

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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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.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
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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.
JENNISSON, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
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MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
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McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
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STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
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TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 26, 2008

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYER

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 44—The Budget Implementation and
Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2008**

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): I'd like to introduce BITSA, the 2008 version, and I would like to have it seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 44, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2008; Loi d'exécution du budget de 2008 et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Selinger: This bill implements measures in the 2008 Manitoba budget and makes various other amendments to tax and financial legislation. Thank you.

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

PETITIONS

Headingley Foods

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The owners of Headingley Foods, a small business based in Headingley, would like to sell alcohol at their store. The distance from their location to the nearest Liquor Mart via the Trans-Canada Highway is 9.3 kilometres. The distance to the same Liquor Mart via Roblin Boulevard is 10.8 kilometres. Their application has been rejected because their store needs to be 10 kilometres away from the Liquor Mart. It is 700 metres short of this requirement using one route but is 10.8 kilometres using the other.

The majority of Headingley's population lives off Roblin Boulevard and uses Roblin Boulevard to get to and from Winnipeg rather than the Trans-Canada Highway. Additionally, the highway route is often closed or too dangerous to travel in severe

weather conditions. The majority of Headingley residents therefore travel to the Liquor Mart via Roblin Boulevard, a distance of 10.8 kilometres.

Small businesses outside Winnipeg's perimeter are vital to the prosperity of Manitoba's communities and should be supported. It is difficult for small businesses like Headingley Foods to compete with larger stores in Winnipeg, and they require added services to remain viable. Residents should be able to purchase alcohol locally rather than have to drive to the next municipality.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister charged with the administration of The Liquor Control Act (Mr. Swan) to consider allowing the owners of Headingley Foods to sell alcohol at their store, thereby supporting small business and the prosperity of rural communities in Manitoba.

This is signed by Rosalyn Cole, Ken Unrau, Christine Maciejkow and many others, Mr. Speaker.

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

Child-Care Centres

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

There is an ongoing critical shortage of child-care spaces throughout Manitoba, particularly in fast-growing regions such as south Winnipeg.

The provincial government has not adequately planned for the child-care needs of growing communities like Waverley West where the construction of thousands of homes will place immense pressure on an already overburdened child-care system.

The severe shortage of early childhood educators compounds the difficulty parents have finding licensed child care and has forced numerous centres to operate with licensing exemptions due to a lack of qualified staff.

Child-care centres are finding it increasingly difficult to operate within the funding constraints set by the provincial government to the point that they are unable to provide wages and benefits sufficient to retain child-care workers.

As a result of these deficiencies in Manitoba's child-care system, many families and parents are growing increasingly frustrated and desperate, fearing that they will be unable to find licensed child care and may be forced to stop working as a result. In an economy where labour shortages are common, the provision of sustainable and accessible child care is critical.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh) to consider addressing the shortage of early childhood educators by enabling child-care centres to provide competitive wages and benefits.

To urge the Minister of Family Services and Housing to consider adequately planning for the future child-care needs of growing communities and to consider making the development of a sustainable and accessible child-care system a priority.

To urge the Minister of Family Services and Housing to consider the development of a governance body that would provide direction and support to the volunteer boards of child-care centres and to consider the development of regionalized central wait lists for child care.

To encourage all members of the Legislative Assembly to consider becoming more closely involved with the operations of the licensed day-care facilities in their constituencies.

This is signed by William Fayant, Holly Doerksen, Crystal Kwasnica and many, many others.

Lake Dauphin Fishery

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to present a petition for the Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson).

I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave to present the petition on behalf of the honourable Member for Tuxedo? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Maguire: These are the reasons for this petition:

Fishing is an important industry on Lake Dauphin.

To help ensure the sustainability of the Lake Dauphin fishery, it is essential that spawning fish in the lake and its tributaries are not disturbed during the critical reproductive cycle.

A seasonal moratorium on the harvesting of fish in Lake Dauphin and its tributaries may help create an environment that will produce a natural cycle of fish for Lake Dauphin, therefore ensuring a balanced stock of fish for all groups who harvest fish on the lake.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) to consider placing a moratorium on the harvesting of any species of fish on Lake Dauphin and its tributaries before the period April 1 to May 15 annually.

To request the Minister of Water Stewardship to consider doing regular studies of fish stocks on Lake Dauphin to help gauge the health of the fishery and to consider determining any steps needed to protect or enhance those stocks.

This petition is signed by L. Artibise, Mel Cleave, Doug Deans and many, many others.

* (13:40)

Long-Term Care Facility—Morden

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background for this petition is as follows:

Tabor Home Incorporated is a time-expired personal care home in Morden with safety, environmental and space deficiencies.

The seniors of Manitoba are valuable members of the community with increasing health-care needs requiring long-term care.

The community of Morden and the surrounding area are experiencing substantial population growth.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to strongly consider giving priority for funding to

develop and staff a new 100-bed long-term care facility so that clients are not exposed to unsafe conditions and so that Boundary Trails Health Centre beds remain available for acute-care patients instead of waiting placement clients.

This is signed by Ruth Friesen, Kathy Friesen, Anne Marie Bock and many, many others.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): Mr. Speaker, I ask leave of this House to read a petition on behalf of the honourable Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese).

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave? *[Agreed]*

Child-Care Centres

Mr. Pedersen: I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly:

These are the reasons for this petition:

There is an ongoing critical shortage of child-care spaces throughout Manitoba, particularly in fast-growing regions such as south Winnipeg.

The provincial government has not adequately planned for the child-care needs of growing communities like Waverley West where the construction of thousands of homes will place immense pressure on the already overburdened child-care system.

The severe shortage of early childhood educators compounds the difficulty parents have finding licensed child care and has forced numerous centres to operate with licensing exemptions due to a lack of qualified staff.

Child-care centres are finding it increasingly difficult to operate within the funding constraints set by the provincial government to the point that they are unable to provide wages and benefits sufficient to retain child-care workers.

As a result of these deficiencies in Manitoba's child-care system, many families and parents are growing increasingly frustrated and desperate, fearing that they will be unable to find licensed child care and may be forced to stop working as a result. In an economy where labour shortages are common, the provision of sustainable and accessible child care is critical.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh) to consider addressing the

shortage of early childhood educators by enabling child-care centres to provide competitive wages and benefits.

To urge the Minister of Family Services and Housing to consider adequately planning for the future child-care needs of growing communities and to consider making the development of a sustainable and accessible child-care system a priority.

To urge the Minister of Family Services and Housing to consider the development of a governance body that would provide direction and support to the volunteer boards of child-care centres and to consider the development of regionalized central wait lists for child care.

To encourage all members of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly to consider becoming more closely involved with the operations of the licensed day-care facilities in their constituencies.

This petition is signed by Tracy Bauer, Kristine Hawker, Diana Wolfe and many, many others.

Provincial Nominee Program—Applications

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Immigration is critically important to the future of our province, and the 1998 federal Provincial Nominee Program is the best immigration program that Manitoba has ever had.

Lengthy processing times for PNP applications causes additional stress and anxiety for would-be immigrants and their families here in Manitoba.

The government needs to recognize the unfairness in its current policy on who qualifies to be an applicant.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider establishing a 90-day guarantee for processing an application for a minimum of 80 percent of applicants that have family living in Manitoba.

To urge the provincial government to consider removing the use of the restrictive job list when dealing with the family support stream.

This is signed by R. Lacap, E. Saria and K. Sabale and many, many other fine Manitobans.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to table the following: the 2007 Annual Report of the Crown Corps Council.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the loge to my left where we have with us Mr. Jack Penner who is the former member for Emerson.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Bill 37

Sponsorship

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Bill 37 contains some of the most sweeping and retrograde steps to Manitoba democracy that we've seen in the life of this government, Mr. Speaker. Every bill that this government has introduced to date dealing with electoral reform has been preceded by public hearings, input from all-party committees, and has gone through a variety of stages, allowing experts and members of the public at large to have input. By contrast, Bill 37 was dropped in the Legislature at the last minute and in the name of the Attorney General (Mr. Chomiak).

I want to ask the Attorney General: Given that every previous election finance bill introduced in this House to date has been introduced by the Premier, I want to ask the Attorney General, more out of sadness than anger, how is it that he got stuck having to put his name to this terrible piece of legislation?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I can recall that we've had differences in the past over election financing and election reform. Members opposite indicated the ability to have third-party advertising that was certainly very, very free in Manitoba relative to other jurisdictions was going to have the sky fall in Manitoba in terms of democracy.

I note the member opposite has ads on the radio. He claims one day to be muzzled, and the next day he's advertising. I know that there are ads all over the place on the hog moratorium proposal, Mr. Speaker. Members opposed also the union and corporate donation ban. In fact, the National Citizens' Coalition opposed it, and I would point out that that is also now a very important part of Prime Minister Harper's

accountability act, when he lowered and banned union and corporate donations in Manitoba. He's seen the light. Someday members opposite will see the light, but it's good legislation to move us forward.

Mr. McFadyen: I don't blame the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) for not wanting to get up and have to respond to this bill, but I want to ask him again: Since it's the Attorney General whose name is on the front of the bill, who's the sponsor of this bill—the Premier has introduced every other bill on election finances to date—I want to ask the Attorney General what happened? Was he the one who was left standing in caucus when the music stopped, and is that why he's the one who got stuck introducing this terrible piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Doer: Well, Mr. Speaker, the music is still playing all across Manitoba. We'll have a country festival on the long weekend. We'll have the Folk Festival in July. Many people went to the Rush concert on the weekend. Music is actually playing in Manitoba more with the MTS Centre, which is another item members opposite voted against in terms of their wisdom in Manitoba. *[interjection]* The Member for Kildonan's choir is singing for President Yushchenko tomorrow, too. The music will be playing to greet the President from the Ukraine here to the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite now has ads on the radio. He has a phony campaign on public financing of political parties. It's phony because members opposite received over a million dollars in financing from the public in the last election campaign. He's got candidates he's signed up to appear before the public hearing who have received rebates in the past.

You know, the old saying is, do as I do, not as what I say. If we did what the member opposite is doing—he received a million dollars. Maybe the truth-of-advertising campaign will include that in his next ad on the radio.

* (13:50)

Mr. McFadyen: It's great to see the great debater on his feet this week. He didn't respond to any questions last week, and it's good to see him back in action. You know, I didn't ask him the questions today either but, obviously, the Member for Kildonan—and I don't blame him. I wouldn't want to get up and respond to questions on this bill either.

Since the bill came right out of the Premier's office, it explains why it is that the Premier feels the

need to get up. I just want to ask the Member for Kildonan, the Attorney General, and I hope that he'll get up and respond to the question this time.

On this side of the House, we're trying to figure out how it is that every previous election finance bill came from the Premier, when this one, for some reason, is coming from the Attorney General. It sounds as though it wasn't a game of musical chairs that he lost. Did he draw the short straw or did he get stuck holding the hot potato when it was flying around the caucus room as to who was going to get stuck putting their name on this terrible piece of legislation?

Mr. Doer: Well, Mr. Speaker, in anticipation of the fact that there was going to be a western premiers' meeting scheduled at the same time there might be public hearings, we thought it an abundance of caution and planning to ensure that the public hearings could continue to proceed. I'll be there at the public hearings tonight. I look forward to some of the candidates that many of us had to campaign against, all of whom received a rebate. All of them didn't have their handshake when they received a rebate.

You know, the member opposite has got an ad campaign out there after he claims to be muzzled, Mr. Speaker. Maybe his next ad can say: I received a million dollars from the public. I know some of my caucus members are now running for the federal nomination perhaps and will receive \$1.95 per vote.

Maybe that can be the next ad campaign the Tories engage in, Mr. Speaker, and it still won't work.

Bill 37 Public Hearings

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): No candidates on this side of the House ran to have a new vote tax imposed on Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, again, on Friday, the Premier (Mr. Doer) promised that he was going to hold broad public consultations, an all-party committee of the Legislature, to hear the public's views on Senate reform.

Why will this government not now agree to all-party public consultations across the province on Bill 37, which impacts each and every Manitoban in an undemocratic way and imposes a vote tax on Manitobans?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I've been a part of this Legislature when probably the worst political scandal in political history occurred, when money was funnelled to third parties in order to set up a party establishment, and the worst scandal in political history occurred. In addition [*inaudible*]

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Chomiak: –House, a lot of shenanigans went on in the selling of the Manitoba Telephone System. Money and politics can be a very dangerous combination, particularly when Conservatives are in power.

I think fair rules for all candidates to apply in all situations is the way to go. It's a more democratic, broad-based Canadian way.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Bill 37 only proves how greedy this government is, how they want to get their hands on more taxpayers' dollars for their own political purposes.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier, himself, on Bill 22, back in 2006, the bill that was passed on Senate reform indicated, and I quote, that I'm willing to listen to the public, and I do believe that we need public hearings on this legislation. That was the Premier then.

Will the Attorney General stand up today and commit his party to broad public consultations across the province, just like Senate reform, for Bill 37?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, we're starting public hearings tonight. There are over 90 presenters. I notice we've got Mike Waddell, Conservative candidate for Brandon East; Christine Waddell, Conservative candidate for Fort Rouge; Ken Waddell, Conservative candidate for Concordia. All received rebates in the tens of thousands of dollars from provincial coffers.

Mr. Speaker, in light of what I have seen in this Legislature, the members opposite opposing union and corporate donations, now coming around, this is a bill that's in line with the Canadian bill. It's \$1.25. It's less than any other province provides. The Conservatives have done it in Nova Scotia for a long time and it makes sense for Manitoba.

Mrs. Mitchelson: And not nearly as many Conservative supporters making presentations on this bill as union bosses that made presentations on bills when we were in government. It's clear that the NDP is only interested in padding their own political

coffers with Bill 37 than they are in hearing Manitobans speak.

Mr. Speaker, will the government commit today to holding broad public consultations right across the province? They don't even have to set up a new committee. Will they include it in the public consultations on Senate reform?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Well, the public consultations start at 4 o'clock today, Mr. Speaker, and I wonder if the member opposite has changed her view on banning union and corporate donations which she voted against, you know, a few years ago.

I notice on the Web site of the members opposite you could pay \$250 for a golf tournament. It's not the quarries at Tories anymore. It's another golf tournament. Their political receipt for this event will be \$187. You can calculate it on the PC generous donation tax benefit credit donation site. You can get—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable First Minister has the floor.

Mr. Doer: Thank you very much. You know, the public will know and we'll tell them that the members opposite campaigned against partial financing, and they took the money. They take the money, Mr. Speaker. The public doesn't like hypocrites.

Bill 38 Public Hearings

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, if the public doesn't like hypocrites, the public certainly wouldn't like this Premier (Mr. Doer). They take the money. This Premier took a million dollars, as well, in the last election. I don't remember him giving it back. Now he wants another million dollars from taxpayers' pockets. He wants to take it. We don't want it. Give it back to them.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister takes great joy in promoting his pre-budget dog-and-pony show. He says he wants to consult with Manitobans on the most serious issues of the budget, yet he is the sponsor of the most important piece of legislation ever to hit this Legislature this session.

Will he now commit to withdrawing Bill 38 and provide meaningful consultation in all regions of the province for all Manitobans?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): The last two budgets have been presented in a full summary budget format. They've been explained to the public. We told them before the election we were going to change to full summary budget. We told them after the Auditor General recommended that. We've gone around the province letting people know that we're moving to a full summary budget format.

People understand it, Mr. Speaker. People know it's coming. It's very clear to the public that the full summary budget approach is the trend across the country. It's been explained to Manitobans. I have explained to them in budget consultations that we're moving to a full summary budget approach, and I've shown them the information on what that means. What's the member's problem?

Mr. Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, the member's problem is this Finance Minister. This member's concerned that this is an open invitation for deficit financing again, and it's wrong. It's absolutely wrong.

We know the Finance Minister is in financial peril. He spends too much and revenues can't keep up. Bill 38 calls for a referendum on tax increases but not on increases for services provided by Crown corporations, Manitoba Hydro, Autopac and Liquor, to fuel his spending habit.

Because of these hidden taxes, Mr. Speaker, will the minister today commit to a province-wide referendum on Bill 38?

* (14:00)

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the referendum requirements for raising major taxes is retained in the new balanced budget legislation. We are fully accountable to the Legislature every year when we table the budget. We usually have a healthy debate on that budget and we can still do that in the future.

What this bill does do, Mr. Speaker, you can no longer sell Crown corporations and use the profits to balance the budget. You can no longer hide the pension deficit and pretend that it doesn't exist when it's growing to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars a year. You can no longer use the Fiscal Stabilization to balance the budget, and you have to be fully accountable on a year-by-year basis for how you spend the money with a financial management strategy.

All of those features strengthen fiscal responsibility in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, this minister never told Manitobans that he was going to repeal the 1995 balanced budget legislation. That was balanced budget legislation that this Premier (Mr. Doer) and this government voted against. They didn't want balanced budget legislation then; they don't want it now. What this legislation does, and I'll quote a comment from the *Brandon Sun*: This bill sets the stage for a return to the deficit era in Manitoba.

Will this minister promise this House right now, and all Manitobans, without having a referendum, without having his consultation process, will he promise this House right now he will not run an operating core deficit for this province in the next four years, before the next election, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, let's review history. How did the members opposite balance their budget after they brought in the legislation? Well, the first thing they did is they sold off the telephone system and then they used the profits from the telephone system to balance the budget. You can't do that under this legislation.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let's have some decorum here, please.

Mr. Selinger: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

After they sold off the telephone system and used the profits to balance the budget, the next thing they did was they took \$100 million extra out of Lotteries to balance the budget at the same time as they were illegally borrowing money to build casinos. That's not possible under this legislation, as well, Mr. Speaker.

We balanced the budget for eight years. We balanced the budget for nine years. We'll balance the budget for the next four years and then we'll go back to the people with our sixth credit-rating improvement and fiscal responsibility while investing in health care, *[inaudible]* pension and infrastructure and you'll be ready to face for the—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Bill 31 Government Intent on Amendments

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, there's been a black cloud hanging over this legislative session: an end to balanced budgets, a vote tax, a government censorship of opposition messaging and a clampdown on release of information of

government records, a disdain for democracy, as Elizabeth Fleming said in the *Free Press*.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: Why has he introduced amendments to Bill 31 that will expand the types of access to information requests that government can disregard, censor and deny?

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport): I'm pleased to rise in the House today to shed more light on the matter that's been raised by the Member for Morris.

We believe that the adjudicator model that I've spoken about here—and my colleague the Minister of Healthy Living (Ms. Irvin-Ross) in my absence last week spoke about in great detail—we believe that's the right model here for the Province of Manitoba.

We also believe that we're building upon 20 years of experience with the Ombudsman's office. The Ombudsman, of course, we all know has powers that are equal to that of most information and privacy commissioners in Canada. I believe that with the added recourse of the new adjudicator that all the necessary powers are in place for an effective review—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, Mr. Speaker, in 1999 they believed that there should be a privacy commissioner in Manitoba, and eight years of bad government gives them good reason to hide access to information.

Mr. Speaker, Ms. Fleming points out that in 1999 the Premier (Mr. Doer) thought it was important and essential to install a privacy commissioner in Manitoba. Instead of doing that, the Premier installs an adjudicator. It is simply another level of bureaucracy and will only serve to further delay the release of information.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain, as Ms. Fleming states in the *Winnipeg Free Press*: In 1999, the Premier told Manitobans he would install a privacy commissioner; why does he refuse to do it now?

Mr. Robinson: We're simply listening to the recommendations of Manitobans, Mr. Speaker, and also the recommendations of the Ombudsman. As I said in my earlier response to the question, to the member, we believe the adjudicator model is the best option we have at this time. I look forward to further dialogue with honourable members across the way on the matter.

We believe that this model and reducing the waiting time from 30 years to 20 years is also a step in the right direction, and I believe, Mr. Speaker, we are making progress.

Mrs. Taillieu: Progress is going forward, Mr. Speaker, not going back and hiding information from the public.

In the novel *1984*, Big Brother ran a ministry of truth. Its sole purpose was the exact opposite, to falsify history and mislead the public. I find it ironic that this Premier (Mr. Doer) changes The Freedom of Information Act to clamp down on the release of information and increase the power of his departments to censor and deny public information. *[interjection]* Yes, yes, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the same question Ms. Fleming asks: Why is this government limiting democracy by clamping down on the public's right to know?

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I believe that we're becoming a more transparent government. *[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker, I do believe I responded previously to the questions that were asked of me. I believe that the adjudicator model that we are introducing in the province of Manitoba is among the best in Canada, and I look forward to further dialogue on this in committee and also into third reading.

Stretcher Services Costs to Patients

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): A constituent of mine was taken by stretcher services from a personal care hospital to the Grace Hospital ER. Because the Grace ER was full, he had to wait on this stretcher in the waiting room for one and a half hours, and he was charged \$120 for this waiting time. I'd like to table the invoice of this patient who had to wait in the ER.

He's on extremely limited income and he does not have the money to pay that bill. I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to explain to my constituent and his sister why he had to pay to wait to get into an ER.

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I thank the member opposite for the question, and, indeed, any occasion where she brings forward a situation that may not have been the best for a patient, for a constituent or otherwise, certainly I would want to see the details, having just received this piece of paper now.

I will certainly commit to the member to review the situation and any further details that she can provide for us. We do know that we work very diligently to ensure that we build our complement of emergency room doctors and nurses, to ensure that we have ambulance services that are available in the quickest amount of time, to ensure that we—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Oswald: —inter-facility transfers, as we committed to do over a year ago.

So if this, indeed, is something that needs to—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Driedger: Well, Mr. Speaker, during the last election, it was this Minister of Health who promised to fix the problems at the Grace Hospital ER. In fact, she has gleefully stood in this House on numerous occasions and said that she has fixed them. Well, she's misleading Manitobans. The latest Freedom of Information documents also show that at the Grace Hospital ER, the nursing shortage is the worst of all the community ERs in Winnipeg, and the ER doctor shortage at the Grace Hospital is by far the worst in Winnipeg. Now a patient is being forced to pay as he's being forced to wait to get into an ER.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health: Why is a patient forced to wait to get into an ER and forced to pay for that wait?

* (14:10)

Ms. Oswald: Again, as I've said to the member opposite, if there's a patient that has received some service that is not up to a standard or there is some discrepancy about cost, certainly we're going to investigate the specifics.

I find it interesting, Mr. Speaker, that a moment ago her colleague said that government wouldn't give any information, and now she's citing the fact that through FIPPA we give information about wait times, about vacancies more so than ever happened before in Manitoba history.

I can say to the members that we want to ensure that we have factual information on the record concerning all aspects, health care in particular.

This is the same member that stood up day after day saying the Grace Hospital was going to close, frightening seniors in the area. They're the only ones that ever closed an ER in Winnipeg, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, she may not have closed it, but it is not safely staffed at this point in time.

Mr. Speaker, I sat in the Grace Hospital ER last week for 10 hours, eight hours with a patient who was in hallway bed No. 5. There were 10 patients in the hallway, and that was happening all week. But I'm sure that was an illusion on my part because, apparently, this government has ended hallway medicine.

So when the ER is full, when the ER hallway is full and when patients are forced to wait on a stretcher, why should a patient have to pay to wait because this government did not end hallway medicine?

Ms. Oswald: As I've said to the member, we will certainly look into this particular case to find out the details, as we always do, if and when members of this House bring situations forward.

I can say to the member opposite that we didn't appreciate, we as Manitobans didn't appreciate fearmongering about the closure of ER. To stand up and say that care is not safe is also highly irresponsible. We know that doctors, nurses and health professionals together are the ones that determine safety, not politicians.

We also know, Mr. Speaker, that it is doctors and nurses working together that triage patients to ensure that those that have the most critical emergencies are the ones that are seen first. We'd much rather have doctors and nurses making those decisions than the politicians opposite.

Sandilands Provincial Forest Fire Risk Management

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, it seems like you'll get personalized service if you supply a bill.

Mr. Speaker, this weekend a fire in the Sandilands Provincial Forest consumed more than 3,400 hectares of trees and cut a swath 11 kilometres wide. Area residents were on evacuation alert. Damages will be in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions. The Sandilands region has been taking a beating in recent years due to the repeated fires and a severe windstorm in 2005.

Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of Conservation convinced that under the recent dry conditions it was appropriate for activities such as the large ATV derby to have taken place this past weekend?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, we need to be very careful. We are investigating the causes of the fire that took place in the Sandilands over the course of the weekend.

I want to correct the member opposite on one fact. In terms of dry conditions, we always need to be careful, but this is a level 2 condition which was moderate, not an extreme condition which I've seen, which he's implied in his questions and others.

Over the course of the summer, most of Manitoba will be under level 2 conditions, just as the Sandilands forest was on the weekend. So, Mr. Speaker, we need to be very cautious. We need to be very determined we're going to get to the bottom of the case.

Mr. Graydon: Mr. Speaker, the water bombers were sitting and ready. The choppers were sitting and ready. The Minister of Conservation just fiddles while the southeast burns.

Mr. Speaker, last September, during Estimates, I asked the Minister of Conservation what this government was doing to reduce the fire hazard in the Sandilands Provincial Forest. Fallen trees from the windstorm of 2005 had never been cleaned up and added damage to the fire of 2007.

Now we have seen another terrible fire. These damages will take decades to repair. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Conservation concede that the current forest management strategy needs a major overhaul to prevent these kinds of incidences from being repeated?

Mr. Struthers: Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying that the people who are involved in our fire program are very professional people. We go to great lengths every summer before fire season to make sure they're very well trained. We started earlier this year and we've invested in helicopters and we've invested in CL-215 water bombers to make sure they're absolutely ready to defend the Manitoba forest, to defend Manitoba communities.

Mr. Speaker, I'd like to suggest—since the former Member for Emerson is here and the current member brought up the whole Sandilands blow-down—when the former Member for Emerson and I toured that area, we were very impressed with the work of the Conservation people to help the people in his community, in his constituency, to be protected from a larger fire. That was very good work on the part of our staff.

Mr. Graydon: You may well be right that there was a lot of clean-up done, but it was done at the expense of every individual that owned the property there. There was no government money involved in Sandilands cleaning up their town.

Mr. Speaker, common sense dictates that we should be trying to minimize fire risks in our forest wherever possible. This morning on CJOB, Conservation official Tom Mirus said there were no restrictions on activities such as ATV derbies, but he added, and I quote, we're going to have to come up with some system, end quote.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Conservation tell Manitobans if there will be a public review of access rules around provincial forests? What steps has he taken to prevent these fires in our provincial forests?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, in so many ways the Member for Emerson has to be very careful. This is still under investigation, and the last thing that anybody needs is either the member opposite or anybody else jumping to a bunch of conclusions while an investigation is undergone. Certainly, Mr. Speaker, we shouldn't be pointing fingers just willy-nilly around the province either. That's irresponsible.

What we need to do, Mr. Speaker, is complete that investigation and then make some decisions based on facts rather than conjecture.

Cancer Mortality Rates Provincial Differences

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, a striking finding in the book *Canadian Cancer Statistics 2008* is a comparison of the number of new cases of cancer and cancer deaths in Manitoba and Alberta. Alberta has a significantly lower ratio of cancer deaths in proportion to the number of new cancer diagnoses compared to Manitoba. Indeed, the difference between Manitoba and Alberta is so striking that if Manitoba had the same cancer mortality rates as Alberta we would have more than 200 fewer people dying from cancer each year in Manitoba.

Will the Minister of Health, on an urgent basis, investigate why Manitoba has proportionately so many more people dying from cancer than Alberta?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I thank the member for the question. I know that all members of this House are deeply concerned about the work that we can be doing here in Manitoba with

our partners at CancerCare Manitoba, at the Canadian Cancer Society. That's why we work together, to ensure that we're working not only on the best possible treatments that we can be providing to our patients but also to the most important preventative measures that we can all be taking for the cases where we can prevent cancer in the first place.

We know that in cross-Canada studies concerning cancer rates that Manitoba in many respects can fare very well. We know we have a young population. We also know that in demographic terms Alberta has the youngest population. There are inherent differences there right off the top.

What we have to focus on here in Manitoba is ensuring that people continue to get among the fastest service if not the fastest service here in Manitoba.

* (14:20)

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, why is the minister not paying more attention to cancer? Why is the strategic framework for cancer services in Manitoba not even signed by the minister?

Manitoba's age-standardized mortality rate, which corrects for differences in ages, shows that Manitoba has a higher mortality from breast and stomach cancer in women, from prostate cancer, pancreatic cancer, lung cancer, colorectal cancer, esophageal cancer, bladder cancer, oral cancer, and from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and leukemia in men. All those cancers, we have a higher age-standardized mortality rate.

Either Manitobans are less healthy than Albertans, which I doubt, or prevention, diagnosis and treatment are done less well here in Manitoba. Which is it? Will the minister undertake an investigation immediately into what the difference is so we can find out why we're not doing as well as we should be doing in Manitoba?

Ms. Oswald: Again, I commend the member opposite for raising these important issues concerning the health of Manitobans. I know that he cares deeply about these issues from his prior professional life, but, Mr. Speaker, he must be aware of the fact that Manitoba has been a leader in a number of areas concerning the treatment, diagnosis of cancer.

I know the member opposite is acutely aware that we have the No. 1 shortest wait time for radiation therapy of any jurisdiction in Canada, Mr. Speaker. I know that this member opposite is also aware that we were one of the first provinces in Canada to introduce a colorectal cancer screening program, the first one to be on the ground. I know that the member opposite's aware of that.

I also know that the member opposite knows that we were the first province, well, tied with one in the Maritimes, to introduce a smoking ban in public places, Mr. Speaker, so we have shown leadership in many areas. We always have to continue to work to look at areas of research that can improve our mortality rates and to improve our treatment, and, of course, we're committed to do that.

Low-Speed Electric Vehicles Availability

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, the ZENN electric car is manufactured here in Canada, and, in fact, the federal government has already approved its sale in Canada, but it's subject to provinces getting on board and supporting these electric cars.

My question specific to the Minister of Science and Technology is: When can we anticipate the Province of Manitoba will allow electric cars like the ZENN product to be sold here in the province of Manitoba? Will the government give indication that that will be done before the end of this summer?

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines): I hope the member is aware that there are other manufacturers. There's one near Carman. There's one out by White Horse Plains that I've gone and visited. So there are lots of manufacturers of these low-speed electric cars, and I hope the member has had the time to read Bill 15. We presented it about a month ago. It's actually part of the bill, so read it. Once the bill is passed, we hope to soon see those cars on the road very, very shortly.

Recreational Facilities Government Support

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Last Saturday, I had the pleasure of attending the opening ceremonies of a magnificent recreation facility in Winnipeg's northeast. I understand, Mr. Speaker, recreational facilities are very important for building our communities, particularly youth. However, such

facilities cannot be built without the co-operation of government from all levels and the private sector.

Could I request the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Sport inform the House of the participation by our government in building this magnificent park in northeast Winnipeg?

Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport): First of all, let me thank the people of Transcona, first of all the residents. I want to thank the MLAs for Transcona and Radisson for the great work that they have done. Secondly, let me thank the federal government and the announcement that was made back in 2005 that we were, in fact, going to proceed with the building of this magnificent facility.

At the same time, I want to give thanks to Mr. Patrick Done, who is a staff member of the Province of Manitoba. Regrettably, Mr. Done has been diagnosed with terminal lung cancer, and we wish him Godspeed in his recovery, but he did a lot of work in making this a reality. The facility, itself, I think is a tremendous asset to east Winnipeg and, indeed, to the city of Winnipeg and to the province of Manitoba.

Disraeli Freeway Construction Plans

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, both city councillors and members of the Legislature from the northeast quadrant of the city of Winnipeg have listened to what residents have said, have looked at the plans for the four-lane bridge over the Disraeli. Many, many residents, motorists, constituents have indicated a desire to see a new plan in place that would see six lanes, but the City of Winnipeg can't do it alone and they need provincial support.

I'd like to ask the Premier, Mr. Speaker, whether he would stand up in the House today and commit to taking a serious look at a new proposal that would look at six lanes for the Disraeli Freeway and have an option to keep traffic flowing over the Disraeli during the construction, not see it closed for over 16 months.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): We look at all advice based on engineering advice. The member opposite will know that when we worked together in the past, looking at the Peguis Bridge, it was prioritized over the Charleswood Bridge because there would be a reduction in traffic of about 18 percent on Henderson Highway, and Main Street was underutilized.

So there always has to be an engineering component of any of these proposals.

I know that MLAs, from time to time, make proposals on different expensive routes. For example, the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. McFadyen) has proposed that there be an additional Waverley underpass to go with the great magnificent work that we did on the Kenaston underpass, but the Kenaston underpass was based on engineering reviews, engineering studies and other factual documents.

So, Mr. Speaker, any consideration we would have in northeast Winnipeg includes, first of all, our own responsibility, and I'm proud of northeast Winnipeg. After a long lag time, we are finally completing the much awaited, long-anticipated twinning of the northeast Perimeter Highway on the northeast quadrant of Winnipeg, something that should have been done a long, long time ago.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

2008 Manitoba Women Entrepreneur of the Year Awards

Ms. Sharon Blady (Kirkfield Park): Mr. Speaker, I was thrilled to attend the 2008 Manitoba Women Entrepreneur of the Year Awards on May 22, organized by the Women Business Owners of Manitoba, a non-profit, independent organization that addresses the unique needs of women entrepreneurs. I was joined by the Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines (Mr. Rondeau), the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) and other honourable colleagues from the Legislature.

The event was a wonderful celebration of dynamic women who are revolutionizing the business world. It is interesting to note that the statistics for Canadian women entrepreneurs show that women continue to open more businesses, hire more people, and their businesses survive longer than those of men. Manitoba's women entrepreneurs are leaders in both the community and in the workplace.

Lewena Bayer, from Civility Group Incorporated, won for International Trade. Tara Potter, from Thompson Water Factory Limited, won for Contribution to Community. Michèle Lécuyer-Hutton, from Access Direct Promotions, won for Home Enterprise. Nadine Coubrough, from VERICO

One-Link Mortgage and Financial, won for Impact on Local Economy. Kristina Poturica, from Rituals in Hair and Skin, won for Emerging Business. Karen McMechan, from Karen's Fashions, won for Excellence in Service. Claudette Griffin, from L.J. Baron Realty, won for Lifetime Achievement. Elizabeth Gage, from PCM International, won for both Building Business as well as being the Overall Excellence winner.

Elizabeth Gage talked about the excellent gains that women have made in making their presence known in the business community and that there is much more work to be done. Elizabeth is a wonderful success story and a role model for the many young women who may be considering a career as an entrepreneur. She started her business in 1995, with nothing except a laptop plugged into a car cigarette lighter, and today the company boasts international clients with a global view of the future. With offices in Winnipeg, Vancouver and Toronto, PCM International has left its mark on people in cities across the continent and around the world.

I would like to congratulate all the inspiring nominees and winners for their outstanding energy and drive to succeed. I encourage all young women to consider careers as entrepreneurs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Nickels for Nick School Fundraisers

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the grade 4 students of Oak Bank Elementary School and the grade 8 students of Springfield Middle School who, through a selfless act of kindness, raised \$1,770.41 and \$913.25 respectively for a fellow student. Together they organized Nickels for Nick, a program to raise money for a specially designed bike for Nick Didora, a 10-year-old Oakbank resident who is living with caudal regression syndrome.

Caudal regression syndrome means that Nick can only walk short distances before becoming exhausted. While children like Nick can strengthen the muscles and improve their quality of life through use of this specially designed bike, it is unfortunately very expensive and beyond the means of his family. Recently, Oak Bank Elementary held a special ceremony to celebrate the Nickels for Nick program to congratulate both their students and those from Springfield Middle School for raising an

extraordinary amount of money for their fellow student.

It was also an opportunity for the Rehabilitation Centre for Children Foundation to present Nick with his bike. Nick took his new bike for a spin through the hallways of the school as teachers, family and friends cheered him on. It was truly an amazing sight.

What these students have done for Nick is tremendous, and it clearly shows their ability to selflessly share in the happiness of another. They were able to put themselves in someone else's shoes and it was a valuable experience for them.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the members here today to join me in both congratulating the students of Oak Bank Elementary School and Springfield Middle School for organizing Nickels for Nick and for all their fundraising efforts. I would also like to thank the Rehabilitation Centre for Children Foundation which provided Nick with his bike that will enable him to cycle for the first time and to join in more, instead of sitting on the sidelines. I wish Nick and the entire Didora family all the best. Thank you.

* (14:30)

Night on an Old Trade Route Musical Performance

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, May 24 was a special day for northwestern Manitoba. Two separate performances of a cross-cultural concert, aptly entitled "Night on an Old Trade Route," took place inside the world's largest canvas teepee in Cranberry Portage. The teepee is located in the park on the shores of beautiful Lake Athapapuskow, directly on the ancient portage linking the Saskatchewan River watershed with the Grass River watershed.

It was an evening of musical and cultural magic. I was thrilled to be joined by the Honourable Steve Ashton, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Tina Keeper, MP for the Churchill riding. The concert was a colourful creative fusion of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal cultures. The event was nothing less than a spiritual experience, a blend of old and new creating something truly unique.

Four of the selections were premieres. The "Ballad of Samuel Hearne", written by Mark Kolt, was one of the many crowd favourites. Brenda Schmidt's poetry was integral to some of the musical

compositions. Jim Hiscott was one of several guest performers.

On behalf of all the members of the Manitoba Legislature, I thank the Flin Flon Community Choir, the Flin Flon Arts Council, the Flin Flon Indian and Métis Friendship Centre and the Cranberry Portage Aboriginal Arts Festival Committee of which I'm privileged to be a member.

I thank the Rising Sun Drum Group for their fantastic performances. As well, a huge thank you to Elder Lionel Mason, Mark and Crystal Kolt, Brenda Schmidt, Jim Hiscott, Frank Michelle, Dennis Head and Sandy McKenzie.

Irvin "Musky" Head and his wife, Lisa Gamblin, deserve special mention. It was Irvin's dream, after all, that inspired the creation of the teepee. This cross-cultural concert could be seen as a fitting tribute to two influential elders who are no longer with us, Irvin Head's mother, Irma, and his grandmother, Margaret Head.

Sadly, as in a Greek tragedy, a moment of triumph can quickly turn into a moment of disaster. Several hours after the last performance on Saturday night, a storm destroyed a large portion of the canvas on the teepee. However, as in the past when faced with adversity, northerners will band together in a spirit of cross-cultural harmony. We will organize and fundraise and the teepee will be restored.

The world's largest canvas teepee, the new icon on the old trade route will be returned to its former glory and will be the centre of many more cultural and community events. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

National Day of Healing and Reconciliation

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative caucus, I rise to mark the importance of today as the National Day of Healing and Reconciliation.

On this day, we take collective pause to recall the enormous social destruction wreaked by residential, day and mission schools on our First Nation, Métis, Inuit and Aboriginal populations and to continue to take steps towards further healing and reconciliation.

Yesterday, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) attended a day of commemoration at Upper Fort Garry, co-ordinated by the Manitoba Métis Federation. Today, I had the privilege of attending the day of inspiration in Brandon, co-ordinated by the Anishanabe Atisokaywin

organization and had the opportunity to listen to the remarks made by Paul Mentuck and Margaret Clearsky and the keynote delivered by Chief Clarence Louie.

On first impression, a Day of Healing and Reconciliation may seem an inadequate gesture to mark the incalculable suffering caused by the Canadian residential school system and, in a certain sense, nothing is capable of rectifying this historical wrong. However, our National Day of Healing and Reconciliation is about something else. It speaks to the elements of the past, the present and the future.

Firstly, this day challenges us to confront an ugly past and all of its sordid misery, as an act both of remembrance and commemoration. The history speaks directly to us and states, lest we forget. As well, this day invites us to improve our collective historical understanding of this important period to recall an important part of Manitoba's history.

Secondly, the day National Day of Healing and Reconciliation also concerns the urgency of our present situation. Across our nation and across our province, First Nation, Métis, Inuit and Aboriginal people remain marked by the collective historical trauma of the residential school system and the consequences of this reality. Part of this process lies in making peace with the past through reconciliation efforts, while the other is building promise for the future by making change. In fact, this morning, the day of commemoration is devoted to this same theme of finding the courage to make positive change when facing desperate circumstances. It is directly out of this necessity to take action, to strive for improvement, enact positive changes that leads us to the third and final dimension of this important day—hope for a better future.

Mr. Speaker, this National Day of Healing and Reconciliation cannot hope to repair past wrongs nor should we expect it to do so. Instead, we can only hope to change the framework within which we approach this issue from one of pain and suffering to one of remembrance, positive change, and hope. Thank you.

Buhler Recreation Centre

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): I rise today to announce that the Buhler Recreation Park is now open. After five years of planning and two and a half years of construction, the state-of-the-art facilities of this brand new park are now open to the public. The official grand opening celebration was held on

Saturday, May 24. It was an exciting event attended by hundreds of community residents and supporters. The official opening ceremonies were equally exciting and were addressed by our Premier (Mr. Doer), Mayor Katz, Mr. and Mrs. Buhler. Members from Transcona and Elmwood and Councillor Wyatt were also present. There were events for people of all ages throughout the rest of the day with live entertainment, activity tents and celebrity baseball games. They ended with a bang in a display of fireworks at dusk.

Mr. Speaker, it was a great privilege for me to be able to attend this event of the biggest multi-seasonal, multi-use park in Canada. The Buhler Recreation Park, covering 150 acres, including baseball diamonds, nature trails, soccer pitches, a playground, an exhibition area and a canteen is a magnificent addition to the city's existing park system. Open all year-round with skating ponds, a toboggan hill and cross-country skiing trails for the winter, it will provide excellent recreation activities for the families across the entire province. A BMX track, beach volleyball courts, and baseball facilities are only some of the future plans in store for this particular park.

Mr. Speaker, the Buhler Recreation Park is expected to attract an estimated 400,000 people a year. It will contribute approximately \$10 million to \$15 million annually to the local economy and is set to hold the Canadian Softball Championship in the coming year.

Mr. Speaker I'd like to thank Steve Mymko, who has worked tirelessly to see the dream of this particular park realized. Along with 15 members of the East Winnipeg Sports Association, the volunteer team has done a significant job. Thank you very much.

GRIEVANCES

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, on a grievance.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): It's unfortunate that I have to rise in this House today to condemn the actions of this government. This grievance is in relation to legislation that this government is bringing forward and the squelching of democratic rights of individuals in this province as pertains to many of the bills that the government has put forth in this session, but particularly the three—Bill 17, Bill 37, and Bill 38—that have come forward.

* (14:40)

Bill 37, being the—I'll get the title, Mr. Speaker, so that I have it accurate. It is a long, convoluted title; Bill 37, it is called The Lobbyists Registration Act and Amendments to The Elections Act, The Elections Finances Act, The Legislative Assembly Act and The Legislative Assembly Management Commission Act, of Manitoba. This is brought forward under the auspices of having a set election date, which, of course, the Premier (Mr. Doer) is the only one that can fix that date, and he's opened it up so that he can fix that date prior to the June 14 date in 2011 that he has put forward. The Premier is certainly the one that can fix this election date, and he is the only one that can unfix this one as well.

As it was just brought out in the House, this bill was brought forward by the Minister of Justice, the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), as well, and it's the first time that such an elections finances act bill has not been brought forward by the Premier himself. We, of course, raised the issue—the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party today in this House—about why this bill was not brought in by the Premier, or if he was so embarrassed about having to put his own name to this, that he disassociated himself. We challenged the Minister of Justice to challenge the fact that he may have drawn the short straw or caught the hot potato on this one.

This act is very regressive in regard to a number of other areas. Two of them that I'll speak on are, of course, the maximum amount of political party donations that the Premier has determined will be taken from the government of Manitoba, from the general revenues to fund the operations of political parties in Manitoba at the charge of \$1.25 per vote.

Mr. Speaker, each person who votes in Manitoba unknowingly will have \$1.25 taken out of general revenue to fund the operations of all parties in the House. Our party, of course, has denied wanting to move this forward. We don't think that operations of political parties should be funded out of general revenue; they should be funded by individual donations. Of course, we were successful in raising more individual donations during the last election than this government was, in spite of the elections finances limitations that they brought in, in previous years. It just shows that the government is not gaining in the popularity that they thought they would, and, by bringing in such derogatory legislation, it will not help them in the future.

I want to point out the irony of this, of how political this actually gets. We've got a Premier here

that brought a bill in that puts a maximum on this of \$250,000 per political party. If there was no maximum on this, his party would collect roughly \$251,042.50. It's with no irony that the \$250,000 level was chosen because he's only giving up \$1,042. Of course, our PC Party would have gained some \$198,000 and the Liberals \$64,000.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I challenge the government to say, if they're going to carry forward to this, at least they could amend it to bring it down to some other number. Maybe they could bring it down to \$198,000, and then they and ourselves would be on the same level playing field at least, instead of a government having \$60,000 a year, a quarter of a million dollar lead in the next election.

Let me go further, Mr. Speaker. Let me say that if they were really concerned about it, they would help our Liberal friends as well by limiting it to \$60,000, which is what they would get, \$64,821. So why was this arbitrary—arbitrary? There's nothing arbitrary about choosing \$250,000 on this. The government knew exactly what they were doing. They're taking the maximum amount of dollars out of general revenue that they think they can get away with by justifying it at \$1.25 apiece. If they were to go to the \$64,000 level, of course, that doesn't make it any better. There's still roughly \$200,000 coming out of general revenue every year to fund the operations of ourselves as political parties, which is not democratic.

We believe, certainly, that for it to be brought in by New Democratic government, this is about as undemocratic as you can possibly make it. It's the heavy hand of dictatorship, and that's what we're seeing here. If he really wanted to make it even, he could go down into some of the other political parties, say, make the maximum \$2,000 for each party. That would make it fair for even his old friends in the Communist Party, but then I digress because they're already represented. I guess I want to say that this is not a good bill for Manitobans, and this is only one of the areas as to why not.

This bill also limits the amount of information and circulars that we as MLAs, not only in opposition, but from the backbench of the government side as well. I hope they're all listening as well, because the only ones that this doesn't impact really are some of the Cabinet members who get, perhaps, more publicity through the departments on a regular basis anyway, Mr. Speaker.

They're limiting the types and determining what can be in these materials for content by passing this bill on the censorship of caucus communications which is, certainly, for the three franking pieces that we've always had the opportunity to send out. The government will be limiting the input into those as well.

When they want to limit our—*[interjection]*—that's correct. I stand corrected there as well, Mr. Speaker. I don't suppose that they're going to do anything about the backbench information that's being sent out from their side of the House. You can be sure that the only ones that will be censored is our side, the opposition side of the House. That's also very undemocratic from this particular type when they've got unlimited budgets to advertise all year long and within their departments as well.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of taxpayer-funded government advertising as well comes into this. The government is saying that any government advertising can continue up to 60 days prior to an election year and, up until that point, there is unlimited advertising from the government, advertising during the pre-writ period.

So, Mr. Speaker, these are only a few of the ways in which this bill is extremely unfair in regard to the future democracy of Manitoba. I just say that it's all stacked in favour of the government. It's obviously the Premier (Mr. Doer) that's brought this bill in; the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak) virtually sat on his hands today in regard to taking any credit for this.

I'm told that most of the backbenchers and maybe some of the Cabinet members didn't even know that this bill was coming forward until it was—and, if they were so proud of it, why did they table it at the last minute before the session could accept bills that would be passed during this term or during this session by the 12th of June?

Mr. Speaker, I say that that's only one bill that's very derogatory for the future of Manitoba, regardless of what party is in power. We believe that this type of legislation should be rescinded.

Bill 38, I call it the bill to kill balanced budget legislation in Manitoba. Balanced budget legislation, debt reduction legislation that came in in 1995 was recognized worldwide, certainly here in North America, as the most accountable balanced budget and operating budgets of any legislative jurisdiction

in North America at the time, Mr. Speaker, not just Canada, the United States as well.

Mr. Speaker, it brought forward the fact that you had to pay down the debt of the province by \$90 million a year which has now been adjusted for inflation somewhat. The government likes to say that they have done that as well and yet, if they have, at the same time increasing the debt of the province; that wasn't what it was set up to do. It was called balanced budget and debt reduction legislation, not balanced budget and increased-reduction legislation.

It's a very defamatory move and lets the government off the hook for any kind of future reduction in transfer payments from Ottawa, because there are only two ways that they can bring this forward. The new legislation states that they would balance the books once in four years and then not then, if there was a disaster which they don't determine by either weather or impact from another government jurisdiction. We can read that as, if there's a reduction in transfer payments from Ottawa, we don't have to balance the books at all either.

Mr. Speaker, the third one is The Environment Amendment Act (Permanent Ban on Building or Expanding Hog Facilities), Bill 17. This is about as undemocratic as it comes. It's an attack on rural Manitoba; it's an attack on farmers and their families to be able to make a living in that jurisdiction. It's an attack on small business in Manitoba and any other business in Manitoba.

I know from speaking to them that the Chambers of Commerce, the council of independent business in Manitoba and others are most concerned about this type of derogatory legislation coming forward. They will not forget this legislation, if the government is forced to put closure on this type of legislation to bring it through, as we saw last Thursday by moving it all to second reading without further debate on it, basically to move it all to committee rather and to get the second readings through.

Mr. Speaker, with that, I want to say that I look forward to being able to have the input of my fellow Manitobans on these bills and look forward to their demise.

* (14:50)

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Steinbach, on a grievance?

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): On a grievance, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On a grievance.

Mr. Goertzen: Mr. Speaker, I rise at this time on a grievance.

I want to thank my colleague from Arthur-Virden for the comments that he put on the record regarding some of the legislation here. They certainly are, as my friend from Springfield references, sage comments. I hope that government members listened to the comments from the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire). I know that the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) listened with rapt attention and perhaps he will be able to go to his Premier (Mr. Doer) and give voice to that Cabinet, where no voice has been heard for the last number of years, because all of the decisions, it seems, come solely from the mouth and the mind of the Premier. Clearly, and surely, when we look at the pieces of legislation before us for consideration here in the Legislature and in committee tonight and in the weeks ahead, Mr. Speaker, we look to some of the undemocratic principles that are coming forward to our province and also some poor decisions in terms of how industry is being treated.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

Certainly, I've spoken in this House, Mr. Acting Speaker, on the issue of Bill 17, the permanent moratorium on the pork industry in Manitoba. Members opposite, ministers and backbenchers alike, have turned a blind eye and turned a deaf ear to the concerns raised by not only pork producers in Manitoba, but really, business people and ordinary Manitobans, some of whom will be employed in the industry, some of whom will have a more tertiary connection to the industry, raising concern about the decision of this government to kill the pork industry in the province of Manitoba.

Seemingly hiding behind a report that the Minister of Conservation has gone forward and said is the reason, is the rationale for the moratorium. But he cannot point to one place in the CEC report that calls for a moratorium. He cannot reference a single passage or a single section in that report which specifically asks for a moratorium on the pork industry in Manitoba. Yet he holds it up as a shield. He holds it up as a shield to the criticism which he knows that he'll be receiving, probably at the behest of the Premier. It may not have come from the mind specifically of the Minister of Conservation. I would give him, perhaps, that much, but I think, at this stage of his young career in Cabinet, he still should have been able to go to the Premier, gone to the

Premier and said, this is not fair to producers. This is not fair to those working in the industry. More than that, it's not right for Manitobans generally. I know there will be a time when the minister will move on to other occupations, whether voluntarily or by the will of the people of his riding. He will reflect at some point in the forthcoming days. He will reflect upon this decision to kill an industry and to put to unemployment thousands of Manitobans and to kill a billion-dollar industry. I suspect that he will, upon that reflection, wherever he's reflecting from, have regret.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it'll be—[interjection]

Well, you know, the Minister of Conservation says he's going to call me in some other, faraway land. He can call me wherever he wants because I can tell you, wherever I am, Mr. Acting Speaker, whether I'm in Manitoba, whether I'm in another province, whether I'm at a different level of government, or whether I'm not in government at all; whether I'm not in government at all, I will stand. I will stand and clearly say to whoever will listen, from whatever party, from whatever level of government, that this decision was a wrong decision. It was a decision that was based on politics, not on science. It was a decision that was made to hurt an industry, not to help the environment. It was a decision that is going to impact individual Manitobans.

So I offer the Minister of Conservation that opportunity, that he can call me at any time, any place, wherever our political careers take us, and we can have this discussion. I can tell you that my position will not change on this, but I wonder if his will. I wonder, Mr. Acting Speaker, in the years to come, when the industry has faded away, and is certainly not what it will be or what it has been today and in the days past, whether or not he will not, in his heart of hearts—he might not verbalize it. He may still, even at that point, have a degree of stubbornness that he won't be able to put it into words. But I believe that, in his heart of hearts, this Minister of Conservation will say, it was a mistake.

Now, he may take comfort and take solace in the fact that it wasn't his decision. He might rely on the fact that it was his Premier that came to him and said, you must do this decision; you're in Cabinet; I'm pulling the puppet strings; your job is to respond to the strings that I pull, and you must put this into place. That might give this minister solace, but I can tell him that when he took—and he knows that when

he took his oath of office to be a minister, let alone to be a member of this Legislature, he did so with the implied and the express knowledge that he would be acting in the best interests of all Manitobans.

When he puts pen to paper on a piece of legislation or an Order-in-Council, it's his responsibility, ultimately, together with his Premier (Mr. Doer), so he shouldn't hide behind the fact or hide behind some cold and distant comfort that this isn't his decision, that he was forced into this by the Premier.

He will reflect, Mr. Acting Speaker, I believe he will reflect, and if we ever have this conversation in the years ahead, perhaps the minister would agree with me at that time when the lights of the political spotlights are off, that it hurt Manitobans, that it will hurt an industry, that we won't have the opportunity to rebuild an industry after it's been stripped away from the province, after people around Canada have lost confidence in our province as a place to invest not only in the pork industry but other industries, because they'll be looking. I can say that they'll be looking and saying, if they can do this to the pork industry, if they can do this to the 15,000 people who are involved and employed in this particular industry, if they can do it to a billion-dollar industry, surely, they can do it to my industry.

So why would I go to a province, why would I go to a jurisdiction that has the ability and that has the will, through an NDP government, to simply, one day, wake up and decide to take an arbitrary action? Arbitrary because it wasn't recommended by the CEC commission, arbitrary because there's not a stitch of evidence within a government department or within a ministerial briefing book that would point to the need for this particular moratorium or recommend the moratorium, Mr. Acting Speaker. That's the definition of arbitrary.

It was done simply and soulfully for the reason of hurting an industry for political reasons. Perhaps the NDP government—and I would hope it wouldn't be reflective of the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Lemieux), the Minister of Transportation, who represents a rural riding, who represents hundreds and hundreds of people who are employed in the pork industry.

I've received the calls, whether they're from Landmark or from other areas in La Verendrye, and they phone me and they've said, I can't believe that our member of the Legislature won't stand up and defend us. If he won't defend us when our livelihood

is at stake, if he won't defend us when our jobs are at stake, when will he defend us, Mr. Acting Speaker?

An Honourable Member: He says clean water comes first.

Mr. Goertzen: Is he simply—well, you know, I hear the Minister of Transportation, the Member for La Verendrye, saying, well, it's all about clean water. Well, then stand up and provide us any document which recommends the moratorium. Point to the place in the Clean Environment Commission where it says that there should be a permanent moratorium put in place—if he can point to any section.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Well, you know, the Minister responsible for Water Stewardship, she should hang her head because she's part of the cabal. She's part of the cabal that history will reflect on, will reflect on and look back on and say, these are the individuals, whether through malice or not, Mr. Speaker, who clamped down on an industry and put 15,000 people out of a job, who put an industry, a billion-dollar industry off the map in Manitoba, regardless and despite the fact that there is no science, despite the fact that there wasn't evidence, despite the fact that their own recommended hearing through the Clean Environment Commission didn't specifically ask for that.

I know, Mr. Speaker, that my time on this grievance is short. I would again plead to the members opposite. Don't simply listen deafly or look blindly to what the Premier is telling. You have the responsibility and the obligation as a minister to do the right thing for Manitobans. It's never the wrong time to do the right thing.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to announce that Bill 217 is being referred to the Standing Committee of Social and Economic Development for 4 p.m. today.

I'd also like to ask, Mr. Speaker, if there is agreement for the House to not sit tomorrow morning between 11 a.m. and 12 noon, but the House will still sit between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that Bill 217 is being referred to the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development for 4 p.m. today.

Also, is there agreement for the House to not sit tomorrow morning between 11 a.m. and 12 noon, but with the House to still sit between 10 a.m. and 11 a.m.? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

* (15:00)

Mr. Chomiak: I'd also like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Wednesday, May 28, if necessary, at 6 p.m. until 12 midnight, to consider the following bills: Bill 10, The Legislative Library Amendment Act; Bill 13, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Damage to Infrastructure); Bill 15, The Climate Change and Emissions Reductions Act; Bill 16, The Child Care Safety Charter (Community Child Care Standards Act Amended); Bill 19, The Liquor Control Act; Bill 21, The Advisory Council on Workforce Development Act; Bill 22, The Worker Recruitment and Protection Act; Bill 23, The International Labour Cooperation Agreements Implementation Act; Bill 27, The Shellmouth Dam and Other Water Control Works Management and Compensation Act; Bill 31, The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Amendment Act; Bill 32, The Personal Health Information Amendment Act; Bill 33, The Salvation Army Grace General Hospital Incorporation Amendment Act; Bill 34, The Child and Family Services Amendment and Child and Family Services Authorities Amendment Act; Bill 36, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act.

I would also like to announce that the Standing Committee on Justice will meet on Wednesday, May 28, if necessary, at 6 p.m. until midnight, to consider the following bills: Bill 14, The Criminal Property Forfeiture Amendment Act; Bill 26, The Legal Professions Amendment Act; Bill 35, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2008; Bill 37, The Lobbyists Registration Act and Amendments to The Elections Act, The Elections Finances Act, The Legislative Assembly Act and The Legislative Assembly Management Commission Act; Bill 39, The Court of Appeal Amendment Act; Bill 40, The Drivers and Vehicles Amendment Act, Highway Traffic Amendment and Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Wednesday, May 28, if necessary, at 6 p.m. until 12 midnight, to consider the following bills: Bill 10, Bill 13, Bill 15, Bill 16,

Bill 19, Bill 21, Bill 22, Bill 23, Bill 27, Bill 31, Bill 32, Bill 33, Bill 34 and Bill 36.

It is also announced that the Standing Committee on Justice will meet on Wednesday, May 28, if necessary, at 6 p.m. until midnight, to consider the following bills: Bill 14, Bill 26, Bill 35, Bill 37, Bill 39 and Bill 40.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I previously had leave of the House to consider no vote, no quorum for tomorrow, May 27, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m., and I'm wondering, because of the visit of the Ukrainian president to the province of Manitoba, if I might have consideration of leave of the House to have no votes, no quorum following question period tomorrow in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker: It's already been announced that there'll be no votes and no quorums for May 27 between 4 p.m. and 5 p.m., and also is there agreement for no votes and no quorum calls following question period tomorrow? Is there agreement on that? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. On House business this afternoon, I'd like to move in order into concurrence and third readings as outlined in the Notice Paper.

Mr. Speaker: Orders of the day will be concurrence and third reading and will be bills in order as on the Order Paper. So I am going to be calling concurrence and third reading of Bill 3, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

Any speakers? Is the House ready for the question?

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck). Oh, he hasn't moved it. He has to move it. It has to be moved.

Bill 3—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux), that Bill 3, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for the third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurischou), that we adjourn debate.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 4—The Provincial Court Amendment Act
(Family Mediators and Evaluators)**

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 4, The Provincial Court Amendment Act (Family Mediators and Evaluators); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Cour provinciale (médiateurs et enquêteurs familiaux), reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen), that we adjourn debate.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 5—The Witness Security Act

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Allan), that Bill 5, The Witness Security Act; Loi sur la sécurité des témoins, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu), that we adjourn debate.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 7—The Child and Family Services
Amendment Act (Child Pornography Reporting)**

Mr. Speaker: Bill 7, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Child Pornography Reporting), as amended.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Mackintosh), that The Child and Family Services Act (Child Pornography Reporting); Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille (obligation de signaler la pornographie juvénile), as amended and reported

from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), that we adjourn debate.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 8—The Phosphorus Reduction Act
(Water Protection Act Amended)**

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (Mr. Bjornson), that Bill 8, The Phosphorus Reduction Act (Water Protection Act Amended); Loi sur la réduction du phosphore (modification de la Loi sur la protection des eaux), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

* (15:10)

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, as members well know, this bill, which reduces phosphorus in automatic dishwasher detergent, is a bill which was copied from a Liberal bill which preceded it by quite some time. We are pleased that the government is following our leadership on this as well as other issues. The sad thing about this bill is that it takes longer to achieve the banning of automatic dishwasher detergent, the phosphorus, and it also creates some uncertainty to what extent that industrial automatic dishwasher detergents will indeed be covered. We hope they will and that the minister is able to work that out, but the bill itself leaves that unclear as to whether half, approximately, of the phosphorus in automatic dishwasher detergents, that the industrial half is actually addressed.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, we will certainly support this bill, notwithstanding the fact that we think it could have been done a little bit better.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurischou), that we adjourn debate.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 9—The Protection for Persons
in Care Amendment Act**

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers), that Bill 9, The Protection for Persons in Care Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection des personnes recevant des soins, as reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), that we adjourn debate.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 11—The Optometry Amendment Act

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Allan), that Bill 11, The Optometry Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'optométrie, as reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), that we adjourn debate.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 12—The Securities Transfer Act

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers), that Bill 12, The Securities Transfer Act; Loi sur le transfert des valeurs mobilières, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), that we adjourn debate.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 18—The Testing of Bodily
Fluids and Disclosure Act**

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Allan), that Bill 18, The Testing of Bodily Fluids and Disclosure Act; Loi sur l'analyse de fluides corporels et la communication des résultats d'analyse, as reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen), that we adjourn debate.

Motion agreed to.

**Bill 20—The Gunshot and Stab Wounds
Mandatory Reporting Act**

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Allan), that Bill 20, The Gunshot and Stab Wounds Mandatory Reporting Act; Loi sur la déclaration obligatoire des blessures par balle et par arme blanche, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and now be read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), that we adjourn debate.

Motion agreed to.

House Business

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, if we could call concurrence motions.

Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there might be leave for a five-minute recess while we gather the motion—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I can't hear a thing. Could you please start over?

Mr. Ashton: Yes. I wonder if we might have leave to have a five-minute recess while we gather the motions for concurrence and ensure that the ministers that the opposition has requested are in the House for concurrence.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement for a five-minute recess? Is there agreement?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: No. I'm hearing some no's. Is there agreement?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: It's been agreed to. *[interjection]*

Okay, let's have some order here. I'm getting some conflicting information here. I'm going to put the question to the House as requested by the Deputy Government House Leader, and that was to recess for five minutes to get the appropriate ministers in the House.

Is there agreement to recess for five minutes?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? Okay, well, there is no agreement.

Mr. Ashton: Well, Mr. Speaker, I was wondering if I might have recess to consult with the Acting Opposition House Leader. If they don't want a recess to get the appropriate documents ready, we might have leave to consult on a matter of House business, not on the floor, but with the Acting Opposition House Leader.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Deputy Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order? There should be no negotiations done on the floor of the House.

I'm recognizing the honourable Official Opposition Deputy House Leader.

* (15:20)

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Deputy Official Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, because it might be under section 68, a reflection on members, otherwise, Mr. Speaker, certainly, I think we would, without a reflection on the member under section 68 of *Beauchesne*, be happy to entertain the government recalling one of its bills and debating it.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Steinbach, he does not have a point of order.

House Business

Mr. Ashton: On House business then.

Mr. Speaker: On House business.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, we can recall the third readings. There may be members wishing to speak on the third readings in order. It would be our intention to call concurrence, once the various motions are available.

I point out that there are numerous steps to the concurrence motion, so we are trying to make sure that all of the motions are available for members of the House and, in addition, make sure that the requested ministers are present from the outset.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave for the Speaker to revert to concurrence and third readings of the bills in order as they're listed on the Order Paper? Is there leave?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: I heard a no.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No, okay, that has been denied.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, could you resolve the committee into the Committee of Supply to consider the resolution regarding the Capital Supply bill?

Mr. Speaker: The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply to consider the resolution respecting the Capital Supply bill.

Madam Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Capital Supply

The Acting Chairperson (Mr. Rob Altemeyer): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

We have before us for our consideration the resolution respecting Capital Supply. The resolution reads as follows:

RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$1,366,898,000 for Capital Supply for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009.

For the information of the committee, according to our rules, as the 100 hours have now expired, this resolution is not debatable. Shall the resolution pass?

Resolution agreed to.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION**Committee Report**

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Acting Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered and adopted the Capital Supply resolution.

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

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please call Committee of Supply?

Mr. Speaker: Okay. The House will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

Madam Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY**Concurrence Motion**

Madam Chairperson (Bonnie Korzeniowski): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): I move that the Committee of Supply concur in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009, which have been adopted at this session by a section of the Committee of Supply or by the full committee.

Motion presented.

Madam Chairperson: On May 12, 2008, the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Hawranik) tabled the following list of ministers of the Crown who may be called for questioning and debate on the concurrence motion: Conservation; Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives; Education, Citizenship and Youth. These ministers can be asked questions concurrently.

The floor is now open for questions.

* (15:30)

Point of Order

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Just on a point of order, Madam Chairperson, seeking clarification. I understand you said that Conservation would be one of the departments. I might be missing it. I'm looking for the Minister of Conservation—*[interjection]*

Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I'll withdraw that point of order.

* * *

Mr. Goertzen: I'd like to ask the Minister of Conservation if he can outline the priorities for his department for the coming year.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): I'd be more than happy to outline the priorities of our department. We have a department that quite often I've described as being a mile wide because we deal with so many issues from every—

Point of Order

Madam Chairperson: On a point of order, the Member for Inkster.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yes, just on a point of order. My understanding—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Chairperson: Order. I'm sorry, I can't hear the point of order.

Mr. Lamoureux: Yes, Madam Chair, my understanding was that the Member for Steinbach had indicated to the Chamber that he had questions of the Minister of Conservation, and the Minister of Conservation is now here. I didn't think that there were opening statements from ministers during concurrence.

I would think that the Member for Steinbach should be allowed now to ask the questions of the minister. What was the question?

Madam Chairperson: Order. For clarification, the minister was responding to the question from the Member for Steinbach that he had asked just previously.

* * *

Mr. Struthers: Now, where was I, Madam Chairperson? Such a broad-ranging question.

An Honourable Member: No, it isn't.

Mr. Struthers: I very much look forward to narrowing it down a little bit for the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) who seems to have trouble getting his brain around it. Let's give it a try. I'd encourage the Member for Russell to work with me on this.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please, some decorum.

Point of Order

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Madam Chair, I would have thought that a reflection on another member is something that is out of order in this House, and it is up to you, as Chair, to indeed control the House and control the proceedings in this Chamber. I don't think it's appropriate for a minister of the Crown to reflect on a member who perhaps was commenting on the fact that the minister couldn't make himself available when he was asked the question in this House and sauntered into the House later and tried to answer a question that he didn't know anything about.

Now, Madam Chair, it is a point of order, and if it isn't a point of order, I'll raise it as a matter of privilege, so I expect that you will rule on it.

An Honourable Member: Same point of order.

Madam Chairperson: On the same point of order, the honourable Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs.

Mr. Ashton: First of all, Madam Chair, it's not a point of order. There was no reflection on the member. The member was heckling quite vigorously, and I believe the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) responded. The member could raise a matter of privilege, if he wants. He can stand on his head if he wants, as well, and, you know, it doesn't make it right.

I want to say, Madam Chair, that I'm not quite sure what the member's trying to prove here through this because the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) asked for a response from the Minister of Conservation and the Minister of Conservation was giving that response. There had been a point of order that you had dealt with and the Minister of Conversation attempted again to start to give that response before he was cut off by this point of order.

Now, a few minutes ago, there seemed to be a great desire on the part of members opposite to get into concurrence, something that they had not indicated they would necessarily be reaching in terms of our House proceedings till later in the week. Madam Chair, we worked with the table staff, we're now in concurrence. We have all the ministers that were requested in the House and I would say, yes, you ruled that this was not only not a point of order, but if there's this real rush for members opposite to

get into concurrence, the government is anxiously waiting for the opportunity for the Minister of Conservation to respond to a very important question. I think he was giving a fulsome response, and he deserves to be heard. I therefore would suggest this is not a point of order. It is, in fact, merely an interruption.

Madam Chairperson: I would just remind the members that I had responded to a point of order and I had to call order because I could not hear what was being said in the Chamber because of the disruptions, so I'm going to have to take this under advisement and I'll rule later.

* * *

Mr. Struthers: As I was saying, I'm going to make this as fulsome for the Member for Russell as I can because it is a big department. It's a complicated department and many people have a hard time understanding all the things that we do because we're very busy working on the priorities of Manitobans, which are reflected by our government and its priorities. If the members across the way don't like that, then that's tough because it's the priorities of Manitobans that we're reflecting and they should know a little bit about that, Madam Chair.

One of the things we spend a lot of time doing, and this might sound funny 'cause it is 2008, but we spend a lot of time cleaning up the messes of previous governments from '99 and previous. Madam Chair, that keeps us oh so busy, but we're very involved in a whole number of environmental licensing issues because that's a big part of our department.

You know, there could be some strange looks from people across the way, like the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) whose government never did take that part of their portfolio very seriously even though there was a department of environment totally dedicated to licensing and all those matters. They either didn't call clean environment commissions or when the clean environment commissions did report they just ignored those sorts of things as we've seen in the House with the Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), asking questions about commitments to water and waste water and combined sewer overflows and those sorts of things, things that the previous government didn't really care about and now bring forward. So there are a lot of those kinds of issues that we get involved with.

* (15:40)

Madam Chair, we're involved with forestry, which employs a lot of people in the province of Manitoba. Communities such as Pine Falls, Powerview, The Pas, Swan River, Minitonas, a whole number of communities who depend on good decision-making, good resource decisions that we have an obligation to perform on behalf of Manitoba because, when we deal with resources such as trees, we have to remember that these are the people's resources, not resources that should be privatized as members did when they had the chance to pull the levers of power in this province. We should be making good decisions, balanced decisions in terms of our resources and job creation.

Of course, when you make decisions in terms of forestry, you have to balance that out with environmental stewardship, with protecting that resource and not wasting the resource, and including First Nations and others, but especially First Nations in decisions having to do with resources such as forestry.

Our department is also very, very involved in wildlife and protection of wildlife. We need to take that part of our department seriously. That's a key priority for Manitobans, the protection of wildlife. Just last week the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (Ms. Wowchuk) and myself met with the media to talk about a number of different initiatives that our department and the Department of Agriculture worked together on, in terms of biodiversity. So, Madam Chairperson, there's very much a priority in our department on wildlife.

As the long, cold Manitoba winter fades off and becomes history and the spring finally gets here, Manitobans will be participating in our great outdoors a lot more in camping, in cottages, in provincial parks. I'm really very pleased to work with my colleague, the Minister of Healthy Living (Ms. Irvin-Ross), in terms of a healthy-by-nature approach to all of these opportunities for Manitobans, not the least of which are our parks, our provincial parks, which have been developed over a long period of time, many in the 1960s by what was then a progressive Conservative government, unlike the breed of cat that we have across the way here today. They've even dropped the Progressive off their names just to show their real stripes on this.

In those days in the '60s and today with our government, you see a commitment to parks. You see a commitment to protecting area within parks.

You see a commitment to building infrastructure within our parks. It's good for a number of reasons. This is a priority of our department because it's important. It's important because it's a good part of our gross domestic product as a province. Manitoba parks bring people in from a whole number of jurisdictions. As a matter of fact, we were over five million visits in our parks system last year. That meant that a lot of people from outside of Manitoba came to Manitoba and left a little money behind in the businesses and in the communities that are close to parks. It's good for our capital city because many people arrived here by plane, by train, by automobile. Without sounding too much like a Hollywood movie, I'll stop at that.

There are real big reasons, too, why we need to support parks in Manitoba. It's part of our fabric. It's who we are as Manitobans. I think we're a very sophisticated population, we Manitobans are. I think we're complicated in many ways. I think we have some unique needs. In some ways, they are needs that exist around the country, but, in so many ways, we are specially connected to our parks, to our pristine areas, even areas of our province that aren't contained within parks, where we go to relax, where we go to share with family, where we go to be part of another community, where we express our values as Manitobans, not just by speaking to each other, but by living and acting out our values and having some fun at the same time. Manitobans think parks are important and so does this government; they are a priority of our government.

Whenever you talk about resources, parks and cottages and opportunities when you're working anywhere within the Department of Conservation or, for that matter, in any department of any government—provincial, federal or otherwise—our unique relationship and our obligations to our First Nations in Manitoba, this is an area that, I think, is important; it's an area where we have made some very tangible steps forward. It's an area where all governments have some work to do.

Madam Chairperson, this has been a priority of ours; it'll continue to be. I think we will look for ways to strengthen our obligations to First Nations when it comes to decision-making in Manitoba.

So our priorities can be summed up in all those different areas as protection, protection for resources, as judicious use of those resources and to setting frameworks and setting rules, regulations that protect our resources such as water, something that members

opposite do not take very seriously as we can see in the debates that we heard earlier today from the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) in terms of hog moratoriums and those sorts of things, where they really show that they could care less about the economic engine called Lake Winnipeg. They could care less about water protection in this province, and I think they really need an education in terms of their support for Bill 17.

Madam Chairperson: Order, please. The minister's time has expired.

Mr. Goertzen: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I'm pleased to welcome the member to committee.

I would like to ask if he could table for this committee the specific line in the CEC commission report which recommends a permanent moratorium which he has referenced repeatedly in the media.

Mr. Struthers: I am really very pleased that the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) is interested in doing more than just playing his usual politics on this issue. I am very interested in engaging the Member for Steinbach in a common-sense-based intelligent discussion, as opposed to the rhetoric that I hear him and others across the way putting on the record.

It's one thing to run to meetings in Morris and pound your chest in front of everybody and play the good local drumming-up-support kind of political role. I understand the pressure that the Member for Steinbach is feeling on that.

I think, though—I really believe this, Madam Chairperson—that, somewhere down in that heart of his, he understands that the greater goal is to protect Manitoba's water and he really doesn't want to be stampeded by his colleagues sitting behind him into abandoning our very historic Manitoba political obligation to protect our greatest resource which is water.

* (15:50)

I believe that the Member for Steinbach understands that. I think deep down he knows that—at one point, it was right on our licence plates about our 100,000 lakes. I think, technically, it's 110,000 lakes, and that every one of those 110,000 lakes needs protection. The biggest of the lakes, the biggest lake in our province, the biggest lake which is under the most stress in our province, which has a huge impact on the economics of our province, on the social traditions of our province, the way we live kind of aspects that impact on our whole province.

I know that the Member for Steinbach doesn't want to toy with the ecology of Lake Winnipeg and have people from Gimli and people from Grand Rapids and people from Norway House come to us some day and say, why didn't you make the tough decisions, and now our fishery is in peril? Why didn't you stand up? I know the Member for Steinbach does not want that, and I know he will reflect. He will reflect, Madam Chairperson, some day when he's far from this building, and that may be of his own choosing. He mentioned earlier that I may have to phone and ask for advice from him. I wonder if I have to begin that call with 1-416 blah, blah, blah, whatever the numbers are behind that—

An Honourable Member: 613.

Mr. Struthers: –613, well, I'm glad he's confirmed that for me because 613 is a far ways away, and maybe the member himself decides that he's going to leave provincial politics and he's going to be somewhere, and he'll be somewhere, some day, reflecting. He'll be reflecting back on our debate in this Legislature and he'll have to look at the kids that come from schools to the House and they'll say, why didn't you make a good decision back in 2008 when you could have stood up and protected Manitoba water. I know it'll gnaw away at this Member for Steinbach just because he couldn't stand up to his colleagues around him and say, no, we have to do the right thing here. We have to do the right thing and make a good decision based on—not just our own little political houses that we have to keep in order, not just, oh, oh, and we have to wait for the science, we can't do anything until all the i's are dotted and the t's are crossed. I know that the Member for Steinbach doesn't believe that down deep and I know when he gets a chance to reflect on this, I know when he looks back on this he'll regret having voted against Bill 17 because he takes his responsibilities seriously. Some others in the group that sit around next to him may not, and I can understand that. There's always that temptation to play a little local politics on this and threaten others, but I know that the Member for Steinbach doesn't believe that.

When his colleagues around him pull on the strings and make him dance on the end of the string like a marionette, I know that that troubles the Member for Steinbach, so I feel for him. I feel for that particular member. I feel for the approach where you try to parse and try to split words and try to spin things just the way you need it. The fact of the matter, Madam Chairperson, all through the 1990s this industry was allowed to grow unfettered.

His colleagues around him, and he was not absent from that debate back in the 1990s. He was not absent from that—

An Honourable Member: Point of order, Madam Chairperson.

Point of Order

Madam Chairperson: The Member for Steinbach, on a point of order.

Mr. Goertzen: Thank you, Madam Chairperson, I reference *Beauchesne's*, 6th Edition, section 549, in relation to relevance. I'm sure if you peruse *Hansard* you'll see that the question I posed, whether or not the minister can point to a line in the Clean Environment Commission report that recommended a permanent moratorium on the hog industry of Manitoba, so I ask you enforce section 549, the responsibility of your high office and call the member to order for not being relevant.

Madam Chairperson: I am confident that the Minister of Conservation was just about to bring the relevant point to—[interjection]

* * *

Mr. Struthers: Thank you, Madam Chair. As I was saying, the hog industry has, through the 1990s, grown unfettered, grown without the attention of members opposite when they were in government. Other than to really push for more unfettered development, what we have done is we've come along and we've said quite clearly that we need to have a framework. A water protection framework that can help the industry grow in a sustainable way.

Madam Chairperson, the member should be able to read through the report of the Clean Environment Commission. On page 10, where the commission recognizes, and this is from that paragraph—see, the Clean Environment Commission looked at the potential impact of phosphorus from the hog industry on the water. It considers phosphorus to be the most serious environmental sustainable issue facing that industry. I quote: "The Commission recognizes that regional imbalances that have developed between the application and removal of nutrients and the potential impact of these nutrients on water resources constitute the most serious environmental sustainability issues facing the industry."

It's very clear. It's very clear. There are regional imbalances in this province. Madam Chairperson, 28 percent of the hogs that are produced in Manitoba come from two R.M.s, and 54 percent of the

nutrients, the phosphorus and nitrogen that enter Lake Winnipeg come from that part of the province, up through the Red River.

If members opposite think that we could just stick our heads in the sand and ignore that regional imbalance, then I feel for them. I feel like they're missing it. They're not understanding the priorities of Manitobans. They're not understanding the science involved in this. They're closing their eyes to the science that exists out there that points specifically to what we've done, and they're doing this for their own political reasons. It doesn't fit into their very pro-development view of the world. But I'm here to tell members opposite that those old days of simply develop, develop, develop, without putting thought to the impact on the environment, and in this particular instance, water, that they're way out of touch.

They're out of touch. They're out of style. They're out of gas. They're out of ideas. They're out of the mainstream of Manitoba thinking, Madam Chairperson.

Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie): I do not agree with the final summation of the Minister of Conservation. I do believe that we, on this side of the House, as active farmers, are more in tune, more akin, to the agricultural sector than I believe he will ever be. It is very disheartening for a minister of the Crown to make such a statement of honourable members opposite.

*(16:00)

But, seeing the honourable Minister of Conservation's a little on the long-winded side today, I would like to direct my questions to the Minister of Agriculture, and ask of the minister, because, I believe, at the time, when I had last opportunity to ask her, we were discussing the potential of the Manitoba Food Development Centre in Portage la Prairie, the current considerations by the federal government in consultation with herself and her department, redevelopment plans for the laboratories that are currently held or housed in the Grain Commission building downtown, as well as the laboratory activities at the University of Manitoba campus known as the Cereal Research Centre for Agriculture Canada and Agri-Food.

I was wondering if the minister could potentially update the House as to discussions between her department and the federal government in the

redevelopment plans for these activities within our province.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): I may have misunderstood the member's question, but he started to talk about the Food Development Centre and redevelopment of the Food Development Centre, Madam Chair, and then he switched over to the Grain Commission and the laboratories at the University of Manitoba. I would indicate to the member that there are no discussions with the federal government on redevelopment at the Food Development Centre. The work at the Food Development Centre has been done. It's been redeveloped. There is some discussion about how we might expand that facility to allow for further opportunities added, but there are no discussions. This is not the location that you would move any of the labs or any of the facilities, so I may have misunderstood the member's question if he is trying to link the two to the Food Development Centre.

Mr. Faurichou: I should have tied it all together insofar as it started out with the Food Development Centre, which essentially in years past recognized that there are approximately four labs in current existence housed at the Canadian Grain Commission building that would, perhaps, fit very well with the operations at the Manitoba Food Development Centre in Portage la Prairie.

Further to that, there are discussions between the federal and provincial government of massive redevelopment for facilities for laboratory activity not only at the—from the Grain Commission building but also Cereal Research Centre. That's how I was working in the Manitoba Food Development Centre, not to be forgotten in these discussions that were ongoing, and so, if the minister could update the House as to the current status of the federal-provincial discussions on this matter.

Ms. Wowchuk: I thank the member for raising the issue of the Food Development Centre because that's one that's very near and dear to my heart and I'm very pleased with the amount of investment that we have been able to make into that facility and bring it up to a federally inspected standard. We are doing a lot of work in there. The Food Development Centre supports Manitoba's agri-food industry through research and development, commercial processing, business development services, and strategic partnerships. As the member knows, we do have a

partner in there, in the Food Development Centre, that we're working on.

With regard to the other discussion, yes, there is discussion with the federal government with regard to a centre of excellence. There has been discussion for some time with various people at the Grain Commission, the Canadian Research Centre, with the universities, to look at how we might establish a centre of excellence at the University of Manitoba. Those discussions are ongoing.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): My questions are for the Minister of Education. I know that a while ago the announcement was made regarding some construction within the Garden Valley School Division, and I know also that during Estimates we went through and had questions and answers regarding the process there. On the weekend, I was informed that we're running into some problems out there with some of the regulations, and this would be specific to the Emerado School. I know the minister's aware of it, but this is where they're going to be adding four rooms.

In discussion with some of the administrative people, they were telling me that there are so many barriers that have been put in place, they are going to have to try and work their way around; they really feel that the timing of the school will not move on as rapidly as what they had hoped. I'm just wondering if the minister could respond to that, that would be specific to the Emerado addition.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth): I thank the member for the question. This is the first that I've actually heard there are barriers, as, the member suggests, is the case.

I will be sure to follow up on this information as I have yet to hear anything from my deputy or from the chair of the Public Schools Finance Board contrary to the fact that things are moving along as they should. If this has been information brought to the member's attention over the weekend, I'll be sure to follow it up and find out what barriers there might be.

Mr. Dyck: In addition to that, I'm not trying to create a problem here. It's just that, in my discussions, I was asking where they were at with the additions. I realize that, at this point in time, they would not be in construction yet, but there is a lot of work that does need to be done before construction can take place.

I would appreciate that and I want to thank the minister for that answer because, certainly, September will be here before we know it, although, at times, we think things move along rather slowly in here. Before we know it, September will be out there and, with the students that are enrolled and looking for accommodation, it certainly would be good if we could get that addition going as soon as possible.

The other one I wanted to look at as well was the high school. I know the minister is aware of the need that we have there for expanded facilities. Again, in discussion with the administration there, it's been brought to my attention again, as has been previously, that we have safety concerns with the number of students in the hallways and so on, should there be some crisis that arises.

I know that, in discussion with the board chair, again on the weekend, they're waiting for some sort of a proposal or direction given by the minister and the Public Schools Finance Board. Again, we had discussions with—and I know I mentioned this during Estimates, this whole area of a technical-vocational school—I know that the minister was open to that kind of discussion.

I know this would only be a discussion stage, but I was just wondering if the minister could just bring me up to date on that, please.

Mr. Bjornson: I thank the member for the question. Two things I can bring the member up to date on, one being, I understand, that Garden Valley and Hanover school divisions have met with the Public Schools Finance Board to discuss the potential for joint planning around additional capital needs specific to, I believe, early and middle years schools.

With respect to the other issue that I can bring to the member's attention is the fact that I have been invited to and have accepted the invitation to tour the high school in Winkler. I will be doing that on Monday, the 9th of June, to get a first-hand look at the challenges they have and certainly will continue to discuss with the Public Schools Finance Board what the proposals are that have been brought forward by the board and by the community to address their needs.

As I said to the member before, we hope to expedite the capital program in areas that have profound need; we've seen profound need in your community. That's why we've looked at the initiative to undertake joint planning with school divisions that demonstrate similar needs, as I said, with respect to

Steinbach and Garden Valley. I'll continue to keep on top of that situation with the PSFB.

Mr. Dyck: Again, I thank the minister for the answer there. I know, in fact, they did inform me that you were going to be coming out to the area. I think that a first-hand view is always the best one to get, which gives you an opportunity to see the needs that are out there.

* (16:10)

I would just suggest that, while he's out there, he help the highway minister in looking at some of the infrastructure needs there as well. Hopefully, they have you there during some of the busiest times of the day, which is the majority of the day, just to find out what the school buses need to cope with as they're trying to deliver and bring the students from place to place and do it in a safe manner.

Again, I thank the minister for coming out there. I know that they are looking forward to it and, of course, there are a lot of needs out there that we need to address. The sad part of it is that all of these things do take time. It's not something that can be done overnight. So we need to do forward planning. Again, as I've indicated previously with the direction that we are going and, of course, the growth with the immigration that we have, it's not something that we foresee stopping very soon, or slowing down rather. We see the increased needs there, and so we need to plan for the future and be able to give the students the accommodation that they need.

Mr. Faurschou: Madam Chairperson, turning now to the Department of Agriculture Estimates as they pertain to infrastructure development grants which the department this year has seen fit to pare from \$3.15 million to \$2.71 million, I would like to ask the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) as to why she has chosen to reduce at this point in time the infrastructure development grants that play such a vital role in rural communities developing diversification projects and enhanced opportunities for value-added development. Could the minister explain why she is cutting back?

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, if the member could repeat again. I'm sorry, I didn't catch the beginning of his question. If he could repeat for me what page he is referring to in the Estimates book, and he doesn't have to repeat the whole question.

Mr. Faurschou: It's on supplemental Estimates book 137.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, we have been making some changes in how REDI funds are being used, and one of them is the Community Enterprise Development Tax Credit, Hometown Manitoba. We are also putting more money into feasibility studies and a variety of other programs. It was a government decision to shift those dollars into other areas of economic development.

Mr. Faurshou: It's a government decision to replace grants with loans? I'm rather curious as to the minister's approach to helping out those in the agricultural sector. There isn't anyone that will dispute the tough times that her sector of the economy has been going through. Now, to hear from the minister directly that she's converting what was a program of grants monies to a program of loans.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Chairperson, yes. Indeed, the member opposite is correct. We have moved away from the portion of the program a portion of that money that was going into grants. We have reviewed that program and looked at how grants were being used, and we felt that it was more effective to change and put these other programs in place. So it is a difference from what was being done before where there were grants that were being offered to some businesses to help with some of their infrastructure, that infrastructure was mostly roadways, paving. So we have taken a different focus on it and are looking at other ways that we can help businesses, besides the areas where the member is referring to, where I have said many times that was money that was used to—that infrastructure was to be helping the commercial infrastructure develop, whether it be paving of parking lots or things like that.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): I do have a few questions for the Minister of Education.

Could the minister tell us how many level 2 students with ASD are registered for school in Manitoba?

Mr. Bjornson: I believe the member raised this question in Estimates. I believe I said I would get the figure back to him at that time. I don't have that available right now.

Mr. Schuler: Could the minister tell us how many level 2 students with ASD are registered for school in Winnipeg?

Mr. Bjornson: I can get that information for the member.

Mr. Schuler: Could the minister also then get for us, how many level 2 students with ASD are registered for school in the IPSA program?

Mr. Bjornson: I believe the figure is 32 but I will check and confirm that number for the member.

Mr. Schuler: Could the minister tell us how many level 3 students with ASD are registered for school in Manitoba?

Mr. Bjornson: These are very specific questions that would require research. I don't know these numbers off the top of my head.

Mr. Schuler: I'm fine with the minister taking it as notice. How many level 3 students with ASD are registered for school in Winnipeg?

Mr. Bjornson: Will take as notice.

Mr. Schuler: How many level 3 students with ASD are registered for school in the IPSA program?

Mr. Bjornson: I will take that as notice.

Mr. Schuler: What is the current budget for the IPSA program?

Mr. Bjornson: I don't know that figure. I will take as notice.

Mr. Schuler: Is this budget amount above and beyond the amounts provided for the level of funding for each of the students in the program?

Mr. Bjornson: I will have to confirm those figures for the member. I'll take as notice.

Mr. Schuler: Again, I'll reiterate the first part of the sentence. Is this budget amount above and beyond the amounts provided for the level of funding for each of the students in the program, or is it included in that funding?

Mr. Bjornson: I will have to confirm that for the member.

Mr. Schuler: The minister had committed to meeting with the parents involved in the IPSA program. Did he have an opportunity to meet with them?

Mr. Bjornson: Yes, I had an opportunity to meet with the parents today, in fact.

Mr. Schuler: I believe during the Estimates process, I had indicated to the minister that this was an amazingly nice group of parents, that they were very kind, very heartfelt, very concerned. Perhaps a little despondent, I think, was one of the terms I used.

They are facing a very difficult future with their children if they don't have the right programming and just wanted to be able to speak to individuals who are the decision makers.

I was wondering if the minister can assure this member that my analysis was correct.

* (16:20)

Ms. Erin Selby, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

Mr. Bjornson: I can assure the member that the parents were a very wonderful group of individuals. I've always believed that having parents advocate for their children can only improve the education system. They're certainly tremendous advocates for their children and for the program that they have been engaged in. It was a very good meeting. They needed an opportunity to present their position, and I certainly appreciated that they did so and did so in a very respectful and a very passionate way.

I would concur with the member's assessment on this group of individuals in terms of their passion, in terms of their commitment to their children. It was a very important meeting for us to have as we have an understanding of their concerns.

Mr. Schuler: Madam Acting Chairperson, of course, meetings aren't held for people's good health. Probably the reason why they met with the minister is they were asking for something. They were asking the minister to review the program and perhaps consider leaving the program as it was.

Did the minister give the parents any commitment to where he might be going with the IPSA program?

Mr. Bjornson: The commitment that was made—and it was basically the ask that was made as well. They said we need more dialogue. I committed to more dialogue, and I certainly assured them, as they mentioned sometimes sensitivities around the proposed transition of the program, that I would get back to them in a timely manner. I assured them that I would do so.

Mr. Schuler: I know the minister has a lot of things he's got to get back to people on, namely, a few of the questions I asked during Estimates and now during concurrence. These parents don't have a lot of time. Instability is probably nothing that is healthy to the children involved in this program. I've mentioned to this minister it's not like our families where we don't face the same kind of anxiety about our children that these parents do. Any kind of upheaval,

any kind of change in routine, any kind of instability is devastating to these children and, other than the plan to get back to the parents, was there anything concrete extended by the minister to them that perhaps he would ensure that whatever was done would be in their best interests?

Mr. Bjornson: I'd like to assure the member that everything that we do in the office of the Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth is in the best interests of the parents and the children. We certainly recognize the need to have this meeting and to consult with the parents on their program and on their children's needs. I assured them that the information that they had presented today was very important for me to receive and that we would be responding in a timely fashion to the information that they presented. That was my commitment that I made today.

Mr. Schuler: Again, I'm pleased that the minister took my advice. You know, if the minister would actually take more of my advice, he might find his job would be a lot easier. I didn't set a trap for him. These were wonderful parents. In fact, his predecessor, the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell), probably should have taken some of my advice as well and his life would have been much better. He probably wouldn't have had that terrible bout of illness which all the stress caused him because he was making bad decisions. If he'd listened to good decisions, he would have kept his health, and I suspect if he'd have listened to me he'd probably still be in Cabinet, but you know that having been said—

An Honourable Member: Live and learn.

Mr. Schuler: Yes. The Member for Brandon says live and learn, and he paid the ultimate price, so he's no longer the Minister of Education. So, to the new Minister of Education, lean over and take some good advice. It's there for the taking.

I am a little disappointed that the Minister of Education felt that somehow I wasn't to be included in that meeting. I was disinvited by the minister. I don't take these things personally; I just thought that was really unfortunate. This was really an issue where politics doesn't have to find its way into it. Again, these parents have gone through a lot and are struggling. So, anyway, I'm pleased that they had an opportunity to meet with the minister. The jury's still out whether or not he'll do anything on it, but we'll wait for that time.

I do want to switch gears and have a few questions for the minister that has to do with the plebiscite on the pension reform for the Teachers' Retirement Allowance and I was wondering if the minister could tell us. There seems to be a lot of discussion on who's paying for the plebiscite. Could the minister clear the air? Who's actually paying the cost of the plebiscite?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, just to explain the process that was undertaken. The Teachers' Society representatives at the Teachers' Pension Tax Force table had brought forward the recommendation that a plebiscite be held to get a true sense of the all plan holders and whether or not they would accept or reject the terms of the Sale report that had been undertaken by the Teachers' Pension Task Force previously.

Just as a matter of explanation, when the Teachers' Pension Task Force makes recommendations that require actuarial analysis, we actually share the cost of the actuarial analysis with the Manitoba Teachers' Society and government. In this case, we decided that government would cover the costs of the plebiscite. That was recommended by the Teachers' Pension Task Force to TRAF. So there's no cost to the plan holders.

Mr. Schuler: What is that cost?

Mr. Bjornson: I don't have the exact figure at this time.

Mr. Schuler: So the Tim Sale task force recommended that there should be a plebiscite? Which task force recommended that there should be this plebiscite?

Mr. Bjornson: As I said in my first answer to this series of questions, it was the Teachers' Society representatives on the Teachers' Pension Task Force and Tim Sale was not part of this equation at this point. He had been engaged in a process that resulted in the report and the recommendations that were made to TRAF and to RTAM and to the Teachers' Society with respect to cost-of-living allowance improvements and that was the Teachers' Pension Task Force report, referred to as the Sale report. But former Minister Sale did not have any say in the plebiscite. It was the Teachers' Society that posed the question to the Teachers' Pension Task Force and the recommendation was made that all plan holders be engaged in a plebiscite to accept or reject the recommendations that were made in the Sale report

which is also, quite frankly, Teachers' Pension Task Force Report.

Mr. Schuler: Okay, that explains it a little bit better. So it's the Manitoba Teachers' Society. Did they send a letter to TRAF asking them to do the plebiscite?

Mr. Bjornson: I'd have to check on the process. I do know that they requested a meeting of the Teachers' Pension Task Force for the purpose of exploring the option of a plebiscite. I understand the question was vetted through all individuals at the table to move forward with the plebiscite. TRAF of course, does have representation at the Teachers' Pension Task Force as such, and that would have been communicated to TRAF as a result of the Teachers' Pension Task Force meeting.

Mr. Schuler: So the actual question that's being asked, could the minister give us the actual wording?

Mr. Bjornson: I don't actually have the actual question in front of me, so I would suspect they'd have to get that for the member.

* (16:30)

Mr. Schuler: Who came up with the question? Is that done through the minister's department? Also, who's actually doing the mailer? Is that done through TRAF? Is it TRAF who does the mailer for the retired teachers and MTS does it for the active teachers?

Mr. Bjornson: If the member will bear with me, I can find that answer in a moment.

Okay. As I mentioned before, it was the Teachers' Society that, through the Teachers' Pension Task Force, asked TRAF to conduct the plebiscite. The Teachers' Society brought the question to a meeting of the Pension Task Force for a review by RTAM and government, and MTS provided RTAM with a copy of the plebiscite question at that meeting. That's my understanding of the process.

Mr. Schuler: So is it TRAF that sends the questionnaire out to all the retired teachers, and MTS sends it out to all the active teachers?

Mr. Bjornson: I would have to check on—I believe they've hired a firm for the purpose of administering the plebiscite. The firm would have sent out the plebiscite question, a self-addressed envelope and the ballot and everything else. The firm would have done that. I believe it was DBO Dunwoody—if I'm not mistaken—that has been hired for the purpose of conducting the plebiscite.

Mr. Schuler: And, of course, the privacy of each individual would be respected. The data base isn't accessible by anybody other than the company for use of the mailer, question No. 1, and I'll add the second one to it; then is it Dunwoody that will be receiving the ballots and tabulating them?

Mr. Bjornson: I believe that would be the case. Yes, on both questions, I believe.

Mr. Schuler: Then, once the cutoff takes place, they are counted. Where would the results then go?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, as the entity that requested the information, I would suspect that information would be provided to the Teachers' Society and the Teachers' Pension Task Force participants.

Mr. Schuler: Wouldn't that go to the minister and he would just make that public, seeing as it's been paid for by the Manitoba taxpayer?

Mr. Bjornson: I suspect there would be a time that that information would be public and, again, it was the Teachers' Society through the Pension Task Force that requested the plebiscite, and they would be presenting that information to me at an appropriate time.

Mr. Schuler: I don't think I'm hearing the minister right. Is the minister indicating that taxpayers' money is paying for a plebiscite, and instead of the company that the department is paying for—that taxpayers are paying for—that company will hand that information off to MTS rather than to the minister, and the minister making it public? This is public information. This is paid for by taxpayers. Why would it go to MTS? Why doesn't it go to the minister and he sends it to whomever he thinks it should be sent to after he makes it public? This is paid for by taxpayers' dollars. If I've got this wrong somehow, please correct me, but is this not paid for by taxpayers' dollars?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, as a matter of process, as I said before, when the Teachers' Pension Task Force makes recommendations for the purpose of any changes to the pension that would require actuarial analysis, that is something that we share the costs with our partners at the table. As such, that information goes back to the Teachers' Pension Task Force for their consideration before they make their recommendations to the minister. By extension, you know, this is something new that has been brought forward with the plebiscite. That information will go back to the Teachers' Pension Task Force first and

foremost, I would suspect, before I would see that information, but that information will be public.

Mr. Schuler: Teachers' Pension Task Force. Who makes up that committee? The task force?

Mr. Bjornson: The task force has a number of representatives from the Teachers' Society. The Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba does have voice at the task force table, and there are also representatives of government who are at the table. This is the group that has been called to meet and assess some of the requests that come forward from things, for example, the Manitoba Teachers' Society annual general meeting when the members would bring resolutions to the table on improvements that they'd like to see in the pension plan.

Having been a part of that process myself, as a teacher and as a teacher advocate, the information goes to the Teachers' Pension Task Force, which can be called by government or by the Teachers' Society for the purpose of assessing potential improvements to the pension plan.

That's the process that's been undertaken, I believe, five times now since we've been in office. I believe we've opened up the act four times to address the recommendations that have come forward by the Teachers' Pension Task Force.

So it's representatives of government; it's representatives of the Teachers' Society and, at the request of RTAM, RTAM now is an active participant in the Teachers' Pension Task Force.

Mr. Schuler: I'm just terribly perturbed that the minister whose department is paying for a plebiscite doesn't make that information public, because it's paid for by taxpayers. It should be public information.

The minister has made it public that they are going to have this referendum, this plebiscite; deciding on what happens on that vote, the minister then will decide what he's going to do with the Tim Sale recommendations.

I am absolutely amazed that the minister is not going to make that immediately available to the public. It's paid for by the taxpayers of Manitoba. This isn't insider baseball; this is something that should be made public for all Manitobans.

I think all active teachers, all retired teachers, all individuals involved in education will want to know what the results are and should have fair access to it as soon as the results are known, because it's being

paid for by the public; it's being paid for by the taxpayers of Manitoba.

How is it that the minister is allowing himself and all Manitobans to be cut out of this process? The public has a right to know.

I'd like to ask the minister again: Is he actually confirming that the results of the plebiscite will not be made public, but rather will go to the retired Teachers' Pension Task Force?

Mr. Bjornson: I believe I said in my first response to that question that the information would be made public.

Mr. Schuler: Well, glory be, the minister corrected himself. I'm glad that he has now indicated he is going to make it public. For three questions in a row, where I was trying to get the minister at—that it's absolutely imperative, when the minister gets this information, he make that result public. Again, the minister has this knack for getting it wrong and then saying that he was misquoted.

I will give the minister one more opportunity. When the minister gets the results from Dunwoody or whichever the company is—the minister said he thinks that's who it was and that's fair—when he gets the results, he will then immediately make the results public, so that the Manitoba taxpayer who is paying for this knows what the results are.

Mr. Bjornson: For the third time, the results will be public.

Mr. Schuler: I've known this minister long enough; I just want to be very clear. Upon receiving the results, not in the fullness of time—not like your former colleague, the former Minister for Brandon East, devil in the details—we want to be very clear. When the minister receives this data, will he immediately make the results public?

Mr. Bjornson: The results will be made public in a timely fashion.

* (16:40)

Mr. Schuler: There we go again. I have to ask this minister three times until I shame him into flip-flopping again. What the minister is basically indicating is that, yes, he'll make it public sometime around when the 20-year Cabinet document law comes into effect, any time between now and then. That's not good enough, and I don't want this minister to somehow squirm his way out of it. I am going to pin him down. When he receives the results,

it will be couriered to him and it will be clearly laid out what the results are. Is it his intention at that time to make the results public, seeing as it is the public, the taxpayer that is paying for it? Will the minister stop trying to squirm his way out of this? Will he be very clear that he will immediately make the results public?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, thank you. After talking to my colleague from Brandon, he doesn't seem to think that I'm squirming. I have said repeatedly that I'll make the results public. The results will be public.

Mr. Schuler: Yes, I have no doubt that at some point in time the results will be made public, but the minister is skating, and he is trying to skate away on this one, he wants to withhold it until such time as it's convenient to make it public, and I think that is very unfortunate. What we want to know is the results, that the results are made public because it is up to the minister and the government then to respond to those results because it is the minister who has said and made pronouncements what he will or won't do when he receives the results, and that is one of the concerns I have.

Now, in the meantime, he's made very clear he's not going to make it public immediately. He's going to withhold that information. He says he'll make it public, but whenever. Until then he will withhold the information, so that's unfortunate. Will he be providing this data to the Manitoba Teachers' Society, to the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba and to TRAF at the same time so that they all have the results at the same time?

Mr. Bjornson: Well, first of all, it's not my plebiscite, it is a plebiscite being conducted at the request of the Teachers' Society, and as such the results will be reported likely to the Teachers' Pension Task Force before it's reported to me. It's not my plebiscite. You're inferring that they are my results to make public, and I have committed to make them public. It's likely that the Teachers' Society or the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba, as recipients of that information probably prior to my receiving that information, would endeavour to do so. But I can assure the member I'm not skating. I haven't skated since I quit hockey when I was 12, so I just want the member to know that it is going to be a public document and it is not my plebiscite; it is a plebiscite conducted under the auspices of the Teachers' Pension Task Force request to the TRAF board.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I have a few questions for the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers). I wonder if he could tell me what he knows of the deer shooting that occurred in Charleswood. I'm sure he's aware that there's a lot of us that have had some pretty serious concern because this shooting took place in a residential area on a very busy residential street. Don't know how many bullets were fired in the area; we do know that a deer was shot. I'm going to make the assumption—maybe I shouldn't—but that as a minister he would've had some concern about this incident and would've been asking some questions. I wonder if he could share with us what he was able to find out about it.

Mr. Struthers: Yes, for one thing, it's illegal, and I think both the Member for Charleswood and I and others in here will be very concerned about something that is illegal. Her assumption is correct; I am very concerned. It is under investigation and we want to be thorough with that investigation. Anybody who's got any information that can help us out, our resource officers, they should come forward with that. Gosh, we've had a bear in St. Vital, a bear in the northeast part of the city and we've got, as the member knows, we've been working on quite a healthy deer population throughout the city of Winnipeg, but especially in the Charleswood area.

Actually, we're getting some help from some of her colleagues in terms of the animals that are in the city of Winnipeg. My officials describe it as one of our, maybe our busiest wildlife region because of deer, because of raccoons, because of the increasing number of animals in the city. So that particular one is under investigation. We are always looking for ways, as the member knows and I want to say, I don't mind saying this on record, the member has been helpful in terms of working with people who live in Charleswood and getting information out to them. We've been working with the City of Winnipeg in terms of getting some information to people about all kinds of techniques to have fewer deer in people's yards and those sorts of things.

We've been working with MPI because a number of collisions have taken place, an increase in the number of collisions. So there is a whole number of people that we are working with to try to deal with the large deer population. Yes, I am concerned and the investigation does continue.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister indicate what the parameters of that investigation might be?

Mr. Struthers: Well, it's an investigation that is being conducted by people who have a lot of experience in this. The natural resource officers have followed up on these types of incidents whether they be in Winnipeg or elsewhere. Smarter people than me are dealing with this—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Struthers: I'm very heartened by the show of support by my colleagues on all sides of the House on that. But let's be honest, there are folks out there in natural resources, officers who have a great deal of expertise in this. They are leading up the investigation. Initially, it was the City of Winnipeg who was called in to work with us on this. If I remember correctly, the call went to the RCMP to begin with, and then we were brought in. We are doing that investigation. As I said, anyone with any information on this illegal act needs to contact us so that we can follow up on every lead that we can.

Mrs. Driedger: Has the minister had any reports of coyotes in the city, particularly in our area? I know that it was a year ago there were a couple in Charleswood and, of course, you hear about some of these incidents of coyotes in Alberta where they have grabbed kids. Knowing that we have a large deer population in Charleswood there are naturally going to be some concerns about coyotes showing up on our doorsteps. Is the minister's office getting any calls about coyotes in Charleswood?

Mr. Struthers: Well, certainly, there was a picture of a coyote. It wasn't in Charleswood but it was in the north end of the city. It was a picture right in the *Winnipeg Free Press*. We get calls from all parts of the city, I believe, just going by memory. I can follow up on this for specific numbers for the member. I don't think Charleswood is immune to calls about coyotes.

Again, we want to work with people so that they know steps they can take to dissuade coyotes from becoming a problem in their yards and on our streets. But, yes, we get complaints about coyotes, we get complaints about raccoons, we get complaints about skunks, a whole host of critters that end up in the city.

Mrs. Driedger: Can the minister tell me what the prevalence of poaching is in Charleswood?

* (16:50)

Mr. Struthers: Well, hunting in the city is illegal. Poaching anywhere is illegal, and when we get tips

from people about gunshots, if we get tips from sightings, we follow up as quickly as we can in terms of following up, whether that be Fraser's Grove or whether that be Charleswood, the Assiniboine Forest. It doesn't matter what quadrant of the city, we follow up, and, quite frankly, it doesn't matter what part of the province, we follow up as quickly as we can possibly get out there.

Mrs. Driedger: I'm sure the minister can understand my concern about this because in the evenings you can sometimes hear gunshots in south Charleswood. We have a walking trail, the Harte Trail, that goes through on the edge of our residential area, and in the past there has been a deer shot there and skinned, or partly.

On some evenings you can hear a lot of bullets flying, and I have some concerns because it's right next to a residential area. I dread the thought that you could have some stray bullet flying and hitting a walker, a cyclist, or anybody, especially in part of that area where we've got a huge sports facility and a wonderful skate park.

But it's in that area where you can hear a lot of the sounds of something going on, so does the minister have any specifics on how often he gets reports of gunshot wounds in south Winnipeg, particularly around the Charleswood area?

Mr. Struthers: I don't think the member intended to say gunshot wounds, but gunshots. I know what she means. I know that trail. I've checked it out on one occasion. I know the layout of that and I know the proximity of that trail to places where people are active and where people are living.

I share the concerns that the member brings forward. It's not a safe practice to be discharging a rifle, a gun of any sort, in the city for whatever reason, let alone hunting, poaching, whatever people want to call it, in a place as populated and as active as Charleswood.

Again, my advice is that whenever, whatever it is, a gunshot that her constituents hear, if they see anything, get a hold of our resource officers as quickly as they can. I don't have it with me, but we try to get our tips number out to as many people as we can. I know there are some fridge magnets floating around. However we can get that number in front of people—[interjection] Floating around on people's fridges, I suppose.

As many people as we can get out there who've got that tips number as handy as we can, when they

see something suspicious, let us know. We have very good staff that follow up on these, and always time is of the essence. If we can follow up quickly if we hear a gunshot or if a deer is taken down or anything like that, the sooner we can know about it, the better.

Mr. Dyck: I have a question to the Minister of Conservation. I met with one of the council members from the R.M. of Stanley in the past week, and, as the minister would know, the R.M. of Stanley was last year, in '07, the fastest growing rural municipality in all of Canada, just to put that on the record, and I know that my colleague from Springfield is impressed by that. But the issue here is that they were informed this past week that the lot sizes that would be allowed now through the director of environmental services were going to be increased from, and they used to be, three-quarter to one acre.

That's what the lot size needs to be in a rural municipality. Then, of course, you could have your ejector system on that area, but now it's been an arbitrary number thrown out, and this is not something that they have suggested should be taking place, but have been told it's now going to be two-acre sizes.

I'm wondering if the minister is aware of this, and if he is, why would they have been telling the people in the process as they are going along and doing their plans for developing, that the three-quarter to one-acre lot sizes are okay, but, now, all of a sudden, it's been changed to two acres.

Mr. Struthers: First of all, I think it's the cool name of the R.M.; that is one of the attractions.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Struthers: You were all with me before; now you've turned on me. I'll try not to be humorous about this.

What we're dealing with are ejection systems that are there to attempt to handle sewage. In all parts of Manitoba, we need to take whatever steps we can to minimize the amount of sewage that ends up discharging its nutrients, the phosphorus, the nitrogen and whatever, into our lakes and rivers.

With those ejection systems, if they're not planned properly, and if you don't give enough ground for these to cover, and if you don't do it when wind conditions have been analyzed, you end up with some very real problems with your neighbours if you don't do it right to begin with. So we have been looking at ways in which we can tighten that

framework for ejection systems. It's part of a comprehensive—I know members opposite have been getting riled up about Bill 17, accusing us of picking on hog farmers, but, in reality, we are looking across the board at tightening regulations to protect Manitoba's water, and this falls into that category.

We have to put in place a framework that protects water, and seeing some of the horror stories connected to these ejection systems, I think we have to treat that seriously. That's the rationale that we've used. I think I'll just leave it at that for now.

Mr. Dyck: I hear the minister. On the other hand, though, I think it's sort of ironic in that the department, in fact, approved a study to be done by GENIVAR consulting engineers to determine the soil capabilities within the area. They are in the process of doing this to be able to determine whether, in fact—and it's not only ejector systems; there are also the septic fields. There's the, I think it's the Octopus or whatever they use, the tentacles sort of spread out, but anyway, they're doing the study to determine as to the amount of grey matter or grey water rather, that can be absorbed by the grey water, absorbed by the soil.

So I would ask the minister, at one point in time, they indicated that they should do the study. They are in the midst of doing it, and now an arbitrary decision has come out and said, you know, you can't do this or we're not going to even look to see what the study comes back with. To me, it sounds very

much like the reference you made to Bill 17, where you do an arbitrary—you don't follow the Clean Environment Commission report. You just arbitrarily go out there and put a moratorium on. That's, in a sense, what you are doing here as well. I just don't understand the rationale for it.

Mr. Struthers: Part of what the member said is correct, and that is that there are not just ejection systems, but we're talking about handling human sewage, septic fields, septic tanks. We're putting more people in place to catch those folks who think they should be poking holes in the bottom of their septic tanks so they can avoid the cost of handling that sewage. We have to do that; we have to look across the board at all of the ways in which human sewage travels from our places of residence into lakes and find out the best way that we can to handle that sewage in a proper and safe way.

I understand the point that he makes about the study. The study was part of the decision. I don't want to wait and cause pollution while we're waiting for that study, so we went ahead.

The Acting Chairperson (Ms. Erin Selby): The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 26, 2008

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