

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

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Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, November 27, 2003

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Highway 32

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I wish to present the following petition. These are the reasons for this petition:

Rural highways are part of the mandate of the Province of Manitoba.

Under a previous commitment, the Province of Manitoba would be covering the costs of four-laning that portion of Highway 32 that runs through Winkler, Manitoba.

The Department of Transportation and Government Services has altered its position and will now undertake the project only if the City of Winkler will pay half of the total cost of construction. The provincial government's offloading of its previous commitment will cost the City of Winkler several million dollars.

The City of Winkler has now been informed that it will have to wait several years before this project could be undertaken.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider honouring the previous commitment and complete the four-laning of Highway 32 through the city of Winkler, absorbing all costs related to the construction as previously agreed.

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider the responsibility of the Department of Transportation and Government Services for the construction of rural highways.

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider the significant and strategic importance of the completion of four-laning Highway 32 through the city of Winkler, especially as it relates to the economic growth and the development of the city of Winkler and its trading area.

To request the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider the valuable contribution of the city of Winkler and its trading area to the provincial economy and re-prioritize the four-laning of Highway 32 for the 2004 construction season.

These are submitted by Eva Klassen, Frank Unrau, Albert Giesbrecht and Tamara Funk.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when a petition is read it is deemed to be received by the House.

Co-op Program for Nursing Students

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. The background to the petition is as follows:

A co-op program for nursing students at the University of Manitoba was approved by the Senate and the Board of Governors.

This program will provide the opportunity for students to apply their theoretical knowledge in the workplace through supervised work terms for which they are paid.

Students are hired by participating agencies under supervision of a workplace employee who serves as a mentor.

Students assume responsibilities suitable for their level of knowledge and expertise and will provide patients with much-needed nursing.

The co-op program will enable nursing students to acquire valuable experience by working with a seasoned mentor, become more proficient

and better able to handle heavier workloads and increase their knowledge, skills and confidence.

This program will enable students to earn income to help reduce their debt load.

Mr. Speaker, the Department of Health will benefit through reduced orientation costs for new graduates and an increased likelihood that new graduates will remain in the province.

Although the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) was unable to attend the round table held on November 7, 2003, he graciously sent a representative who restated his position to work with the students to reach a creative solution.

* (13:35)

Several Canadian universities have successfully implemented nursing co-op programs. Several faculties within the University of Manitoba have such a program available to their students. Therefore, students within the Faculty of Nursing should have equal opportunity and access to a co-op program.

This program will offer students valuable experience and provide the confidence and strength they will need in the future.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Legislative Assembly to consider supporting the proposed co-op program.

Signed by Heather Wenzel, Elizabeth Singh, Christine Reeves and others.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when a petition is read it is deemed to be received by the House.

Sales Tax Proposal

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition. These are the reasons for this petition:

The Mayor of Winnipeg is proposing a new deal which will result in new user fees and additional taxes for citizens of the city of Winnipeg.

One of these proposed changes requires the provincial government to approve an increase of the sales tax.

The Balanced Budget, Debt Repayment and Taxpayer Accountability Act requires a referendum to take place before the provincial government can increase major taxes, including the retail sales tax.

The Doer government has been silent on whether they will make the necessary legislative changes required to give the City of Winnipeg additional taxing powers.

Taxpayers deserve to have a say before having any major new taxes imposed upon them.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) notify the City of Winnipeg that the provincial government will not allow an increase of the sales tax without a referendum being held as required under balanced budget legislation.

This petition is signed by Linda Bergmann, Debbie Traynor, Gord Taylor and others.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when a petition is read it is deemed to be received by the House.

Walleye

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition. The background to this petition is as follows:

Fish stocks in Lake Winnipegosis began to decline in the 1960s. The walleye fishery on Lake Winnipegosis has been in serious trouble for many years.

A similar situation happened in Lake Erie but it was handled much more effectively. In Lake Erie, a sound science-based management program was implemented and the stocks rebounded. As a result, production of walleye on Lake Erie for 1980 to 2001 averaged 182 percent of the estimated sustainable yield.

In contrast from 1980 to 2001, the average annual harvest of walleye on Lake Winnipegosis

was about 14 percent of the estimated sustainable yield for the lake.

Much better management of a walleye fishery on Lake Erie shows that good management of a walleye fishery is possible.

The fishermen on Lake Winnipegosis have been deprived of an estimated 72 million of income between 1980 and 2001.

Economic models of the effects of such primary income loss usually estimate a significant multiplier effect and that may well mean a loss of several hundred million dollars in economic activity for the region.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Finance and the Auditor General to consider undertaking a thorough investigation of the provincial management of the walleye fishery on Lake Winnipegosis.

Signed by L. Boucher, Rodney Boucher, Andy Chartrand and others.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our Rule 132(6), when a petition is read it is deemed to be received by the House.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 202—The Nellie McClung Foundation Act

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), that Bill 202, The Nellie McClung Foundation Act; Loi sur la Fondation Nellie McClung, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, this bill, we believe, is very important. It will establish a foundation to promote the memory of Nellie McClung.

Motion agreed to.

* (13:40)

Bill 12—The Highways and Transportation Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Trucking Productivity Improvement Fund)

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Industry, Economic Development and Mines (Mr. Smith), that Bill 12, The Highways and Transportation Amendment and Highway Traffic Amendment Act (Trucking Productivity Improvement Fund); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la voirie et le transport et le Code de la route, be now read for the first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lemieux: Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to introduce this bill today. The proposed legislation will create a new highway-improvement fund fuelled by unique partnering agreements with the private sector and overweight permit fees.

We believe this new and innovative approach to funding improvements to Manitoba's aging highway infrastructure has the potential to channel millions of dollars into the highway system, while at the same time improving the productivity of the trucking industry. I look forward to discussing the proposed legislation in detail with my colleagues.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 203—The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), that Bill 203, The Manitoba Lotteries Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Corporation manitobaine des loteries, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, this bill will require the Manitoba Lotteries Corporation to eliminate the use of video lottery terminals in the province of Manitoba over a five-year period on the basis

of 20% reduction per year. Video lottery terminals used in government-run casinos and First Nations casinos are not affected.

This bill also restricts the corporation's power to obtain new types of video lottery terminals until they provide a report to the Legislature on the economic and social implications of replacing VLTs.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 204—The Fatality Inquiries Amendment Act

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), that Bill 204, The Fatality Inquiries Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les enquêtes médico-légales, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, each year the Chief Medical Examiner submits a statistical report to the Minister of Justice about deaths investigated under The Fatality Inquiries Act. This bill requires statistics about gambling-related suicides to be included as a separate entry in that report and requires the minister to table the report in the Legislative Assembly.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 206—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I move, seconded by the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), that Bill 206, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Presently, The Manitoba Public Insurance Act requires a reduction in income replacement, in the income-replacement indemnity paid to an accident victim by the amount of any disability benefit received under CPP. This amendment allows the accident victim to retain, rather than have clawed back, any money

received from CPP as the result of a division of pensionable earnings from the victim's spouse, former spouse, common-law partner or former common-law partner.

Motion agreed to.

* (13:45)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from Churchill High School 19 Grade 11 students under the direction of Mr. Ed Lenzmann. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Advanced Education and Training (Ms. McGifford).

Also in the public gallery we have from Carpathia School 40 Grade 5 students under the direction of Mr. Dennis McIntosh and Mrs. Darlene Deda. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson).

Also I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the loge to my right, where we have with us the Honourable Stephen Mahoney, Secretary of State for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and also the Honourable Mark Wartman, Minister for Highways and Transportation for the Province of Saskatchewan. These visitors are the guests of the honourable Minister of Family Services and Housing (Ms. Melnick) and the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Lemieux).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Tax Increases Premier's Intentions

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, while I understand the mayor yesterday credited me with putting a stop to any increases in the sales tax, I must thank my colleague from River East who did a

tremendous job in putting a petition together. My colleague from River East was responsible and showed the leadership to put a petition together to develop a voice for all Winnipeggers to tell the mayor and the Premier that they were not interested in any new taxes in Manitoba.

Unfortunately, while the Premier has said that he will not increase the sales tax, the Premier has a growing credibility gap. He says one thing and then does another. We are also troubled that the Premier is now trying to find a little bit of wiggle room by saying, generally speaking, I was not elected to raise taxes. If this does not sound off alarm bells, I do not know what does. Considering the Premier finally spoke out on the sales tax issue, I think Manitobans deserve to hear where he stands on the others: the gas tax, the hotel tax, all of those issues.

Will the Premier come clean today and tell us what new taxes he is prepared to consider and which ones he is prepared to increase?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I thought it was instructive, Mr. Speaker, that it was pointed out again late last week to these born-again tax savers, that the taxes went up over 68 percent on the education portion in the dark days of the 1990s here in Manitoba.

Since we have been elected, unlike members opposite, we kept our promises to increase the property tax credit, the education tax credit over two years: year one, \$75 which was subtracted off the property tax bill; year two, subtracted another \$75 off the property tax bill to go from \$250 to \$400. We then started to phase down the ESL, the second education tax.

We have kept our promises. Members opposed feigned indignation. They rose taxes 68 percent in the 1990s. They have no credibility in this House on that issue.

* (13:50)

Property Tax Education Support Levy

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): On this side of the House, we agree that consumption taxes are a fair way to

tax and we support the notion of a revenue-neutral shift. We are opposed to increased taxes.

I do believe we have a great opportunity to rethink taxation and develop a plan that shifts to consumption taxes, but in a revenue-neutral way because I said before, considering that we are already under the Doer government the highest taxed west of New Brunswick, we do not need any new taxes here.

One of the cornerstones of the mayor's new deal was to reduce the municipal tax by 30 to 50 percent. The Premier should recognize that his Government's continued reliance on property taxes to fund education, Mr. Speaker, is part of the problem. Before the mayor gets to word crafting his new deal, will the Premier insist and commit today by eliminating the education tax for residential property and farmland, thereby saving Manitobans half of their bill? That is something that will not cost the mayor a cent.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker. I think I heard the echoes of the GST debate when the member opposite worked for former Prime Minister Mulroney. He said introducing the GST into Canada was going to be revenue neutral. Yes, well, has it ever been revenue neutral?

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to the member opposite if he wants to run for the mayor's position, he is eligible to run like any other citizen of Winnipeg the next time the civic elections take place.

Gas Tax Federal Portion

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the mayor for bringing forward a new idea, new ways of thinking about things. I think that is important. I do not think there is anything wrong with that. I think it is important that Manitobans have a way to bring forward their voices on how they should pay for the services that they value. We are certainly interested in working together with the mayor, people in the province of Manitoba, Winnipeggers, to develop the right deal but not one that increases taxes.

The Premier now seems to be supporting the mayor's idea of increasing the gas tax by another five cents a litre, Mr. Speaker. What we find troubling is that the Premier knows full well, while the Province puts most of the money it collects in gas taxes back into the roads and infrastructure, we know that the federal government collects about \$150 million in gas tax but does not put that back into Manitoba.

Does the Premier not agree, Mr. Speaker, that rather than tax already overtaxed Manitobans even more, we should stand together and fight to get the federal government to put the gas tax back into Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, if you want to read back the October 1 answer I gave to the Leader of the Opposition when he said: do not have public hearings, do not let the people speak out, and I talked about the GST collection on gas taxes. I mean he is six weeks, or seven weeks, or eight weeks behind the statements we made.

The bottom line is that one of the elements of the proposals from municipalities, we were just at the AMM convention this morning and last night and one of the issues that has been raised by them and by us and I would expect by all governments is the fact that there is \$165 million raised in gasoline tax. I think the public hearings that the member opposite wanted to shut down, he did not even want the public hearings to take place. Close them down he said. Well, we think the public debate has been useful.

Mr. Speaker, there are public debates going on in Brandon now on a new municipal planning act. There are public debates going on in The Pas on a new municipal plan for the community of The Pas. There are discussions going on in Thompson right now about a new relationship. There are ideas on housing in various parts of this province. We have a lot of municipalities.

I think the one point we should raise is when the members opposite with no credibility said they were going to get rid of this tax and that tax, they did not tell the public how they were going to do it. At least the mayor went out and said to reduce the property tax by 50 percent,

these are the other taxes that would have to be increased. When you look at the issue of credibility, at least one debate was honest and another debate was not so.

* (13:55)

Hells Angels Associates Trial

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): My question is to the Minister of Justice. The Justice Minister announced that a combination of Legal Aid lawyers and a private defence lawyer will handle the defence of the five Hells Angels associates. It was reported this morning that the private defence lawyers chosen by the Hells Angels will be challenging the decision of the minister to appoint Legal Aid lawyers for the defence.

Will this minister today guarantee to Manitobans that the five Hells Angels will be tried in court and they will be tried in court for their charges and that their charges will not be dropped?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): This is the Legislative Assembly; the courthouse is across the street. The matter is being heard today. I will respect the process, Mr. Speaker, that over centuries democrats have put in place. That is the justice system.

Mr. Hawranik: It is obvious this Justice Minister has been out of practice far too long. I suggest he go back to private practice to learn about what he can talk about in this Chamber.

Manitobans are looking to this Justice Minister for answers, and he has a duty and he has an obligation to ensure that those who are charged with criminal offences are tried in a court of law. Given that the minister had the power to resolve this matter for months and has only come up with a Band-Aid solution for Justice Holly Beard, will he today guarantee the Hells Angels charges will be brought to trial?

Mr. Mackintosh: What I can say is the departmental and other officials that are on this matter have been instructed to do what is

necessary to respect the orders and direction of the court, Mr. Speaker. The responses are being made in that forum, in the forum of the court, given that it is before a judge and being supervised by a judge. I might add members opposite seem to be saying well, just throw money at it and have the matter proceed.

Mr. Speaker, on the other hand and then on another day they say do not give them legal aid so the stays will follow and out the door they go. So they cannot have it every way.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, this minister has sat back for months while the Hells Angels and their lawyers have made a mockery of their trial and a mockery of this justice system.

Will this minister assure Manitobans that he will do his duty and he will fulfil his obligation as the Minister of Justice of this province and assure Manitobans the five Hells Angels associates will be brought to trial for their charges?

Mr. Mackintosh: I can certainly assure Manitobans, as I stated yesterday, that all efforts are being made to ensure the prosecution of this matter proceeds. I know the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) would rather be the mayor; the Opposition critic would rather be a judge. I regret they have such discomfort in being MLAs, Mr. Speaker.

Health Care Services Rossburn/Erickson Area

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, citizens in Erickson and Rossburn are frustrated and, quite frankly, afraid and do not know where to turn because this Government has closed their hospitals and they do not have access to services.

Since the closure of the Rossburn hospital, doctors in Russell have been directed to do the on-call and also the after-hour patients out of Rossburn at a time when these doctors are overwhelmed with the workload. In addition, these doctors have been asked to do the in-patient services in Rossburn which is 30 miles away, which is dangerous and cannot serve the patients well.

I want to ask the minister what his advice is to patients in Erickson and Rossburn whose

health care is at risk because of this intolerable situation.

* (14:00)

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): I want the members to know that I had some very, very productive and interesting meetings with members from Erickson and other communities at AMM that I attended yesterday. We had some very productive meetings where we talked about some of the issues that have occurred, the revolving door and how in the 1990s, when the previous government cut down the number of doctors training in Manitoba by 15 percent, what impact it has had now today on Manitoba doctors. We had some very interesting discussions.

As well, we had a chance to talk about the committee that is going around reviewing, having meetings, looking at ideas with local communities, with local doctors, to talk about some of the difficulties that have occurred during the 1990s and some of the solutions proposed by some of the initiatives adopted by our Government.

Assiniboine Regional Health Authority Physician Recruitment

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I want to advise the minister what I am talking about now. I am talking about the fear that patients have about their health care today.

I want to quote from the *Brandon Sun*, where a Miss Pat Philips, who is the board member for the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority says, and I quote: No matter how much writing is on the wall, rural people resist even the suggestion that their hospitals or emergency rooms will close.

The communities of Erickson and Rossburn have been directed to abandon all efforts in recruiting doctors for their communities. This has been directed by the ARHA. They have been told that, even if they were to recruit a potential doctor, that doctor would not be offered a contract for that community. Can the minister explain why he told this House and these communities that they would be involved in recruiting doctors when in fact the regional health

authority is telling the communities the exact opposite?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): It is curious the way the member attempts to take words and phrases and tries to make politics out of what is a very serious situation.

Let me quote from the pamphlet that is going out with respect to the hearings that are going on in the very region the member purports to represent. The Assiniboine region has approximately 60 doctors working at 20 hospitals, more than when the members opposite and when that member was a member of Cabinet.

In addition, a recent survey found that the Assiniboine region has recruited more than 45 doctors, resulting in an increase in the total number of doctors working, and, as a result, we are going around, the committee is meeting with the community to talk about working with the communities to solve the problems and difficulties made by 10 years of neglect of the previous government.

Review

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): The reality is that out of that 43 doctors that were recruited over the last four years into the regional health authority, 35 have left. By any standard of measurement, this is a disaster. We have doctors that are overworked, patients that cannot get service, and the entire situation is in a disaster.

I want to ask this minister whether he is prepared today to launch an investigation into the exodus of doctors from the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): First off, we have launched a review of the Office of Rural and Northern Health. There have been six hearings, another one scheduled for tonight, in the community, by doctors interviewing doctors, et cetera.

I might add, in 1997-98, when that member was a member of Cabinet and they closed Gladstone Hospital, I want to advise this House that that ER is reopening Monday. I wonder if members who closed that hospital will stand up on

Monday to congratulate the Government for doing something that they were unable to do when they closed that hospital. The record speaks for itself.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to remind all honourable members when putting a question or answering a question to please do it through the Chair. I would like to remind all honourable members.

Assiniboine Regional Health Authority Review

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): The minister's health record is speaking for itself. We have 35 out of 43 doctors who have left the southwest region. I correct myself, Mr. Speaker. This morning one more announced his resignation. It is now 36. In the last four years, this minister has seen 36 doctors leave the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority.

That prompted the minister to his good deeds. A group of people came in and met with him and he decided to call a review. The first person he appointed to do the review was somebody from within the system in the RHA not acceptable to the people in rural Manitoba, and the minister obviously moved it to the Office of Rural and Northern Health.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, the person put in charge of conducting the review is now the executive director to the CEOs of all the regional health authorities in Manitoba.

I ask the minister if he believes that this is an appropriate appointment, for the executive director to represent the people of the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): You know, Mr. Speaker, it is very clear what a pattern emerges. In '97-98, when members opposite closed Gladstone Hospital, we heard nothing about it. They slunked off, they flew off to South Africa, brought in a few doctors, no program to expand the college at the University of Manitoba, as we have. They closed down the nursing program.

We put in place a rural and northern health program. We put in place bursary assistance for doctors to go back to rural Manitoba. We took a hundred doctors that were trained outside of Canada that are Canadian citizens and offered them an opportunity to train as doctors and practice as doctors in Manitoba, all programs we put in place, all contributing to having more doctors in Manitoba today than when the members left after 11 lean and mean years of cuts and slashing.

Mr. Tweed: I will remind the Minister of Health that this is 2003. It is now his responsibility, as it has been for the last four years.

Mr. Speaker, the executive director responsible for the CEOs of all the regional health authorities in Manitoba is conducting this review. Part of the mandate of the review is to provide a forum mechanism for community participation in the review of the issues affecting health service delivery in the Assiniboine Regional Health.

At the meeting I attended, members were told by this executive director that all their comments would be printed on a board so that the minister could read the comments at the end of the process.

When members asked directly why 33 out of 45 doctors have resigned or left southwest Manitoba in the last four years, they were told they could not put it on the list. Is this director covering his political hide to protect him from Manitobans?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, as members opposite may know, when they were government in '97, '98 and '99, Erickson Hospital closed.

I wish that members opposite would go to Gladstone on Monday and watch how a government reopens an ER. It was closed shamelessly by members opposite five years ago and now has five doctors covering the ER, and not a peep now when that hospital reopens. That is what I told communities in rural Manitoba when we met them at AMM.

Mr. Speaker, we can work together on a problem we can all solve together. We have

more students training, we have more resources in, we have more benefits provided. Manitobans can do it, Mr. Speaker, not the days of giving up and cutoff, as happened during the last 11 years of the Tories.

* (14:10)

Mr. Tweed: Well, Mr. Speaker, it is pretty obvious to the people in the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority that this minister's dog-and-pony show is not walking. The people up there are frustrated because they are being muzzled, they are being restricted in what is going to be reported back to the minister, and, in reality, the minister will not and I suspect that his direction refuses to acknowledge the truth.

We have a doctor shortage problem in rural Manitoba. This minister is failing to address it. All he is doing is paying lip service so that he can satisfy his political masters on that side of the House.

I will ask the member again. Is the minister satisfied that the executive director who reports directly to the CEOs of regional health authorities in Manitoba should be the person responsible for reporting on doctor shortages when he will not even commit to talking to doctors in the region?

Mr. Chomiak: All we have done is gone from the Tories training 585 doctors a year in the mid-nineties to training 636 per year. That is almost 80 doctors more per year. All we have done is put in place a program so international students who have degrees do not have to work as cab drivers and do not have to work as attendants. They can work as doctors.

All we have done is put in place a bursary and grant program so over 200 students can participate in rural and other parts of Manitoba to pay back their fees. All we have done is put in place an Office of Rural and Northern Health to get rural students to participate in health care, and all we have done is had more doctors in Manitoba every year since 1999, a first time in a decade. That is all we have done.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to remind all honourable members when the Speaker is

standing, all members should be seated and the Speaker should be heard in silence. Also, I would like to remind all honourable members that we have guests up in the gallery, and they are here to hear the questions and hear the answers. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members, please.

Assiniboine Regional Health Authority Physician Recruitment

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am going to try to contain my frustration and, yes, my anger, because I am standing up for the small communities of Rossburn and Erickson, whose citizens who are elderly, who are patients, and all they want is to have access to a health care system. The communities of Erickson, Rossburn and others arrived at this Legislature and they took the minister at his word when he said he would involve them in the active recruitment of doctors for their communities.

I have a letter from the secretary-treasurer of the Rural Municipality of Erickson where the ARHA, the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority, has directed them to cease recruiting a doctor for their community. I want to ask this minister if he will now give a directive to the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority to engage the services of that community to recruit actively a doctor for that community.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): The member knows full well, because he was at that meeting, that I spoke, and the member knows full well, and it should have been reported, when I spoke with the Erickson officials just yesterday, that we are actively recruiting. They are recruiting doctors, but the region looks at priorities across the whole region, where there is a whole series of doctors that are being brought in, and Erickson is on the list. It is on the Web site.

The member attempts to find disunity when, in fact, it is not there. The community even said to me as early as yesterday that they are willing to work with all the parties to try to resolve this issue, as we have done in other instances, and I accept that.

Mr. Derkach: The people in the community of Erickson were attempting to help the regional

health authority in recruiting a doctor to their community. When a doctor did, in fact, become identified, a potential candidate who was interested in locating in Erickson to provide services for the people in Erickson, that doctor was told by the regional health authority that there was no contract available for Erickson and that, in fact, that doctor would have to do on call in Minnedosa and not in Erickson. Now, I want to ask this minister whether he will stand up for the people in these communities today and whether he will give a directive to the regional health authority to, in fact, offer a contract to a doctor interested in locating in Erickson or in Rossburn.

Mr. Chomiak: For all the member's sound and fury, he knows that has already been done.

Mr. Derkach: If that has already been done, I want to ask the minister whether he is prepared to put it in writing with a copy to me, to the community of Erickson, to the community of Rossburn and to the CEO of the regional health authority that, in fact, that is his position with respect to these two hospitals.

Mr. Chomiak: I understand the member's frustration in wanting—*[interjection]*

An Honourable Member: You want an answer to that, let him answer.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

An Honourable Member: You asked the question; let him answer it.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Chomiak: I understand the member's frustration in wanting to preserve the status quo in his community, Mr. Speaker. I understand that, and we have tried, we have met, we have recruited. They were recruiting for both of those communities. They are recruiting for other communities. There have been public meetings in those communities. There have been region-wide meetings. There is a task force meeting as we speak to look at rural doctor recruitment retention, and I might add, it is not just the microcosm of that particular area. We look at the whole province, which is why we have done so much to expand training and medical positions and retain them here in Manitoba, which is why

we have more doctors working in Manitoba today than when that member was a member of the Executive Council and cut the number of students enrolled in the medical college.

Sewage Treatment Facilities Upgrade Funding

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, when speaking to the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, the Premier (Mr. Doer) paid lip-service to the importance of water quality to Manitobans. This just one day after Winnipeg spewed over 13 000 gallons of raw sewage into the Assiniboine River. If the Premier was serious about this issue he would budget funds to assist the city. I would ask the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs how much money the Doer government is willing to provide the City of Winnipeg to help eliminate the spewing of raw sewage into our rivers and lakes.

Hon. MaryAnn Mihychuk (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade): I thank the member for the question. As we know, the City of Winnipeg has a significant challenge when it comes to water treatment, and we are prepared, as we have been in the past, to contribute as a partner for the infrastructure. We will look at our capital programs as well as the Canada-Manitoba municipal infrastructure program. So we are available. We are willing to work with the City. We know they have an enormous challenge and look forward to helping them wherever we can.

Mr. Loewen: Well, I thank the minister for that answer, but it rings hollow. I would remind her that in its last three budgets the Doer government has budgeted \$70 million to help rebuild the floodway. Unfortunately, they spent virtually nothing on the floodway and instead used that \$70 million to pay for overexpenditures in other departments. I would ask the minister to advise because Manitobans want to know when this Government will actually spend some money to fix the crumbling infrastructure as opposed to just budgeting it.

Ms. Mihychuk: Well, as the member probably knows, we are coming to the conclusion of the Canada-Manitoba infrastructure program. We have expended 80 percent of the money that is allocated in that three-partnership program, and

we are in the process of negotiating the new infrastructure agreement. What I would ask the member and members across the way is to assist the Province of Manitoba to ensure that we get our fair share of dollars from the federal government and ensure that these agreements are signed in an orderly and timely manner.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, we are trying to help this Government live up to its promises like constructing the Kenaston underpass. Where are they on that? Despite an infusion of more than a billion dollars a year this Government has received from the federal government since they took power, they refuse to find funds to repair our infrastructure—over a billion dollars a year. I am going to ask the Doer government when they will get serious about infrastructure repair and provide the City with support to solve its waste water problem, or are they just going to sit by idly as raw sewage continues to spew into our waterways?

* (14:20)

Ms. Mihychuk: I would like to remind members across the way that in 1999 the way that government dealt with the issue of infrastructure was to watch the city of Winnipeg burn. Now we are investing in the renewal of our city and are seeing growth, hope and optimism. Our investments in infrastructure, both in the core and in structural improvements to the city, have provided a new and vibrant city and we can take a lot of credit for that.

University of Manitoba *Maclean's* Survey

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier. I take a great deal of pride in all of Manitoba's universities, but what I want to focus on is the University of Manitoba. The *Maclean's* magazine once again has ranked the medical doctoral program dead last. The overall rating for the University of Manitoba highlights a serious problem that needs to be addressed.

Given the Premier's (Mr. Doer) comments in the Throne Speech, that all-party committees of the Legislature are a good way to demonstrate non-partisan solutions, will the Premier agree to

an all-party committee dealing with the future of the University of Manitoba?

Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question because it does give me the opportunity to elucidate the matters that he raised. One thing the member does not understand, and perhaps should, is that the University of Manitoba, as the only doctoral university in the province, has a commitment to accessibility for all our students. Because of this commitment to accessibility, it loses a great number of marks in the *Maclean's* survey.

I would also like to point out, and if the member wants to take a closer look at the *Maclean's* survey, he will see this: there is very little difference in actual numerical value between the top and as we progress down the list. So I think that the University of Manitoba has much to be proud of. We have the greatest number of Rhodes scholars in western Canada but this member—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, it causes great concern that the minister would have that sort of an attitude. Yes, we might be in last, but at least we are not that far from first. We are in last. We tried to get the Premier to acknowledge through the Throne Speech, trying to get some positive solutions, and I take his lack of a response to the question that the Government is not interested in that.

Mr. Speaker, let us take a look at the province of Saskatchewan, a relatively good province for us to be compared to. University of Saskatchewan has 15 000 full-time students, University of Manitoba has 18 000 students. When you look at the overall, best overall: Manitoba 27, Saskatchewan 17; highest quality: Manitoba 27, Saskatchewan 21; most innovative: Manitoba 30, Saskatchewan 20; leaders of tomorrow—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. McGifford: Mr. Speaker, speaking of creative solutions, we might look at the Uni-

versity of Manitoba. Indeed, our Manitoba accessibility program, which has been praised by our Adrienne Clarkson and her husband, John Ralston Saul, as one of the best programs in the country. Maybe the member would like to look at that.

Speaking of creative solutions, I think perhaps he could speak to his colleagues in Ottawa about transfer payments. I notice, Mr. Speaker, that in 1982-83, the federal post-secondary cash transfer as a percentage of GDP was .52. In 2002-2003, it has dropped to .22 percent. Maybe he can talk to his colleagues in Ottawa and have them support post-secondary education in this country.

Government Vision

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, the answer to every problem the Doer government faces, or this Premier faces, is to blame Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, this Government has got to start taking responsibilities for the administration, whether it is education or health care. Our university, the University of Manitoba is not being served well by this Government's dunking their head in the sand, pretending everything is well. This Government should be establishing goals and priorities and set a vision that will show that the University of Manitoba means something to this Doer government.

My question, Mr. Speaker, is: Does this Government have a vision for the University of Manitoba, and get their head out of the sands? Shame.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, there is a fundamental issue here. The issue is the priority of accessibility at our universities. That is a fundamental principle because it speaks to the issue of do you want universities to be more accessible for more people, to have more people in our society involved in careers, in professions, in lives of dignity through the university, or do you want the entrance bar to be raised and raised and raised and deny other individuals the opportunity to go in? That is a very, very important issue. That is why we believe that accessibility and inclusion is very, very important for post-secondary education.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we have the largest capital program ever announced in the history of Manitoba at the University of Manitoba.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Yesterday, Manitobans were informed that 122—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Oh, I am sorry. It is my error. Under the agreement we have had with the House leaders—*[interjection]*

Order. Under the agreement we have with all members of the House, the first six questions were for the Official Opposition, the seventh question was for the independent members and question No. 8, if a member of the Government backbench stood up, they would ask the question.

I did not see the honourable member when I looked that way. I will correct my error and recognize the honourable Member for Seine River. Then I will recognize the honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler).

Health Care System Wait List Reduction Plan

Ms. Theresa Oswald (Seine River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health. The recent Speech from the Throne outlined the Manitoba Wait List Reduction Plan. Part of this plan is to invest in diagnostic equipment throughout Manitoba and expand day surgery.

Can the minister kindly please update the House on the progress made in these areas?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I think it is very important to note that first off, within our first few years in office we reduced the lifesaving cancer treatment waiting list in half and have continued to reduce it in half. In fact, we are No. 1 last I checked in the country with respect to cancer treatment waiting lists.

Mr. Speaker, yesterday we introduced 14 000 more ultrasounds for the people of Manitoba, six new machines across the city of Win-

ipeg. More important, something that was ignored for 11 lean years, is the fact that we have increased the sonographers class, that is the people that operate the machine, by 35 percent. Believe it or not, we will have people to operate the machinery that we have purchased and put in place.

Palliser Furniture Job Losses

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Yesterday, Manitobans were informed that 122 more working men and women are to lose their jobs at Palliser Furniture.

Can the Minister of Labour (Ms. Allan) tell us what her long-term economic strategy is to protect any further job losses at Palliser Furniture?

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister of Industry, Economic Development and Mines): Mr. Speaker, certainly Palliser Furniture has been an outstanding business here in the province of Manitoba.

When the previous government had given Palliser Furniture support with loans in 1989 and 1993, we have seen Palliser Furniture grow into the company it is now, supporting well over 3000 families through the jobs in Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, the DeFehr family has a background in business and is expanding and has continued to expand their operations worldwide, in fact, just received an outstanding award in Canada about the excellent business practice that they have.

Mr. Speaker, this side of the House is in support of families, Manitobans, and we will support this business through this time.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mr. Speaker: Order. I just called for members' statements and I would like to remind all honourable members there is lots of room in the loges, out in the hallway if you wish to have your conversations, because the honourable members who are getting up on their members' statements, it is a very, very important statement

they are making and we should give them the opportunity to be heard. So I ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

Louis Riel School Division

Ms. Theresa Oswald (Seine River): It is my pleasure to rise today to inform the House of an important event that occurred this week that will have a significant impact on the schools in the Seine River constituency and indeed in the Louis Riel School Division at large. On Tuesday, November 25, members of the Louis Riel School Division community joined together in an event celebrating the accomplishments of the amalgamation of the legacy divisions, St. Boniface and St. Vital.

* (14:30)

This community symposium was designed to create a mission and vision for the new Louis Riel School Division. The inspiration for the community event came from the board of trustees. In consultation and collaboration with the superintendent, Mr. Terry Borys, the symposium offered an opportunity for equitable representation from the community for a thoughtful sharing of ideas and reflections that will set the mission and priorities for the newly created division. I was very pleased that the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (Mr. Bjornson) was on hand to provide a keynote address about valuing communities and excellence in teaching and learning.

Attendees included parents, teachers, instructional assistants, custodians, secretaries, support staff and high school students. Schools were organized in round-table discussion groups wherein we shared ideas about the purpose, priorities, values and principles of public education. Adults reflected on fond memories and lessons learned from their past and students spoke of their personal dreams and hopes for a better world. Although the crowd consisted of a diverse group of individuals, we quickly learned in the whole group sharing that the vision for the school division was uniformly held.

I would like to extend my gratitude to Mrs. Linda Chernenkoff, director of policy, planning and communication, for co-ordinating and facilitating this very inspiring event.

La Division scolaire Louis-Riel met beaucoup de valeur sur la coopération et sur les consultations communautaires. J'aimerais féliciter tous les membres de la communauté pour leurs efforts extraordinaires en vue d'assurer une éducation de qualité supérieure pour les jeunes de Rivière Seine. Merci beaucoup. Félicitations.

Translation

The Louis Riel School Division places great value on co-operation and community consultation. I would like to congratulate all the members of the community for their extraordinary efforts to ensure high quality education for the young people of the Seine River area. Thank you very much. Congratulations.

AMM Convention

Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman): Mr. Speaker, this week many members of the Legislature had the pleasure of attending the fifth annual Association of Manitoba Municipalities in Brandon, with many of us able to take in the ever popular banquet.

My colleagues and I have always enjoyed going to the AMM convention and having the opportunity to touch base with municipal leaders and officials and to share ideas and concerns. We also enjoy listening to the debates on the resolution which is always lively and engaging.

Mr. Speaker, the theme of this year's AMM convention is strong leadership, strong future. This year's theme seems particularly fitting given the many issues our communities have faced this year, including the BSE crisis, drought and forest fires, challenges in the mining sector and difficulty in the recruiting and retaining of health care professionals, to name just a few.

I am always impressed by the resiliency of our communities and by the ability of local officials such as the municipal councillors, reeves and mayors to step forward in times of uncertainty and to provide exemplary leadership to their constituents. I would like to take a moment to thank the elected representatives and municipal officials for all they do in serving Manitobans. Hundreds of men and women from right

across the province are devoting their time to improving their communities, their municipalities and making Manitoba a better place for all.

I know that each member of this Assembly will join with me in congratulating His Worship Ed Anderson from the town of Boissevain, who was congratulated by his peers for his dedication to municipal politics. Also, we would like to congratulate Alan Beachell and Larry Walker for receiving their honorary life memberships to the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. I would also like to congratulate Stuart Briese on being re-elected as AMM president as well as the new and returning executive members. I know Mr. Briese and all of the other members of the AMM executive devote considerable time and energy to the execution of their duties each year, often taking time away from their families in the fulfilment of their municipal duties. We appreciate your efforts.

I would like, Sir, to thank the Premier (Mr. Doer), the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak), the minister of highways, for taking me along and the courtesy that they have given me.

The Village Centre

Mr. Cris Aglugub (The Maples): The education and care of a child requires many things including the support and help of the community where the child lives. On November 12, 2003, I had the pleasure of attending the relocation and opening of the Village Centre on Fife Street in The Maples. The new Minister of Healthy Living (Mr. Rondeau) brought greetings on behalf of the Government.

The Village Centre is a success story, and I would like to commend the program co-ordinators, the staff, the volunteers and the parents who have been dedicated in the development of the Village Centre programs, all of which have contributed to the education of the children in the constituency of The Maples.

The Village Centre was established in 1997, formerly located within Elwick Community School. At that time, the purpose of the centre was to assist parents in the education of their children from pre-school to early school years.

The new centre will continue to offer the same programs and added activities such as a drop-in centre, a community kitchen, a healthy baby program, pre-school programming and clothing exchange, just to name a few.

It also circulates a monthly newsletter within the community to keep the constituents informed about various events. These programs, along with the newsletter, have been created in response to the growing needs of the children and families in the community. A steering committee also provides information and direction for the development and sustainability of the Village Centre. It is comprised of the members from CEDA, Seven Oaks School Division, Child and Family Services and parents.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the funders of the Village Centre, which are the United Way, Child and Family Services and the in-kind support from the Seven Oaks School Division and the Maples Tenants Association. With their support, children in our community will benefit from the programs which are instrumental in their development and education.

Reverend Walmsley

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): I rise today to honour a man whose passion for life and compassion for his fellow man bore him the admiration and respect of everyone who knew him. I speak of Major the Reverend Sidney Arthur Walmsley C.D., who passed away recently.

Reverend Walmsley, born in Winnipeg, moved with his family to London, England. There he served as a commando in the British Army seeing action in World War II that dramatically shaped his life. He returned to Canada after the war and married the love of his life, Dorothy; and, while raising their children, he completed his studies.

The Reverend Walmsley was ordained a United Church minister in 1959. Reverend Walmsley joined the Portage la Prairie and Virden militias and was a member of the Royal Canadian Army Chaplain Corps, serving the 12th Manitoba Dragoons and the 26th Field Regiment of the Royal Canadian Artillery. By

retirement, he had achieved the rank of major and also received the Canada Decoration and Bar.

Reverend Walmsley also served as chaplain at the Manitoba Developmental Centre. His ministry to people with special needs included teaching and developing curriculum appropriate to their abilities. He received numerous international awards for these creative efforts.

The Reverend's creativity was also apparent through his participation in the performing arts. He was instrumental in the creation of a number of theatre groups in both Portage la Prairie and Virden. Reverend Walmsley helped to establish the Portage and District Arts Council and, with his wife, Dorothy, created the Candlelight Production Dinner Theatre in 1992. Throughout the numerous productions in which he was involved, the cast, the crew and audience appreciated his talent and positive outlook on life.

* (14:40)

Reverend Walmsley served on the Canadian Arts Council Board of Directors and taught theatre classes as well. He put his ingenuity to use by writing plays for which he received two Manitoba playwright awards. The arts community was always near and dear to Reverend Walmsley's heart, and he enjoyed participating in any and every capacity.

Recently, I had the privilege of nominating Major the Reverend Walmsley, C.D., for the Queen's Jubilee Medal. I am delighted to say, he was a most worthy recipient of this award.

Mr. Speaker, I can say without reservation, Reverend Walmsley inspired and spiritually guided not only our community, but also our province and our country. The impact he left on individuals with whom he worked, performed with or ministered to will not soon be forgotten.

It is my privilege to pay tribute to Major the Reverend Sidney Walmsley, C.D., and if I may, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Legislative Assembly, convey our deepest sympathies to the Walmsley family.

Computers for Schools Program

Mr. Bidhu Jha (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba there are certainly many successes in education, and today I would like to highlight one particularly important program.

Mr. Speaker, this week the Computers for Schools Program celebrated its 10th anniversary. This thoughtful program has put thousands of restored computers in the schools, libraries, literacy programs, community access sites and non-profit groups across Manitoba. These computers, which would otherwise have been dumped in the landfill and caused environmental problems, have been put to use by our students.

The program has provided training opportunities for students in technical work experience to develop skills as computer technicians. This is an excellent way to give incentive to the students to learn skills that will keep them in the workforce.

Today, the Computers for Schools has delivered more than 25 000 computers for youth, a phenomenal number and a milestone worth recognizing. One of the reasons for the program's success is that it brings Manitoba telecom pioneers together with the students to clean and refurbish equipment before it is provided to schools and libraries.

This program is directed by a provincial advisory body that establishes the criteria for eligibility and generally oversees the program operations. Working with a federal partner, Industry Canada, Computers for Schools ensures that the needs for school computers continue to be met.

The program also works closely with the computer industry and an important partner in Microsoft Canada because they have donated the operating system and software on every computer. This kind of team work is good for Manitobans and shows how many people can come together to make the best use of our resources and a skilled workforce.

Computers for Schools has expanded and has the scope to serve a whole variety of community organizations. It also expanded its

mandate to include building computers and addressing quality requirements in multimedia capabilities.

Computers for Schools is a significant partner in helping us prepare Manitoba students for the future. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with Rule 45(2), I am interrupting the debate on the address in reply in order to consider government business.

Mr. Speaker, will you please call Bills 2, 3, 4 and, by leave, 202 for second reading debate.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with Rule 45(2), I am interrupting the debate on the address in reply in order to consider government business and we will be calling bills in this order: Bills 2, 3, 4 and, by leave, if there is, Bill 202, for second reading debate.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

SECOND READINGS

Bill 2—The Biofuels and Gasoline Tax Amendment Act

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Energy, Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), that Bill 2, The Biofuels and Gasoline Tax Amendment Act; Loi sur les biocarburants et modifiant la Loi de la taxe sur l'essence, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

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

Motion presented.

Mr. Sale: Mr. Speaker, I am very honoured and pleased to be introducing this bill for second reading. In addressing the bill, I want to first thank my honourable colleagues opposite for

facilitating the consideration of this bill at an early time. I appreciate the amount of time that they have spent in becoming familiar with all of the issues. We have attempted to respond quickly and, I hope, clearly to the many questions which they have posed.

I look forward to the committee hearing during which we will consider the bill in detail on a clause-by-clause basis. I do want to thank my colleagues, particularly my critic, for facilitating consideration of this important legislation.

The act establishes a program to encourage the production of ethanol and the use of ethanol-blended fuel in Manitoba. I think that most members know that the ethanol industry in North America is incredibly rapidly growing. There is currently one plant per month being opened in the United States of America.

The new bill, which has been held up briefly, I believe, in the American Congress but will undoubtedly come back in January and be passed, provides for roughly a doubling of the market for ethanol over the next seven years in the United States of America and provides, I believe, tremendous opportunity for Canadian producers to take part in the expansion of this industry, both in our country and in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, members may know that currently ethanol is actually imported into Ontario because they are not making enough for their own needs. That, too, is a potential market for our ethanol that will be produced here in Manitoba.

The studies which were done by the panel which toured Manitoba more than a year ago very clearly showed that Manitoba was the lowest cost producer of ethanol in North America, frankly. We could ship ethanol into Minnesota at four or five cents per litre cheaper than they can make it. We can ship it into Ontario at a similar cost advantage. We are a slightly cheaper producer than Saskatchewan.

I want to address a number of issues in my remarks today. I do want to just be clear about some of the reasons why it is important that we be timely in our consideration of this legislation.

We are a small province with a market of about 1.4 billion litres of gasoline a year. At an E10 blend, that would be a market for about 140 million litres of ethanol.

Some members have asked why we would need to mandate the use of ethanol. Quite simply, the reason is that the oil and gas industry, which currently supplies all of Manitoba's gasoline, would not willingly substitute 10 percent of their market for a product which they do not make and which would cost them at least as much as the raw materials for gasoline would cost them.

There is no way in which we could introduce a voluntary market of 85 percent of our gasoline having an E10 blend, because those who are responsible for supplying our gasoline, not unreasonably, would say: Why would we give up our market to supply you with 100 percent of your fuel in order to let you develop an industry on a voluntary basis?

In fact, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you that as we negotiated over the last year with blenders and with commercial producers of ethanol, they were unanimous in asking us for an extremely clear set of regulations, a clear mandate, and very clear targets and clear timelines. They, as good corporate citizens, want to obey the law, but they want the law to be fair so that they will not be disadvantaged. For example, a Shell company would not want to be disadvantaged by having an unclear mandate, an unclear requirement for the blending of 85 percent of our gasoline by a certain day. They want a level playing field and a clear playing field.

That is why our mandate is very clear and provides a fair and transparent level of support for the development of this industry.

There are enormous advantages to beginning what will surely be a process that will be continued over our children's lifetime and may require the lifetime of our children and, perhaps, our grandchildren to complete, and that is the transition in our entire globe from a fossil fuel-based transportation industry to a renewable fuels industry.

*(14:50)

Countries like Brazil have shown the way, where in the 1970s Brazil was able to attain a level of almost 40 percent of their motive fuel as ethanol. They have maintained now a situation where they blend all of their gasoline at an E22 level. The manufacturers of automobiles, virtually all of which are imported to Brazil, are providing flexi-fuel vehicles that are able to use anything from an E10 to an E100 ethanol content. These fuelled vehicles are imported now in the tens of thousands into the country of Brazil.

Clearly, we are at the beginning stage in North America of making the transition from a non-renewable fossil fuel industry to a renewable transportation fuel industry. I was delighted the other day with my colleague the Minister of Agriculture, who introduced the biodiesel task force, which is now going to take the next step in moving towards the development of a biodiesel industry which, we believe, will have virtually the same as or even greater benefits to both our economy and our environment by moving to a blend of diesel between B10 and B20 perhaps, or B22, that will give us great advantages in terms of carbon dioxide and carbon monoxide and particulate emissions from the diesel side.

The benefits of ethanol are significant. First of all, just in terms of engines, all engines today, whether they be two-stroke cycle, four-stroke cycle or advanced automotive or truck engines will run on an E10 blend. Many of them will also today run on an E85, and the adjustments that are required in modern engines to raise the amount of ethanol that can be burned are relatively minor and relatively inexpensive. So, clearly, the automotive industry can see the opportunity to move towards a less carbon-based economy, and we are delighted that is the case.

The communities in Manitoba have been unequivocal in their welcome of this development and of this legislation. I have met with the communities of Killarney, Roblin, Russell, Minnedosa, Beausejour, Dauphin, Roblin, and, in fact, even some folks from The Pas, and I know my friend the Minister of Agriculture has met some people from Swan River. All are unequivocally supportive of the development of this industry in our province. They support the idea that first the industry needs government support and government legislation to get started, but,

Mr. Speaker, they also support the notion that after eight years, this industry should be self-reliant and that no further subsidies will be required at that time.

In fact, it is interesting that the industry itself recognizes that subsidies should be phased out over time and, I suppose no industry is happy with the idea that they will lose support, the industries with which we have consulted, and that would include four major proponents, have all agreed that it is appropriate that their support from the Government should be highest in the first couple of years and should, in fact, end after eight years, and they do not argue that case. I am delighted with their support for this plan.

The benefits in terms of our economy are very substantial. First of all, we are currently importing that 10 percent of gasoline which would be replaced by 10% ethanol. That gasoline is worth about \$55 million at today's prices. So that \$55 million, instead of circulating in the economies of Alberta and, to a small extent, Saskatchewan, will circulate in Manitoba's economy. This will create jobs. Though the jobs involved in an ethanol factory are not large in number, they are significant for any rural community. Twenty-five or thirty jobs are not to be sneezed at in a community such as the ones that I have mentioned.

More importantly, for the farmers of those regions, there are two very, very significant benefits. The first is there will be a readily used market for feed wheat in particular, and, more particularly, winter wheats that are high in starch. This will increase as the recognizability of the seed varieties that are currently under research has been achieved and we can get licences for some of the very high-starch winter wheats which currently they are able to be grown, but they are not able to be licensed. So we are in the process of working with the Canada grains commission and with the universities of Saskatchewan and Manitoba to increase the yields and the ability to use the most productive kinds of winter wheat for fuel production. So, in the first place, it creates a market.

When I recently, with my colleague the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), visited some ethanol-producing areas in the United

States, they told us the effect of having a plant on the farms round about was that the price of corn went up by about 10 cents or more a bushel, just pretty much immediately. Of course, that is the substitution of a cost of transportation for the ability to use the feed stock. So there is an advantage in terms of stabilizing price. There is an advantage of having long-term supply contracts, because any ethanol producer needs to know the supply they are going to have on the front end of the process will be there.

There is also, Mr. Speaker, an advantage in terms of the product. Ethanol is only one of the products from the use of wheat in this process of producing this product of ethanol. The other main product is distillers' grain, which is essentially a wet mash that is what is left after you take the starch out of the grain and begin the process of converting it first to sugar and then fermenting it and creating the alcohol.

In terms of the studies that we have seen, the protein content of DDGS from wheat is in excess of 40 percent, often as high as 44 percent. This is a very well-accepted feed. So, for those who have been concerned about the removal of what could be a food chain component, namely our winter wheat or our feed grade wheat, they really actually should be reassured completely because the real value of what is left is in its protein content and, of course, fibre content as well, but, certainly, protein content, which is frankly more important as a feed. It can be used for cattle and poultry immediately.

We were very glad to see that our universities are working very hard on whether it can be mixed in the feed for hogs. It is being mixed in on an experimental basis and we expect over the next few years it will become readily accepted as a feed stock for the hog industry.

There is an associated benefit with the production of DDGS. That is that Manitoba is currently a net importer of feed in the form of soybean protein. The soybean protein currently, I think, is costing around \$130 a tonne, if I am not mistaken, and the ability to use the wheat DDGS to replace some of that soy meal is obviously also a substitution effect on our economy and, therefore, is valuable in its own right, in addition to the value of the feed itself.

There are other by-products which in the longer term we believe will be used, including carbon dioxide which can be sequestered or can be used for either industrial or greenhouse purposes. When we look into the future and see the possibility of the production of ethanol from cellulose, under processes being researched by, among others, Grant Forest industries of eastern Canada and Iogen located currently in Ottawa, we see a very attractive marriage of a lignin cellulosic plant which produces as one of its by-products, lignin. Lignin is a very high value fuel. If you can use the lignin to burn, to dry the wet grain, the wet mash that comes off an ethanol plant based on wheat, you have essentially a loop that uses the head of the grain in the traditional plant that we know from Minnedosa, the cellulose of the grain in the cellulose plant, the lignin by-product to provide heat for the process and the DDGS to provide a feedstock for animals.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

We are optimistic that Iogen will perfect its process in the next few years and that that kind of complementary loop will become a reality. With the folks of Killarney I know that we hope that that will first take place in Manitoba. I am sure that members all know that Iogen has been very active with the Killarney area in terms of looking at the appropriateness of establishing their first plant in the world in that community. We certainly wish them well in their research. We wish the community of Killarney well in attracting what will be a world-class plant that we believe will revolutionize the production of ethanol in North America because it will make it enormously more efficient and certainly greener in terms of its benefits for the environment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to address briefly the energy-balance question. There are those who continue to quote studies that indicate that the production of ethanol has a negative energy balance. We accept the studies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Department of Energy of the United States, as well as the NRCan in Canada who have done very careful and very transparent studies on the energy balance issue. I am absolutely comfortable

with the finding of the NRCan study, which is approximately a 44% positive energy balance.

I might note that those who suggest the energy balance is not positive get a great deal of their negative number from assuming somehow that the land on which the ethanol is drawing its grain from would somehow be left fallow and there would not be any crop grown there. Well, I think most of the members opposite who know enormously more than I will ever know about agriculture know that land that is capable of growing grain is not likely to be left fallow. It will grow something.

So the notion that somehow the energy balance calculation cannot say that the development of ethanol counts all of the costs from hydrocarbons used in the production of the wheat and not at least put a little footnote down that says this assumes this land will never be used for anything else or, in fact, misleading people. I think that that is simply not a very fair comparison. I hope that groups like the National Farmers Union and others who have raised these questions will think about that issue of the assumption based in Mr. Pimental's work, which, we believe, is in error anyway. The assumption is that somehow these lands would lie fallow. I think that is clearly an erroneous and unreasonable assumption.

So we are convinced that modern plants and appropriate crops will yield an even higher energy balance than 44 percent, but we are convinced by NRCan's numbers that the minimum that we can see is a 44% positive energy balance.

* (15:00)

I want to just conclude my remarks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by indicating the reason for the urgency of bringing this legislation forward. Again, I want to thank my colleagues for enabling this to happen. In mid-September of this year, the federal department of energy Canada introduced a program of grants, somewhat surprisingly. I think people in Canada who are working on the development of this industry were not expecting this particular grant program at this particular time.

Uncharacteristically, for most federal programs, the time for responding to this program was very, very short. Initially, they set the time to be November 19, a program that was introduced about six weeks prior to that, but they put requirements in the request for proposal that required that there be clarity of the mandate, the legal framework under which ethanol would be produced in the jurisdictions or that there would be off-take agreements. An off-take agreement is an agreement on the part of a gasoline producer and blender to take the ethanol and use it, that there would be financial agreements, that there would be community siting agreements, all within a two-month period, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Now, I think you know and members opposite know that a business with a \$50-million to \$100-million investment cannot simply provide all of those kinds of legal agreements within a very short period of time unless they were already prepared to do so.

What we frankly were concerned about was that the federal proposal seriously disadvantaged Manitoba and perhaps Saskatchewan because it, first of all, rewarded the biggest plant, and, secondly, it rewarded production of ethanol in markets where there was a huge market and a relatively small penetration.

So, in Ontario, for example, there is the import of ethanol right now from the United States. Clearly, there is a market in Ontario for some ethanol production or in Manitoba to produce for Ontario.

But the federal plan which was brought in for a \$60-million allocation clearly weighted towards big plants and weighted towards big markets would have very seriously disadvantaged Manitoba communities if we did not have our legislation in place, because, as a small market, 140 million litres, even though it sounds like a lot of litres, it is actually a small market. Most American plants being built today are over 150 million litres in one plant.

The federal proposals were seriously, we think, disadvantaging Manitoba in favour of plants that would be built in eastern Canada. We intervened with the federal proposals. I shared the interventions Manitoba made with my

honourable colleagues opposite. We asked for more time. The federal government granted one more month for the conclusion of the required agreements to April of 2004.

However, they did indicate in a letter from Mr. Dahliwal to myself in early November that the mandate for Manitoba would serve as essentially the assurance to the federal government that there would be a market in this province.

I want to close by again underlining why the mandate is important. The mandate is important, quite simply, because a fuel producer such as Shell or Imperial or Co-op would not willingly give up 10 percent of its market if there were no requirement to do so, nor I think would any intelligent businessperson voluntarily give up their market.

In the absence of a requirement to use that fuel, the ethanol, in Manitoba, we do not believe that it would be prudent for anybody to invest in a plant in Manitoba, because they could not be assured of a sufficient market to make their plant profitable.

I believe that the development of an ethanol industry in Canada, and, preferably, in the long run with a mandate from the federal government, which would make it ever so much simpler if there was a national mandate, nevertheless, we accept that there are stages of evolution here.

We believe the development of an ethanol industry in Manitoba is a benefit to our environment, a benefit to our farmers, a benefit to our rural communities, a benefit to our province overall because we will have more than \$100 million circulating in our economy instead of going out of our economy to buy either feed or fuel.

It will allow Manitoba rural communities to position themselves to take advantage of import markets in Ontario and probably in northern border states of the United States, where the Americans are simply unable to produce the amount of ethanol that is going to be required in California with the phasing out of MTBE, which will be required under the federal energy act that will ultimately be passed, I am sure, by the Congress in the early new year.

So I look forward to consideration of the bill in detail on Tuesday evening. I appreciate the involvement of my colleagues in making that possible.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): I, too, wish to put a few comments on the record in the debate of Bill 2, The Biofuels and Gasoline Tax Amendment Act. We have in front of us a bill that is basically in hurry-up mode for many reasons, and I want to get into that, but the bill in its context is really—the debate is not new.

We had a similar bill, though there were some changes made afterwards, in the last session. It was introduced in spring, but even before that, the whole debate of ethanol has been around. It has been discussed. Certainly, the Minnedosa plant, if anybody wanted to tour it, they are more than willing to take you through.

Ethanol is not something new to Manitoba. The debate in Manitoba is certainly getting to the point where this kind of legislation was bound to be coming forward at some point in time. The last bill was introduced, and it was framed in the context of having more to do with the Kyoto accord than environmental commitments. That certainly drove a lot of interesting debate in Manitoba and across the country for that matter.

*(15:10)

There is science really on both sides of the issue how environmentally friendly ethanol is. I think the Mohawk ad is "Mother Nature's Fuel" or something like that and the little bird chirping. There are others and there are studies out of the United States. Evidently, California is asking for an exemption to not sell ethanol in the summer because it adds so much smog to the environment.

It all depends on where you come from on this debate. It depends on where you are. Is this part of the Kyoto commitment? I have noticed from documents coming from the Government, whether it be the Throne Speech or anything else, that that argument has sort of waned. If one could put it this way, it seems to be running for the shadows rather than being one of the main arguments for ethanol. The debate is out there.

There are people on both sides of the issue. Again, one of my concerns about this being in a hurry-up mode is that debate does not have the opportunity to really be fleshed out in its full form.

I think where the Government has gone, and the minister has certainly mentioned that this has quite a bit to do with rural development, it has an economic spinoff. That is the case the minister has been making in the last couple of weeks, that there is an opportunity for communities to build these ethanol plants. It does create some employment. It does create economic activity. Within the last year, we have seen a shift going from an environmental case being made to more of an economic rural development issue. Nothing wrong with that, but certainly we have seen the shift.

Some of the dangers, if I can word it that way, that have certainly been brought to our attention have to do with inputs and outputs. Right now, we have a low grain price and I would suggest a fairly good supply. There is not really a big problem with getting the kinds of inputs that we need to get ethanol going. Where the problem is, is what if we have a very high price in grain? What if we have a very poor supply? Will that then leave us open to cheap, subsidized corn coming in from the United States? I do not think that is really the intent of what we wanted to do with ethanol.

There has been discussion. What if there was an amendment put to the legislation that you had to use only Manitoba-grown grain or Canadian grain, which then in itself causes another problem because if you have a shortage of grain, you then start driving the price up for feedlot operators and for others. Again, you have to be careful. It is the domino effect. You push one domino and a whole bunch of others fall, and you push that way and it goes in a different direction. Again, because we are in a hurry-up mode, what concerns me is that those kinds of issues are not going to get debated fully. I know some of my colleagues are going to get up and deal with that.

We know that ethanol in the United States is a very heavily subsidized industry. The American government, being the lover of free trade

and equal opportunity and open markets for their products, has been incredibly strong in subsidizing grains, in particular corn. Basically, what the American government does, by and large, is pay farmers to grow corn and then has to figure out some way of doing it. We know that the U.S. government, the federal government, helps to subsidize ethanol plants to build them. The ethanol plants then buy subsidized corn, produce ethanol, and in a lot of instances subsidize the states to buy the ethanol. That certainly puts us into a tough spot. I think we have to discuss in third reading. Certainly, at committee, I would love to hear the minister's comments, how we are going to deal on the whole input issue, because I think there is a concern there that we do not just get flooded with cheap, subsidized U.S. corn, especially now that the Canadian dollar is on this meteoric rise upward.

The other issue is the by-product. I have been to the Minnedosa plant, very interesting having a tour through. What they currently do is they dry the output. The by-product is dried. It is a very good supplement for cattle. Science is still trying to work on if it is a good supplement for pigs, but it certainly is for cattle. The thing is that to dry the by-product of the plant in Minnedosa, although a substantial amount of natural gas is used, it only produces basically a low amount of by-product. If we are looking at a plant producing 110 million, 150 million litres of ethanol a year, that is an awful lot of by-product.

The minister has mentioned that one of the things that would be looked at is the feedlot. Again, the feedlot, then we get into environmental issues, where are we going to put that substantial of a feedlot—it really does add a lot to the project that is being proposed. It means a lot more money being infused. Right now I suspect if you would do a survey of the cattle farmers or the ranchers of Manitoba, a lot of them would hesitate to get into the business, and we are talking about feedlots.

An Honourable Member: Maybe now is the time.

Mr. Schuler: My one colleague from Pembina says maybe now it is the time to get into it. But again, these are the issues that really have to be flushed out, because I do not think we want to

get into an industry, a very new industry and find that it flounders right from day one. We want to make sure that all of these issues have been discussed. Certainly, by taking it right out of the plant and feeding it wet saves a lot of money in that you do not have to dry it, but those are things that have to be dealt with.

I know there are other issues that we want to talk about, for instance, where a plant is located, how much fuel it costs to actually get the inputs to the plant, you know, community involvement and that kind of stuff. I know some of my colleagues are going to deal with those issues. I suspect less for the minister, though he did spend a certain amount of time in opposition. I know he understands that we as the Opposition do have some concern with this being in hurry-up mode.

The minister met with myself and my colleague from Russell, I believe October 1 was the first time we met with the minister and had a discussion that there was a real problem in that the federal government, in its chaotic way, eccentric way that it has been running the nation in the last few years, decided they were going to put \$100 million up, of which \$60 million were going to come due on November 19. I appreciate the minister providing us with the documents that laid all this out. So the Government, obviously wanting to see our industry getting access to \$60 million of the \$100 million in the first round, but because there is no enabling legislation which there is in Québec, Ontario and Saskatchewan, we needed some kind of enabling legislation for this to proceed.

I think whether one agrees with ethanol or disagrees with ethanol or is a draw on ethanol, certainly, we as Manitobans pay our fair share of taxes and contribute quite a bit to the national treasury. We believe that we should be on an equal playing field and have access. Those who wish to build this kind of an operation should be on the same playing field as anybody else in any other region.

The minister did meet with one of my colleagues and myself and we did have a discussion about what we should do. The minister indicated at that time the legislation was not ready. With a bit of encouragement from this member halfway

through the month, we encouraged him to maybe get something to us a little bit sooner, because, again, this has to go the proper process.

Legislation this substantial, legislation this significant had to be out in front of the public so that everybody would have an opportunity to speak to it. When you look at the layout of this Legislature, the only one of its kind, I understand, in all parliaments, I mean, it is in a horse-shoe shape where we have a committee system; all legislation has to go to committee.

* (15:20)

We wanted to make sure that everybody had access to the legislation and then had access to come to committee, albeit that the legislation had been on the books as early as spring, but, again, the legislation had changed somewhat.

On October 31, we then had an opportunity to sit down with the minister, see the spreadsheets and see the intent of the legislation and actually see a draft of the legislation. At that time, my colleague from Emerson and myself and some staffers met with the minister. He was forthcoming, indicating again that there was a real time constraint. The document in front of me said November 19, 2003.

The minister also indicated to us that there was a letter from the federal minister saying that if the legislation was agreed to provincially to be in hurry-up mode that the submissions could be submitted and would be considered in this round.

We are now at the point where the legislation is here. We, the Opposition, and I would like to share with the minister and with this Government that it is with a certain amount of concern and hesitation that we allow this legislation to go to hurry-up mode. I know many of the minister's colleagues are new to this process and have not sat in the opposition benches, but it is the role of the Opposition to see to it that it gets full public discussion, that all issues are discussed.

In the end, the Government does have the authority to pass legislation. They have all kinds of means at their disposal. On this particular

legislation, again, we have agreed that it should go the next step and go to committee on Tuesday. We certainly want to hear the various communities. I know there are colleagues of mine that wish to speak to this legislation. I am prepared to leave my comments at that and perhaps after committee have another opportunity to speak on it.

Again, we are appreciative of the minister that he was forthcoming with documents and with answers and certainly was prepared to be forthwith on whatever questions we had. Let us see what Manitobans have to say on Tuesday. Thank you.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): I want to put a few comments on this bill before the House. Quite frankly, I do want to, for the most part, just admonish the minister for his sloppy handling of this bill.

Whether one agrees with the bill or not, this is just bad public policy the way this bill has been handled. For this minister to come to this House and say that he needs to hurry, get this bill rushed through in a hurry-up mode in a situation which is going to result in Manitobans being regulated, being mandated to use ethanol is simply bad process. It is bad public policy to handle it this way.

I am not surprised that, coming from this minister, it is being handled this way, but I am quite frankly astounded and disappointed that at the same time that members on this side of the House are making every effort to accommodate him he has his department, and he himself is out there, implying to people in rural communities that somehow members on this side of the House are holding this bill up.

I am not surprised that this is the attitude this minister has taken, but I have got to tell him, I am very disappointed once again. I would suggest to him that it is his Government that has made a mess of this legislation. They had every opportunity to bring it before the House in the spring and get it passed. Instead, they took political advantage of a situation in which they felt they could win an election and they let it be.

They were in no rush to get it before the House this fall. Then, all of a sudden, it is hurry,

hurry, hurry. Quite frankly, why is it hurry? The only reason it is hurried up, the only reason that it is put on the fast track is so this minister can try to gain some political advantage.

The federal government has already said they have accepted the proposals that were due on November 19 without this legislation. So there is no need for those proposals to go ahead for this legislation to be passed. Yet the minister is out there somehow trying to convince people that without this legislation, the proposals will not be accepted. Not true, the federal government has accepted.

What does need to happen, quite frankly, is that for the proponents to get financing for their proposals the people who would provide the financing need to know this Government, the NDP government, will in fact mandate the use of ethanol, because that is the only way the proposals will make economic sense. That is the only way they can get financing. It has nothing to do with requirements of the federal government. It has everything to do with this minister's lack of attention, with his sloppiness and, again, with his desire to rush something quickly through that he knows, if given the proper time, may, in fact, result in some serious public debate which I believe should happen.

I am not here saying the bill should pass or the bill should not pass, but the minister should respect the legislative process enough to have either brought this bill forward in a fashion in the spring that it could get out to the public and get public debate, or he should have the courtesy to allow public debate to continue over the course of the next two or three months and allow the bill to sit in committee stage until we come back in March. There would be nothing wrong with that.

If his Government indicates they are going to mandate, they are willing to mandate the use of ethanol, then the proponents will be able to get their financing in place because, quite frankly, they have a majority. The financiers can rely on the fact that the minister or the Premier (Mr. Doer) would stand up and say we are going to mandate ethanol. That would give them enough security to know the proposals could get proper due diligence in terms of financing.

The proponents themselves would be able to go forward with their proposals. They would be able to go to the people who are financing their project and assure them that the government of the day will mandate ethanol, but in the meantime, we could have an open and honest public debate, not only in this Legislature but at the committee stage too.

We would have an opportunity for people all across Manitoba to express their view on whether they want this bill to proceed or not. At the end of the day, they would proceed, the Government would lose nothing, but, again, what we have from this minister is a complete lack of respect for the time-honoured tradition of putting legislation through this Chamber, a complete arrogance in how he has handled the bill, and I would admonish him for that.

Having said that, we do not want to hold this bill up. As my colleague has said, it will go to a committee. We have co-operated with that, but the minister needs to take responsibility for his failings. He needs to face up to Manitobans and let them know that it was his failure that forced this bill into hurry-up mode and it was his failure that meant there was not proper public debate on this issue.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): I want to compliment my colleague from Fort Whyte in putting out procedurally why this has been a little bit troublesome for those of us on this side of the House, because in May, the very early days of May, there was a lot of legislation this Government, this province was expecting that fell by the wayside. In my opinion, it did so for political expedience of the Premier and nothing else.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in going through this bill it is not the complications of the bill that are really at the base of the discussion. The bill is entirely, except for a couple of notable exceptions, about regulatory procedure in terms of being able to govern and mandate the sale of gasohol in this province. As regulations and legislation go, that is pretty mundane stuff. What the real issue is, the minister rather neatly and correctly talked about the fact that this would replace a number of millions of dollars' worth of imported fuel. He must also acknowledge that

there will be some forgone revenues to the treasury of this province. Even if it is forgiveness of tax, it is currently a revenue stream to the Government. That needs to be acknowledged. Why would government do that? Why would we be interested in supporting government moving down that road? Obviously, the primary issue was: Is this appropriate action to take for the environmental aspects of putting gasohol, putting denatured alcohol in gasoline to form a blend?

Is this economically a reasonable and sound approach? I heard the minister spend a fair bit of time talking about how he felt the economics were supportable. I am not from Missouri, but I am from north of Highway 1. It seems to me that in listening to the arguments that have risen on both sides of the environmental issue, I probably would say that the arguments that I was the most familiar with came during the period of time when I was closely associated with the environment file. It was rather easy at that time to make a case that the NOx and VOCs that could be reduced by the use of ethanol were necessary for reduction of health-damaging emissions that were occurring in areas of smog. Two of the benefits from using ethanol would be beneficial in those areas.

* (15:30)

Science has undoubtedly progressed some, and the minister says he is prepared to hang his hat and his reputation on the current science as he sees it. *[interjection]* Perhaps I overstated that, but at least his hat is hanging on the information that is being put forward by those who say that the environmental benefits of ethanol blend are there. There may, in fact, even be an energy plus of going to ethanol. I would say, and I want it on the record, that I am not entirely convinced of that, but I am willing to acknowledge that it is probably at least neutral. That means that I accept the argument that there are reasons that we can make on an environmental basis that this is worthwhile.

My colleague from Emerson, I am sure, will go into this in greater depth. It seems to me that one of the things that we have not yet talked about, and it will depend on the nature of the proposals that go forward, and before I address that directly, when I talk about nature of pro-

posals that go forward and why we are having this debate today as we are, this does come down to across Canada tens of millions of dollars' worth of federal subsidy starting these plants up. The greater question is: Has the Government of Canada in initiating this program done their homework? On the local efficiency, because that is a federal grant, then that becomes a bit of a moot question when we look at the total environmental benefits across this country and put it in perspective of \$100-million program on the part of the federal initiative.

I know that science will begin to move forward even beyond what we may comprehend today. I think that when we are seizing the opportunity to get into the ethanol area, I hope the colleagues across the way, the members of government, will be at least as open-minded on one other topic as they appear to be on this one. Here we are talking about energy, balance and environmental benefits. I would hope that the benches on the government side will be as equally receptive to the science that talks about nutrient balance and some of the activities of agriculture. This bill we are talking about today will have a local impact on agriculture. The agricultural production will undoubtedly vary in the area where a large market can be developed.

I fully acknowledge that I am a customer of the current ethanol plant in Minnedosa, or a patron, if you will. I sell grain to them, but I generally sell low-value grain. I think it is fair to put on the record that we are going to have to have very efficient plants to be able to wring profits out of a plant like this if they do not get a large volume of modestly-priced grain. If we go back into a high-priced situation then, I do fear some of the comments that my colleague, the critic, made early, the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), about potential offset being imported, that that might become a reality. I hope it does not. I would certainly argue that that is probably only a sidebar issue, but it strikes me as being very important that we recognize that we have to get the value-added out of this.

The minister talked eloquently about the high value of the by-products after the alcohol has been extracted from it. That is a fair comment, but that goes directly back to the other arm or the other leg of the agricultural industry that I

referenced when we talk about nutrient management that will go through a livestock production facility. Undoubtedly, it will have to. With that will come nutrient management. I suggest that a profitable plant will be very closely tied to the livestock industry in this province as well. Occasionally, I think we have a lot more difficulty making the argument with the public that the nutrient balance that can be achieved with the nutrient extracted from the waste of our livestock operations, that is the second leg of this. So I hope they will take every opportunity to stand up and be counted when they talk about hog barns, when they talk about feedlots and chicken operations that do produce a very high concentration of nutrients.

That is a side issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but very much near and dear to my heart in terms of bringing this ethanol plant to fruition. I will be hoping that the science is the very best that the potential investors can possibly bring to this province, because if it is not an efficient plant, some of the issues that I am raising will come back to haunt it and it could end up being a continual drain and unforeseen. As the minister has proclaimed, this is a phased-out program, but if you have a plant that for whatever reason is not able to operate as efficiently without the marketplace, then the first place that they will look of course is to some relief on excise tax or provincial sales tax in order to continue to operate. Then we will be staring in the face the real question: Is that offset giving us the benefits that we need for the environment and for the health of our community?

I do want to say that I see one of the major benefits for the health of the community in using ethanol is where the NOx and VOCs are reduced. Where we have a density of cars and people in close proximity to each other does not mean that the VOCs do not occur out in the country, it just means that they do not have as direct an impact on somebody's lungs as they do in an urban centre.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this bill is permissive legislation, permitting the regulation to provide some guarantee to the potential investors that they will be able to operate in this province. I will be watching very closely to see if the optimism that goes with this kind of legislation

can be brought to fruition, because, certainly, some of the people that I represent in this province, my constituency is a blend of agricultural production that is both grain and livestock. That is where the second leg of efficiency is coming out of this plant.

For the record, I want to indicate that having them located in close proximity will be also one of the more notable efficiency features of this plant. If you have to haul wet material very far very quickly, the cost will rise. If you have to dry it, there is another cost of another energy matter that quickly comes into the equation and creates another imbalance in what would be the energy balance of what is potentially a grain industry.

Over the years, I have never been comfortable with legislation that goes through quickly. On the other hand, we saw this last spring; it could have been dealt with last spring. We are dealing with it now. I will look forward to see some of the comments that undoubtedly the proponents will want to put on the record when we get to committee, and I look forward to that discussion.

* (15:40)

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): It is certainly my pleasure to rise to put a few comments on the record in regard to Bill 2, The Biofuels and Gasoline Tax Amendment Act, which is partly directed at putting legislation in place to ensure that we can be in a competitive mode to ask the federal government to consider Manitoba as part of a granting process that they are into, allocating the \$60 million that the federal government has identified as an incentive to further ethanol production in Canada.

I note that Québec and Ontario are significant producers of ethanol, currently, as are some of the other provinces. We in Manitoba have a small operation, a small plant operating at Minnedosa which has, I think, demonstrated the viability of using some of the low-grade produce that we produce, mainly wheat, that we grow in this province from time to time, although in general I think Manitoba is seen in large part as probably growing some of the highest quality wheat on average in western Canada. Manitoba

No. 1 red is a desired commodity in the milling industry and has always been able to extract a bit of a premium from the price side in the industry.

I am not sure that wheat will be the mainstay of a significant ethanol industry in this province. The reason I say this is because I live six miles from the U.S. border and am somewhat familiar with many of the industries that have evolved and grown over the last while in states such as Minnesota and North Dakota and, indeed, South Dakota and Iowa and Illinois.

I want to say to you that the ethanol plants south of the border from us are largely processing corn for two reasons. Corn is a much higher-yielding commodity even in Manitoba than wheat is. It produces significantly more starch per acre than virtually any other product that has so far been grown and processed for alcohol.

Starches, as you know, are the mainstay of the sugars that are required to produce alcohol. We all know that the only way so far that I know of that has been invented to make alcohol is by processing sugar, fermenting sugars or sugar products into alcohol.

I suspect that after everything is said and done, the economies of scale will dictate, No. 1, where the plants are going to be built over the long term, setting aside all the subsidies that we are currently talking about, establishing the initial series of plants in Canada and some of the western Canadian plants that are at least touted as a possibility by the federal government.

Then, I think, we will finally determine what the viability is from an economic standpoint, from an environmental standpoint and, indeed, the geographic locations as to where these are located. I think transportation of the raw products in the finished product are in large part eventually going to determine where most of the plants will be built, if this industry will, in fact, become an industry that has some legs in it over a long period of time.

I always find one thing rather interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we are now looking at utilizing food products to supply the energy needs to produce the food products on our farms.

I have always sort of thought if we could finally achieve this, then we have actually invented the perpetual wheel, have we not, in food production, because as long as we can deliver more energy off of an acre of land by producing the product and defining it and then using the energy to turn the wheels to produce the energy again, I am not quite sure that I am always fully able to comprehend the kind of technology that will be required to be able to allow us to do those kinds of things, so I hope we are on the right track. I hope we are on the right track in determining what methods of energy we can create that will reduce the emissions which will lower the impact to our environment from an emission standpoint and to give us cleaner air, cleaner waters and cleaner soil.

I want to reflect just a wee bit of time on that. We have talked for so long about maintaining our soil structure, maintaining our clean water and providing clean water, ensuring clean water. I note that the minister of clean water is sitting in the benches today and is in the House. I congratulate the Government for wanting to pay more attention to clean water and the environment. I think that is honourable. However, let me say this, that if any sector in society had spent as much on a per-capita basis as the agricultural community has spent in the last 15 years to create a cleaner environment to ensure that our water quality will be enhanced, I want to see that. I want to see that industry. I want to see those persons or those individuals.

Individual farmers have spent millions of dollars in many areas to create a cleaner environment, to create a more efficient agriculture and to ensure that the soil they will work with and that they want their children to work with will be maintained and enhanced in such a way that it will support our future generations. I do not think there is any other industry that has spent larger amounts of money than agriculture has. Yet they receive no credit. They receive no credit from this Government. We have seen nothing but criticism extended by the Minister of Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton) now, by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), by the minister of environment, by the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) and the Premier (Mr. Doer), saying it is agriculture that is destroying our waters, our streams and our lakes. I think

that is unfortunate because no other group of people has spent more energy and money to clean up what they do. I think this Government, if anything, owes the community of agriculture an apology because I think they have gone way beyond where the general process is.

Secondly, I want to talk about where we are going to go with the whole environmental benefit in alcohol. I have read a number of reports. I have read a number of government commissioned reports and I have read a number of private reports. Nowhere have I seen, Mr. Deputy Speaker, any indication that would lead me to believe that the environmental effects of ethanol production over the long term are going to provide a great deal of benefit to the environment. I am not sure how that could be done. If you are going to use a huge amount of energy to produce the basic product, to produce the alcohol, again, I go back to the perpetual wheel. I have yet to see that in realistic terms. I look forward to the day that somebody will come up to me and say: Here are the benefits.

The other things are the by-products. If we are going to use wheat as the basic fuel to fuel the ethanol industry, and we talk about the protein content of the product coming out of the plant will be no different than the protein product going into the plant, there is no conversion of protein in the process. If you have 12 percent going in, you will have 12 percent going out except for the weight of the products is going to be less. Therefore, the protein content of the actual product going out to the feed mills might be a percentage or two higher.

* (15:50)

Our main product that we have used for protein in feed supplies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, has been soybean meal because it is without question one of the highest protein products that we in the farm community can buy to blend in with our food supply to enhance our protein in our feed. That has not changed. The other thing is that what I see is happening, at least in the province of Manitoba, is that soybean production has almost doubled over the last two years and probably is touted to double again next year. Soybean production will be much higher and, therefore, will be a competitive factor from a

Manitoba production standpoint into the protein market that we look forward to coming out of these plants. There will be a competitive element to this. I think it is also important to note that if we look at livestock production in this province, livestock production in large part depends on cheap feed supply. So do the ethanol plants.

Here is my last point I want to make. If the Americans are going to continue subsidizing corn and their grain supplies to the extent that they have in the past, if that is what they are going to continue, then I doubt whether we will not find ourselves in the same position that Ontario and Québec find themselves in, whereby the corn that they produce in Ontario is not being utilized in the ethanol plants. It is imported corn from the U.S. that in large part fuels the ethanol production in Ontario and also to a similar extent in Québec.

I believe that we in Manitoba will find ourselves in the position, as our alcohol plant in the province does now at Gimli, utilizing mostly U.S. corn to make whisky. We in Manitoba grow a better quality corn than what is coming into the province right now, but we cannot sell it there because the Americans are underselling us by way of subsidization. I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker and Mr. Minister, I say to you that those are some of the competitive factors we are going to have to face. I hope, for the benefit of all, that this industry will survive without constant subsidization from governments on an ongoing basis to make it viable to maintain them.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I have said to the minister that I am not opposed to the development of the ethanol plants. I have some concerns which I think I have expressed today. I say to the minister that I think it is time that we, in realistic terms, address this industry. I commend the minister for trying to bring this forward. As my Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) has said, I think it is unfortunate that he did not do this sooner, that this debate could have been held on a wider basis.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for the time.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I am going to reserve my primary comments for third reading, but I just wanted to say at this point that it is clear to me that the only real reason for rushing this through is that the Government has delayed over the last several years in bringing this forward. There really was ample time to do that, as, in fact, has happened in legislation in other jurisdictions.

I think that, although we are certainly ready to co-operate in looking at this quickly, it is too bad in fact we did not spend more time earlier on and that the Government was not ready a little earlier.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I want to take just a few minutes to comment on this bill because I do believe it is an important one. It is rather unfortunate that we have not had an adequate amount of time to be able to debate the value of this bill because I do think there is some value to it.

Mr. Speaker, in general terms, when bills come before this House, we spend a fair bit of time researching the quality of the bill, if you like, and also the contents of it so that we might by debate be very well informed and have Manitobans informed about the impact the bill may have on consumers and also on the public of Manitoba.

The only one area that I object to somewhat in this bill is the area of mandating because, although the people I represent, both consumers and also the proponents, have different views on mandating, on the side of the consumers I have a bit of a concern about the fact that mandating may lead to increased charges for fuel. However, I think I have been assured by the minister and by his staff that in fact the examples we have looked at throughout the United States and other jurisdictions do not prove that out. I am hoping that is not the case in our province as well. I am also led to believe that Saskatchewan will be moving into the area of mandating ethanol production as well.

Mr. Speaker, in my community, we have been looking at ethanol production now for eight years. It is an initiative that was undertaken by our government when we were in government,

along with communities. We tried to encourage it, and today we are seeing that we are getting closer to the potential of having actually some ethanol production in our province. To that extent, I think the bill is important.

I think this bill is also important because it does allow the federal government to flow funds in the first round of grants to the Province of Manitoba and to proponents who are developing these financial positions and projects within the province.

We have about four projects I know that are alive in the province and ones that have a possibility of survival. All I can say is, regardless of where a plant is located in this province, I think it will be of benefit to the community, to agriculture and to the economy of our province.

Let us not kid ourselves. This is not only about the environment. This is about keeping the economy of our rural communities alive. This is about keeping the economy of the agriculture side of our province alive. I do want to hear from the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) with regard to this bill because this bill, if any bill, does impact on what the Department of Agriculture should be doing in our province and should be promoting in our province.

I am fully supportive of the issue of ethanol production in the province. I support the concept. I support the proponents who have come forward and their proposals. Indeed, I hope in the next year we will actually see the reality of construction of ethanol plants in this province. I am prepared to work alongside the Government to ensure that indeed does happen.

Mr. David Faurchou (Portage la Prairie): I appreciate the opportunity to debate Bill 2, The Biofuels and Gasoline Tax Amendment Act, as presented by the honourable minister. I share a lot of my colleagues' reservations as expressed today in debate. I believe we are being encouraged to go ahead with the passage of this bill prematurely.

I believe it is folly of us to be lured into the passage of this legislation without really totally comprehending its impact upon the province of Manitoba and Manitobans that will be affected

by this legislation, not only the consumers, but also the potential producers of the raw materials required for ethanol production.

The minister, I believe, understands that it is high-starch material that produces the greatest yield of ethanol. I do, though, believe that the minister does not totally comprehend the production of what we have been discussing as feed grains here in the province as it pertains to the Canadian Wheat Board. The Canadian Wheat Board has, by federal statute, control of all wheat and wheat products. Anyone producing wheat in the Wheat Board-designated area has to abide by the federal statute in the sale of those products, regardless of whether it is domestic or international.

If an ethanol production plant is to consume wheat, then we are dealing with the Canadian Wheat Board. The Wheat Board over the years, understandably, has had a rather relaxed approach insofar as feed grade, which is essentially degraded hard red spring wheat or hard red winter wheat, which is of milling design that has seen its way into the feed industry.

* (16:00)

What we are talking about right now is actually looking to the genetics to produce a high-starch, high-yielding wheat variety which will be produced and intended for the end use of the ethanol industry, which is going to be difficult to do without total consultation with the Canadian Wheat Board and the Canadian Grain Commission. What we speak of at the present time is not doable, and we are passing legislation and effectively increasing expectations of producers without fully comprehending and following through to see whether or not wheat is available to this industry. As it stands at the present time, it is not. So why, then, are we hustling forward with this legislation?

The other grains, corn primarily, that can be used for this product, we have an industry in Manitoba that is consuming all corn production in the province. As new genetics come forward, we certainly will see more production in Manitoba, but, at the present time, we do not have enough corn to sustain or support this

industry that will be developed under this legislation.

This is truly folly of us to proceed with this legislation at this time with the unknowns which I have presented here this afternoon. We are feed-grain deficit in this province, so, therefore, we are looking to import to the province of Manitoba to sustain this industry which will be created by this legislation. The subsidies that the Manitoba taxpayers will be presenting in support of this legislation over the course of the years, which will add up to be tens of millions of dollars, will be essentially benefiting producers outside the province of Manitoba unless we can address some of the issues which I have presented here today. So I encourage the Assembly to take time to really truly study the impacts on related industries and related regulations and statutes that have or will come to play in regard to this legislation. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Very briefly, I want to put a few comments on record. I am not going to recap and indicate the concerns that have been expressed by my colleagues. However, there are some concerns that I do have. I just want to note that.

Starting out though, at 3:10 this afternoon, I had a call from a development officer within the south central area who was rather frustrated because he had had a call from a department person who indicated that it was the Opposition that was stalling this legislation. Now that concerns me. I do not think that is the right way to go, so I did need to indicate to him that, certainly, we were not stalling this. However, I did indicate to him that we did have some concerns and we would be raising those concerns this afternoon in the Legislature here.

So just from that perspective, I do not like to be railroaded into something. When I look at it from my area, I know that we have had several proposals coming in that have gone in regarding the implementation and the construction of this facility. I think it is great. As an economic initiative for the area, it is great. However, anyone who gets involved in business and looks at a facility, the cost of this magnitude does need to do due diligence and needs to look at it very critically. From that perspective, I feel that we

do not want to rush this. Are the citizens of Manitoba prepared, feel that they should be mandated to put in ethanol?

That is again a question and that is the issue that we have been talking about this afternoon. That is nothing to do with urban or rural. That simply is: Are the people of Manitoba prepared to do this?

I know that on Tuesday we are going to be having a committee meeting. We will be listening to them.

With that, I want to thank you for the opportunity. I do have some concerns. I hope that in the long run this will be something that would be really beneficial to the province of Manitoba, because, certainly, I am one who continually will say that I want to see Manitoba grow, move ahead and make this a place where our families can continue to do well and can be involved in business. So, again, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 2, The Biofuels and Gasoline Tax Amendment Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? On division.

Bill 3—The Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation Amendment Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I move, seconded by the Minister of Labour (Ms. Allan), that Bill 3, The Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Fondation commémorative Helen Betty Osborne, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, this bill amends the act in order to allow scholarships, or call them bursaries or grants, to be paid from donations to the foundation subject to conditions that will be set by regulation.

Presently, under the existing act, only the income earned from the management and investment of the fund can be used for the purposes of scholarships. The regulation will be drafted to ensure that the direct donations which have been received to date will be managed in accordance with the provision of the act as they existed when the donations were received.

This act will provide the board with the opportunity to further promote the foundation's important purpose by allowing donations to be used in the year in which they are received. It is an important part of the reminding of Manitobans and raising awareness of the foundation that they be able to provide these scholarships as the capital fund and investment fund are growing.

So the amendment will support the tremendous work done by the board of the foundation in raising funds and also in raising awareness of the aspirations of students who wish to make a difference in our community.

I was privileged to attend the first annual gala fundraising dinner in May this year. It was an event of celebration and, of course, of remembrance. The 2004 gala will, I am sure, repeat the success of last year. With this amendment, those funds raised will be able to be used to more immediately support the educational goal of Aboriginal young people. This will mean that more dollars will be available for bursaries for Aboriginal students enrolled in post-secondary education, students pursuing the desire to obtain an education, like Helen Betty Osborne had dreamed of for herself.

* (16:10)

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): I thank the minister for bringing this bill forward. The Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation itself now permits only income to be used for

charitable donations for scholarships, bursaries and grants. I found that quite unusual since the foundation itself was only set up about three to four years ago.

Many of the foundations in Manitoba, if they were set up within the last three years, if they were established within the last three years, do not have that provision. This bill brought forward by the minister, Bill 3, permits both income and capital to be used for grants, scholarships and bursaries. That is in keeping, I think, with many foundations across the province, most of the foundations across the province today.

I would like to recognize the importance of the Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation in their work, their charitable work. It is an important foundation in memory of Helen Betty Osborne. This foundation is really no different than any other foundation. It is subject to the same rules and regulations that are under the Income Tax Act as other foundations.

I would like to express my appreciation for the value of foundations in Manitoba. Foundations are established basically to accumulate donations from groups, individuals, organizations and corporations. It takes those funds, invests those funds and generally uses the income to grant to other non-profit charitable groups in the community or in the province. When necessary, if not enough income is available in any given year, it can also use the capital for that purpose.

Foundations are very valuable in Manitoba in the sense that they provide a source of funding for other non-profit charitable groups within our communities. They do a great deal of good because other non-profit charitable groups have a great deal of difficulty in raising funds in order to carry out their charitable intents and objects. What the foundation does is it provides funding to other non-profit groups in the community.

It is important, I believe, to support foundations. They are essentially the local solution to charity. All foundations have a charitable number and anyone donating to a charity gets a tax break. Therefore, part of the donation that is given to a foundation is actually funded by the federal and provincial governments.

One important feature to any foundation is the fact that it funds charitable purposes and it funds charitable organizations in perpetuity. Some of the foundations, in fact, have a regulation which only allows the foundation to distribute income from the foundation and not necessarily capital, thereby preserving the capital in the actual foundation.

The value of a foundation, I believe, is really in the giving of grants, bursaries and scholarships. It is one thing taking money and donations from individuals and groups, and it is another in giving grants. I think that is the importance of a foundation in the sense that foundations, in fact, give grants to community groups. That is what foundations are all about. Without giving grants, bursaries and scholarships, there is no reason for people to donate.

I was involved with a foundation in our constituency, with the Brokenhead River Community Foundation. In fact, I was the president of that foundation. I started the foundation in 1989. We were part of the Thomas Sill Foundation Challenge in 1989. The Thomas Sill Foundation, part of their object and part of their purpose was to establish other foundations across Manitoba. We were part of a group of 10 other communities at the time.

The challenge was to raise \$200,000 in personal donations to the foundation. We did that in three years. As a result of meeting that challenge, the Thomas Sill Foundation gave us an extra \$100,000. That \$300,000 stays within the community. It is used for the benefit of the community.

We identified at the time, before we established the foundation, more than 55 groups in our community who would receive benefits from the foundation. Our service area included the service area that was serviced by the Edward Schreyer School in Beausejour.

Another reason why I can understand the amendment is the fact that, under the Income Tax Act of Canada, four or five years ago it was amended so that in order to retain your charitable status as a foundation, in order to retain your charitable number so that people would donate to you and receive a tax deduction, foundations

were required, under the Income Tax Act, to distribute at least 3.5 percent of their capital every year.

Given the interest rates that are out there today, the 1% and 2% interest rates, I can understand why the Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation wants this amendment. They want the amendment so that they do not lose their charitable status. They are required by the Income Tax Act to give 3.5 percent of their capital every year or else they would lose that charitable status. There certainly would not be enough income to get to that 3.5 percent. They would have to go into the capital.

The concerns we had as a caucus were that the previous donors would be aware of the changes to the act that are being made today and that they would consent to the changes. Our concern was that donors may have donated simply because they knew the capital was to be preserved, because under the act itself the capital had to be preserved. Only the income could have been distributed. Our concern was when you change the act in the manner in which it is being changed today, or being proposed today, the donors should have a chance to have some input.

We received a letter from the minister. I thank the minister for that letter in the sense that he is agreeable by way of regulation to preserve the initial capital at least, which I understand to be about \$55,000, to preserve that in perpetuity so that could not be used in the form of grants or scholarships and bursaries, so that in fact it would be there to earn income in order to give out more grants.

I would like to then conclude my remarks by saying I look forward to any comments that are going to come forward at the committee level.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I, too, just wanted to add a few words before its passage to committee. I have always been an advocate for foundations, primarily because it serves really two purposes. One of the purposes is there is going to be much financial benefit for other worthy causes that have been determined, but the second one I would mention is the one that probably means more to me personally. That is,

foundations quite often are formed as a result of an incident that occurs.

This is, in fact, the case with Helen Betty Osborne as a young Aboriginal lady from the North which the community as a whole really felt there were some problems that took place in terms of a miscarriage of justice. The general feeling was, I believe at the time, that a lot more could have been done.

Since Betty's murder, a lot has taken place. There has been a television production. We have attempted to try to get to the root of actually what had taken place. Ultimately, no doubt, we will never know 100 percent of the facts.

So, when you see legislation of this nature, it also provides us the opportunity just to reflect on why this fund is in place in the first place. Again, we do not have any problem in terms of seeing this bill going to the committee stage at this time. Thank you.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 3, The Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation Amendment Act.

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

* (16:20)

Bill 4-The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act

Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), that The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act (Loi modifiant le Code des normes d'emploi), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Allan: It certainly is an honour, as the newly appointed Minister of Labour and

Immigration, to have the opportunity to speak to this bill. I know as the new minister that I have big shoes to fill, because Becky Barrett was an absolutely awesome minister. If she had known that this piece of legislation was coming forward, I think we would have been able to convince her not to retire.

The Employment Standards Code is being amended to allow workers in Manitoba to take unpaid compassionate care leave and to provide effective job protection in cases where the worker takes or intends to take maternity, parental or compassionate care leave. I would like to express my gratitude to the Manitoba Labour Management Review Committee for reviewing the proposed amendments and providing me with the committee's findings and recommendations. The committee, which is comprised of leading labour and management representatives in this province, conducted its review under extremely tight time constraints and completed its task within those time limitations.

I am especially pleased that the committee was able to present us with unanimous recommendations regarding both unpaid compassionate care leave and enhanced job protection for workers who take or intend to take a statutory leave. I am also pleased to say that Bill 4 reflects the committee's recommendations on each of the elements. The committee is to be commended for its efforts.

In more specific terms, the bill provides for up to eight weeks of unpaid compassionate care leave so that a worker can provide care and support to a close family member who is seriously ill and in the final stages of life. This legislation will enable Manitoba workers to take full advantage of benefits that will become available on January 4, 2004, as a result of changes to the federal Employment Insurance legislation. Eight weeks of leave is required so the employee can observe a two-week waiting period, following which the worker would be eligible for up to six weeks of Employment Insurance benefits.

To become eligible for compassionate care leave a worker must have been employed by the employer for at least 30 days and a physician must issue a medical certificate indicating that

the family member has a serious medical condition with a significant risk of death within 26 weeks. The medical certificate would have to state that the family member requires the care and support of another family member. These conditions will ensure that compassionate care leave will be available only in the gravest of medical circumstances.

As well, a worker intending to take compassionate care leave will, unless circumstances necessitate a shorter period, be required to give the employer notice of his or her intent to take leave as well as notice of his or her intent to return from the leave. Furthermore, the leave will have to be taken in no more than two periods of time for a total of eight weeks. These provisions are intended to achieve a balance between minimizing disruptions to an employer's operations while providing a worker with the right to take compassionate care leave.

These amendments, I believe, are very positive, progressive and consistent with the emerging trend of legislative initiatives that seek to strike a balance between work life and family life. As well, these amendments are consistent with the recommendations set out in the Romanow Commission report on health care in Canada where it was proposed that workers be entitled to leave so they can provide care and support to family members that are ill.

I am proud that Manitoba is the third jurisdiction in Canada, following Nova Scotia and the Yukon, to amend its legislation in compliance with the federal law. I am also pleased that this legislation complements the palliative care initiatives that have been established by the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak).

The other major thrust of Bill 4 is to adopt a new procedure that will more effectively ensure job protection for workers who intend to take maternity leave, parental leave, or compassionate care leave. Under existing legislation, employers are prohibited from terminating the employment of a worker because the employee is pregnant or intends to take a leave or takes a leave to which the employee is entitled. As well, an employer is required to reinstate a worker at the end of the employee's period of leave.

At present, there does not exist a timely and effective means in the legislation of providing job protection for a worker taking a statutory leave. Currently, all an employer has to provide is one pay period's notice, usually two weeks, and then the person can be terminated. Consequently, we are proposing in Bill 4 the contraventions of the Employment Standards Code relating to these matters be subject to the same complaint and enforcement procedures as contraventions relating to a failure to pay wages as required by the code.

As a result, workers who feel their employment has been terminated contrary to the code, or that they have not been reinstated as required by the code will have the right to file a complaint with the Employment Standards Branch. Following an investigation, an Employment Standards officer would have the authority to either dismiss the complaint or make an order requiring an employer to compensate an employee for any loss suffered by the employee or to reinstate that particular employee. Either party would then have the right to request that the order be referred to the Manitoba Labour Board. As is the case with other types of orders, the board could confirm, vary or set aside the order. This model is similar to that of other jurisdictions.

I firmly believe that this new procedure will be much more effective in ensuring that the intent and the spirit of the law is complied with. It is certainly preferable to the existing procedure where Manitoba's most vulnerable workers are more or less left to fend for themselves.

In closing, I would like to reiterate my thanks to Mr. Wally Fox-Decent and the members of the Manitoba Labour Management Review Committee for their valuable contribution toward the development of this legislation. Some members might not be aware that the Labour Management Review Committee was created by a resolution of this Legislature in 1964. Four decades later, Manitoba is still the only jurisdiction in Canada to have such a body dedicated to the successful resolution of labour management issues. Manitoba is a better place to work and live as a result of their efforts.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): I wish to make a few comments for the record. Again, Mr.

Speaker, if you are starting to notice that there is a little bit of a pattern with all the legislation that we have seen this afternoon, it has to do with the hurry-up mode. I wish to first speak a little bit about the legislation and then I want to address the hurry-up mode issue one more time.

Again, Bill 4, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act, in and of itself deals with, I think, an issue of what I would call family issues. In the years I have been a public servant, first elected in 1995 as a school trustee, I have always felt the family is the cornerstone of any society.

I think what this bill does, really it is just enabling legislation for the federal government, and, in essence, we should compliment the federal government for actually getting something right in this case.

What it does is in the case of illness, of impending death, somebody who is found to have severe cancer, whatever the case may be, that a family member, as laid out in the legislation, has the opportunity to take leave and take care of that family member. I am sure many of us over the years have had a loved one pass away, whether it was a grandparent, parent, whether it was a child or another relative, and, as much as possible, it still seems to be human nature for a lot of people, to want to pass away at home.

This kind of legislation allows for that to happen where a member who is employed full time, might be the breadwinner of the family, still gets to apply for unemployment insurance, employment insurance, and yet take care of a loved one. When you look at the genesis of the bill, I think the genesis is there. I think it is important that we give that opportunity.

We do not always have the luxury as members of a family to be able to afford around-the-clock nursing or medical care. So often that does fall on family members. What is difficult is that member may not normally have the opportunity to take time off of work.

* (16:30)

So, by and large, I think again the federal government is to be commended for actually

getting something right. This enabling legislation has to be in place, as the minister mentioned, January 4, 2004. When we did meet with the minister, the compassionate care leave, we certainly agreed, it was appropriate for it to go into hurry-up mode.

We did have some disagreement about the last section. We felt that that would probably have worked just as well going into the spring session with and allowing a fuller debate. I have sent the bill out to many organizations, and I encourage them to come forward. There are some concerns.

The federal compliance asks for, and I will make sure I get it right, the federal requirement is 600 insurable earning hours, and the provincial proposal is only 30 days. One of the questions I am sure that we will have at committee is: Why is there this difference between the federal legislation and the enabling legislation? Why are we not mirroring the federal legislation?

Again, our feeling was that for hurry-up mode, what was absolutely necessary to get compliance with federal legislation, we would agree with. The other section, the enforcement part, I know there are many in society, I hope they come forward and want to lay out some of the concerns they have. The bill, however, is in one piece.

I did have the opportunity to meet with the minister on November 19, 2003, and the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) attended with myself. We had an opportunity from the department side to get a briefing with the minister, and that was very helpful. We had asked for some information, which was forthcoming. We certainly appreciated that from the minister's department. Questions we had, certainly, we got the answers that we were looking for.

Again, the concern that we do have is that this is in a hurry-up mode. The second piece of the legislation is substantial. It does involve a lot of technicalities and probably should have been left until spring, the first part just to comply with federal legislation. The second part could have gone through a bit more rigorous analysis and debate by this Chamber.

I know the minister got elected in 1999, as myself, and ended up on the government benches and so has not had the opportunity to sit in opposition like others of her colleagues to understand what the role of the Opposition is. The role is to ensure that full debate be given to serious issues. That is why I had asked for the second part to be delayed.

It is the responsibility of the Opposition to make sure that the bill is vetted properly, as is the Government's right, in a sense, with its majority, to put the legislation through. So it was not that this legislation would have been stalled or that it would not have gone through, the second part of it, but I think we are at this point in time prepared.

I do not know if there are any other colleagues in the Chamber who wish to put a few comments on the record, but, certainly, we are prepared to go to committee and listen. I hope the minister, this being her first bill, is also willing to listen to what the public has to say. Perhaps there might be some room for a few amendments. We will see what the public does come up with and we will go from there, but I think what we are trying to do with this as legislators, in this case federal and provincial, is see to it that those who face a sudden crisis, it might be a crisis that has been brewing for a long time, a loved one on their last days of cancer treatment, perhaps, that family can tend to them and give really the kind of comfort and the kind of care that only a family member really can give.

So with those words certainly I will be looking forward to seeing this going to committee on Tuesday. Before I conclude my comments, and I should have done this in the beginning, I wish to congratulate the minister for her appointment. I would just like to point out to the minister she is, after all, my third Minister of Labour. I am sure the six weeks that my first Minister of Labour and I spent together in Estimates, I am sure we will not be repeating that, but I look forward to working with the minister in committee on Tuesday evening on this bill.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): First, I want to start by just complimenting the minister in the

sense that she did provide, I thought, a very informative meeting so that we can get a good sense of what is inside the legislation. I would encourage all ministers to do likewise. I do not know if that is good or bad that I said it inside the Chamber, but it is definitely very helpful in terms of allowing opposition members the opportunity to get a better sense of what it is that the ministry is trying to do.

I think compassionate care leave is a good idea. It is something that is—one has to wonder why it took so long to even come into being. It is something which we applaud. I do not know if the origins come from Ottawa, the Province, or if there was consultation between the provinces and Ottawa. It does not really matter. The point is, it is a good idea. It is with pleasure that both myself and my leader, in fact, see that brought in and hopefully get that third reading, at least with respect to that part.

I make note of the eight weeks is what we are really talking about in terms of eligibility with a 26-week time span. Outside of that, I wanted to very briefly comment on the maternity leave component. I appreciate that there have been some concerns in regard to an individual that is receiving maternity benefits be able to go back into that work environment and not have to be concerned or worried about not having that job.

I think most of us just kind of assumed that the legislation was there that would have allowed government to guarantee that position, but, from what I understand, that is not the case. I share the comments of the speaker before me in regard to the timing of that particular component of the legislation, again because of the importance of Opposition being able to really see if there is something that they might be able to want to add or if something else has been missed out.

We would have been afforded a better opportunity had we had more time, whether it is during second reading when we actually have the bill in hand, to look at possible amendments, or how we could have made it in terms of better legislation.

So, with the one caveat in terms of concerns regarding the second part of the bill, it is with

pleasure that we see this bill go to committee. Thank you.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 4, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act.

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

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to call forward Bill 202, The Nellie McClung Foundation Act for a second reading? [*Agreed*]

Bill 202—The Nellie McClung Foundation Act

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): I move, seconded by the Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), that we give second reading to Bill 202, The Nellie McClung Foundation Act; Loi sur la Fondation Nellie McClung.

Motion presented.

* (16:40)

Mr. Murray: I just would like to put some words on the record with respect to Bill 202. I think that in this House we see that there are a number of very, very capable and talented women that have been elected as leaders in their constituencies throughout the province of Manitoba to represent those constituencies. They do it very, very well, Mr. Speaker, and I want to congratulate all of them. I do believe that in Manitoba we still have a long way to go on the basis that there are 14 women that are representing 57 constituencies. I think that, although one should say that it is a step in the right direction in the sense that we have to do better, we know that women play a very key role as mothers, as business people, as advocates in the community, as those who are involved in teaching, in nursing, and they take time to get involved in making Manitoba a better place by standing for election. I would like to congratulate all of the women who were elected in the last election campaign on both sides of the House.

I did want to say earlier that, although we have come a long way, we are still very much underrepresented in the Legislature by the number of women that we need to grow the representation of women in the Legislature and I believe that will happen. I believe that it will happen and it is my hope that Bill 202 which is before us will help in a way because it acknowledges Nellie McClung, who, I think, was an incredibly important woman for what she did not only in Manitoba, but obviously, I believe, throughout Canada.

I just want to make one point of reference when I made comments about the 14 of 57 women that we currently have in this Legislature. I was very pleased to be at the Manitoba Métis Federation swearing in of their board, and I thought it was very interesting that half of their board were women and half, of course, were men. It was incredible to see that the Manitoba Métis Federation has reached what I believe is a very equitable goal in terms of the way they have elected their board.

This bill would recognize the significant contribution that women have made to Manitoba politics, in particular Nellie McClung who led the charge to get Manitoba women the right to vote. She was one of five founding members of the Political Equality League which began the lobby of the women's suffrage. In 1929, the "Famous Five" won their petition to have the Government expand the legal definition of "person" to include women. McClung travelled across Canada, the U.S. and Great Britain speaking at rallies and supporting social changes such as women's suffrage, prohibition, property rights for wives and widows, access to education and careers and better laws to regulate safety and working conditions.

McClung and her family moved to Alberta in 1915, one year before women's suffrage became law in Manitoba, making Manitoba the first province to give women the right to vote and hold provincial office. Canadians know Nellie McClung as a prolific author, a political activist, a teacher, legislator and columnist. Manitobans know McClung as the determined woman who helped change the face of politics in our province for the better. Her success in securing the vote for Manitoba women should

come as no surprise to anyone who has ever heard her famous words: "Never retreat, never explain, never apologize—get the thing done and let them howl."

In recognition of Nellie McClung's outstanding contributions to Manitoba politics, we are reaffirming our commitment to set up the Nellie McClung Foundation. Last December in the Legislature, our party did introduce The Nellie McClung Foundation Act. We are committed to the passage of that legislation, and we hope that members opposite will support us in that.

Our bill calls for the creation of a foundation empowered to raise funds for the creation, erection and maintenance of a statue on the grounds of the Manitoba Legislature to commemorate Nellie McClung. It is important that McClung is honoured in such a tangible way for the role she played in advancing women's rights in Canada and beyond. We are pleased to be able to claim Nellie McClung as a Manitoban for the years she spent lobbying in the provincial government in her work as a founding member of the Political Equality League. We hope that young women contemplating their future will look to Nellie McClung as an example of what any of us can achieve through hard work, dedication and perseverance.

In closing, I would like to share with you one more famous Nellie McClung quote that sums up so well what individuals can do to improve their society. She said, and I quote: "Disturbers are never popular—nobody ever loved an alarm clock in action—no matter how grateful they may have been afterwards for its kind service."

Mr. Speaker, this is an important bill, one that we believe on this side of the House is important for Manitoba, for the history of Manitoba and, perhaps more importantly, for the future of Manitoba.

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): Nellie McClung is widely recognized as a pioneer in women's rights across Canada. She was instrumental in securing the right for women to vote in Manitoba in 1916, and her contributions to women and to politics in general were remarkable.

Nellie McClung was born in Ontario, but she spent her formative years in Manitoba. She became a teacher and taught school in Manitou. It was while teaching in Manitou that she was first exposed to the women's movement, and it was there she attended her first political meeting. She later moved with her family to Winnipeg where she became involved in the suffrage movement. She was ultimately a lifelong advocate for women's rights.

Ms. McClung's achievements were impressive. Upon moving to Alberta, she became a member of the Legislative Assembly. She was later appointed to the Canadian delegation of the League of Nations and she was the first woman appointed to CBC's board of governors. Ms. McClung was one of the "Famous Five" involved in the Persons case, the case which led to British courts declaring that women were indeed persons, a case which changed the status of women in Canada and throughout the entire British Empire.

Her staging of a mock parliament in Manitoba was key to Manitoba women earning the right to vote, and other provinces soon followed Manitoba's lead. Manitobans are rightly proud of Nellie McClung for her tremendous work advocating the rights of women and for her connections to Manitoba. Her life has been commemorated throughout Manitoba. She has been honoured with a plaque in Manitou and a school also bears her name. Numerous other honours have also been bestowed upon her in recognition for her great work.

Nellie McClung was a great woman in Canadian history and a great woman in Manitoba history. We are very happy to see this foundation set up and we look forward to seeing the results of this worthy effort. We here as women in the Manitoba Legislature want to be able to recognize her as a significant part of Manitoba history.

We, on our side of the House, are prepared to see this move on to committee.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I am indeed honoured and privileged to be able to second this particular bill.

The purpose of the bill is to create a foundation that will promote the memory of Nellie

McClung by erecting and maintaining a statue in her honour, either on the grounds of the Legislature, or at any other location the foundation considers appropriate. It will also allow the foundation to undertake any other activities that they consider appropriate to educate the public about Nellie McClung and her contributions to Manitoba and Canada. Indeed, her contributions are significant. It is because of her that women in Canada won the right to vote, which began in Manitoba with women in Canada first earning the right to vote right here in this province in 1916, which did come years after struggling for her to have that day arrive.

Her later efforts led to women being recognized as persons in 1929, making it possible for Canadian women to be appointed to the Senate. The work that Nellie McClung carried out, not only during her years in Manitoba, but throughout her lifetime as a teacher, a writer, a political activist and a legislator, as well as being a mother of five, certainly are interesting to hear about and make one wish that one had time to have known this woman and the struggles that she achieved in her day to actually accomplish all that she did accomplish. I cannot imagine the challenges she took on then compared to what we look at now and the kind of circumstances she had to do this under.

It certainly is an opportunity for us here in Manitoba now to recognize and honour her legacy to Manitoba and Canadian women by the erection of this statue. I think women of Manitoba, the ones I have talked to, certainly are very supportive and excited about this endeavor to honour her passion and her fierce determination to champion the rights of women.

The affairs of this foundation will be managed by a board of trustees consisting of not fewer than three and not more than seven trustees appointed by the Manitou-Pembina Culture and Heritage Committee. They are very excited about this opportunity that is before them, because they are very proud of Nellie McClung's early days in Manitou. They are quite prepared to put in the effort and the work that is needed to see that this statue and all of the other works become a reality. That community is excited with the possibility.

There is another woman in Winnipeg that is also very excited about this. That is a woman, an artist, a sculptor by the name of Helen Granger Young, who has spent a lot of her years learning about Nellie McClung and being able to draw her, sculpt her. When you talk to Helen Granger Young, you can hear the passion in her voice about Nellie McClung and her work and the work of the suffragettes. It has been my pleasure to spend some time with Helen Granger Young and hear her stories about Nellie McClung.

* (16:50)

I do hope that this bill will be supported by all members of the House. I am pleased to hear the comments from the member opposite who just spoke about support of this bill. It is interesting, because I really do believe that with the support of the NDP, with the support of the Tories, Nellie McClung happened to end up being a Liberal in Alberta when she got into politics.

This really is not about politics. It is about supporting women. This really is about doing the right thing and it is to acknowledge a woman, politics aside, partisanship aside, to acknowledge a woman who really laid the foundations for all of us as women to move forward in this province, in this country and have the opportunities that we have before us. So I look forward to this bill moving to committee. I ultimately look forward to this bill passing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this bill. I think it is very important that we recognize the important contributions that Nellie McClung has made to Manitoba and to Canada and, in fact, to women's issues globally, because I think that we can see her, not just as a Manitoban and a Canadian, but somebody who on the global stage was an important writer, an important contributor to advancing the cause of women and the role of women in politics in particular.

Clearly, the fact that Manitoba was the first province where women were allowed to vote and had the right to vote is important, I think, to all of us in this Legislature.

The important date, of course, was January 27 when the bill passed the third reading here in this Legislature and was greeted with very substantial applause and approval and, indeed, by hundreds of people in this Legislature singing O Canada! because they were so thrilled. I think that the fact of the matter is that this is going to be very important to have a statue to Nellie McClung here on the grounds of the Legislature and to have knowledge about Nellie McClung promoted throughout Manitoba and, indeed, throughout Canada.

It is also important to us as Liberals, in particular, because Nellie McClung not only spent a lot of time promoting the position of women and the rights of women in politics, but she also spent a lot of time campaigning to elect a Liberal government in Manitoba, and that was eventually successful. It was the Liberal government in Manitoba, under Premier Tobias Norris, which passed the legislation providing for the vote for women in Manitoba.

Nellie McClung, of course, had a good sense of humour. She commented that she could not see why women should not sit in Parliament; it did not seem to be such a hard job. She got some opposition from the premier of the day and, indeed, when she came in to meet with him in his office and her appeals were rejected, he replied I do not want a hyena in petticoats talking politics at me. I want a nice, gentle creature to bring me my slippers. She immediately replied, Mr. Premier, you will hear from me again, and you may not like this.

Such was her stamina and her inspiration and her determination that she staged a theatrical performance shortly thereafter, mimicking what had happened and, indeed, in that theatrical performance, she and many other women dressed up as members of the Legislature and pretended what would happen if, indeed, it were men who did not have the vote. It was a wonderful and very humorous occasion. There was a rather interesting presentation by a Mr. Skinner at this theatrical performance, who arrived at the Legislature which, I think, was the Pantages Theatre, with a wheelbarrow full of petitions asking for votes for men. Mr. Skinner said that the women were afraid that if men were given the vote, they would neglect their business to

talk politics when they ought to be putting wildcat subdivisions on the market.

In spite of Mr. Skinner's eloquent appeal, his appeal was not successful because Ms. McClung, who was the Premier in this theatrical performance, replied as follows: I must congratulate the members of this delegation on their splendid appearance. If all men were as intelligent and as good as Mr. Skinner and his worthy though misguided followers, we might consider this matter, but they are not. Seven-eighths of the police court's offenders are men and only one-third of the church memberships. And you ask me to enfranchise all these, she said.

Well, I do not need to go on. It was a rather humorous instance and certainly it mobilized women and many others throughout all of Manitoba to the point that women were able to receive the vote in Manitoba after the passage and third reading of the legislation on January 27, 1916. It is for all these reasons, the humour, the sense of purpose, the dedication to a very important goal for all of us, that we salute Nellie McClung and seek to have this bill passed in legislation and move forward on having a statue on the legislative grounds to honour Nellie McClung.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 202, The Nellie McClung Foundation Act.

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

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Tuesday, December 2, at 6:30 p.m. to consider the following bills: Bills 2, 3, 4 and 202.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development will meet on Tuesday, December 2, at 6:30 p.m. to consider the following bills: Bill 2, The Biofuels and Gasoline Tax Amendment Act; Bill 3, The Helen Betty Osborne Memorial Foundation Act; Bill 4, The Employment Standards Code Amendment Act; and Bill 202, The Nellie McClung Foundation Act.

Is it the will of the House to call it 5:30? *[Agreed]*

The hour being 5:30, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

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