opportunity to question the Minister of Transportation, to go back to that after as well.

Madam Deputy Chairperson: That's not a point of order, but I do thank the member for seeking clarification. Is there agreement from the House? *[Agreed]*

* * *

Mrs. Stefanson: I just wanted to get quickly, in the interest of time, right into some questions here with respect to the retired teachers of Manitoba and, specifically, with respect to COLA.

As I understand, there have been some meetings recently with the Pension Task Force and I'm wondering if the minister can just confirm how many meetings have taken place since the beginning of this year and whether or not the issue of COLA has been addressed at those meetings.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth): Thank you for the question. I'll have to check on the number. I believe there have been, to my knowledge, two or three meetings, and with respect to the issues raised at the table, it's an ongoing negotiation. I can't really speak to the issues that are raised at the table, to prejudice that negotiation.

* (15:20)

Mrs. Stefanson: I'm just wondering if the issue of COLA, if the minister is under the understanding that the Pension Task Force Committee is dealing with the issue of COLA. Certainly, during the election campaign, since the election campaign and prior to the election campaign, we brought the issue of COLA forward to this government. Obviously, this is a very important issue for many Manitobans. Certainly, we on this side of the House would consider this a priority, and the government should be trying to move the Pension Task Force Committee to come to some sort of a resolution, both short-term and long-term to the issues of COLA.

Could the minister just confirm that it is, in fact, a priority of his government, and that he has taken steps to move this issue forward with the Pension Task Force Committee?

Mr. Bjornson: I can assure the member opposite, and I thank her for the question. I can assure her that it is a priority for this government. I do not have a role to instruct the teachers' Pension Task Force. These are negotiations that go on between representatives from the Manitoba Teachers' Society, representatives from RTAM now who are, for the first time, active participants in the teachers' Pension Task Force, as well as representatives from government. I would suspect, given the message that we have heard from the Retired Teachers' Association, that it is something that is being discussed at the teachers' Pension Task Force. But, again, I'm not privy to the discussions at the task force as it is an ongoing negotiation, and I can't prejudice those negotiations.

Is it a priority? I think our actions have spoken very loudly with respect to teacher pensions. In fact, the funding of the unfunded liability has been an issue of concern that I remember lobbying the government for when I was teaching and, as a teacher advocate, was lobbying for a plan to fund the unfunded liability. That one goes back to 1994 when I was a teacher advocate. I did not expect that I would be sitting in this Chamber and be the Minister

of Education who would have the privilege of signing a submission with my colleague the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), to put \$1.5 billion into that unfunded teacher pension liability and bring this to 75 percent funding of the government account to address an issue that was a real concern, and that is the integrity of the main account. We've certainly taken other steps to address that as well.

Mrs. Stefanson: If the minister is saying that COLA is an important issue and should be a priority of the government, why is it that he has not made it a priority to this date? Why is there no resolution to this issue? If it is a priority right now, when can we expect an announcement or something to come out of the Pension Task Force Committee to address this issue of COLA?

Mr. Bjornson: Again, perhaps the member doesn't clearly understand the way the teachers' Pension Task Force works, but these are negotiations that go on with the Teachers' Society who are contributing, representing the contributing members and, again, we now have active participation from representatives from the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba. Those recommendations are brought forward once consensus or compromises have been reached at the teachers' Pension Task Force. It is a priority, and we have demonstrated our commitment to improving teachers' pensions over the last eight years. We have opened up The Teachers' Pension Act five times and have made improvements that have been recommended by the teachers' Pension Task Force, all five times.

Mrs. Stefanson: When you had the opportunity to open up The Teachers' Pension Act five times over the last number of years, why is it that you didn't take the opportunity to deal with the issue of COLA then? Obviously, this hasn't been a priority of your government. You're trying to tiptoe and dance around the issue, talking about main accounts versus other accounts, et cetera, et cetera. You're talking about the 1.5 billion that you're putting toward the unfunded liability, but you've done nothing and said nothing about addressing the issue of COLA.

That is primarily what I'm talking about today and, you know, I would like to know. I mean, you say that you're going to hide behind the Pension Task Force Committee. You, Mr. Minister, have the ability to make changes with respect to COLA. That does fall under your jurisdiction as the Minister of Education of this province and, certainly, during the election campaign, this was an issue that was brought

forward. Members on this side of the House came forward with what we believe is somewhat of a resolution to this issue, and members on your side have done nothing. Yet you continue to say that this is a priority for this government. Nothing has been done.

All we want to see is some action. If it is a priority, when can we expect this issue to be dealt with? Will the minister agree to call his former colleague the former Member for Fort Rouge, Mr. Sale, who is now the chairperson of the Pension Task Force Committee, and find out when they will come to sort of a resolution so that retired teachers who are waiting now to see what will be done about this issue of COLA, when this issue will be addressed, and what we can expect from this task force.

If they're not going to come, will he set some deadlines for the task force in order to come forward, as he had said that this is a very important issue of his government? Will he set some deadlines for the task force to come forward to deal with the issue of COLA?

Madam Deputy Chairperson: Prior to recognizing the honourable minister, I just want to take this opportunity to remind all members that questions should be put through the Chair.

Mr. Bjornson: I have to take exception to the comments made by the member opposite that we have done nothing. I find that rather offensive, as somebody who had contributed for 13 years to the teachers' pension fund myself. If the member would refer to the annual report that I tabled today for the TRAF report where it refers to the funding status, and it refers to Pension Adjustment Account. It refers in the third paragraph, and I'll read it directly:

An actuarial valuation of the Pension Adjustment Account is "completed annually to determine what cost of living adjustment can be paid. Annual cost of living adjustments are the lesser of the prior year change . . . in the Consumer Price Index . . . for Canada and the amount that the PAA can support as determined by the plan's actuary."

Now the member has been critical of our actions, and I would suggest that it was inaction under the previous Member for Russell as minister, Minister McCrae, Minister Manning, Minister McIntosh, who were all in receipt of letters annually from that Pension Adjustment Account annual actuarial advice that said, you cannot afford to pay the COLA that

you were paying from 1988 to 1996. They were given that advice, and ignored that advice. In fact, I believe the actuary was simply dismissed and a new actuary was hired.

Now, what have we done? I'll remind the member again that the No. 1 priority for the active teachers in the province of Manitoba has been, for over 20 years, the integrity of the main account, the integrity of the main benefit. That was a big step by this government to fund \$1.5 billion in addition to the \$318 million that was already in that account, because we were the first government to come up with a plan to fund that unfunded liability.

So to fund that 75 percent is a really significant signal to teachers, both active and retired, that we value the teachers, and we are as concerned as they are about the integrity of the main benefit account. We have also been matching contributions of new entrants on a go-forward basis since 2000. We've increased the contribution rates by 1.1 percent, the first time in 25 years. We have appointed a retired teacher to the TRAF board, and retired teachers have an active role to play on the teachers' Pension Task Force.

Now, the member suggests that they came forward with a proposal. During the election, I don't recall seeing that proposal. I understand it was two-thirds COLA and it could be done for \$11 million, or something like that, and on a go-forward basis, an additional \$1.5 million. Clearly, the members opposite don't understand the Pension Adjustment Account and the ability to pay COLA. If that was their commitment to retired teachers, that would fall well short of providing the necessary funds to support that COLA. So I would certainly challenge the honourable member with respect to our action versus their lack of action on this issue.

* (15:30)

Mrs. Stefanson: Well, I know it's tempting for members opposite, indeed, this Minister of Education, to go back to the 1990s time and time again, et cetera. The fact of the matter is this government's been in for eight years and has done nothing about this issue. Otherwise, we wouldn't be bringing it up time and time again. The Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba which, time and time again, this government refuses to listen to, refuses to for—actually, a very long time refused to even meet with them and refused to accept them as a very important organization in Manitoba.

The minister likes to go back and talk about the \$1.5 billion to go into the unfunded liability of the main account. The fact of the matter is we heard the other day that only \$500 million of that—we heard from the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) that only \$500 million of that has actually gone into the account to date. You know, we will be monitoring that to make sure that this government does, in fact, follow through with that \$1.5 billion. We've seen time and time again this government is wonderful at making all sorts of great announcements, but when it comes to following through on issues, they're few and far between.

But, having said that, when I talk about the \$1.5 billion boost to this account, and I'll quote from the president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society, he said and I quote, he emphasized that government money does not change the pension formula. It will not change the amount of money retired teachers receive or the cost-of-living increases that have been one of the major issues with retired teachers. In that same article, Minister Bjornson stated that this will change the COLA.

If he believes that somehow this is going to change COLA, I wonder quite seriously what colour the sky is in his world when it comes to specifically the retired teachers out there that are very concerned. You know, these are people that are living on fixed income right now in Manitoba. This is a huge issue for them. Yet all they care about is sort of one side of the issue. They're not looking at the retired teachers who have paid into this fund for years and years and years and are expecting to get their cost-of-living adjustment because that's what they were expecting.

I think our party has come forward with a very viable and sound policy and something that we believe would achieve, and I know it would achieve the two-thirds of the consumer price index, similar to what the government pension pays out. I will say that there has not been fairness when it comes to COLA, not even within this province, but if we look across this country, there hasn't been fairness in the COLA for the teachers for a number of years. I know members opposite like to go back to 1990s all the time, and I will say that back then COLA was paid out.

An Honourable Member: They had COLA.

Mrs. Stefanson: You know, they did have COLA. So I'm not sure this government has the ability to make change. It's been in there for eight years. They have not addressed this issue and there are people

who, you know, there are over 10,000 retired teachers in Manitoba that are waiting for some answers from this government.

Yet, time and time again, I come and ask simple questions. I ask, when is the task force meeting? Well, it's not in my jurisdiction or something; they meet on their own time and this sort of stuff. I mean they try and pass and deflect blame to other organizations, to other people. The fact of the matter is this is the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson); he is responsible for this. He has the ability to make changes so that there's fairness brought to COLA. I guess I just find this whole process extremely frustrating.

I ask again the Minister of Education: When will this task force be charged with bringing forward a solution to the problem with COLA that is faced by the retired teachers of Manitoba? If he doesn't know when that is going to be, will he set a date today as to when we all can expect some sort of a policy to come forward with respect to COLA so that the retired teachers can know what to expect from this government?

Mr. Bjornson: Madam Chair, I'd like to thank the member for finally getting around to the question after that rant, and I feel I have to address some of the issues that were raised in that rant.

First of all, the suggestion that we refused to meet with RTAM is absurd. I met with RTAM on a regular basis. The retired teachers also have met with the Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger); they have met with the Premier (Mr. Doer); they have appeared as delegations to our NDP caucus. So, for the member to even suggest that they've had a hard time meeting with us is absolutely absurd. There is a retired teacher appointment to the TRAF board, and RTAM has an active voice at the teachers' Pension Task Force. So a lot of the issues that have been raised have been addressed. The outstanding issue, the COLA, is certainly one that we are committed to work on, and the process is that it goes through the teachers' Pension Task Force where recommendations are made.

Now, again, during the election, I understand that the members opposite had made a proposal that would solve the COLA issue, and I believe the figure was \$12.5 million this year, \$1.5 million every year for subsequent years, and I honestly don't think that that will adequately address the COLA, Madam Chair. I'd have to see where they did their numbers there.

Also, yes, the member is correct, that they did pay almost full COLA during the Filmon years, but the Filmon government also ignored the actuary saying you cannot pay full COLA because you are borrowing from the future. When you have seven active teachers to one retired teacher, it's sustainable. When long-term projections indicated 1.4 active teachers to every retired teacher, it's not sustainable. The members opposite ignored that advice; they borrowed from the future. We've inherited that mess; we're working to clean up that mess.

Mrs. Stefanson: Madam Chairperson, this Minister of Education, to go back to—there are so many issues that I could bring up, but in the interest of time I'm going to have to focus this specifically on the COLA issue.

The minister just says that he is committed to working on COLA, yet he says nothing about it. What does that commitment mean? He then says he doesn't call the Pension Task Force Committee meetings, all this sort of stuff. I mean, to hide behind procedures is a joke. The fact that this minister—maybe he can't even explain when we can expect an announcement on COLA in this province, the fact that he can't give any indication—you know, these are not trick questions. They are very straightforward questions of this minister, and I find it unfortunate for all the retired teachers in Manitoba, as well, quite frankly, for future retired teachers in Manitoba, if this is the kind of attitude of this government when it comes to dealing with the issue of COLA. And just in terms of dealing with all of education issues, I think it's very unfortunate that this minister is unable to explain the issue. He is unable to come up with simple deadlines, simple guidelines that will be followed. And, you know what? He will refuse to take responsibility for the actions.

So I find that extremely unfortunate and, because he is not answering questions, I have other Education issues which I have to bring up as well and we'll have to move on. But, again, I find it's a sad day in Manitoba for retired teachers that this government continues to refuse to take this issue of COLA, that actions speak louder than words, Madam Chair, and I find that unfortunate.

My question for the minister—I'm going to focus on concerns regarding École Provencher. As we understand, a number of parents and parent advisory councils in the area, the decision to move the school to a French immersion curriculum, as they understand, has been pushed through without proper

public consultation in a very abbreviated time period, and I'm wondering if the minister can explain. Obviously, there is extreme concern on the part of parents in the area when it comes to this issue, and if the minister could explain what it is that his department is doing to address the issues of procedure not having taken place in an appropriate matter.

* (15:40)

Mr. Bjornson: Thank you for that, Madam Chair. I would like to put on the record that, you know, after the rant again about the COLA, I know it wasn't the question, but she prefaced the question on École Provencher with another rant about COLA. The RTAM president had responded to you in an announcement that we had made with respect to the PAA. President Con Lynch at the time did say, and it was in his press release, that our announcement does improve the environment in which negotiations with MTS and the government can take place regarding COLA.

He also said because TRAF has a very good return on its investments, it also ensures that this money is earning interest at a higher rate than what the government is paying for the borrowed money. He also mentioned that the appointment of Tim Sale to the teachers' Pension Task Force to facilitate the negotiations is a positive step. RTAM believes that this appointment signals the government's desire to reach and negotiate agreement about how to solve the problems with the current structure and funding of the PAA.

We made a commitment to address COLA. We're going to continue to work to address COLA, but that work also involves active teachers and the teacher Pension Task Force negotiations. So I can't arbitrarily intervene. It is something that has to be addressed through the teachers' Pension Task Force that is, as it is active teachers who continue to contribute to the fund and RTAM has a voice at the table.

Now, with respect to the question around École Provencher and the program that has been under much debate of late, yes, I have received letters from parents who are concerned about this program. The member opposite speaks about the consultation process. The consultation process is one that is established by the local school boards around the decisions that are made with respect to programming.

Madam Chairperson, Bonnie Korzeniowski, in the Chair

Certainly, with respect to that particular program, there was a letter sent in May of 1996 by Minister McIntosh at the time, who recognized that this was a derivative program of the French language instruction, and, as such, I have asked my department for a legal opinion on this particular program. I'm waiting to examine that legal opinion and look at what options might exist.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Just a quick question to the minister regarding Garden Valley School Division. I know he's been out there a number of times and certainly do appreciate the fact that we've got a new school out there. But, as he's also aware, we've got growth that's probably the fastest growth in rural Manitoba. Right now we've got over 800 students again in huts, and I know that the school board with your administration has been in touch with the minister. But the problem that they're having is that, even with the huts, although be it as nice as they are, they don't have the facilities for washroom, and so, of course, in wintertime, they need to go outside which is creating some other problems.

I'm just wondering if he has some plans through his department as to assisting Garden Valley School Division in their—not the problem, I'd say it's a good thing that's taken place, the growth that they have, but what he's planning to do.

Mr. Bjornson: Madam Chair, thank you for the question. Yes, growth is a good problem to have. Of course, we did open the Emerado Centennial School. It was great to see the member there to celebrate the construction of that new building.

The process with the Public Schools Finance Board has been to engage school divisions to address capital needs on the basis of the five-year capital plan. I know that the PSFP has been meeting with the school boards to look at their capital needs. We, of course, had increased funding on an annual basis with an unprecedented three-year commitment to look at better long-term planning to address needs such as those in communities where we're seeing rapid growth.

Our investment has been \$423 million since we've been in office and we're currently looking at the next phase of the capital planning for the Public Schools Finance Board. It is a process that I appreciate can take time and I appreciate that we're seeing unprecedented growth in this area and that

there's a dire need, and it is something that we'll work with the school divisions, through the PSFB, to ensure that those needs are addressed.

Mr. Dyck: Okay, just a quick question. Could he be more specific? Like have they—I know that in the last two years the board has been meeting with capitals branch and with the minister regarding the building of another school. I'm just wondering if they are continuing to meet and if there is a timeline that he could give to us and to the school board.

Mr. Bjornson: With 37 school divisions that meet with the PSFB I will—I don't recall if they have had an opportunity to meet in this latest window to discuss the five-year capital plan, but I will get back to the member and see if they have, indeed, had an opportunity to meet with your division.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): To the Minister of Education, recognizing the enormous importance of Upper Fort Garry as a historical site and the huge potential for young people and students to come there and re-enact important events that occurred so many years ago, I would ask the minister if he will help me and those of the friends of the fort to ensure that the whole site is adequately preserved, that there is not a 15-storey apartment high-rise building on the site, and that there would be the room then for people to recognize and relive, as it were, for students, the historic events of so many years ago.

So I would ask: Will he support the efforts to ensure that the whole site, the Upper Fort Garry, is there and that it's not displaced or limited by a 15-storey apartment block being built on that site?

Mr. Bjornson: Madam Chair, I'm not sure how this is relevant to the Education budget discussion. Having said that, though, I can assure the member that history and heritage certainly are something that is a priority to our government. It is certainly a priority to me personally as a history teacher. When history was eliminated as a compulsory course under Premier Filmon, we reinstated it as a compulsory course because we know how important history is, although members opposite occasionally don't like us to bring up history.

We've also, through our citizenship agenda, put a tremendous emphasis on what it means to be an active participant in the democratic process, what it means to be a contributor to the community, and certainly I suspect that there will be many people who will be making contributions in this debate on this particular historic asset. That's part of an

important part of that debate, but, as I said, I don't see the relevance to questions on the Education budget.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): My question is for the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation.

Roblin Boulevard, as it leaves the city, goes through Headingley and Beaudry Park. It becomes, I believe, Highway 241, provincial Highway 241. There's an increased amount of truck traffic on this road, and, on the unpaved section, it's causing deterioration. On the paved sections, it's going through a residential village, and it's causing some safety issues.

I wonder, what will the minister do to ensure the safety of residents in the residential sections of Headingley, and will he address the conditions of the roads in the unpaved portions, both caused by excessive large truck traffic that would be better suited to be on major highways?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): Wanting to just preface any comments by just saying, because the economy is booming in Manitoba, we're having a tremendous amount of truck traffic is correct, as well as rail traffic and air traffic coming through this province and to the province. That's the positive side. The downside of that, of course, is that a lot of our roads are seeing a lot of use which they haven't seen before, quite frankly.

* (15:50)

One of the tenets or one of the principles that transportation is all about is safety, and we've put many initiatives in place to ensure that safety is adhered to in the province of Manitoba. Just on that note, if I might just add that drivers in the province of Manitoba should—I would ask them to be careful and watch their speeds this summer. There's going to be a tremendous amount of activity happening on our roadways. Millions upon millions and millions of dollars are going to be spent this year fixing our roads and repairing our roads, and you're going to have a lot of crews working on highways, and construction is going to be happening everywhere. Literally everywhere. I would just ask drivers in Manitoba to be very cautious and careful when driving by construction crews.

I'm just wondering whether or not the MLA for Morris could expand a little bit on this particular stretch of road and be more specific with regard to the concerns she has on the safety side.

Mrs. Taillieu: The road, Roblin Boulevard, which is 241 provincial road, leaves the Trans-Canada Highway, goes through Beaudry Park and into Headingley, and large truck traffic does tend to take this route as an alternate to Highway 1. There are a couple of reasons, likely, for that. There's a weigh scale there on Highway 1, and also the speed limit on the highway is lower than on Roblin Boulevard, and trucks tend to take this route.

On the unpaved section near Beaudry Park, this road is not built to handle this excessive truck and weight traffic, and it's causing disrepair of the road, and it's not being maintained. Secondly, as it goes through the village of Headingley, you have a large truck traffic going through a village where people walk, people jog; it's a residential village. It's not meant for highway truck traffic.

This truck traffic should be on the Trans-Canada Highway.

Mr. Lemieux: I'm pleased to hear the Member for Morris say that she's prepared to restrict highways, certain highways in the province, just to truck traffic only. One would argue, and I know many do, that municipalities, when they're doing their planning, have allowed residential properties to come up and exist all over the place, quite frankly, without much planning taking place.

What's happened is that a lot of the highways that once existed in bare prairie land are no longer that. You have homes that exist on a lot of five-acre properties. You have a lot of homes that are now up against provincial highways. They want to have access to their land and also to the highway, which also causes a lot of dangerous situations. It's something that we're going to have to deal with, obviously, because these developmental plans have been approved, and homes and large residential areas have sprung up all over, quite frankly, holus-bolus, around the city of Winnipeg and the Capital Region, and it's put a lot of pressure on provincial highways.

I would just want to say that, with regard to repairs and upgrades to highways, it's decisions, of course, made by a lot of our engineers and people who work for transportation. Their determination on whether or not a road needs to be, needs extra work on a particular stretch of road, that's a decision that they're able to make, and they do, with their professional backgrounds.

So I appreciate the MLA from Morris raising it. Just by virtue of raising it in this time period, it will

be brought to the attention of people within the Transportation Department. People will be monitoring that stretch of road, not only for the kind of traffic that's on the highway, but also whether or not the stretch of road needs to be repaired and it's getting extra damage, if I can phrase that way, compared to other stretches of road.

So, again, it comes down to a priority within the Department of Transportation. Even though we have now put millions upon millions of dollars, and literally billions of dollars, \$2 billion over the next five years, four over the next 10, into our highways and Infrastructure Department, it's important that you still have to prioritize because there's a huge need out there. We plan on addressing it, but yet it still takes a lot of prioritizing to take place in order for a lot of these projects to take place.

Mrs. Stefanson: I'm going to be very quick, if I can. Regarding the tender for the manufacture and delivery of traffic control signs across Manitoba, I've spoken to the minister about this issue. I'm just wondering if he could indicate to the House when this tender will be awarded.

Mr. Lemieux: Well, I'll have to take the question as notice. I don't have any specifics with regard to the particular question.

Mrs. Stefanson: A subsequent question. I just wonder why there is such a large sort of single tender. Why not allow Manitoba companies to bid on smaller tenders? It is such a huge tender. Why is it that the tender is for five years and not a shorter amount of time? There are no other Manitoba tenders awarded, as I understand, for five years' time.

Mr. Lemieux: Well, again, I might just mention to the MLA that I would have to take the question as notice. I don't have any specifics with regard to that particular question. Nor do I have an answer, at this moment, with regard to the period of time of tender or the length of contract, and so on. I certainly can get back to the MLA about the question and try to answer, certainly, in part or in full, once I get the information.

Mrs. Stefanson: Okay. Just briefly, not a question for the minister. I thank the minister for that, and if he would endeavour to get back to me with the answers, that would be great. Thank you.

Mrs. Taillieu: Madam Chair, just a quick question in regard to Highway 247. In fact, I think I could name any provincial road in my constituency, and there would be a problem with it. But Highway 247,

there is a small portion of it that is not paved and has not been in good repair. It seems to be one of those roads that doesn't get any attention. I have a letter from a resident saying that he's made several calls into the department of highways and transportation. He's basically been told, and I'll quote: It all comes down to what political colours that are in power in the area. That's what he's been told.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski): Order.

An Honourable Member: So I would like to ask the minister: Will he not address this section of Highway 247?

Madam Chairperson: Order.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Chairperson: Just to remind all members, try and maintain some decorum in order to hear the questions and the answers. I can't hear a thing. Thank you.

Mr. Lemieux: Thank you very much. I'm not sure where to start.

An Honourable Member: At the start.

Mr. Lemieux: Maybe, yes, I'll start from the start.

Trans-Canada Highway: \$62 million on No. 1 Highway. Most of that goes through the MLA for—

An Honourable Member: Arthur-Virden.

Mr. Lemieux: Arthur-Virden. How could I forget? I asked him for months and months to move his birdbath and finally he did. How could I forget?

PTH 10: \$61 million, north and south of Brandon; Also PTH 16: \$4.5 million, Russell to Foxwarren; PTH 2 and 3: \$60 million, near Elm Creek. I could go on and on.

Just speaking about highways 2 and 3, a member who is currently not in this Chamber, who was a distinguished member, a former Speaker in this Chamber, Mr. Rocan, worked extremely hard to ensure highways 2 and 3 received the attention they deserved. When we were able to find the finances and able to work through a budget, that was able to work through our balanced budget, \$60 million, and the Member for Carman deserves a tremendous amount of credit. Mr. Rocan, the former MLA, worked extremely hard to get this done. Not only windmills did he work with this government on, but

he worked on getting highways 2 and 3 fixed, and he deserves a lot of credit to this day.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Madam Chair, can the minister indicate to me what updates lately, or since the election, the contact that he's had with the Clean Country Resources people at Hartney in regard to 21 highway and the potential of building the ethanol plant in Hartney?

* (16:00)

Mr. Lemieux: Is this the company that wants to use coal or clean coal to fuel their operation?

Madam Chairperson: In accordance with the sessional order adopted today, the time now being 4 p.m., I'm interrupting proceedings to put the question on the resolutions respecting Interim Supply. These questions are to be put without further debate, amendment or recorded vote.

RESOLVED that a sum not exceeding \$5,401,597,200, being 60 percent of the total amount to be voted as set forth in Part A (Operating Expenditure) of the Estimates, be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2008.

Resolution agreed to.

RESOLVED that a sum not exceeding \$446,482,050, being 75 percent of the total amount to be voted as set out in Part B (Capital Investment) of the Estimates, be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 2008.

Resolution agreed to.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered and adopted two resolutions respecting Interim Supply.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak),

THAT there be granted to Her Majesty on account of Certain Expenditures of the Public Service for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2008, out of the Consolidated Fund the sums of \$5,401,597,200, being 60 percent of the total amount to be voted as set out in Part A (Operating Expenditure) and \$446,482,050, being 75 percent of the total amount to be voted as set out in Part B (Capital Investment) of the Estimates, laid before the House at the present session of the Legislature.

Motion agreed to.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 2—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2007

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice, that Bill 2, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2007; Loi de 2007 portant affectation anticipée de crédits, be now read a first time and be ordered for a second reading immediately.

Motion agreed to.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 2—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2007

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice, that Bill 2, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2007; Loi de 2007 portant affectation anticipée de crédits, be now read a second time and be referred to a Committee of the Whole.

Motion presented.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the motion moved by the honourable Minister of Finance.

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

The House will now resolve into Committee of the Whole to consider report on Bill 2, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2007, for Concurrence and Third Readings.

* (16:10)

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 2—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2007

Madam Deputy Chairperson (Marilyn Brick): Will the Committee of the Whole please come to order. We will be considering Bill 2, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2007.

Does the honourable Minister of Finance have an opening statement?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): No.

Madam Deputy Chairperson: Does the official opposition Finance critic have a statement?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Deputy Chairperson: We shall now proceed to consider the bill clause-by-clause.

The title and enacting clause are postponed until all other clauses have been considered.

Clause 1—pass; clause 2—pass; clause 3—pass; clause 4—pass; clause 5—pass; clause 6—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

That concludes the business currently before us.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Committee Report

Ms. Marilyn Brick (Deputy Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered Bill 2, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2007, and reports the same without amendments.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for St. James (Ms. Korzeniowski), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 2—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2007

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 2, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2007; Loi de 2007 portant affectation anticipée de crédits, reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the motion moved by the honourable Attorney General. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): On government business, I wondered if there might be leave of the House to reinstate The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Reservists).

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to deal with the bill? *[Agreed]*

REINSTATEMENT OF BILLS

Bill 12—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Reservists)

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I thank the staff thoroughly.

I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that notwithstanding any rule or practice of this House, Bill 17, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Reservists); Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi (congé à l'intention des réservistes), be reinstated during the First Session of the Thirty-Ninth Legislature at the stage it was at when the Thirty-Eighth Legislature was dissolved.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might have leave of the House to refer to the bill, formerly referred to as Bill 17, as Bill 12 from this point forward.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for the bill from this point forward to be referred to as Bill 12? Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we might have leave of the House to revert to Committee Reports.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for the House to revert to Committee Reports? *[Agreed]*

Committee Reports

Standing Committee on Human Resources First Report

Mr. Doug Martindale (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Human Resources presents the following as its First Report.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Meetings:

Your Committee met on Thursday April 19, 2007, at 4:00 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

Bill (No. 17) – The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Reservists)/Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi (congé à l'intention des réservistes)

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the meeting:

Hon. Ms. ALLAN

Mr. ALTEMEYER

Mr. DEWAR

Mrs. DRIEDGER

Ms. KORZENIOWSKI

Hon. Mr. LEMIEUX

Mr. MARTINDALE (Chairperson)

Mr. PENNER

Mr. REIMER

Mr. SCHULER

Mr. SWAN

Your Committee elected Ms. KORZENIOWSKI as the Vice-Chairperson.

Bills Considered and Reported

Bill (No. 17) – The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Reservists)/Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi (congé à l'intention des réservistes)

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Rossmere (Ms. Braun), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion presented.

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

Special Committee of Seven Persons First Report

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Chairperson of the Special Committee of Seven Persons): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Special Committee of Seven Persons.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee of Seven Persons presents the following as its First Report.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Special Committee of Seven Persons presents the following as its First Report.

Your Committee prepared the following list of the proportional representation of Members by party to compose the Standing Committees ordered by the House:

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

CROWN CORPORATIONS (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

HUMAN RESOURCES (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

JUSTICE (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

PRIVATE BILLS (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (11)

Government Members: 6

Official Opposition Members: 4

Independent Members: 1

RULES OF THE HOUSE (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 3

Independent Members: 1

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

STATUTORY REGULATIONS & ORDERS (11)

Government Members: 7

Official Opposition Members: 4

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), that the report of the committee be received.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Government House Leader, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance, that the report of the committee be received.

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

* (16:20)

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS**Bill 12—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Reservists)**

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance, that Bill 12, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Reservists); Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi (congé à l'intention des réservistes) be

reported from the Standing Committee on Human Resources, be concurred in, and be now read for a third time, and passed by leave.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Speaking on third reading.

Mr. Speaker: When I moved the motion, I didn't see the honourable Member for Springfield. He wanted to speak to it in third reading. Would the members give leave for him to speak? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Schuler: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I will keep my comments short.

This is a piece of legislation that has already been moving through the Manitoba Legislature until it was interrupted by a provincial election, and I just want to put on the record that it was most unfortunate that the Doer government chose to—*[interjection]*—the current NDP government refused to allow this bill to go to Royal Assent with unanimous consent, certainly of the Progressive Conservative caucus and the Liberal caucus. It was actually the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), the NDP House Leader, who refused leave to let it go, and we felt that that was really most unfortunate as this is a piece of legislation that could have moved forward over 40 days ago.

It is an important piece of legislation. It, certainly, is important to those men and women who are affected by what's going on around us in the world. Again, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, we would like to see this move forward in a quick fashion. It's gone to public hearings. It certainly has had a lot of debate on it, and we believe it should move on to Royal Assent, as it should have done with full agreement of this House before the provincial election was called.

Mr. Speaker: We'll move on.

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if we might have leave to introduce and complete all stages on The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act bill, seconded by the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), to do first, second, Committee of the Whole, and third reading by leave.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to deal with the bill in all stages? *[Agreed]*

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 25—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) that Bill 25, The Legislative Assembly Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative, be now read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Government House Leader, seconded by the honourable Member for Steinbach that Bill 25, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, be now read a first time. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

SECOND READINGS

Bill 25—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Steinbach, that Bill 25, The Legislative Assembly Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has been advised of the bill and I table the message.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Government House Leader, seconded by the honourable Member for Steinbach, that Bill 25, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor has been advised of this bill and the message has been tabled.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, thank you.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, just a point of clarification. If the Speaker can continue to serve as Speaker, does that happen even if the Speaker is not re-elected or if the Speaker doesn't run? What's the situation if there's an election?

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is there leave for the honourable member to put his question because the

question wouldn't be appropriate at committee stage? Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, the regime that's been put in place will allow continuity so that the Speaker, regardless of the Speaker's action following a writ, will remain a Speaker until an Order-in-Council—until a new Speaker is elected, which is similar to the process that works for members of Executive Council and in other jurisdictions.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 25. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

The House will now dissolve into Committee of the Whole.

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Bill 25—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Chairperson (Marilyn Brick): I call the committee to order. Does the minister responsible for Bill 25 have an opening statement?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Deputy Chairperson: We thank the minister. Does the critic from the official opposition have an opening statement?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Deputy Chairperson: We thank the member. During the consideration of a bill, the enacting clause and the title are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order. Also, if there is agreement from the committee, the Chair will call clauses in blocks that conform to pages, with the understanding that we will stop at any particular clause or clauses where members may have comments, questions or amendments to propose. Is that agreed? *[Agreed]*

Clauses 1 and 2—pass; clauses 3 through 7—pass; enacting clause—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

* (16:30)

IN SESSION**Committee Report**

Ms. Marilyn Brick (Deputy Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered Bill 25, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act, and reports the same without amendments.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Altemeyer), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS**Bill 25—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act**

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), that Bill 25, The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative, as reported from the Committee of the Whole, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question for the House is third reading of Bill 25. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Business): Mr. Speaker, on government business, His Honour is going to be attending shortly in order to deal with Royal Assent on Interim Supply and several of the bills, and I wonder if there might be leave of the House to recess for approximately 10 minutes to allow for the arrival of His Honour.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to recess for 10 minutes, and prior to the 10 minutes expiring that we will ring the bell? *[Agreed]* We'll ring the bell for one minute, okay, just to let members know. So we'll recess now for 10 minutes.

The House recessed at 4:34 p.m.

The House resumed at 4:44 p.m.

ROYAL ASSENT

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Blake Dunn): His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

His Honour John Harvard, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the Throne, Mr. Speaker addressed His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor in the following words:

Mr. Speaker: Your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba asks Your Honour to accept the following bill:

Madam Clerk Assistant (Monique Grenier):

Bill 2—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2007; Loi de 2007 portant affectation anticipée de crédits

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): In Her Majesty's name, the Lieutenant-Governor thanks the Legislative Assembly and assents to this bill.

Mr. Speaker: Your Honour:

At this sitting, the Legislative Assembly has passed certain bills that I ask Your Honour to give assent to.

Madam Clerk Assistant (Monique Grenier):

Bill 12—The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Leave for Reservists); Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi (congé à l'intention des réservistes)

Bill 25—The Legislative Assembly Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Assemblée législative

Madam Clerk: In Her Majesty's name, His Honour assents to these bills.

His Honour was then pleased to retire.

Mr. Speaker: Please be seated.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if you might canvass the House to determine if we have leave on the requirement for the private members' resolutions on September 25 to not be on notice.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for the private members' resolutions for September 25 to not be on notice? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): We would agree that it not be on notice to the Legislature. We would expect to see a provision of the motion in for our caucus before it goes forward on Tuesday.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, yes, I think that can be arranged.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement then? *[Agreed]*

An Honourable Member: Is it 5 o'clock?

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5 o'clock? *[Agreed]*

The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until September 25 and also at the call of the Speaker.

So the House is adjourned. Have a nice summer and work hard for our constituents.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 14, 2007

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<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/index.html>