

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

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Speaker*

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

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSON, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARCELINO, Flor	Wellington	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
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MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
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STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

**The House met at 1:30 p.m.**

### PRAYER

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### PETITIONS

#### The Child and Family Services Act

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

Manitoba's provincial government has a responsibility to protect children from exploitation.

Canada's laws recognize those less than 18 years of age as deserving of certain legal protection. Under law, children cannot drive until they are 16, and cannot smoke cigarettes or drink alcohol until they are 18. Yet, the current age of consent under Canada's Criminal Code is 14 years of age.

Families, communities and law enforcement authorities recognize that young Canadians between the ages of 14 and 16 years of age are especially vulnerable due to this legal loophole. They are frustrated with the lack of tools available to protect them from exploitation by adult predators at least three years older whose intent is to sexually exploit these children.

Predators are increasingly using nefarious means such as drugs, alcohol, gifts and false promises to lure at-risk victims. In addition to sexual abuse, these victims are sometimes coerced and misled into criminal activity, drug use and gang recruitment.

The consequences of any type of exploitation are devastating. While any child may become a victim of exploitation, at-risk children are particularly vulnerable and targeted. Many of these children are in the care or have previously had contact with Child and Family Services.

While the age of protection is within federal jurisdiction, there are actions that could be taken by the provincial government to protect young people in the care of the Department of Family Services and

Housing. Section 52 of The Child and Family Services Act could be strengthened to better safeguard minors in care.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Premier (Mr. Doer) to consider amending and strengthening section 52 of The Child and Family Services Act to allow for the greater protection of children in care from exploitation.

To request the Premier to consider urging the federal government to raise the age of protection to a minimum of 16 years of age.

This petition signed by Penny Spence, Brenda Staska, Mary Chief and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

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

#### Dividing of Trans-Canada Highway

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The seven-kilometre stretch of the Trans-Canada Highway passing through Headingley is an extremely busy stretch of road, averaging 18,000 vehicles daily.

This section of the Trans-Canada Highway is one of the few remaining stretches of undivided highway in Manitoba, and it has seen more than 100 accidents in the last two years, some of them fatal.

Manitoba's Assistant Deputy Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation told a Winnipeg radio station on October 16, 2007, that when it comes to highways' projects the provincial government has a flexible response program, and we have a couple of opportunities to advance these projects in our five-year plan.

In the interests of protecting motorist safety, it is critical that the dividing of the Trans-Canada Highway in Headingley is completed as soon as possible.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) to consider making the completion of the dividing of the Trans-Canada Highway in Headingley in 2008 an urgent provincial government priority.

To request the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation to consider evaluating whether any other steps can be taken to improve motorist safety while the dividing of the Trans-Canada Highway in Headingley is being completed.

This is signed by Anthony Guarino, Pat McCallum, Ron Chase and many, many other Manitobans, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Personal Care Homes–Virden**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Manitoba's provincial government has a responsibility to provide quality long-term care for qualifying Manitobans.

Personal care homes in the town of Virden currently have a significant number of empty beds that cannot be filled because of a critical nursing shortage in these facilities.

In 2006, a municipally formed retention committee was promised that the Virden nursing shortage would be resolved by the fall of 2006.

Virtually all personal care homes in southwestern Manitoba are full, yet as of early October 2007, the nursing shortage in Virden is so severe that more than one-quarter of the beds at Westman Nursing Home are sitting empty.

Seniors, many of whom are war veterans, are therefore being transported to other communities for care. These communities are often a long distance from Virden and family members are forced to travel for more than two hours round trip to visit their loved ones, creating significant financial and emotional hardship for these families.

Those seniors that have been moved out of Virden have not received assurance that they will be moved back to Virden when these beds become available.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to consider taking serious action to fill the nursing vacancies at personal care homes in the town of Virden and to consider reopening the beds that have been closed as the result of this nursing shortage.

To urge the Minister of Health to consider prioritizing the needs of those citizens that have been moved out of their community by committing to move those individuals back into Virden as soon as the beds become available.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by Joyce Gardiner, Georgina Coulter, Elsie Gardiner and many, many others.

#### **Provincial Nominee Program**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

The current government needs to recognize that the backlog in processing PNP applications is causing additional stress and anxiety for would-be immigrants and their families and friends here in Manitoba.

The current government needs to recognize the unfairness in its current policy on who qualifies to be an applicant, more specifically, by not allowing professionals such as health-care workers to be able to apply for PNP certificates in the same way a computer technician would be able to.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his government to recognize and acknowledge how important immigration is to our province by improving and strengthening the Provincial Nominee Program.

This is signed by L. Surla, M. Calvadores, M. Aienza and many, many other fine Manitobans.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\* (13:40)

### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Mr. Speaker:** I am pleased to table, in accordance with section 28 of The Auditor General's Act, the Auditor General's Audit of the Province's Management of Contaminated Sites and Landfills.

I'm also pleased to table, in accordance with section 28 of The Auditor General's Act, the Auditor General's Audit of the Department of Conservation's Management of the Environmental Livestock Program.

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** I would like to table the following: The Public Service Group Insurance Fund Benefits Summary and audited Financial Statements for the year ended April 30, '07.

**Hon. Diane McGifford (Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy):** I'm pleased to table the following reports: Red River College Annual Financial Report, 2006-2007; Assiniboine Community College Annual Report, 2006-2007 and the University College of the North Annual Report, 2006-2007.

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Monsieur le Président, I just want to table the report of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission 2006 Annual Report. I'd also like to table, and indicate the information is on the Web anyway, I'm tabling, for the first time, a Summary of Ministers' Expenses for the fiscal year April 1, 2006 to March 31, 2007. Thank you.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today David Kirkup who's from Souris. He's the guest of the honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat).

Also in the public gallery I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members where we have with us today grade 9 students from various schools who are participating in Take Your Child to Work Day.

Also in the public gallery we have with us today approximately 30 members with the Advocis Group who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Competitiveness, Training, and Trade (Mr. Rondeau).

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

### ORAL QUESTIONS

#### Manitoba Hydro Power Line Protests from Environmental Organizations

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** The Premier—[interjection] I haven't even started my question yet, and they're already heckling.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has indicated that he's directed Manitoba Hydro to run the much longer west-side route at a cost to Manitobans of \$410 million in added unnecessary costs to be left in the form of debt to future generations. He has made a decision that will result in losses of future power sales totalling hundreds of millions of dollars which could have gone toward the building of the wealth of the people here in Manitoba.

The decision will also, in a sense, assist the coal industry in the United States because of the fact that the line loss associated with the longer line will result in the lost opportunity to displace coal. Now, the Premier has indicated, and he's made the case numerous times, that he's concerned about international pressure and the power of international environmental organizations to potentially block future sales of Manitoba Hydro.

The Premier will surely be aware that some of the organizations active outside of Canada on the issue—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

### Point of Order

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

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** On a point of order?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** On a point of order. Mr. Speaker, there has been dialogue in regard to Question Periods and trying to ensure that we get more questions in, and members are asked, as much as possible, to try to keep their questions and answers to within 45 seconds. We would appreciate if, in fact, we could do that.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order?

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) ought to know, and he's well aware of the fact that we do have leaders' latitude as part of the rules. The 45-second limitation only applies to members other than the Leader of the Official Opposition and the Premier. He ought to know that.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Inkster, I had gone into discussions and agreements with the House leaders who represent their respective parties. The agreement was that each member would have 45 seconds for questions and the ministers would have 45 seconds for answers, but there was no agreement on leaders' latitude, so as of now, and has been in the past that leaders do have latitude and there's been no agreement to that. So the leaders have the freedom of going until we get an agreement, hopefully some day, but right now we don't, so the leaders' latitude I will be applying until we come to an agreement.

So the honourable member does not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mr. McFadyen:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that ruling.

I just want to carry on by saying that the decision to cost Manitobans hundreds of millions of dollars is based on concerns about international pressure which could have the impact of blocking future sales of Manitoba Hydro to the United States.

I want to ask the Premier, because he'll be aware that some of the organizations that lobby to block power sales, sometimes behind environmental organizations, are the American coal industry which has a massive vested interest in blocking sales of clean Manitoba Hydro renewable energy to the United States because it jeopardizes the coal industry in the United States.

So I want to ask the Premier whether in addition to Robert Kennedy Jr.'s organization, Riverkeeper and the other organizations that he is part of, which are on the record as opposing any future hydro development and which are known to have a massive budget of \$70 million, has been pointed out by the NDP to fight environmental causes, recognizing that as a formidable organization headed by

Mr. Kennedy Jr., I wonder if the Premier can indicate, other than that organization, is there any other American environmental or other organization on the record as being concerned about the east-side line and threatening to block Manitoba power sales to the United States.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Are we aware of and have we been dealing with the coal lobby manifesting itself in various forms of clean energy, kind of an oxymoron for the coal industry. In clean energy clothing, yes, of course, we have been. That's a fairly redundant question in terms of the last 20 years of dealing with hydro sales to United States and Minnesota in particular.

Are we aware that there is a coal lobby in North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Montana, Utah? Yes. Again that's pretty standard assumptions about these kinds of approvals and regulatory bodies.

Mr. Speaker, I would point out, notwithstanding the obvious that was asked, the whole issue of dealing with coal—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

#### Point of Order

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

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Yes.

**Mr. Speaker:** On a point of order?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Yes, on a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, members might recall last Wednesday we gave extreme latitude to the leaders and, as a result, we were not even able to get seven questions posed. We would ask, through you, that some limitations do be put in terms of the length of answers and questions on minutes.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order.

As I explained to the member last Wednesday, we have with the official opposition given leave to the Liberals to have a question every day. Actually I made a mistake last Wednesday. I should have been on my feet quicker and allowed for—I made an error. We have given leave to the Liberals every day of this session, with that one exception a mistake was made,

for the Liberals to have three questions. Now they are standing up and grandstanding on an issue that we negotiate and talk about on a regular basis. I am a little bit frustrated with the member trying to make political hay on a point that we negotiate privately on a regular basis. I think it's not only inappropriate, it's not a point of order.

\* (13:50)

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Inkster, until I have an agreement that we have come to by the two official parties and the independent members, I will be enforcing the agreement as how we agreed to.

As of today, I have not been able to see an agreement from members pertaining to leaders' latitude, so I will be allowing leaders' latitude. On that point of order raised, I just remind the honourable member I dealt with this point of order just previously, so I would just caution the member about reflecting on the Chair's rulings, because I just ruled on a same point of order just previous to.

The honourable member does not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** So we will proceed. The honourable First Minister had the floor.

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, to continue, we would point out to the members opposite that when we came into office, we believe that shortly thereafter the emissions that were coming from the coal plant in Selkirk, East Selkirk, were the highest emissions of any coal plant in Canada on a megawatt per emission basis. It was the highest in Canada. It was spewing out, I daresay, into MLAs from the former government side's backyards without any action, political action, on behalf of the government.

You know what we did, Mr. Speaker? We actually met with Hydro and made a suggestion that we would enforce. I know that this will be called political interference, but we suggested the coal plant in East Selkirk be closed down, the emissions be stopped, and we would reduce the emissions in East Selkirk.

We now have a plan to have the transition in Brandon, Mr. Speaker, to eliminate the coal production as part of the regular operation of megawatts in Manitoba. He can ask questions about Wyoming and Wichita and he can ask questions about everywhere, but he can talk about everywhere.

In Manitoba, we took political action to close down one coal plant and we're on the way to close down the second coal plant. We will be coal-free under our government.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, we support the concern that the Premier has raised about environmental lobbyists posing as a front for the so-called clean coal industry in the United States. We share the view that this is an oxymoron, that we should be striving to reduce the amount of coal that's burned. In fact, we acknowledge that the government has moved from coal-burning plants to another non-renewable resource, natural gas, at those plants. It is a step in the right direction.

We acknowledge that coal is a major force in the United States, and I'm pleased that the Premier has acknowledged the power of the coal lobby in the United States to try to block sales of clean, Manitoba Hydro power energy.

So, given that his decision to cost Manitobans a billion dollars is driven by international pressure and he's indicated that Mr. Kennedy's organization has a \$70-million budget to fight sales from Manitoba, I just want to ask the Premier: Given that we've learned that he's sharing a stage with Mr. Kennedy in February in Australia at the 3rd International Solar Cities Congress 2008, the co-keynote speakers will be Robert F. Kennedy Jr. and Manitoba Premier; given that he's sharing a stage with Mr. Kennedy, will he be challenging Mr. Kennedy with respect to his statement in July 2004, where he said, hydro development not only harms the land and the people who live there, it may worsen global warming? Robert Kennedy Jr., an opponent of hydro energy. Will the Premier stand up to Mr. Kennedy when he sees him in February in Australia?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, and we have consistently taken the view that with a lot of environmentalists in Canada that have been sceptical of renewable energy and hydro production, we have consistently met with a number of extremely credible people in Canada and their organizations. I had a chat recently, a couple of years ago, with prominent environmentalists in Canada about renewable energy and hydro.

You could even go further, Mr. Speaker. The portfolio, the U.S. Secretary of Energy, Secretary Bodman, who's got former mining interests in Manitoba, we've argued with him that hydro should be included as renewable energy. Jean Charest, Premier Charest, premier ministre du Québec, has

been involved with Manitoba and British Columbia, consistently taking the view that hydro-electric development and hydro export sales are renewable energy.

The water goes down a river through a turbine into Hudson Bay, evaporates eventually and comes back in the form of rain, snow, sleet and becomes a renewable energy as it goes down again through our river systems. We will consistently take that view, whether it's prominent environmentalists in Canada, prominent environmentalists in United States. We take the view whoever we talk to, whoever organizations they have, that hydro-electric power is a renewable energy.

This is the same position, by the way, the Premier of Québec has taken with the same individual when he was involved in stopping, with the former James Bay Cree, developments of hydro-electric power. Oh, where did he do that? He didn't do it in Québec. He actually went down to New York state and Albany and stopped massive hydro-electric developments in the state of New York, which put back the Québec hydro-electric developments tens of millions, if not billions of dollars in terms of economic lost opportunity.

I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that the coal lobby has been involved with Manitoba in the past. I have seen them combined with the Cross Lake First Nation indirectly in trying to stop hydro-electric sales. There are people against the development of hydro-electric power, including the Conservative Party of Manitoba. There are people in United States that are against it being called the renewable energy. There are environmentalists that I believe are wrong-headed on calling hydro-electric power not a renewable energy. And no matter where we are, we're going to have a consistent position: hydro power is renewable energy power and should be treated as that.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I'm pleased to hear the Premier finally standing up to Robert Kennedy Jr. and his completely irrational views about hydro power, Mr. Speaker.

We are the party that founded Manitoba Hydro. We're the party that built Kettle. We are the party that built Kelsey. When they were in power, Mr. Speaker, they announced a dam, and it took a Progressive Conservative government to get it built. It was the Limestone dam, \$1 billion under budget and ahead of schedule. They haven't completed a single project of significance under their watch.

And so I want to say I'm pleased to hear the Premier now finally, it appears, standing up to the international lobbies that are opposed to Manitoba Hydro exports, because the only rationale he's provided to date is the opposition brought by Mr. Kennedy Jr. and his organization, the potential for a \$70-million campaign his staff has talked about, the \$70-million war chest.

Mr. Speaker, he hasn't named a single other organization to date. This is the one organization that's on record as being concerned about the east-side line. We now know that Mr. Kennedy Jr., not only is he opposed to hydro development, he's opposed to wind development. He's leading and spearheading the charge against a major wind energy development on Cape Cod. He has been criticized by environmentalists throughout the United States, and the response from an environmentalist has been, and I quote, constructing windmills six miles from Cape Cod where they will be visible as half-inch dots on the horizon is the least that we can do.

So, given Mr. Kennedy's opposition to hydro power, given his opposition to wind power, when the Premier shares a stage with him in Australia in February, the person he's holding up as the person whose opposition he's most concerned about, will he take on Mr. Kennedy? Will he stand up for hydro power, and will he correct Mr. Kennedy's statements on the benefit of wind power?

\* (14:00)

**Mr. Doer:** Well, you know, Mr. Speaker, I've shared a stage with the governor of California, when they announced their climate change proposal. He is a Republican, and he's doing great things on climate change and global warming. We signed off on a western announcement with governors that were both Republican and Democrat in the United States.

I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that we have also opposed the Republicans in the United States when they say that hydro-electric power is not renewable. Actually, if the member opposite wants to—I know he wants to burn books, maybe Mr. Kennedy's books, are the next ones he wants to burn, but—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** There are people that have opposed hydro-electric power sales into Minnesota. There are people that have opposed the renewable energy



classification for hydro-electric power. There are people that have been lobbied in the United States to have a limitation on the number of megawatts. If you look at the state of Wisconsin, there's a limitation on megawatts. A lot of that lobbying was actually led by Manitobans from some communities that weren't in favour of the Northern Flood Agreement that has restricted the sales to be a smaller amount which, of course, is open for review in that state.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) has appeared at Xcel annual meetings and talked about hydro-electric power and renewable energy when other people from Manitoba have talked the opposite.

I would point out, Mr. Speaker, that we've had a very consistent position: I wonder whether he'll get up and stand up to the Republicans in the United States that took renewable energy power. Will you stand up to all the evil Republicans in the Congress, in the Senate, that have disallowed hydro of being a renewable energy power? We have stood up to them. Will you?

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

#### **Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s Opposition**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** On a new question. I've given the Premier three opportunities to explain why he's throwing away a billion dollars, to explain where the international pressure is coming from. I've asked him to explain whether it's coming from the American coal lobby or whether it's Mr. Kennedy's group or to name organizations that he thinks are going to have influence in the United States to block sales of Manitoba power.

I want to ask the Premier: Given that he's sharing a stage with Mr. Kennedy in three months in Australia to talk about environmental issues, whether he's aware of the fact that one of Mr. Kennedy's closest colleagues, Riverkeeper founder, Robert Boyle, resigned along with seven other Riverkeeper board members in 2000, after Mr. Kennedy insisted on hiring a convicted environmental felon as the group's chief scientist, Mr. Speaker. At the time, Mr. Boyle told the *New York Post* that Kennedy is, and I quote, very reckless, and added, he's assumed an arrogance above his intellectual stature.

Now, given that this is what Mr. Kennedy's former colleagues are saying, and given that the Premier is going to throw away a billion dollars

based on the advice of Mr. Kennedy, will the Premier heed the advice of Mr. Kennedy's former colleagues, of Manitoba Hydro President Bob Brennan, who said that Mr. Kennedy engages in reckless exaggerations? When he goes to Australia, will he take on Mr. Kennedy? Will he defend Manitoba power and will he say I'm going to make the right decision for Manitobans? I'm going to save a billion dollars. We're going to fight against the American lobbies that are trying to oppose their policy decisions on the people of Manitoba. Will he stand up to them or is he going to continue to kowtow to these irrational American environmentalists?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Well, Mr. Speaker, that radical organization, the Canadian Parks and Wilderness association, has stated that the line should not go down the east side. They think protecting the undisturbed boreal forest—that radical environmentalist, Lloyd Axworthy, called the boreal forest the lungs of the planet. We have people all across Canada supporting the UNESCO World Heritage site.

Mr. Speaker, I would point out that we had great speakers at our meeting last week on climate change. We invited speakers to come here. I would note that one of them was the governor of Arizona, the other one was the Premier of British Columbia, the third was Mr. Blair's key person who's now working with Bill—oh, I hate to say that, I'm in trouble—on climate change, Dr. Steven Howard.

We then had hundreds of Manitobans, businesses—in fact, it was sold out—talking about climate change strategies. Manitoba was listed by that radical environmental organization, the U.S. *BusinessWeek* magazine, of having one of the best plans in all of North America. You know, Mr. Speaker, that radical extreme environmental group.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I'll check under my desk. Well, Robert Kennedy is not there, and we're in favour of hydro-electric development.

**Mr. McFadyen:** I want to appreciate the four responses we've received to date, indicate our appreciation for the four responses received to date, on the issue of why it is that the Premier's going to flush a billion dollars down the toilet because of international pressure.

He still hasn't named a single organization, international organization, that has spoken out against the east-side line. He's mentioned CPAWS,

Mr. Speaker, and I will invite the Premier to take a look at the funding organizations and sponsors behind CPAWS when he has a chance to Google them after Question Period today.

I will also ask the Premier if he would take into account, given that he has referenced previously Robert Kennedy Jr., that he'll be sharing a stage with Mr. Kennedy Jr. in Australia in three months, Mr. Speaker, that in an interview in 2004, Mr. Kennedy was asked about the issue of the role of coal, and he said, and I quote, I think coal is going to be part of our portfolio for a long time. We have more coal than any country on earth. We have enough coal to supply all of our energy needs for the next 200 or 300 years. If we're serious about weaning ourselves from mid-eastern oil, I think we have to look at coal reserves, and we have to try to figure out ways to burn coal and to mine coal. End of quote, Robert Kennedy Jr. We need to find ways to burn coal and mine coal.

So in light of the fact, Mr. Speaker, that he shares a stage with Mr. Kennedy Jr., that he's cited Mr. Kennedy Jr.'s organization as the main opponent of Manitoba Hydro sales, why doesn't he just admit the fact that he's selling out Manitoba because he's more interested in appeasing skills for the American coal industry at the expense of Manitoba clean electricity and Manitoba clean wind power?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, when the member stops Googling all night long, perhaps we can go after the non-Googled facts here in Manitoba. Number 1, Tories: Two coal plants in Manitoba, one of which has got the largest amount of emissions per megawatts produced anywhere in North America—Tory vision. NDP vision: Close down the emitting coal plants. Very simple.

Renewable energy: Under the Conservatives, the only wind energy we got were members of the Legislature. No renewable energy in terms of wind power in Manitoba. Under the NDP, a long-term plan to go to a thousand megawatts, and we've already built 100 megawatts in Manitoba.

No wind over there, so to speak, and wind power on this side of the House.

Renewable energy: Energy conservation, which is the most effective way of reducing emissions, No. 9. The Tories, when the member opposite was chief of staff, and the former Cabinet ministers that are on those benches, No. 9 in Canada. They weren't 10. They were No. 9, ninth place in Canada.

Where is Manitoba today according to the energy conservation group? Number 1 in energy conservation in Canada.

Now I know that the individual that the member opposite has a bit of a fetish upon in terms of his attention, is paying a lot of attention to, Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that we believe hydro-electric power should be built. We believe it's renewable and should be treated by everyone as part of the solution. We'll take that message any place, everywhere, every time, everywhere.

Last thing, Mr. Speaker, I would point out that Mr. Brennan, that radical environmentalist, Mr. Brennan said at the committee, under the four and a half hours of cross-examination, that there is no question there will be more opposition about an east-side transmission line than a west-side transmission line. Mr. Brennan said that; he's hardly a radical environmentalist.

\*(14:10)

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, you know, he can turn up the volume on his answers all that he likes, it doesn't make the song any better. I've given five opportunities to provide Manitobans with a reason for why it is that he's going to throw away a billion dollars.

We're talking about making every Manitoba family \$4,000 poorer. We're talking about adding to environmental damage. We're talking about the fact that as the party that built, that created Manitoba Hydro, that has built every major transmission facility versus the party that announced Limestone and couldn't get it built. They've announced Wuskwatim and can't find a single contractor to work on the project in Wuskwatim; still haven't been able to get the project started.

The question is: Why is he wasting a billion dollars?

There are no reasonable opponents to the east-side line. Ed Schreyer supports it. The First Nations communities support it. Our caucus supports it. The *Winnipeg Free Press* supports it. Elijah Harper supports it. The chief of Berens River supports it. The chief of Red Sucker Lake supports it. The chief of Wasagamack supports it. The chief of Garden Hill First Nation supports it, and we can go on and on, Mr. Speaker, and he can't name a single individual. When he talks about opposition, he can't name—in fairness, he named one individual yesterday. We give him credit for that. We know Mr. Kennedy Jr. is on

the record opposing it because he's a shill for the American coal industry.

So I want to ask the Premier: Other than the one individual he's named, and the shill for the American coal industry, just give us one more name, who is opposed to the east-side line, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, we had 80 meetings in the east side between 2003 and—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

I would point out, Mr. Brennan, under the cross-examination of the member opposite, pointed out that after four and a half hours of cross-examination and, of course, Mr. Speaker, the CEO of Manitoba Hydro said, and I quote, that there's no question about it there will be more opposition to the east side. He also knows, as we do, that the revenues for Manitoba Hydro last year on export sales were \$800 million. Those export sales can never ever, ever, by any government, be taken for granted that they're just automatically going to continue to renew themselves. And so opposition on the east side, that Mr. Brennan has pointed out, a huge ongoing revenue liability or risk on the east-side transmission line, that's \$5.5 billion over the next 10 years by the time the transmission line is set.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite is talking about different issues of money. The risk side is much more on the export sales than anything else. Mr. Brennan also said that the transmission line will produce millions and millions of dollars of sale. And he said, not us, we will make money on the transmission line.

So he should stop putting out that old Limestone story, that building Limestone was going to cost money. It made money for Manitoba. We believe the transmission line will make money, Mr. Speaker. Of course, that's been confirmed at committee, but I'd like to thank the member for being ecologically friendly. I'd like to thank him for recycling his questions and using those recycled questions again today.

### **Cattle Industry Rising Canadian Dollar**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, Manitoba cattle producers, still recovering from BSE, are being walloped by high input costs and a

skyrocketing Canadian dollar which hit \$1.10 earlier today. There's a threat of another trade challenge. Prices are devastating. There are reports of bred cows that will calve next spring and summer and selling them for as low as \$200 to \$350 per head. That doesn't cover the cost of those cattle being raised.

Will the Minister of Agriculture tell Manitoba's cattle producers what plan she has developed to help the industry through these times of latest challenges? And don't tell us the CAIS program is going to cover that off, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Well, I guess, Mr. Speaker, I would tell the member that he shouldn't have told the cattle industry a few years ago that we didn't need increased slaughter capacity in this province. If they hadn't been so discouraging, had come supporting slaughter capacity, we might have increased capacity in this province now to help with some of the challenges.

But, Mr. Speaker, the high dollar is indeed putting very serious pressure, not only on the cattle industry, the pork industry, but it's putting pressure on the manufacturing industry and on the tourism industry. That is a serious challenge for us.

Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that the member opposite does not—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Eichler:** Mr. Speaker, cheap talk doesn't pay the bill, and I'll table a letter from an Interlake cattle producer. He states, and I quote, the issue of the rising dollar along with the high input costs have resulted in producer not meeting the cost of production. These costs are resulting in an approximate shortfall of \$250 a head at market time. The currently safety nets are not working to meet these shortfalls.

Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister again: Has she picked up the phone and talked to her federal counterpart about development of strategy to help the cattle industry deal with these challenges?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Speaker, despite the fact that the member opposite does not like the CAIS program, the CAIS program puts out millions of dollars into the producers' hands and the cattle producers have the ability to apply for an advance payment, moving it along more quickly. I would

encourage him to talk to the individuals in his constituency, to talk about applying for an advance.

Have I talked to the federal minister? Yes, I have, and there will be a fed-prov meeting very shortly.

### **Cattle Industry Bovine TB Surveillance**

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, cattle producers in the Riding Mountain area are dealing with bovine TB surveillance. This involves costs to producers, including handling, shrinkage and potential injuries to the cattle, among others. Producers have borne these costs on their own for years, in spite of recommendations they be paid a presentation fee.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Agriculture tell producers what she's doing to help them deal with mandatory surveillance?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Mr. Speaker, as the member opposite knows, surveillance for TB that has been in place in the Riding Mountain area falls under the jurisdiction of CFIA, Canada federal inspection agency, and it is the federal inspection agency that makes the decision. However, I will say to the member that I believe our producers are being treated unfairly and that Manitoba producers are facing greater pressure because of the restriction and the lack of the U.S. government recognizing that we are now TB free. Have we raised this with the federal government? Yes, we have.

\* (14:20)

**Mr. Briese:** Mr. Speaker, this really shouldn't be so difficult for this government to understand. By participating in the mandatory surveillance program, Manitoba producers are helping all Canadian producers who export cattle, yet this government seems oblivious to the costs these producers are incurring.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit to offsetting a portion of the costs Manitoba producers incur for participating in the mandatory surveillance program or is she satisfied just to leave them hanging out there swinging in the wind?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** As I said to the member opposite, the inspection is a CFIA program. It's a federal program and I'm quite surprised that the member opposite again wants us to take over responsibility from the federal government. The federal

government has this responsibility and I say to the member, I believe that there is an issue that he is raising here that is important. I do believe that the Manitoba producers are paying an unfair price and other producers in other provinces are taking advantage of it.

However, the member opposite is wondering what we've done. I would like him to know that I have raised this issue with the federal government more than once and I will continue to raise it because I think the federal government has to take more responsibility, Mr. Speaker. I would hope that the members opposite would quit defending the federal government and stand up with us on this issue.

### **Lake Winnipeg Water Quality Initiatives**

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Mr. Speaker, as a result of eight years of NDP neglect when it comes to cleaning up Lake Winnipeg, today the federal Conservative government announced that they will be investing \$18 million to fix the serious water quality problems in Lake Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, will this Minister of Water Stewardship admit that this is a positive step towards improving the water quality issues in Lake Winnipeg and support this very important initiative?

**Hon. Christine Melnick (Minister of Water Stewardship):** Well, Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to meet with the federal minister this morning. We discussed not only the announcement for today but continuing to work in partnership around the cleaning up of Lake Winnipeg.

We were very pleased to see the announcement today. We understand that this is building on the \$7 million announced in the Throne Speech in the spring. An additional \$11 million will be coming into the Lake Winnipeg basin. It will be spread over five years, Mr. Speaker.

I think we can agree that this was a good announcement. We look forward to continuing to build our partnership. We're very happy that the federal government has for the first time put real money on the table. We will be working through our science committee, and we will be working with all the stakeholders around Lake Winnipeg including our federal partners.

**Mrs. Stefanson:** Well, I'm glad and I thank the minister for her comments. Despite record increases in transfer payments from the federal government,

this NDP government has refused to place the water quality issues of Lake Winnipeg as a priority.

Instead of a bunch of empty rhetoric, which is constantly what we hear from this government, instead of endless consultations and round table discussions, instead of all talk, talk, talk and no action, action, action, will this minister agree today, as she already has, to work with the federal government, but will she agree to take real action now, Mr. Speaker, and agree to match the funds that the federal government announced today? Will she agree to match those funds?

**Ms. Melnick:** Mr. Speaker, earlier this summer I announced close to \$1 million for scientific research on Lake Winnipeg. We have been supporting the *Namao* for \$100,000 core funding for the last several years. We've increased that by \$50,000 for scientific research. We have invested over \$130 million in drinking water and sewer infrastructure throughout the province of Manitoba.

We are working with all of the partners. We are working with the Lake Winnipeg consortium, the *Namao*, the federal governments, the municipal governments. We are happy to have partners at the table. It's going to take all of us to clean up the lake. This is the government that is leading the way across Canada on water quality and water—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

### **Spirited Energy Campaign Web Site**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Minister of Competitiveness for informing me that I can go down to St. James Street to pick up my Spirited Energy merchandise. I made the long trek to St. James, a land far away where the sun always shines and shipping costs are \$8 for a \$3 order.

It was fortunate, Mr. Speaker, that when I arrived, I was told—or unfortunate, I would say—that when I arrived my order was lost. Why was it lost? Because the Spirited Energy Web site was broken.

I ask the minister: Is this the same Web site that Manitoba taxpayers are paying \$5,000 a month to maintain?

**Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade):** I'm very pleased that the member opposite has finally got something. Maybe she'll get some positive spirit instead of always in the negative. I think it's also nice to know that it isn't

government running the initiative. It is private business driving it. It's trying to promote the province. It's trying to change the image of the province, and I'm glad to see that if the member had a look at the original Web site, it said that you could pick it up for free. I hope that she takes those same skills and reads the Auditor General's report to see that we did follow proper processes for all procurements.

**Mrs. Rowat:** Mr. Speaker, the private sector is running that campaign, but he's paying \$5,000 for a Web site that's broken.

I was one of the lucky ones, I got my pen. I wonder if the general public who has ordered merchandise are that lucky. What about rural and northern Manitobans? He's saying drive to St. James and pick up the pen. I don't think that that's a really good response for individuals who have to go to St. James to pick up their merchandise.

I urge the minister to stick a fork in this campaign. It's done. Will he now end the boondoogle, boondoogle once and for all?

**Mr. Rondeau:** I was trying to find out, Mr. Speaker, what a boondoogle was.

**An Honourable Member:** Google it.

**Mr. Rondeau:** I was trying to Google it.

I hope that the member opposite talks to the business community, which is talking about changing the image of Manitoba, talking about our energy, our clean energy resources, the fact that we have something good here, the fact that we have a friendly educated population, we have a skilled work force. That's the advice that the business community provided to government.

Mr. Speaker, the business community said that we needed to create a positive image. We are following their lead to create the positive image, and I'm glad to see that the member opposite started with a pen. Maybe if she buys additional merchandise, she will get more positive spirit and actually become an optimist and maybe come to this side of the House.

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

### **Orthopedic Surgery Wait Times**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to ask my question and two supplementaries.

**Mr. Speaker:** Does the honourable member have leave to ask a question and two supplementary questions? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, I note that the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) is in full retreat from her positions stated so emphatically yesterday that her goal was a 10 percent reduction in the phosphorus load for Lake Winnipeg. Now she recognizes a much greater reduction is needed. I hope the minister will apologize.

Today, Mr. Speaker, I want to address a question to another minister who should also be in retreat. On Monday, the Minister of Health said that the median wait time for all orthopedic surgery for this September is 25 weeks.

I ask the Minister of Health: Will she today give us the wait times for elbow and shoulder replacement surgeries, for spinal discectomies and fusions, for major ankle surgery procedures, and will she please include both the wait time to see a specialist and the wait time from seeing a specialist to getting the surgery?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** I thank the member for the question and attempting to take some leaders' latitude of his own in addressing a few ministers with his comments.

I can tell the member, as I've said before, that we have for a number of years now posted wait times on our Web site as decided by the first ministers in the five areas of priority for wait times. Certainly, that was decided under Prime Minister Martin. I can tell the member opposite, concerning the specific surgeries that he's addressing, I can endeavour to get the member that information. I can tell the member, of course, that the wait time for hip and knee surgery in orthopedics has come down some 40 percent in the last two years.

\*(14:30)

**Mr. Gerrard:** As I suspected, the minister was talking only about knee and hip surgery when there is a lot of other important orthopedic procedures which she is forgetting. It is important when she said a medium wait time for all orthopedic surgeries that she include all, at least major, orthopedic surgeries.

I understand that for spinal discectomies and fusion procedures, the combined wait time to see a surgeon and to get the surgery done is now about three years. For shoulder and elbow replacements, it's about two and a half years, and for ankle

surgeries, it's a year and a half, if you can get it in Manitoba, because a lot of people are being referred out of province because it's hard to get here.

I ask the minister: When will she start considering other orthopedic procedures in her group of all orthopedic surgeries? When will she focus on the whole issue, not just on a part of it?

**Ms. Oswald:** I think I've been clear from the start when I've been referencing the materials that are posted on our Web site for all Manitobans to see that it's orthopedic surgery for hips and for knees. I've always been clear about that. The reason, of course, that those materials are there was based on agreements made by the first ministers under the direction of Prime Minister Paul Martin. I would think the member opposite might know that.

I can also tell him that since 1999 we know that the WRHA has annually increased its surgery across the board by some 8,000 surgeries. Those would include the ones that the member opposite is talking about. We have more work to do, Mr. Speaker, and that's why we have our shoulders to the wheel with our doctors and surgeons and nurses to get those surgeries done.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, even Dr. Postl said to the minister and the nation, beware of pouring huge expenditures into hip and knee surgery without paying attention to the other orthopedic procedures. He described the other orthopedic procedures as Cinderella diseases which are not being invited to the dance. The minister has provided no Cinderella shoes for ankle surgery. She's forgotten all about it. People with foot and ankle surgery are increasingly having to go to Saskatoon or British Columbia for attention because the minister has neglected this important area. The minister should apologize for talking about only hips and knees and start talking about all orthopedic procedures.

When will the minister start supporting a comprehensive approach like a Manitoba bone and joint health initiative which will look at all orthopedic procedures and not just at the narrow hips and knees which only are a fraction of what is important?

**Ms. Oswald:** I'm going to resist making any references to Prince Charming at this point, I assure you. I can tell you that Dr. Brian Postl in his federal wait-times report did offer a caution to the nation concerning wait times in surgeries outside of the big five, as they've come to be known. There have been

subsequent studies on these so-called Cinderella syndromes, and we're seeing that across the nation. Much work is being done to ensure that that doesn't happen.

I say to the member, again, that surgeries have increased by 8,000 annually, and it's very interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite continually refers to the Alberta institute for hips and knees. This is an institute that focusses only on hips and knees, the very thing he's telling us not to do.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Operation Christmas Child

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, it was an honour yesterday afternoon to join with paramedics from across Manitoba to participate in their annual Operation Christmas shoe box drive. It was quite a sight on Henderson Highway as one ambulance after another formed a slow-moving parade toward the Eastview Community Church.

The ambulances and the paramedics inside, however, were not headed to the scene of an accident, but instead had a busy day going from school to school picking up Operation Christmas shoe boxes filled with gifts for underprivileged children around the world. In all, paramedics from across Manitoba helped to transport nearly 4,000 Operation Christmas Child gift boxes.

Operation Christmas Child delivers nearly eight million shoe boxes filled with toys, papers, pens, towels, brushes, and other items desperately needed by children in poor nations. More than 700,000 of these come from Canada alone.

Paramedics work long and difficult hours, and by giving of their time to help deliver these packages, they not only touch the lives of children around the world but also of children right here at home who learn about giving and generosity. I would like to especially thank paramedic Kristine Friesen for the invitation to participate in this year's event and to all emergency personnel who made it such a success. Thank you also to Eric Glass, chairman of the Paramedic Association of Manitoba and to Marc Savard, vice-president of the Professional Paramedic Association of Winnipeg, for their warm welcome and invitation.

Manitobans are grateful for the work you do each and every day and appreciate the special effort you put into making Operation Christmas Child a success.

### University College of the North Chancellor

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in The Pas, Manitoba, Ovide Mercredi, chief of the Misipawistik Cree Nation, former national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, was installed as the first Chancellor of the University College of the North. He is only the second Aboriginal person to be appointed chancellor of a university in Canada.

Together with my colleague, the Minister of Advanced Education and Literacy (Ms. McGifford), I was very pleased to state our government's support for the University College of the North. I was joined by a large number of dignitaries, including University of Winnipeg President Lloyd Axworthy, and former Winnipeg mayor and now Chancellor of the University of Manitoba, William Norrie; Grand Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, Phil Fontaine; Chiefs Glen Ross and Chris Baker; MKO Grand Chief Sydney Garrioch, along with representatives of AMC, MMF, and numerous others.

Chancellor Mercredi attended high school in The Pas and the University of Manitoba, graduating with a law degree in 1977. He was the president of the first Native Students' Association in all of Canada. Chancellor Mercredi is an internationally respected voice on Aboriginal people's issues and will have a profound impact on the University College of the North. Chancellor Mercredi made clear, in his address yesterday, that he sees education as key to ending the cycle of poverty and providing opportunity to all people in the north. I am proud to be part of a government that has made education in the north a priority.

The instalment of Ovide Mercredi creates a role model for all young Manitobans, particularly those in the north. As I said yesterday, Ovid has done great things, is doing many great things now, and in the future will do even greater things. As Ovide himself said, "I think it's a very symbolic indication to the young people in Aboriginal communities that they have opportunities if they pursue them and that any one of them could become a future chancellor of the University of the North or a president of a university or a professor."

Honourable colleagues, please join me in congratulating Ovide Mercredi. We thank this great Manitoban for his commitment to the north and Aboriginal people. As a friend and fellow northerner, I am extremely proud of Ovide Mercredi's latest achievement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **25th Anniversary Jamaican Association of Manitoba**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I had the pleasure of attending the 25th anniversary of the Jamaican Association of Manitoba last Saturday evening at the Royal Crown banquet centre along with Trudy Turner.

The evening began with Mrs. Lola Hibbert introducing the MC, Mrs. Joyce Graham-Fogwill, and after grace by Warren Smith and a lovely dinner, Mrs. Eartha Gyles introduced Mr. Devon Daley, the evening's guest speaker. Mr. Daley, who has spent 25 years working in youth corrections, brought a message of strong family involvement in shaping the future of our young people to become responsible members of society.

Throughout the evening there was a video slide show by Patrick Moore. Music was provided by Kenny McLaren and Jennifer Nembhard. The Honorary Consul of Jamaica, Ms. Carman Nembhardt, brought a powerful message to the room from the Prime Minister of Jamaica.

In celebration of the 25th anniversary, all of the presidents were recognized for their contributions to the association. They are: Pauline Morris, Lena Anderson, Lloyd Mullings, Byron Cooke, O.T. Anderson, Mavis McLaren, Lola Hibbert, Tony Beach, Ethlin Cunningham, Mavis McLaren for a second time, Tony Beach for a second time, Renwick DaCosta, Tony Beach for a third time, Winston Taylor and Mavis McLaren, again, for a third time.

It was a wonderful evening, and I would like to commend the present executive: Louise Lewis, Damyam Hemans, Enid Smith, Lola Hibbert, Pauline Nembhard, Iris Drake, Marilyn Robinson, Mavis McLaren, as well as Bev Moore and Shirley Opaleke and Hyacinth DaCosta for the work they did and continue to do for the Jamaican Association.

I was pleased to bring greetings on behalf of our leader, the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. McFadyen), and our P.C. caucus. It is because of strong organizations like the Jamaican Association that we have a rich and vibrant multicultural mosaic in our province of Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\* (14:40)

### **Slave Trade Act's 200th Anniversary**

**Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows):** Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 200th anniversary of the Slave Trade Act in the British Parliament. This act outlawed the

slave trade in the British West Indies and made it illegal for British ships to be involved in the trafficking of human beings. Petitions to Parliament and William Wilberforce, member of Parliament, were key to passage of the slave trade abolition legislation.

Although slavery itself was not abolished for three more decades, this bicentennial marks an important event in the decline of this barbarous practice. This anniversary is a unique opportunity for us to reflect upon the past and to commemorate those who suffered as a result of the slave trade. It is also an occasion to celebrate everyone who contributed to the abolition movement, or who has fought for social justice in any form.

However, events such as this call for not only reflecting on the past, but also consideration of the present. The Atlantic slave trade may have been abolished 200 years ago, but slavery still exists in its modern forms, such as human trafficking, bonded labour and the recruitment of child soldiers. Poverty is intrinsically linked to these issues as it makes people vulnerable to exploitation. There are many individuals and groups today, both in Africa and throughout the world, who are suffering from devastating injustices based on racism and prejudice. Right here in Manitoba, there are thriving communities of ethnic minorities, but sadly, racism and social exclusion still exist.

Finally, this bicentenary necessitates looking toward the future and working to remedy poverty and inequality both here and in other parts of the world. It is a chance to tackle the contemporary forms of slavery and all other forms of inequality, discrimination and racism.

Mr. Speaker, it is clear that harsh social injustices exist today as they did 200 years ago. We need to work collectively to remedy the root causes of these injustices and to foster universal respect and equality in our communities. We need to keep working toward eliminating racial discrimination so that, in another 200 years, future generations will be celebrating our accomplishments, as we are celebrating the steps taken in the past.

### **Lake Winnipeg Environmental Stewardship**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about the environmental stewardship, the importance of Lake Winnipeg to all of us, the incredible increase in algal blooms as a result of increased phosphorus.



Yesterday I raised the issue that the minister's stated target of reducing phosphorus by 10 percent was hopelessly inadequate. The minister defended her target but then beat a hasty retreat after she'd left the Chamber, recognizing that the Liberals are right, that there needs to be a much more substantial reduction than 10 percent of the phosphorus load in Lake Winnipeg. Indeed, the calculations from the lake stewardship board show clearly that it's probably in the order of a 58 percent reduction in phosphorus that's needed, and we clearly need a plan to do that.

The inept stewardship of the environment by the NDP was further exposed today by the Auditor General's report which shows that the Brady Landfill, the largest one in the province, doesn't even have an environmental licence. What a terrible situation. This government has been operating one of the big landfill sites in this province without an environmental licence, only with an operating permit. This is the government which cancelled, blew up, dismissed the Manitoba Environmental Council. This is the government which failed to bring forward the Lowlands National Park.

Increasingly, Mr. Speaker, this government is being exposed as very poor environmental stewardship of this province. This government is being exposed as not really knowing what they're doing on the environment. This government is being exposed as people who really don't even get their facts right when it comes to the environment, don't even get their licences right. It's time to change this government because they're not doing a good job for the environment.

### GRIEVANCES

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for River Heights, on a grievance.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Yes, on a grievance, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, in this session, there's room for grievance on an extraordinary range of topics. First and foremost, we've had major problems with many of the ministers of the Crown misleading people in the Legislature and misleading the public by the statements that they're putting on public record.

We had the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) just the other day saying that all that was needed for Lake Winnipeg was a 10 percent reduction in the load of phosphorus, and by the end of the day, the minister was beating a hasty retreat

and recognizing that the Liberals are right and that you need a much greater reduction than 10 percent of the phosphorus in Lake Winnipeg.

We had the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) claiming on Monday that the median wait time for all orthopedic surgery in Manitoba was 25 weeks. We have exposed this because it's very clear that she wasn't including in the wait time the time to see a specialist, and she wasn't including the wait time for many, many orthopedic procedures including shoulder and ankle and elbow replacements, spinal discectomies, spinal fusion procedures, ankle surgeries. This clearly was misleading this House. It is time that we have ministers who at least put some reasonable and accurate information on the public record instead of providing day after day after day misleading information, Mr. Speaker. I think that there are issues that we've talked about, and my colleague raised earlier today, of fairness in the Legislature which need to be addressed and which we could be doing a lot of grieving about.

But I want, as an example, Mr. Speaker, to just mention one of the bills which was very badly mismanaged. It's an example of poor government and poor management. This was The Insurance Act, Bill 7. This was a bill which, yes, we supported and we have now passed, but the reality is that the whole process that was put in place by this government for this bill was very poor. The reality is that we have ended up with a bill which—it's really a Band-Aid approach where there really is a need for much more comprehensive change which was recognized by everyone initially, including the government of Manitoba, when the process started in about 2003. The end result falls far short of goals which should have been there and there were real problems with the way that input was brought forward.

For example, in about 2003, there was a so-called blue-ribbon panel of 15 respected professionals from all sections of the insurance industry and the legal profession organized by Manitoba Finance and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) to prepare recommendations on this legislation. It included additional stakeholders, the Insurance Bureau of Canada, the Insurance Brokers' Association of Manitoba, the Insurance Council of Manitoba. Significantly, there was no representation from consumer advocacy groups. Where were they? This government isn't concerned about them.

Another aim of this group launched by the Minister of Finance involved to seek harmonization

of The Insurance Act of Manitoba with those of other provinces. The progress of the review in this instance was slow and tedious. There was extensive disagreement among the committee members on the scope of the reforms that would be presented to the government. Eventually, things slowed and they slowed in part, and stalled, because there was a growing perception by panel members that their efforts were likely to be ignored by Cabinet.

This is the kind of government we have, a government which brings together some experts and then ignores them. There were delays, eventual dissolution of the committee because the government didn't like the advice they were getting, and many members felt afterwards that this was just an exercise in futility. That is a description of this government, certainly in this respect and in many others.

There are a variety of factors that led to this failure, and one of these was a failure of leadership by the NDP Doer government and the Minister of Finance. There were, and should have been, some major additional things incorporated to provide for better governance, to recognize the fact that you don't just have blocks of shareholders of more than 50 percent, that you can have controlling shareholders with much less than this, that qualifications of boards of directors should have been not just bankrupt now, but anybody who's been bankrupt in the past surely should have been disqualified.

\* (14:50)

Qualifications of directors that dealt with those who are convicted of an indictable offence should have been extended not just for five years, but for much longer than that where there were people convicted of fraud or forgery, for example, as you need to make sure that the integrity of the process and the integrity of the boards are there.

So, sadly, as a result of the ineptitude of this government and, in this case, of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), a variety of things that could have been included and should have been included in Bill 7 were omitted. The flaws in the whole process exemplify the fact that this government, even with the process of bringing together people and getting input and advice, has a great deal of problems. It is sad because we could have ended up in this instance with a much more comprehensive, a much better act which would have better served consumers and insurers.

One hopes that some of these problems could be corrected with the regulations if the government listens to people, but I bring this forward, Mr. Speaker, as an example of the problems that we are having at the moment in Manitoba with the Doer NDP government, the need to improve lots and lots of areas and the reason that we continue to need in this Legislature strong speakers from the Liberal opposition because of the mistakes and the poor procedures that this government does day after day.

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

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Yes, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** On a grievance?

**Mrs. Rowat:** Yes, on a grievance, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to put some words on the record regarding the Spirited Energy campaign.

**An Honourable Member:** The boondoggle.

**Mrs. Rowat:** The boondoggle. I got it. The boondoggle, Mr. Speaker. The Spirited Energy campaign has cost Manitobans nearly \$3 million. That's serious, serious change. That's a lot of taxpayers' dollars that are being spent on a campaign that has just gone from bad to worse.

The NDP have been stonewalling, misleading and contradicting themselves whenever we've asked a question regarding the costs or what level of support has been provided for that campaign. There seem to be a lot of hidden details that, you know, are slowly coming out and at times have embarrassed the government, to be quite frank.

I understand that the Premier (Mr. Doer) himself has said on the record that he's not overly impressed with the campaign; at the launch, when asked about his impression of the campaign, he said, it grows on you. Well, Mr. Speaker, it's not growing on anybody. It's like I said earlier; it's a wart. It's not doing what it was intended to do, and seriously, Manitoba needs to have something to be proud of. They have to have a branding that they can be proud of and that can signify a province that is moving forward and is ready to do business.

Mr. Speaker, this campaign has been on the go for well over two years now and has been promoted outside of Manitoba minimally. There's been hardly any campaign made outside of this province, and it does little to entice outsiders to visit, relocate or

invest in Manitoba. Actually, I think that Facebook and blogs have had great fun with this campaign and not in a positive way. I believe Facebook has a section under a heading called, How Spirited Energy Has Ruined My Life. That is not something that Manitobans can say that they are proud of.

The campaign raised a lot of questions. It has been shrouded in secrecy. Government has hidden details. They've misrepresented the role that the private sector, public sector have played in this, and Manitobans, I believe, need to be treated, you know, in a better manner than this when it comes to their tax dollars.

We were pleased to see that the Auditor General issued a report because the NDP disclosure of invoices and focus groups would not have happened if the Auditor General and the Ombudsman had not gotten involved. So I am so pleased that these independent bodies did come forward and did provide support in trying to get the information out to Manitobans, and that's probably the biggest positive to come out of this campaign, Mr. Speaker. We fought for seven months to have this information disclosed and it was not until the Auditor General and the Ombudsman finally got the government to relent.

The NDP agreed to this investigation which is a sign that even they knew that the secrecy behind the campaign had to come to an end, but we were extremely disappointed that the NDP would commit another million dollars to the campaign as they did earlier this month, you know, before the Auditor General even had a chance to report. I just think that it shows a total disrespect for the office of the Auditor General when you say one thing and go—one thing meaning you weren't going to be putting more money into a campaign, and then continuing to spend, Mr. Speaker.

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

You know, part of that money that was being spent on that campaign was to maintain a Web site: \$5,000 a month to maintain a Web site that doesn't work. A Web site that will take your MasterCard, but not provide any product. For the Minister of Competitiveness (Mr. Rondeau) to say, you know, go to St. James, pick up your pen; even, at one point in the House, indicated that the merchandise was free. You know, that might be not a bad option, is to continue to give that material merchandise out for free, because I can't believe that there is going to be

anybody wanting to purchase anything from that Web site considering that they now know that they would never get their product. You know, my MasterCard was billed, but no product.

So I guess some of the people that I have been talking to regarding this issue have said, how many Fidos won't get their Frisbees, and how many tots won't get their tattoos, Madam Deputy Speaker? So it's become just a comedy of errors, but on a serious note, a comedy of errors that has cost the Manitoba taxpayer \$3 million. We're very disappointed that, when the government is asked questions on this issue, they talk in riddles; they don't provide the facts. They, I don't believe even within their own caucus, are united in believing that this is a good campaign. You know, I understand that some are saying it is and the majority of them are questioning that themselves.

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

Mr. Acting Speaker, when we look at the value for money, we look at that as an elusive term. For example, one could say that they got value for money if they paid \$5 for a bottle of beer because that is a reasonable price for a bottle of beer. What is not said, is that it's an idea that—you know, I guess it's a stupid idea to approve funding for beer and wine at the expense of taxpayers in the first place, no matter what or how they paid for it.

The NDP misled about suspending the spending on the campaign, you know, the focus group information that came back was negative. The public has given it a thumbs down. Taxpayers' monies have been wasted on items like beer and wine and, Mr. Acting Speaker, even the media have largely declared the campaign a failure.

While we are relieved that there was nothing illegal occurring, or that we are aware of, the Auditor General does not examine whether the decisions made were wise politically and, which we have proven on numerous occasions, that political wisdom on the government's side on this file has been suspect, Mr. Acting Speaker.

\* (15:00)

So, on the campaign going forward, we maintain, and we always have, that this campaign was originally designed more to make the NDP government look good. It failed. What it really should have been intended to do was to promote Manitoba to people who have left the province, enticing them to come back, encouraging investment

and opportunity within our province from the outside. That hasn't happened.

This is exemplified by things like having the former NDP executive director sign-off on campaign expenses, Mr. Acting Speaker. It just speaks of arrogance of this government in allowing so many things to be blatantly wrong with the way they handled this campaign, and using it as a political trough is just disgusting.

So we believe that it's time to throw in the towel. As I said earlier, put a fork in it, it's done. Spirited Energy, directing any monies that were earmarked for Spirited Energy can be used for more worthy causes. There are so many issues facing Manitobans today that need to be addressed. I believe that this government has wasted intentionally \$3 million in an ill-conceived campaign that has actually put a dark cloud over Manitoba's image more than has helped Manitoba's image.

So, on that note, I just believe that this campaign should be canned, and let's look at ways that we can promote this province in a proactive way and not continue to waste taxpayers' dollars in a very foolish manner.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** I very much appreciate you recognizing me, and it's regrettable, indeed, to have to get up on a grievance today. There are so many issues, Mr. Speaker, that I could spend, perhaps, all day and into the evening, but I am, in fact, losing my voice somewhat, so I won't be able to take that opportunity. I know that we are limited to only a mere 10 minutes.

So I, unfortunately, am going to have to limit my grievance to maybe one, maybe two, maybe a few topics. I know, certainly, I will be focussing on one issue that our leader, the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. McFadyen), has consistently asked questions about in this House over the course of the session. We have really not been getting much in the way of answers from this government, but it has to do with the east- versus west-side hydro line or the bipole line, also known as the somewhat daffy detour.

I think it's quite something, Mr. Speaker, when I think only an NDP government would have the ability to do this, and that is where there is a direct line from where the transmission line originates, it's directly north of, I think, north of Kenora. Only an NDP government would see fit to take a line, and rather than putting the line right down the east side

of Lake Winnipeg, a direct clear route down that side, only an NDP government would find a way to waste a billion dollars of taxpayers' money, make it the longest possible route, going from almost the Ontario border all the way over to the west side of our province, bordering on the border of Saskatchewan. We're still not clear whether or not it would go through Riding Mountain National Park or where exactly this line would be, but this detour continues to get more and more daffy. We really haven't been given any indication by this provincial NDP government as to specifically where this line may go, so we don't really know how much more and how much longer it would be as opposed to a line down the east side of Lake Winnipeg

So, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be only an NDP government that would take a billion dollars of taxpayer money in this province and throw it out the window, not even take into consideration anyone, not care about anything in the world, but only an NDP government would see fit to take a billion taxpayer dollars and throw it out the window. I think that is incredibly regrettable and is the primary reason why I stand before you today on a grievance, because it's just wrong.

We need to hold this government to account on this issue and to account on every issue out there on behalf of taxpayers in Manitoba, and taxpayers want to know why this government is making the decision that they are making. They're directing Manitoba Hydro. Manitoba Hydro originally had recommended a route down the east side of Lake Winnipeg, but something changed, and it was this government, this NDP government, that directed Manitoba Hydro to put the line down the west side of Lake Winnipeg and, indeed, the west side of our province, Mr. Speaker.

I think that's regrettable. When the president and the chairman of Manitoba Hydro come forward and make a recommendation and say that it should be down the east side, and then all of a sudden, everyone is scrambling around because the government directs them to put it down the west side of the province, Mr. Speaker, it makes absolutely no sense. We've asked question after question after question in this House, wanting some answers from members opposite, wanting some answers from this Premier (Mr. Doer), the Premier of this province who has made this decision, this ridiculous decision to throw away a billion taxpayer dollars. That's the equivalent of \$4,000 a person in this province, and

I think it's unfortunate that they do this without any regard to the taxpayers in this province.

I think, Mr. Speaker, it is incumbent upon us to bring these issues forward in this House and to have a debate on these issues, but what's happening here is that the government has made their decision. It's the heavy hand of government. They've made their decision. They're forcing Manitoba Hydro to take on a billion dollars more of debt in this province, debt that our children and our grandchildren will be stuck with for no reason. There has been no reason, no rational reason given why this government has decided to force Manitoba Hydro to take this route. It makes absolutely no sense.

Only a government, only an NDP government, would be able to take a billion dollars, throw it out the window, make a decision that's completely irrational, that's going to cost a billion dollars to taxpayers in Manitoba without any regard and no care at all, and let's go on our day-to-day business. Well, it's wrong, Mr. Speaker, and that's why our leader, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen), has gotten up day in, day out, and questioned the Premier as to why he is making this ridiculous decision to throw away a billion dollars of taxpayer dollars in our province, to create his own sort of legacy that he wants to leave behind in Manitoba. It makes absolutely no sense. It's completely irrational. It's throwing away a billion dollars of taxpayer dollars, and it's very unfortunate that they're able to get away with this.

Because you know what, Mr. Speaker? They were not elected the government in this province on this promise, because I'll guarantee you, if they got out there during an election campaign and made a promise like this, there's no way that Manitobans would want and agree to take on this kind of debt for the future generations of our province. There is no way. I think it's unfortunate that they wait until after the election, and then they force in the hidden, dark halls of Manitoba Hydro and the Legislature, they slide through this decision and force Manitoba Hydro to make this ridiculous decision. All of the research and everything that Manitoba Hydro has done for years with respect to how they're going to put this third bipole line down the east side of Lake Winnipeg. They were doing the research there because it makes sense. It's the shortest route. They never thought about putting it down the west side because it makes no sense. It makes no sense, but only an NDP Premier of this province would have the ability to come forward and make a decision and

force Manitoba to make a decision that makes absolutely no sense.

\* (15:10)

That's why I stand here on a grievance right now, Mr. Speaker, because I think it's unfortunate when the Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province makes a decision that's going to affect future generations, and he doesn't even really care. He doesn't care about what's going to happen in the future. All he cares about is his own legacy. To me, we are here to debate, in this Legislature and in this province, ridiculous decisions that are made by these kinds of, by NDP governments, ridiculous decisions made by this particular NDP government. I think it's unfortunate that a decision—that they get away with this type of a decision.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that after the day in and day out, our leader, the Leader of the Official Opposition, and other members of our caucus have had the opportunity to stand up in this Legislature and ask questions of why it is that this Premier has made this decision, that his ministers on that side have made this decision to force Manitoba Hydro into making this ridiculous decision.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that he does do the right thing and he changes his mind because that would make sense. It would make sense for him to change his mind and do the right thing and put the bipole line down the east side. There are so many organizations. There are so many groups out there that are in favour of the east side, and they can't even mention and name a few, or really anybody, who is opposed to it.

I think it's unfortunate they used the UNESCO site as part of their—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable member's time has expired.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, could you call, please, Bills 19, 20 and 21?

### CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

#### Bill 19—The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the

Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), that Bill 19, The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act; *Loi sur les pratiques d'inscription équitables dans les professions réglementées*, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

***Motion presented.***

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** I do want to put some comments on the record in third reading of Bill 19, The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act. Mr. Speaker, of course, we know that the purpose of the bill is to ensure that regulated professions are applying impartial, transparent, objective and fair principles when they are looking at the registration governing the number of bodies that they will be overseeing.

Certainly, we have always supported the principle and the spirit of this bill. In fact, during the recent election campaign, we also put forward in our campaign that we would support a legislation that would recognize the credentials of people coming to this country so that they could obtain work in their chosen profession. I think that that is very important in our economy today because we've seen such a number of people leave our province that it is important that we have people coming into our province, Mr. Speaker. Once people come in, once these families from various parts of the world come to our Manitoba and we welcome our new Manitobans, we must ensure that they are fairly treated, and that, in part, means to ensure that they are able to gain employment in their chosen field of work or in their professions.

You would think, Mr. Speaker, that with such a bill like this there would be no controversy because it sounds like a very fair and reasonable bill and something that everybody would support. But what happened? Well, what happened is the NDP government brought this in very quickly before an election campaign to look like they were being fair and open and it was ill-thought-out. They modelled it after the Ontario legislation, and the Ontario legislation has not been in place long enough to actually assess any of the pros and cons there. So it was fast-tracked in, certainly for political purposes, but the most important thing that did not occur is consultation with the regulated professions and there are about 30 of them.

I think that that is always the problem. When you do not ask people for their input beforehand, you

don't get a buy-in in support that you thought that you might have. We certainly heard this at committee. Now, of course, the democratic process means that we come into the House, a bill is presented, we have first reading and we have second reading. We debate it and, of course, the object of the debate, from the point of the opposition, is to bring forward ideas and issues to the government so that they may have another sense of the way we're thinking about it and what people have told us about it. Of course, then it has to go to committee, and that is so that Manitobans can come to the committee and they can make presentation and they have their say. That's our democratic process.

Now, what happened at the committee is that we had 15 groups of people or organizations, associations or private people that wanted to present. I think there were actually 14 that presented. A number of the people at this committee hearing when asked the question, were you consulted, the answer was no. When people aren't consulted, then they bring forward their concerns at that committee stage. Certainly, part of the process for us when we get legislation presented to us is we consult with all of the stakeholders to see if they were properly consulted with and if they were listened to in that consultation process, if they had the opportunity to speak about their concerns or their support for the legislation.

So, when these people came and presented at committee, they had some very important things to say, and at this point, I mean, it's very far along in the process. Now, of course, we all know that the minister prides herself in passing legislation in this House and in consultation. She said it time and time again that she likes to consult, but in this particular bill I think she didn't quite get it done. I don't think she got it all done. She didn't quite get the homework done, and that was evident at committee because of what the people came to say.

So that has brought this bill into a more controversial arena because once people come and make negative comments you begin to wonder, well, this is going through very quickly, and sometimes it takes a bit of time for people to absorb what's happened and read it over again, and before we even know it the bill is passed. Then people come afterwards and they say, well, was that bill passed already? It just went so quickly and I wanted to have something to say but it went very, very quickly. That's unfortunate, Mr. Speaker, because I believe that the democratic process should allow all

Manitobans an opportunity to have their say and we should give ample time frame for that to happen.

But what happens after the committee is we have an opportunity to bring amendments. I know the minister did bring some amendments to the bill because she recognized the short-fallings, the shortcomings of the legislation, but, of course, bringing too many amendments would have made her look like she hadn't done her homework.

\* (15:20)

So, our duty, of course, is to look at the legislation and bring some amendments and listen to what people have said to us and propose some amendments. It would be reasonable that people have asked for. One of those amendments, Mr. Speaker, was in talking about the fairness commissioner. Now, we certainly love the idea of a fairness commissioner as being one that, with impartiality, transparency, objectivity and fairness, would look at how the professions, the practices that the regulated professions go through when they look at the legislation and look at how they would apply this to everybody that's coming into the province with foreign credentials so that they're treated—the process is fair and open to everyone—the same as it is to everyone else in the province.

Now, we certainly support that. We said, you know, to be fair and transparent and objective and impartial, it just makes sense to have this as a function overseen by the Ombudsman's office because the Ombudsman in the province is someone that is impartial and transparent, objective and fair and she's at arm's length from the government. She's independent of the government. I think that when you talk about fairness, you cannot talk about fairness unless you talk about independence from the government.

In this legislation, the fairness commissioner is not independent from the government, in fact, answers to the minister. I would not be surprised to learn later on as we watch what happens here, this person wouldn't be handpicked by the minister, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I wonder if she actually has a person in mind who she's tailoring the job description for. So we'll be watching to see who the person is that becomes the fairness commissioner.

Another argument to that is we're going to have a Cabinet shuffle, so who knows who the minister will be, and then maybe the next minister will want another fairness commissioner. This is something

that needs to be taken outside of the government and placed in the Ombudsman's office or under the oversight of the Ombudsman and have it totally impartial, transparent, objective and fair.

It just kind of defies reason why we would even be having a debate about this not being an independent person that answers to you, Mr. Speaker, and to the Legislature, and certainly would be appointed by the Legislature. It just makes you wonder how you choose a person that's going to be a fairness commissioner if you're not using fair practices to choose the person. So we'll have to watch and see what happens on this one. Certainly, we will.

I know that, when you talk to the regulated professions, they already say, they've already said we take our job here very seriously and conscientiously and we do, we do use and employ the principles of being impartial, transparent, objective and fair when we assess the credentials, the foreign credentials of people coming into our province, because they recognize the importance of people being brought into Manitoba and filling the void, I guess if you will, in the number of people we need to have employed in this province. They are onside with this in principle. They're not against it. In fact, they will work with it, but they did have many things that they felt that this legislation might have been either heavy-handed or an oversight in some areas that could have been addressed in some amendments. I know that many of the organizations or the associations lobbied for this, but it all fell on deaf ears, Mr. Speaker.

I don't think that this government has a monopoly on good ideas and good amendments and good legislation. In fact, all people in this House, all members of this House have ideas and bring forward ideas and propose legislation and all of this. I just think it's very arrogant when a government just turns their ears off and doesn't listen to what other people have to say in this Legislature, because we're not just saying what we think, we're saying what other people in this province have said to us. So to just not pay attention to that and not listen is arrogance, Mr. Speaker. I think that that ultimately will be the downfall of this government because they have a tendency less and less to listen to the people of Manitoba.

I certainly listened when people came to committee, and because of what they said there, I certainly said to them that I would propose

amendments which the Member for Inkster and I got together on. We co-operated on that, which just shows you how two parties, at least, in the Legislature can get along this way when it's for a good purpose. We proposed some amendments, and we thought we had—and I certainly believe that the amendments brought forward were fair and warranted some discussion and debate, and it didn't happen. It didn't happen. It was just, no, we're doing what we're doing, and that's it.

I think that all the minister could find to say about what I said on the record which was, oh, so scary was that we didn't want to build a bureaucracy. Well, we don't want to build a bureaucracy in the minister's office, Mr. Speaker. We don't want that bureaucracy to be built in the minister's office. We know that the fairness commissioner is likely going to have a staffperson. I think that's even spelled out. But we don't want that to be something that's built into the minister's office.

We believe that a fairness commissioner—and, Mr. Speaker, when you talk to the regulated professions, they don't feel that there's going to be a huge demand for the fairness commissioner because they feel they are applying these principles of being impartial, transparent, objective and fair already. So they don't think that this fairness commissioner is going to be in high demand. But we don't know that, and we don't know what kind of things are going to come along. We don't know some of the things that may be determined to be not fair, and when there's a pipeline right to the minister, we have to consider that this is not impartial. It is not transparent. It is not objective, and it is not fair. It needs to be independent because we don't know all of the things that could come along here.

I think recognizing that this bill has started out to be something that would not be controversial, you would think, and that people would support the idea of looking at credentials of people coming into this province—certainly, we believe in being fair and treating everybody equally. We need immigrants in our province to gain employment so they can be productive in our society, and their families could flourish and be part of our multicultural mosaic. We recognize that, as do the regulated professions.

But what has been particularly controversial in the bill is the lack of consultation, the lack of willingness on the minister's part to be conciliatory and to look at some of the suggestions that were brought forward, both from our side of the House

and from the regulated professions and the people at committee, Mr. Speaker. So this has caused a problem with the regulated professions that are under this legislation. I understand there will be more coming in the future, so we will keep an eye on what this legislation does and how it will affect future organizations.

With that, I'll close my comments and offer the floor to my colleagues. Thank you.

\* (15:30)

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I'm somewhat inclined to give the floor back to the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) as she articulates so well in terms of some of the problems with Bill 19. Yet the principle of this particular bill is that of a positive nature. We acknowledge that right at the beginning. Having said that, there are issues with regard to the committee and what took place in committee; for example, the lack of consultations, as has been pointed out from the Member for Morris. The issue of not doing this consulting, we even had the government bring forward amendments, and those amendments could have been more as the Member for Morris had pointed out. But in order, possibly, to save face, the minister didn't want to overdo it and only accepted two amendments. There were other amendments that could have been brought forward that would have made it a whole lot better, Bill 19, and I want to spend a bit of time on that particular issue.

When I look at Bill 19, Mr. Speaker, what I see, in part, is a bill that had so much potential to be able to help our immigrant community that had skills from abroad, that are now living in our fine province, the opportunity that could have been there to ensure that those skills would have been better recognized. I had opportunity the other day in the form of amendments that we brought forward—I think it could have been the very first time where I worked with a Conservative MLA to bring forward an amendment that would have seen a change in legislation. That's very, very rarely done. I would suggest to you that the minister should have noted that fact in itself, where you've got two members of different political parties coming together saying that we could make this bill even better by allowing for the passage of this particular amendment.

Mr. Speaker, the minister to this day has not given any real explanation as to why it is that that amendment shouldn't pass. I find that unfortunate. I would have thought that the minister would have



been much more sympathetic to the needs of recognizing the skills that people bring over to our province and how those skills are quite often underutilized. The idea of having an independent, a truly independent individual, a fairness officer, was supported not only by political parties in this Chamber but ultimately I believe by interest groups and individuals alike. You know, the minister had the opportunity. She listened in the committee stage where we had associations like the Law Society of Manitoba, the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists. We had private individuals that commented on the bill, and three of those indicated very clearly that having this person appointed by the Legislature would be more effective than having the minister make an appointment.

Mr. Speaker, there are even some concerns that the minister already knows who it is that she would like to see put into that particular spot. I believe that there's a huge difference in having this individual report to the minister as opposed to the Legislature. We have seen how important that role of reporting to the Legislature has been, how it has been so much better for things such as the Child Advocate's office, the provincial Ombudsman's office, the Auditor's office, Elections Manitoba's office. It really emphasizes how important the issue is, when you would have had this commissioner appointed by the Legislature. It would have depoliticized it to the nth degree. It would have provided more teeth. This individual could have been a stronger advocate. It could have had more opportunity to take down some of the barriers.

Mr. Speaker, I look to my New Democratic colleagues from across the floor and suggest to them that, in fact, they have not done the immigrant community a favour by ignoring and not supporting the amendment that was being jointly brought forward to this Legislature that would have made this fairness commissioner more apolitical.

Mr. Speaker, my intentions are, when I am provided the opportunity, to point out to members of the public that the government did make a mistake here. It's somewhat, ultimately, unfortunate that the minister, even though he still has that opportunity, even at this very last minute, to make a change because, with leave of the Chamber, we can do wonderful things if the Legislature saw the merits for doing so.

I would appeal to the minister to do the right thing in regard to this particular bill and to allow for

that commissioner to be reporting to the Legislature, to be hired by the Legislature as opposed to this minister. This minister likes to believe that she can have the credit for everything related to immigration in the province of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. Truth be known, this minister has dropped the ball on several occasions. If it wasn't for a Liberal-Conservative agreement in regard to the Provincial Nominee Program, we wouldn't have much for immigration to our province. The reality is that, even with this program, the minister still hasn't done the work that's necessary to make this program even that much more effective.

With those few words, Mr. Speaker, as I say, the principle of the bill we support. We would have liked to have seen those amendments pass. We're disappointed in this minister and this Premier (Mr. Doer) for not recognizing the value that immigrants have to offer to our province by allowing for this independent fairness commissioner to truly be independent and report directly to this Legislature. Thank you.

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

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 19, The Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act.

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

#### **Bill 20—The Planning Amendment Act (Deemed Single Operations)**

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford), that Bill 20, The Planning Amendment Act (Deemed Single Operations), reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman):** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to put a few notes on the record for this third reading of Bill 20, The Planning Amendment Act (Deemed Single Operations).

Again, we were not in favour of this bill when it came through second readings and into committee. We see it as not necessary legislation. It's meant to close an alleged loophole and the loophole hasn't happened since this one particular case. So we really

don't see the purpose of doing this. However, it seems to be the government will to continue to push forward with this and, such as it is, we'll make a few comments on it.

I just want to reiterate that Manitoba's livestock sector contributes in excess of \$1.5 billion, that's B, as in billion with a B, annually to the provincial economy. When you have regressive legislation like this that comes forward to repress the industry, it's very unfortunate.

\* (15:40)

We believe that Manitoba farmers are good stewards of the land, and they take the impact of their operations on the environment very seriously. Just this morning, I sat in on a meeting with the Farm Stewardship Association of Manitoba, which is an arm's-length group that does environmental farm plans or oversees environmental farm plans on a voluntary basis. They've already completed some 5,000 environmental farm plans; that's 5,000 farms and I believe it's something like eight million acres that are included under this. You don't need to force farmers into being good stewards of the land; this is what they do naturally. Pieces of legislation like this just further take away their ability to do their job effectively. Producers do this because they know it's protecting their soil and their water resources. It's providing dividends for future generations of producers. Any farmer out there will tell you that you don't look at the land just for today; you look at it for the long-term and for future generations. It's something that this government doesn't seem to understand.

We appreciate the efforts of producers to adapt to today's rapidly evolving environment. Certainly, the more regulations, the more difficult it becomes to do this. It's difficult to be able to address the regulations now because it's like a constantly moving target. We have manure management, phosphorus regulations, water quality management zones, planning requirements, and these just constantly change.

The departments of Conservation, Water Stewardship, Intergovernmental Affairs are all mixed up. They don't seem to be able to get their work together in order to effectively work together so that producers know what the regulations really are. Subsequently, they just seem to bring in policies without science behind them and just with their public agenda, trying to make it look like they really are being effective.

This government is very good at bureaucratic overkill when it comes to enacting certain regulations and certain bills and regulations. Bill 20 is just another example of this. It's more regulations, more bills that we just don't need. As I said, this bill is intended to close a so-called loophole. We're still looking for where that loophole might even happen again. But they don't have any long-term plan and it's always reactionary government here. It's never proactive; it's only reactive.

Certainly, we think that this government could do a much better job if they just went into producer education. Again, I refer back to the Farm Stewardship Association. There is no financial reward for doing this; it's just good stewardship. Why doesn't the provincial government get more involved in this instead of trying to beep out everybody with regulations and further overkill?

In Bill 20, we brought up the one clause in here, it said category of livestock. We did get somewhat of an answer to it but we're really not happy with that. It looks like category of livestock will effectively shut down small producers, and it just seems to be very strange that, for instance, the Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) is such a strong advocate of this bill and yet it's going to be to the detriment of family farms. That's the ones that he constantly professes to be supporting. This bill will, in effect, help to kill the family farm, whatever that is.

**An Honourable Member:** Oh, you don't know?

**Mr. Pedersen:** Well, family farms are a little different now, Mr. Speaker. It used to be three goats and a pig qualified as a family farm, but I know of very large operations that are family farms and they certainly don't qualify as your traditional category.

This government just is going to basically regulate every aspect of farming as we know it today. I was certainly interested to note that in committee hearing when the Member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady) wanted to take a slam at the paramedics and was very adamant about the union—you had to be unionized in order to be there. Well, I'm sure that she would like to see all farm workers unionized, too, and that would be to the detriment—well, some people would cheer that, but if you had anything to do with farm, you would know that that would actually cost more money and it would actually be to the detriment of the workers. They're very well paid now and very good working conditions, and unions will only suck that union dues out and they'll be farther behind.

This bill and the subsequent regulations that are coming in will continue to make this just more costly for farmers to navigate through the web of red tape dealing with departments. The Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs yesterday, with great fanfare, signed the Neepawa Area Planning District yesterday, only to come and tell me afterwards that it's been sitting on his desk for 10 days, and I know, from the Neepawa group telling me, that it's been in the department for the last six months. So now we're going to pass more regulations and it's going to become even more difficult. Maybe the hog industry after today will look at going to Saskatchewan because as the green movement moves east—moving out of Saskatchewan after tonight, they'll find a much more conducive farming industry in Saskatchewan and we're even going to lose our farmers to Saskatchewan. I can speak from experience from that because I actually had a farmer who was looking after some cows for me, and he sold his farm in Manitoba and moved to Saskatchewan. My goodness, we're really not doing very good in here. It's really sad.

I just wish this government would look at farmers as being the asset to the province that they really are, that they would just stop trying to regulate farmers out of business and look at it for what we really do. We produce food; they are good stewards of the land, and we need to appreciate that and we wish this government could consider this, that they really do a good job.

Mr. Speaker, we are opposed to this bill. This is not necessary, and the sooner that they would just not pass this bill it would be much better for all of Manitoba. Thank you.

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs):** I just want to put on the record that I'm quite disappointed that the member opposite used his speech to make kind of ridiculous comments about the Member for Kirkfield Park (Ms. Blady) and another committee. I know they don't like having an NDP MLA in Kirkfield Park, but I do think that this is a matter of serious concern.

I just want to put on the record, too, by the way, that, Mr. Speaker, this is another version of the Chicken Little, sky-is-falling view that the Conservatives have had with each and every water bill that we brought in place, each and every planning bill that we brought in place. To suggest this is going to lead to the end of farming as we know it—this is about correcting a loophole. We have

seen a situation where this has occurred. It basically says that people in the surrounding community should have the ability to go conditional use when we have two operations, and this is within the confines of a quarter section. You know, if it's under the same ownership, clearly the member opposite would be in favour of some kind of public support.

But I want to put on the record that, earlier today, in Question Period, they expressed concern about Lake Winnipeg water quality, et cetera, and we're at 3:50 in the afternoon and they're already back to what they've done over the last several years; they've voted against The Water Protection Act; they voted against the ability to have proper licensed drainage in this province, and now they're going to vote against fixing a loophole that has occurred.

\* (15:50)

By the way, I would suggest the members opposite get out of the 19th century and recognize that a lot of people in rural Manitoba and a lot of producers are quite willing to take on the challenge, and they are doing that, Mr. Speaker. This is not punitive. This is about dealing with a loophole that prevented local citizens from having a say. In a previous situation, it has happened. We want to make sure it doesn't happen again.

This is not going to lead to the sky is falling. The member knows that he got a clear clarification in terms of the cow-calf operations, in terms of what's happening there. You know, again, they can fearmonger all they want. This is about a very common-sense, logical planning part of the process. There was a problem before with this. We're responding to it, and it's about making sure that rural Manitobans have a say over their own future. Maybe they think that rural Manitobans should not have a say through the conditional-use process when you have two operations owned by the same company within 800 metres, with an 800-metre buffer.

You know what? I would suggest they talk to people in areas of the province where this has happened. I look forward to the Agriculture critic, who should know in terms of the Interlake—because if they vote against this, clearly what they're doing again is they are saying: When push comes to shove, the Tories aren't concerned about planning. They're not concerned about environmental protection, and they're not concerned about the many rural Manitobans who think they should have a say over the future of their own communities.

Their choice. We'll see how they follow through because despite all the rhetoric, in committee they voted—they didn't vote against it. They let the whole bill through. We'll see. I'll be watching to see how they vote because the rhetoric is great. Let's see where they stand. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, just a few words here. The MLA for Thompson's (Mr. Ashton) rhetoric is getting carried away with himself and the importance of this bill. The concern here is that this could really be done at a municipal level without having to have this provincial regulation.

It is also an issue of why is it 800 metres and not 900 metres or 1,000 metres or 700 metres. This is sort of an arbitrary number and it's going to catch—*[interjection]* Yeah. I mean, the reality, Mr. Speaker, is that people are going to apply for conditional uses for big operations which are now 850 metres apart. I'm not sure that this is a convincing or useful step forward, quite frankly, and in spite of the major rhetoric and the vociferousness with which he presented it, this legislation does not appear to be as strong or as useful as the MLA for Thompson has put forward.

So we raise some cautions here and we think that the rhetoric of the MLA for Thompson is rather overblown. The intent here may be reasonable, but the actual result of this is probably going to be far short of the overblown rhetoric from the MLA for Thompson.

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Speaker, just a few comments on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague the Member for Carman (Mr. Pedersen), I think, laid out the reasons why some of the points on this bill are objectionable in terms of the treatment of producers. Now, I just listened to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), who, I'm sure, has a lot of livestock producers in his constituency and speaks eloquently about his experience with those producers. Perhaps he should get out of that environment and learn about what producers really have to do.

Mr. Speaker, the only way that we survive in rural Manitoba is by being able to pass along one farm to another or perhaps jointly, father and son, operate a farm that is going to be viable. As the pressures get to farmers today, with low cattle prices, with the rising Canadian dollar and with the closed

borders between Canada and the United States for certain livestock, those challenges are even greater. We don't need a minister putting more hurdles in front of producers who are out there today.

Yes, there are reasonable regulations that should be put into place, but, right in my own back yard, I have witnessed where his police come into yards and begin to harass, if you like, producers who are trying to do their utmost to ensure that not only do they do an effective job and an efficient job in producing livestock, but, indeed, are good stewards and continue to be good stewards of the environment.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think there are reasons why we should put a question mark over some of the amendments that have been introduced by the minister, but we understand that good reason should prevail when you're applying regulations or legislation to people who are trying to not only make a living but indeed do feed society in general. Thank you.

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, I'm familiar with the operation that brought this bill forward, and if there is a problem with a particular operation, they have the expertise at their disposal in order to deal with that particular issue. What they're doing is penalizing all the Manitoba producers by one loophole that's been supposedly taken advantage of, and whenever that happens, they go back to the municipality and deal with that particular issue. They don't shut down all of Manitoba as a result of it.

The Member for Carman did talk about FSAM, and I want to put on the record, there are 9,245 applications received to date of which 7,784 have been approved, 603 projects have been cancelled, and 355 were rejected. The remainder are waiting for approval pending site inspection for environmental assessment. Payments total \$14,256,000, of which 3,210 are completed projects. Outstanding commitments to date are \$24.7 million. The total encumbrances and outstanding commitments experienced to date, \$38.9 million.

Mr. Speaker, also, the top five categories that we talk about when we're talking about environment and how useful these farmers are in trying to look after their own land: improving crop systems, \$11,900,000; production of waste management, \$9.8 million; wintering site management, \$4.3 million; manure handling storage, \$2.7 million; relocation of livestock confinement facilities, \$1.7 million.

Mr. Speaker, I know that the government's trying to do what they can to penalize our farmers by regulations and bills, and we certainly feel that the farmers are the best stewards of the land. We've said that. We'll stand by that. We know there are 5,000 producers out there that have voluntarily signed up for the environmental farm plan. There are eight million acres of which Manitoba can be very proud of that are in the voluntary environmental plan, which we see growing each and every year.

What I would suggest is that the government would take the leadership. This program does end on December 31. It's a voluntary program, audited by themselves, by the producers, which I think is doing a wonderful job. If they would take that energy and spend it on trying to encourage the federal government to carry on with this and their commitment, if in kind, no financial support but in services, in trade for that, for their percentage of, I believe, 30 percent, the rest is picked up by the farmers in some \$70 million since 2005.

But I do know there are a number of farmers out there that are great stewards. Why penalize the whole industry because of one or two? They have the police force that they need at their disposal in order to work with these environmental issues, and certainly, if there's somebody that broke the law, we're certainly standing beside whoever has done that, and we will continue to advocate for our farmers and our producers without heavy regulations and bills hampering the livelihood of those producers.

So, with that, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**An Honourable Member:** Question.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question before the House is Bill 20, The Planning Amendment Act (Deemed Single Operations).

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

\* (16:00)

**Bill 21—The Housing and Renewal Corporation Amendment Act (Fund for Housing Revitalization)**

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ashton), that Bill 21, The Housing and Renewal Corporation Amendment Act (Fund for Housing Revitalization);

Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'habitation et de rénovation (fonds destiné à la revitalisation des logements), reported from the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

***Motion presented.***

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I do want to say a few words about Bill 21, The Housing and Renewal Corporation Amendment Act. I think when we look back, this bill was first introduced well over a year ago by the then-Minister responsible for Housing and I was the critic at that point. But, looking back over this bill and what it was introduced for, it raises a number of serious concerns. Certainly, as we've gone along over the process or the time frame here which is 18 months, we've certainly had a number of concerns raised to us. So we need to have a serious debate about this bill, which we have been doing.

The bill basically allows money that is the profits from the Waverley West development to be channelled to inner-city housing, Mr. Speaker. Of course, on the surface, that doesn't sound wrong, but when you look seriously at this legislation and review it and listen to the comments that people make as time goes along and as other things develop and as new information comes forward, you realize there are a number of serious issues here.

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

Well, first of all, we have to ask the question, though: why is this legislation necessary? This government is basically putting in legislation giving itself permission to give itself money. That just really doesn't make sense. I mean, you don't need legislation. They don't need legislation to take the money that they make and put it in another area. They can just do that simply through general revenue, Mr. Acting Speaker.

So you've got to say, what's going on? What's going on here? It's just smoke and mirrors. They already have the ability to channel the money from Waverley West into the inner city, so why do they have to put it in legislation? Well, you have to put it in legislation if you're trying to make an impression. The impression that they're trying to create here is to deflect criticism. They want to deflect the criticism that they would receive by doing a huge development on the outskirts of Winnipeg which would be as big as the city of Brandon. They knew they would get criticized by environmentalists, their

supporters, about this urban sprawl. So, to deflect from that criticism, they said, but we'll do this, but don't worry, because we'll take the profits and we'll invest in the inner city. They didn't need to have a legislation to do that, Mr. Acting Speaker, but they want to create smoke and mirrors over this.

Mr. Acting Speaker, you know, it brings into question, I mean, here we—the minister that proposed this legislation was the minister responsible for what went on in the Aiyawin Corporation, in a housing corporation in the Department of Housing. It was a mess. The department was in total chaos. Then she's the same minister that proposed, well, we'll just take the profits from Waverley West and we'll direct those to inner-city housing. Again, I said, you don't need legislation to take money to pay yourself.

What on earth is this government doing in the development business anyway? They don't have a very good track record. We want to talk about the Seven Oaks development?

**An Honourable Member:** Debacle.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Debacle. Well, and you know, there were two sets of books—*[interjection]* Mr. Acting Speaker, the government doesn't have any business being in the development industry. They're in a conflict-of-interest situation. They're the developer; they're paying themselves; they call the contracts. They're putting themselves in a conflict-of-interest situation right there. Certainly, development is risky. So, when you channel—

**An Honourable Member:** They're in the right business.

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Well, as my colleague from Springfield says, they're in the right business.

But, you know, we have to think seriously about this and say, it's a risky thing, and if you take Manitobans' money—and make no mistake about it, it's Manitobans' money; it's not money that belongs to this government. So, when they take the money and risk it, they put the money that belongs to Manitobans at risk, and we already know that there are a lot of problems going on in the Manitoba Housing Authority.

We know that there was an independent review called to look at the serious problems that were going on there and that was right after, as I might say, Mr. Acting Speaker, after Estimates last year when we had some information that we questioned the government on as to where is all the money in

Manitoba Housing because there's no money. You're having to borrow, using The Loan Act authority when there should have been money there. It wasn't only a matter of four days later that we got a leaked Cabinet document that told us that right now they were going to call a review into the Manitoba Housing Authority to see what was going wrong. Now, we know that this report has been done, and we also know it was extended beyond the time limit of six months because, well, I guess we have to assume there were a lot more problems there than anybody suspected.

So we know that there are problems in Housing. We've always known that this has been a chaotic department, Mr. Acting Speaker, but this report that took so long to do, we still don't know what's in it. We know that there are problems. We know that there are problems with the flow of money within that department. Why would we ever allow this government to take money and create a slush fund for the Manitoba Housing Renewal Corporation when we already know that there's a problem there? You would think that you'd want to find what the problem was and fix that before any more money flowed.

Of course, we know what their track record is when they knew that money was flowing through Aiyawin and it wasn't accounted for. What was their answer to that? We'll give them more. Instead of finding out the problem, they just decided to perpetuate the problem, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, the deficiencies in this legislation, I've outlined some of them, but some of the other things I think that come up in this legislation is, when they talk about areas of need, that's pretty subjective. It's not really clearly spelled out what areas of need are. So, when you talk about taking money from one development project and putting it in areas of need, well, what does areas of need mean? It's pretty subjective.

The other very problematic thing is that organizations are allowed to draw down from this account before the money's actually there. Now, that's like anybody going and taking a loan out of the bank before they've made any money to put money in. That's risky. That's risky because we all know that, in any kind of land development projects, there's risk involved, and to allow money to flow out of a fund before it actually flows in is not being very accountable with the public's money.

\* (16:10)

*Ms. Marilyn Brick, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

We also know that the money that's generated from projects that the government owns or land that the government owns has to be used within the same municipality. So, if it's money that's generated in the municipality of Winnipeg, it has to be used in the municipality of Winnipeg. So this money does nothing for rural communities, Madam Acting Speaker, unless the government owns land in rural municipalities.

Madam Acting Speaker, we certainly would have thought that the Member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick) and the Member for Fort Garry (Ms. Irvin-Ross) might have had some concerns about the Waverley West issues and certainly would love to hear them stand up for their communities and speak in opposition and in support of our position on this bill, because we know that there's going to be huge impacts on schools, on infrastructure, on roads, services, emergency services. These communities that border this Waverley West, we certainly would have thought that they would have more to say, would have had a say to their government as to how it would impact on their communities, but we have heard nothing from them.

I was astounded when the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) asked the question of the Minister of Housing (Mr. Mackintosh) if he would withdraw this bill, and he stood in his place and waved the bill around acting like he was some kind of windmill or something. He was flip-flopping this bill around. We certainly know he has the wind to drive the windmill, but, really, Madam Acting Speaker, he's trying to say, oh, you're flip-flopping the bill; you support the bill; you don't support the bill.

But, you know, Madam Acting Speaker, we on this side of the House take the democratic process very seriously. When people come to us with new information, and they come and present to committee and bring their thoughts and ideas forward and their concerns as to what this government is doing, we take those very seriously. We allow ourselves to be persuaded by Manitobans and what they have to say, unlike this government, who is so arrogant that they just go flip-flop, flip-flop with a piece of legislation in this House. In saying that, in doing that, their arrogance is saying to Manitobans: We don't care, because Big Brother government knows best and we don't have to listen to you.

That is shameful, Madam Acting Speaker, when the government will not listen to what Manitobans have to say. We listened. We were persuaded by Manitobans and their concerns. They didn't, and that is shameful. That is why we have a problem with this bill, because of the information that has been brought forward to us, the new information and certainly in light of the ongoing—or probably completed by now but we don't have the report—KPMG report on Manitoba Housing, which has to have a lot of information in there which the government does want us to see and does not want the public to see because they have not released it yet.

We think we should get that report. We should have a look at it and not until we're absolutely assured that there's nothing wrong in Manitoba Housing should any money flow into a special slush fund that can be then distributed to people who could apply for that money before the money is even coming in. That's NDP math and that's just bizarre. It's just wrong.

So, with that, Madam Acting Speaker, I, regrettably, cannot support this bill. I pass this on to my colleagues. Thank you.

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** I want to put a few things on the record in regard to Bill 21, The Housing and Renewal Corporation Amendment Act.

I know that the government has a piece of property here that they're going to be taking advantage of to build a significant slush fund. We found out that the Seven Oaks School Division was not one that was a great development and certainly mismanaged. We certainly know that the government's not very good at that. They shouldn't be in the housing business, but we do know that when they do look at a number of lots that they're talking about on this 1,200 acres they're talking about is that we've got to look outside the Perimeter. They're talking about low-income housing within the city of Winnipeg. There's a number of those communities. I've got a community in my area that has been advocating for a personal care home for a number of our seniors. They're forced to take out roots in other communities because we don't have a personal care home in our particular area where we could be using some of the money for that.

If they're going to make significant thresholds to help people of all Manitoba, which this government quite clearly says from time to time that they're going to govern for all Manitobans, we certainly would appreciate the fact that they would look outside the

Perimeter. This does not happen, and we're certainly disappointed with the fact that the Manitoba Housing Authority has spent more than \$300,000, for example, to eradicate bedbugs, with very limited success. We know there are other issues, housing that's in Winnipeg, housing that's in rural Manitoba that is run down, that's not up to standards, and we know that the crime rate in those particular areas is also significant, Madam Acting Speaker.

We do encourage the government to re-evaluate their position on this bill. I know that we've been accused of flip-flopping on this bill, and we certainly haven't. What we have done is listened to the public, listened to their input, and we have made it very clear on this side of the House we will not be supporting this legislation, Madam Acting Speaker. I do say that the government has the power to carry this bill through, but, having said that, I will encourage the government to look outside the Perimeter, look at rural Manitoba, look at all of Manitoba that needs to be carried through in a way that each and every one of those family members, in fact, will be treated fairly.

So, having said that, I'll let my other colleagues, in fact, I know that some government members would probably like to talk on this particular bill, from St. Norbert and Fort Garry. I'm sure they'll be wanting to put a few things on the record, and Fort Whyte. We will be looking forward to those comments as they come forward because I know that it's going to have a significant impact on their areas as well as others. I look forward to those comments.

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** I was hesitant in standing up. I thought there might be an NDP member that wished to put some comments on the record, supporting their own legislation, or at least giving pause to maybe indicate that they might be willing to revisit some of this.

Madam Acting Speaker, I don't oppose funding inner-city housing. In fact, I think that's a very important issue that we have to address in this city. It's been something that has been known for a long time that we have to do a lot to look at that issue, but what I do object to is the daffy detour in how the NDP want to make this happen. Daffy detours seem to be the order of the day with this NDP government in looking at how they're going to move towards accomplishing some of the goals that they have put in front of themselves.

This certainly seems an odd way to go about doing something that this NDP government has had a

long time to address, and I think, because of their failure to do it, they're now looking at trying to find some alternative way to address it without actually being transparent and accountable with the funds that will be flowing into this way of funding inner-city housing.

Certainly, the government does not need legislation to do what they want to do in funding inner-city housing, but more recently, we have also seen the government bring in legislation to actually develop a literacy strategy. Again, they didn't need legislation to bring in a literacy strategy. It seems to be something that is becoming a little bit more common with this government right now is to look at legislation as a way of making some of these things happen where all that is needed is some good thinking, some innovative thinking and some strategizing and hard work without having to bring in legislation to move down that road. So it's disappointing, in fact, that once the legislation has been debated and went to committee, it is disappointing that this government has not listened to the presentations that have been made at committee and even after, as they have had more of an opportunity to hear from the public and to hear from the public through the comments that we are bringing forward on their behalf, too.

\* (16:20)

So, while the Minister of Housing the other day certainly seemed to have fun grandstanding in here about the issue, it really is unfortunate that he chose to do that rather than looking more carefully at this and actually having a chance to revisit the bill. You know, he likes to portray it that we are flip-flopping on the issue when, in fact, quite contrary to that, Madam Acting Speaker, we have been listening to people, and we do believe that this is legislation that is not something that the government should be moving forward with.

When we do bring the public into committees—and Manitoba has a great opportunity in the way we have set up that process—it really is a charade when they're not listened to. I think there have been a lot of people that have come before us in this Legislature, and they have left in the last number of years feeling that they have been taken advantage of, that they have brought forward concerns and many times their concerns are totally ignored; they have not been listened to. It is too bad in this case that the government wasn't willing to do that and to rethink the legislation, even after numerous presentations



had been made at committee, all of which oppose this legislation. We are also disappointed that despite warnings from this side of the House, the government is still going to forge ahead with unnecessary legislation.

I would like to take a few minutes right now to talk about a number of the serious problems with this legislation. I do hope that the members for Fort Garry (Ms. Irvin-Ross) and for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick) will rise in their seats and address this issue in the House because, indeed, this is going to affect their areas quite substantively as this whole area of Waverley West starts to become developed. We already know that there are problems with schools in the area. In fact, in that whole area of Waverley West, there isn't even a high school right now.

Well, wouldn't it make sense that some of the funding that is generated out of that area that is being developed would indeed go to fund some of the local issues that need to be addressed like schools, like infrastructure, like emergency services—money that could be put into the roads. I recently read a small article in the newspaper that talked about the fact that a high school in Lindenwoods is not even going to be looked at for at least five years. That is very, very disconcerting considering already, right now today, we have a challenge with the need of a high school in that area. Yet this government has already indicated and the Minister of Education has been on the record as indicating that, well, yes, we know we need one, but it's just not happening right now.

Members of their caucus have certainly indicated similar things. When we have an area that is so desperately in need of a high school and will be in desperate need of proper roads, and whether we start to look at Waverley as needing an overpass or an underpass in order to deal with the already significant traffic challenges, what is going to happen when we add more homes into the area and we add more traffic? It will be substantively more. As it's been pointed out, we are looking at an area of the size of Brandon that is going to be put into there. We know the trains are already a major, major problem in that area. So what is going to happen? That is a huge capital cost that needs to be addressed, and they are soon going to have to look at what they are going to do to address the stoppage of traffic that happens already on Waverley as trains are going through, and there is a huge backlog of traffic already. But, instead, what we're going to see is funds taken from that area and put into an authority

that is going to have the mandate to direct funds to inner-city housing.

Well, Madam Acting Speaker, that is troublesome. It is troublesome on many different levels. It's troublesome first of all because it is smoke and mirrors. What the government is basically doing is, through legislation, setting up a slush fund so that they can deal with pet projects; so that groups that want to come and ask them for money are going to be able to access money based on criteria we're still not sure about because it has not been clearly articulated what that criteria is going to be. So it becomes, what is an area of need? Because that definition is certainly vague at best. It really allows this government to play a lot of politics with where this type of funding is going to go, what reach is this type of funding going to have, and who gets to make those decisions.

This is disturbing, Madam Acting Speaker, because that is not transparent, and because it's not transparent, it is going to be difficult, I think, in many instances, to follow the money, to find out exactly what is happening and where that money is going to be spent and who's made the decisions for that to happen.

It's obviously that this legislation is politically motivated, and it was designed specifically by this government to deflect from the criticism they have been facing on Waverley West.

The profits, certainly, from the sale of that land we know are going to be directed to this fund. It would make sense, and I would think the members for St. Norbert and Fort Garry should be up there championing the fact, that these funds might be better spent in a much more transparent way, and urge their government instead to fund inner-city housing the way inner-city housing should be funded, and that is through the government, through their strategies, through the department, instead of through a political slush fund.

We've seen time and again what happens when this government has acted as both developer and regulator of these lands. When I was the Education critic, we certainly were able to uncover a lot of what had been happening in the Seven Oaks School Division. That took an enormous amount of research, and that took an enormous amount of digging into the various documents, legal documents and land documents, and that was not something that one could readily identify. When we look at what can happen in this situation, we know that this is not

necessarily going to be something that is going to be very easy to track. As the Provincial Council of Women pointed out in their presentation to committee, this is a clear conflict of interest. Indeed, Madam Acting Speaker, that is, in fact, a significant concern for me as well.

We are going to be allocating funding from this area into a department that, essentially, right now, is in chaos, where there is a review going on, where there has been some concern as to what has been happening within the department. We are going to see money now funded into a department that many would say is in chaos, that perhaps has been derailed in some instances from where they should be. When we see an NDP government get involved as a developer, we know that there is potential for scandal and mismanagement. We've seen it, and the fears are that we may be seeing it happen again.

\* (16:30)

When we have a government that has a proven track record of mismanagement, it makes it very, very difficult for us to turn around and support this bill. I wish that as many groups have come forward and pointed that out to government, that there would have been more attention paid by this government towards some of these highlights that have been brought forward to them.

These have been red flags that have been raised, again, by groups that have been coming in, but there have been red flags already that the government should have woken up to from within their own government. We've seen the Aiyawin situation. We've seen Hydra House. We've seen Seven Oaks School Division. We've seen Crocus, the Burntwood Regional Health Authority, floodway expansion. We've seen red flags in these areas, and we've seen a government that has ignored them. Then we have seen the kind of chaos and major challenges that have now been put forward because of all of these areas. Instead now we have had people that are coming forward on this issue and waving some red flags in front of government, and, in fact, this government is not very good at paying attention to them.

When we have seen our taxpayer funds that have been misspent, when we have seen conflicts of interest that have been allowed to continue, when we have seen this government ignore red flags, when we have seen no accountability in the Housing Department because this government has refused to

hold anybody accountable, that causes major concern with this particular legislation.

So we will not support this legislation. We have had an opportunity and we've listened and we've studied the issue, and we know that this is not the appropriate way for this government to go. It, particularly, is not transparent and it is not accountable with respect to the Waverley West development. It's been troublesome to see the minister duck and weave on this issue especially related to cost and revenues. When we see that happening already, it just continues to wave that red flag and continues to wave our concerns. When we have had so many funding scandals, we're not going to sit back and support legislation that could very well be the precursor for another funding scandal in this province.

You know, as it's been mentioned before, land development is a very risky business. It certainly is, and it shouldn't be something that the government is getting themselves into. What they should be focussing on instead is the housing stock in Manitoba that is in a terrible state of disrepair.

A number of years ago, I had sent a letter to the former Minister of Housing. I sent her a letter outlining some of the problems with one of my areas. I went into the Manitoba Housing units, and I took pictures. I took pictures of mould following sewer backups that was never properly addressed. I took pictures of cracks in foundations and in the flooring. I took pictures of electrical wires hanging loose on walls that we would never tolerate in our own homes. These are Manitoba Housing units that have children in them, little children, and here on the walls, not even in a box, but you've got all these electrical wires hanging out there. We saw eaves troughs that were never cleaned that led to all kinds of problems with the homes. We've seen houses with cracks in them, again because of problems that were just allowed to fester. We saw linoleum that was lifting off the floor, again, because this government allowed these units to get into such a state of disrepair. We saw land in front of the housing units caving in dramatically.

Again, we sent all these pictures to the Minister of Housing of the day and nobody did anything substantive with any of those units. We have a number of them in my constituency, and I think that's what this Minister of Housing (Mr. Mackintosh) should be doing to address their job properly, is look at what their job should be and do that instead of

trying to find these devious ways, these daffy detours of trying to find ways to grab more money so that they can get at some of their pet projects.

The other day in the paper, we saw, again, continuing infestation of bed bugs. That's what the Minister of Housing should be focussing on, how to address these health situations in Manitoba Housing rather than trying to get into doing what they're doing with this legislation.

Our housing stock is not safe. We've got some Manitoba Housing in Charleswood where a few years ago a man had his hand cut off with a machete. We have been told there's prostitution going on there. There's major drug dealing. The cocaine dealer sits in the local pub and is dealing cocaine. Or right next to the Manitoba Housing that same drug dealer later in the day is behind the store that sells eyeglasses. The drug dealer is out there.

This is all happening in Manitoba Housing—Manitoba Housing that was set up in the first place for seniors until an NDP government decided to change things a little bit, and now the seniors in there don't feel at all safe. People are scared to answer their doors, and this government has been so slow to address those types of issues. They have failed a lot of these low-income people that are living in these Manitoba Housing units, and now they are shamefully trying to do a grab here of money to set up a little slush fund so that they can look at some of their own little pet projects when they can't even do what they should already be doing, and that's following the mandate of their department now.

So it's very, very disturbing, Madam Acting Speaker, to see what is happening, and so, based on the flaws that are in these legislations, based on the vagueness built into this legislation, the lack of accountability, looking at the Waverley West issues, it is very, very difficult to support this legislation, and I will not be supporting the legislation.

I encourage the members for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick) and Fort Garry (Ms. Irvin-Ross) to get up and speak against it, as well, because it definitely is going to impact their area, and their constituents deserve better than a silent voice from them in this House. They should be speaking up on behalf of their constituents and speaking against legislation that is not needed and, in fact, is probably going to lead to some problems down the road.

So, with those few comments, Madam Acting Speaker, I just do want to say that, based on all of

those issues, this is not something that I can support, and I appreciate the opportunity to put those comments on the record. Thank you.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Acting Speaker, there are two reasons why it is that I have a difficult time in supporting this bill and, in fact, will not support the bill.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

The first reason is that, unlike the government of the day, I recognize the value of non-profit housing and working in our older communities to develop housing initiatives that will actually make a difference on an annual basis. I don't want to leave the development of good initiatives, our inner cities, and other communities to be dependent on money coming in from so-called profits of the future. You are either committed or you are not, to improving programming and providing services to non-profit housing groups, associations, or housing initiatives, or you are not. I find it very difficult to believe that the government has not made the type of commitment that's necessary in order to improve the housing stock.

Mr. Speaker, I'll focus my attention on an area where I'm most familiar with because, as I've pointed out in the past, I am an MLA, a very proud and privileged MLA, from the North End of Winnipeg, and I drive through it every day. The housing condition and the housing stock, as I drive from this building to the community in which I live, has not improved.

\* (16:40)

This government has not been progressive in its thinking, in its actions to the degree it could have been, and the best example I could give to that would be the whole Gilbert Park complex. The last time there was a Minister of Housing that did something positive in Gilbert Park was actually Jack Reimer. Jack Reimer was the last minister that actually did things in Gilbert Park that had had a major difference. Now, the government of the day can say, well, we've thrown, now, money in terms of renovations. Yes, they have put some renovations into Gilbert Park since they've taken office, but I'll suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, more important than the renovations is assisting and helping people that live in the community take ownership, and that is something that Jack Reimer recognized and this government has failed to recognize since it's been into office.

So I would suggest to the government that it does not own the issue of the, the moral issues of trying to assist and help people out of situations that they are in today, that it's more than just throwing money at a situation or at a problem. It's about helping people getting in there, and I can tell you that I've had more positive experiences with Jack Reimer than I have had with the NDP administration in regard to non-profit housing programming.

So I would encourage this current minister—and the current minister, in fairness, hasn't been Minister of Housing that long—I would encourage him to do a better job at trying to come up with programs and initiatives that will have a real impact. That's one of the reasons why it is I do not support this bill, Mr. Speaker.

The other reason is that, you know, you're talking several million dollars and what is ultimately the reason for the government bringing in this bill, a bill that's not necessary. MHRC has the capability or the capacity to be able to do exactly what this bill is purporting to do, so why is the government doing it? It's doing it because it wants to try to send a message, a public perception. It wants its minions of spin doctors to be able to say that the government wants to re-funnel money from suburbs into inner city.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there are suburban MLAs. There are communities that I represent that one would classify as suburban. Suburban MLAs have needs, too. I'm sure the Member for Southdale (Ms. Selby) would talk about some of those needs in our suburban communities. I would think that the Member for Fort Garry (Ms. Irvin-Ross) or the Member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick) would talk about some of those needs, and if they were in tune with their constituents, they would find out that those needs are very real, and that the way in which you are going to address many of those needs is by financial support, whether that financial support is driven from the private sector or from the government sector. The last thing that suburban needs require is a government to reach their dirty paws in and grab money out of those communities. Those communities need those finances, whether it's new schools, whether it's rapid transit, whether it's their own infrastructure.

I look at it, and from a point of view that—the nice thing about elections is they do come, and there is an opportunity for future candidates. And you know, I trust and I hope that future Liberal candidates will reflect on this government's

performance in regard to why it is that they're doing Waverley West and what their MLAs had to say about taking community money out of those community monies in order to sell a political message. That political message, first and foremost, they should have believed strong enough in, that they would provide annual financing for those programs and initiatives. But, Mr. Speaker, those candidates, those Liberal candidates, will be made aware that the MLAs that represent those suburban seats said nothing, sat on their seat and did nothing.

I see, Mr. Speaker, I'm at six minutes and 30 seconds so I'm going to conclude my remarks on that, and yeah, put forward my opinions and thoughts. Thank you.

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West):** I'd like to thank the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) for leaving a little time for us to speak to this issue, Mr. Speaker. Actually, he was complaining quite bitterly in Question Period not having that same opportunity, so it's really nice that he would extend that opportunity to us.

I can only say, Mr. Speaker, that the description of this bill could be described simply as a goofy concept, and it really is a totally goofy concept.

**An Honourable Member:** Boondoggle.

**Mr. Borotsik:** Well, I'm not going to try boondoggle. That was tried earlier this afternoon and we got tied up in that one, but this is a goofy concept. The concept is, as I understand it, the Province owns some land they're going to develop, and we'll talk about how that's goofy in itself, but they're going to develop this land. They're going to take the money, supposedly profits, which, again, is highly unlikely, and they're going to take those profits and put them into, in this case, inner-city housing in the city of Winnipeg. Now, the reason I say that's goofy is because why in their wisdom did they not say, well, we'll take the profits of that development and we'll put it into, oh, let's say agriculture, or we'll take the profits of that development and, hey, what a rash thought, we'll put it into reduction in taxes that Manitobans are paying, or we'll take the money that we generate from the profits of this development and we'll put it into any numbers of other services and functions that Manitoba requires, from health to education on down the road. But no, no, they're going to take the proposed profits and they're going to put it into inner-city Winnipeg.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the reason why it's a goofy concept is because they already have the opportunity to do whatever it is they wish with the plan for social housing in Winnipeg. Now, the reason why I say it's goofy is because in this legislation it's quite specific. It says that the Province has to own land in that specific municipality to take those profits and put it into social housing. Well, that's fine in Winnipeg with Waverley West. The Province owns the land; therefore, they assume that they're going to generate some profits and they'll put it into the inner city in Winnipeg.

Well, what about those other municipalities, Mr. Speaker, that don't have provincial land, first of all that's owned in those municipalities and, secondly, land that's not going to be developed for housing or for whatever other purpose? So does that mean there's no policy, there's no social housing policy for those communities, and I speak specifically of Brandon because we have some really serious needs with social housing currently in the city of Brandon.

But, if we're not going to have a planned development that's going to generate these horrendous profits that we're going to be able to throw into that, does that mean that the policy of this government now is that Brandon doesn't receive any funding for that social housing? It seems so. It seems so, Mr. Speaker, because we don't have the ability to generate the profits to put into social housing. I would hope beyond hope that realistically this government will say, well, just because we don't have those revenue centres to funnel the money to, we are still going to invest in social housing in those communities.

Brandon has, perhaps, a better advantage because just maybe in the not-too-distant future we could develop if we had to, but there are other communities, smaller communities that don't have any provincial land that's owned, that don't have any opportunity to generate profits to put into their own social housing, and that's wrong. The Minister of Housing (Mr. Mackintosh) should, in fact, have a well-thought-out, well-funded policy that they can put into place in all communities throughout the province of Manitoba. So don't depend on one-off development.

Now, talking about development: So now we're taking money that's not even there. We've got some land. The Province has some land and the first thing that I would say is government should not be involved in any kind of business enterprise.

Whenever government gets involved in private-sector enterprise, taxpayers lose, unless, of course, it's a monopoly situation. Then they can mismanage as much as they want, Mr. Speaker, in a monopoly situation because it doesn't matter. If it's only one place that you go to buy your liquor, then that's it. You can go one place to buy your liquor. It's a monopoly; it doesn't matter. We can make money and everybody's happy. But don't, don't extend that to the private sector. There are private-sector developers out there that know what they're doing.

By the way, there are also land developments that I have experience with that don't make money. This is going to come as a real shock. This may be one of those developments. In fact, if the government's involved with master union contracts, with a business plan that hasn't even been put forward yet, then I would suggest this is a recipe for disaster.

Now, there's my next question. We've got profit that's going to be put into inner-city housing. What happens if they lose money? What happens if this development in the long term loses money? Does that mean you're going to take money out of the social housing, inner-city housing, because now you don't have profit to put into it; you've got loss? Believe me, there is a potential for loss. I have not seen a business plan. I have not seen anything that's gone forward with respect to phase 1, phase 2, phase 3.

How much we heard that there's \$89 million of hard infrastructure dollars. Now, that \$89 million of hard infrastructure dollars in the first place, Mr. Speaker, is in yesterday costs. We know right now that they can't build Wuskwatim for the dollars that they had originally budgeted because costs have gone up substantially; steel's gone up; concrete's gone up. All of your construction labour's gone up. So what they've budgeted, if there is a budget, is already gone out the window. So that \$89 million could, in fact, be a half again more than that. If that's the case, already your profit margins are shrinking quite dramatically. So we don't have a business plan; we don't know what the costs are.

So you're going to put money into the ground right now for something that hopefully this government can develop. By the way, there's also probably going to be a master union contract, I suspect, in the development of this whole government's Waverley West. That in itself is going to drive labour costs up to the point, Mr. Speaker,

where there may not be any profitability. Are you listening to me? There may not be any profitability. You could lose money at this. You're not good at developments. As a matter of fact, I'd like to see the financials of the cottage lots. I would love to see the final numbers of the cottage lots that this government takes such great pride in. I'd like to know exactly what it cost taxpayers to put those cottage lots out. How much is it costing them? By the way, in that development, they wouldn't even deal with the municipalities with respect to effluent. They wouldn't even put their dollars in to make sure the effluent was going to be treated in a proper fashion.

What's stopping them from doing the same thing with Waverley West? Are they going to work with the City of Winnipeg to make sure that the roads are going to be put in properly, that the hydro is going to be put in properly, that the telephone systems are going to be put in properly? Are they going to be making sure that they're going to have to develop Kenaston, I think it is, they're going to have to develop? They're going to have to develop schools; they're going to have to develop more services in that area. That has not even been part of the whole business plan and that's foolish because those are hard infrastructure costs that should be charged directly to the project.

Mr. Speaker, be careful, be very careful with this government developing that land. So now, all of a sudden, we're going to take profits that aren't even there and we're going to move them into inner-city housing. It's wrong; it's absolutely wrong.

In fact, there's also an experience that they wanted to go back and look at, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, CMHC. Do you remember that, Mr. Speaker? CMHC many, many years ago tried the same thing. They said that there weren't enough private-sector land developers and CMHC was going to be big brother. It was going to be big brother and all of a sudden, CMHC was going to go into all communities across the country and develop housing lots. Well, guess what? They're out of the business now. CMHC got smart. They sold the land off and said, fine, we'll give it to people who know what they're doing and how to develop. Some of those developers made money at it; some didn't. That was their decision and that was their business plan because that was private-sector capital.

Do not risk Manitoba taxpayers' capital on this project in Waverley West. That's where this whole thing starts. This piece of legislation right here is

speaking specifically to taking a development, taking potential profits out of it, and putting into another service area, a service delivery that the Province should be doing anyway, Mr. Speaker. They should be doing that.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when you develop as a land developer—and I've had some personal experience with developing land—as a land developer, you want to look at all the variables. Now this may, and I'll give them the credit, this may have been a good idea 10 years ago. It may have been a good idea when they first came in because the economy—we set the groundwork for a very strong economy in this province and they've been taking advantage of it. They should have, at that time perhaps, looked at this kind of development, but the economy's turning. We see now that construction costs are going through the roof.

We see now, with the Canadian dollar hitting \$1.10 right now, that, in fact, there is most likely going to be a downturn in the American economy, which is going to affect the Canadian economy. That means the marketability of these housing lots isn't as strong today as it was five years ago. By the time this infrastructure is in place for phase 2, those lots may not have the value that they seem to have now. If I had the business plan, I'd be able to see what they were going to identify the value of those lots, but I haven't seen the business plan. But, five years from now, those lots may not have retained the same value as what they do today. There will be a downturn in the American economy; that's a given. We know that's going to happen. All of a sudden, we're going to throw in \$89 million of infrastructure into this phase 1 with the hopes that we're going to generate some profit.

Well, I do want to have my colleague from Russell have a few words on this particular piece of legislation, but I again would like to echo the comments of my colleagues. This is goofy legislation. It's silly legislation. It is not good for taxpayers of the province of Manitoba and it's not good for inner-city housing. It is just absolutely wrong-headed and the government should remove this legislation or look at the possibility of another boondoggle going forward. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Speaker, I certainly do want to put some comments on the record with regard to this legislation because one has to wonder what this government is really up to when it brings in legislation of this kind when, in fact,

the mandate of the government is such that it has a responsibility to take from its general revenues enough money to ensure that the quality of inner-city housing is addressed and social housing needs are addressed for the people in this province. It doesn't require to legislate itself to spend money on social housing. My colleague the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) calls this goofy legislation.

It is absurd as to why legislation like this would even come forward to the House, and I'm surprised that we haven't had more comment about it. In fact, I think there are people out there who are commenting. I just wish that some of our papers and local media would get on to this because the condition of social housing in this province is dismal. When a government comes in with legislation like this that says it's going to take money from a development which it doesn't know, doesn't have a budget for, doesn't have a plan for, and is going to put it into housing in the inner city, it just talks about the foolishness that this government is up to.

Mr. Speaker, what about communities like Brandon? What about communities like Neepawa? What about communities like Minnedosa, Russell, East St. Paul in this province that require social housing? Where are they supposed to look to get their social housing needs and to get the housing stock in a respectable state? This government has allowed housing stock, social housing stock in our province to deteriorate to a dismal state.

Mr. Speaker, people are living in conditions they should not be living in, and basically it's the responsibility of this government to ensure that that housing is in the kind of condition that is conducive to proper and healthy living. That's this government's responsibility. It doesn't have to target money from certain revenue sources to be able to shore up housing in a particular part of this province. The legislation just doesn't make any sense, but,

of course, I think this minister who is taking this legislation through the House has been saddled with something that he was given from the previous minister, because we saw what the previous minister mismanaged in terms not only of the entire portfolio that she had before, but she landed all of this mess on the lap of this minister now, this current minister, and he is trying to sort some of this out. But the current minister needs to sort this stuff out and perhaps abandon some of that wrong-headed decision-making that he inherited from the previous minister.

Mr. Speaker, we can look at the problems that there are in housing right now, and I think my colleague, the critic responsible for this area, has very eloquently enunciated some of the issues that this government should be paying attention to. She has highlighted for this minister where it is that he should be paying attention in terms of housing needs.

Mr. Speaker, the mismanagement that is going on right now in housing needs to be addressed. Agencies out there that can't manage what they have been mandated need to be brought under some scrutiny, and it is up to this minister to do that, but, instead, we have a government that comes in with a piece of legislation that just makes absolutely no sense. I would have to say that we would be foolhardy to even think that we should support legislation of this kind if, in fact, it comes to a vote. The best thing the minister could do is withdraw this legislation and save himself some embarrassment.

Mr. Speaker, my colleague from—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 25 minutes remaining.

The time being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 7, 2007

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