

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 28, 2008

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYER

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 236—The Domestic Violence Death Review Committee Act

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I move, seconded by the MLA for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat), that Bill 236, The Domestic Violence Death Review Committee Act, be now read a first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Driedger: This bill establishes the domestic violence death review committee. This multidisciplinary committee will review the circumstances surrounding deaths that occur as a result of domestic violence and make recommendations to help prevent future deaths in similar circumstances. All reports made by the review committee are to be provided to the designated minister, tabled in the Legislature and made public by posting on the government's Web site.

I look forward to swift passage of this bill, Mr. Speaker.

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

PETITIONS

Headingley Foods

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

requirement using one route but is 10.8 kilometres using the other.

The majority of Headingley's population lives off Roblin Boulevard and uses Roblin Boulevard to get to and from Winnipeg rather than the Trans-Canada Highway. Additionally, the highway route is often closed or too dangerous to travel in severe weather conditions. The majority of Headingley residents therefore travel to the Liquor Mart via Roblin Boulevard, a distance of 10.8 kilometres.

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

This is signed by Bev Russell, Ernie Siwak and Jodi Peasgood.

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

Provincial Nominee Program—Applications

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

This is signed by A. Galow, D. Cabaltera, S. Reyes and many, many other fine Manitobans. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Child-Care Centres

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

These are the reasons for this petition:

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

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

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

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

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

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

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

This petition is signed by Roxana Castillo, Karen Parada, Cara Wojikoski and many, many others.

Long-Term Care Facility—Morden

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

The background for this petition is as follows:

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

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

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

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to strongly consider giving priority for funding to develop and staff a new 100-bed long-term care facility so that clients are not exposed to unsafe conditions and so that Boundary Trails Health Centre beds remain available for acute-care patients instead of waiting placement clients.

This is signed by Shirley Hildebrand, Doretta Wiebe, George Derksen and many, many others.

* (13:40)

ORAL QUESTIONS

Western Canadian Free Trade Agreement Government Support

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Western Canadian Free Trade Agreement, otherwise known as TILMA, is designed to reduce red tape, increase GDP and create jobs for western Canadians. In fact, the Conference Board has projected that 78,000 jobs will be created in British Columbia alone under the Western Canada Free Trade Agreement, 78,000 jobs in B.C. alone. The vision is to create a common market in western Canada of 8 million people that can go toe to toe with a 10-million-person market in Ontario and go toe to toe with the United States to the south of us.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier has dropped the ball already on two major economic issues. We've got the highest taxes in western Canada. That's strike one. He's dropping the ball on the inland port. That's strike two. I want to ask the Premier: Why is he swinging and whiffing and getting us into strike three when it comes to free trade with western Canada? Why won't he go into the meeting today and fight to get Manitoba at the table for a western Canada free trade agreement?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I'd like to ask the member opposite whether he's read the free trade agreement. Has he read the agricultural sections? Can he quote us pages 37 and 38 in the agricultural sections if he's got it there?

Mr. Speaker, we totally support internal trade in Canada. All the premiers have agreed to labour mobility across the country effective April 1, 2009. That includes the premiers of western Canada, the new Premier of Saskatchewan at our meeting in British Columbia in January. It includes Ontario and Québec and all the Atlantic Canadian provinces. We actually have more trade east of Manitoba than we have west.

So we believe in having a trade agreement across the whole country. The premiers talked about this issue yesterday in a conference call. We expect that many items that still—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: I might point out, Mr. Speaker, that at the Canada West Foundation meeting that the member opposite attended, the keynote speech from Manitoba, from Mr. Richardson, pointed out that Manitoba's GDP was slightly better and ahead of all other western Canadian provinces.

I just note, Mr. Speaker, that he mentioned that sometimes a diversified economy doesn't get the same attention, necessarily, from the media as an oil-rich economy. He pointed out, contrary to Mr. Martin's presentation in the *Free Press* ad nauseam, that the economy of Manitoba is doing exceptionally well. He also pointed out, and you should also note, in terms of GDP across all the sectors.

So we feel very proud going to the meeting, in our usually understated way, having the best economy in western Canada in 2007. I want to thank all the people of Manitoba for making that happen. We hold our head up high, Mr. Speaker. We'll let the member opposite hang his head.

Mr. McFadyen: And that abuse of leaders' latitude contains so many factual errors, we hardly know where to begin. But, for starters, he talks about a national deal. He said a year ago that he's not planning on signing TILMA because he wants to see a national deal which he expects will be finalized in August 2007. That's what he said a year ago, Mr. Speaker. There is no national deal and he knows there's not going to be a national deal because he knows that Québec will never sign on to a national deal.

So here we have an opportunity for a western Canadian deal so that western Canada can stand up with strength to Ontario, to the United States and other places. The fact is, Mr. Speaker—and he made reference to the TILMA agreement and asked whether we'd read it, the agricultural provisions. I don't know that he has, but he should, because under agriculture, measures adopted or maintained related to regulated marketing and supply management are exempted from the agreement. I don't know if he's concerned about that particular provision, but he should read page 21 of the agreement.

The fact is he's looking for every excuse in the world not to enter into this free trade agreement in western Canada. Phony excuse about looking for a national agreement; phony excuse about agricultural provisions. Isn't it just that he's gone all the way back to where he was in 1992 when he said: Let the record

show I'm opposed to free trade with the United States.

Now, Mr. Speaker, he's in favour of NAFTA. He's in favour of free trade with the United States and Mexico after 20 years of experience. Why is it that he's afraid of free trade with western Canada, but, now, after 20 years of experience, he supports free trade with the United States and Mexico?

Mr. Doer: Well, Mr. Speaker, in terms of free trade with the United States, I always thought the Free Trade Agreement with the United States should include, as Professor Ryan had said a number of years ago, a provision to ban the bulk water sale to the United States. So, obviously, I believe that that should be part of any kind of international trade agreement, and I actually would believe that we would want it to be part of any kind of Canadian internal trade agreement.

I couldn't convince the Tories to stop the bulk sale of water to the United States, so I was proud of the fact that one of the first pieces of legislation we brought in, after the Tories were defeated, was to ban the bulk water sale out of Manitoba to the United States, to any other province.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let's have a little decorum, please.

Mr. Doer: The member opposite will know that Premier Charest is working very, very effectively along with Premier McGuinty and the Atlantic Canadian premiers, in our belief, to have an agreement in place.

We have agreed to labour mobility. There is full labour mobility agreed to by all the provinces effective April 1, 2009. We are working between chartered accountants, the general accountants. We're working towards agreement with all the Red Seals in trades in terms of labour force mobility. We're working on teacher certifications that are not always comparable. We're working on nursing certifications.

We have agreed to labour mobility across—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: —April 1, 2009. That makes a lot more sense for—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Let's have some decorum, please, okay? Anybody who wants to ask questions

will have the opportunity. There's lots of time left. We need some decorum here, so I can hear the response and the questions.

The honourable First Minister has the floor.

Mr. Doer: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, on a point of order?

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I take your rulings very seriously and the Member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) just told me to shut up.

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

Mr. Speaker: Well, I have to deal with one point of order. Are you responding to the same point of order?

Mr. Lathlin: Same point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, okay, same point of order.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, I sit here day in and day out trying to hear the questions from the other side and also to hear the responses coming from our side, and every day the Member for Arthur-Virden sits there and he heckles. His voice seems to carry from wherever he's sitting. The acoustics of this building seem to carry his voice a lot more than other parts of the Chamber.

I'm trying to sit here, trying to listen to all the debate that's going on, questions and answers, and I always have a hard time when that member starts heckling. I would appreciate—and even though, Mr. Speaker, every day I watch you saying order, order, order, and he doesn't listen to you.

So, Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wish the member would obey your instructions so that everybody can hear the questions and answers going back and forth in this Chamber.

* (13:50)

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, I didn't hear the comment, but I'm going to take this opportunity to address all members because it is my responsibility to maintain decorum in the House.

I have been pretty lenient up to now. But, on both sides of the House, if members wish to heckle, I will be singling that member out, on both sides of the House, because we need some decorum in here, and it's obviously getting out of hand. When a member has to rise on a point of order and another member has to respond, the duty of decorum in the House is my responsibility.

I've been too lenient and, because of the instructions of the House, I will be looking at members if they continue to heckle. I will be singling them out. If I have to, I will have no choice but to name members. So let's have some decorum in the House.

* * *

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

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It makes more sense for Manitoba that has more trade east of us than we have west of us, notwithstanding Saskatchewan has not agreed to TILMA either, to have agreement with all provinces. I am very confident that we already have in place labour mobility. The deputy ministers of Agriculture have already signed off on agriculture. We're one province short on energy. We have full compliance now on Crown procurement. We have a lot of work to do on not just the agreement on labour mobility but actually going to professional groups. I sometimes meet with the Chamber of Commerce group, and we have three different types of accountants, none of which want to give away their credentials to a seamless labour mobility clause in Canada.

The agreement is there on labour mobility. We agreed on April 1, 2009, and that makes sense. If two families from Ontario move to Manitoba, it's important that their families have the same credentials, and it's also very important if two families from Alberta move to Manitoba that they have those credentials.

So we're looking west, south and east. If members opposite only want to look in one direction, they're one-dimensional. We believe in being multidimensional on internal trade, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McFadyen: I thank the Premier for that multidimensional answer. I've never heard so much smoke and mirrors, Mr. Speaker. The fact is that there's momentum behind a western Canada free trade agreement. There's no momentum behind a national free trade agreement. There's no momentum

behind a Manitoba-Ontario free trade agreement. This afternoon he is going to be meeting with premiers who are calling for a western Canada free trade agreement and, yet, he's resisting it.

Now, he raises the point about NAFTA and concerns about water. I would ask him if he would just read the current draft of TILMA, which says under general exceptions that water and services in investments pertaining to water are exempted from the Western Canada Free Trade Agreement.

So this red herring about water exports and NAFTA, that was his excuse last time around. The fact is he is ideologically opposed to free trade. He was in the 1990s. He is now, and it's being noticed by his western colleagues which is why there was a story in yesterday's *Calgary Herald* where Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach said, and I quote: This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for western Canada, B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan, to grow our economy in partnership, create a larger western economic marketplace of 8 million people, more influence in the federal government, Stelmach told reports in *Calgary*. Stelmach conspicuously avoided any mention of Manitoba.

Now, I want to ask the Premier: Given that he's now building up credentials across the country as being anti-free trade, running a risk of creating Manitoba as an isolationist backwater stuck between a free trade zone to the west, a juggernaut to the east and free trade to the south with the United States, given that B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan premiers don't even seem to know that we exist going into today's meeting, is this what they mean with their new tourism slogan, Undiscovered Manitoba?

Mr. Doer: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite wants to categorize Manitoba's No. 1 western Canadian performance in 2007 as backwater. He's allowed to denigrate the great performances of the economy of Manitoba. He's the negative nabob across the way.

Mr. Speaker, he talks about water. Forty percent of the water that comes to Manitoba comes from Lake of the Woods. That is actually east of us. There are more water systems again in the east. We are in the centre of Canada. We are the Keystone Province as the gateway to the west.

It is preferable for Manitoba to implement the agreement we did reach last year in New Brunswick. What did we agree to in New Brunswick last year as premiers? One, we would have full labour mobility

by April 1, 2009. Two, we would have a Crown corporation full procurement. Three, we would have a national energy trade agreement. Four, we would have our ministers work on the agricultural section which they've now signed off. Five, we would have not only the TILMA agreement but there are also impediments on trucking from different western provinces on regulation harmonization, and we will have that in place, I believe, in July 2000.

The TILMA process has been condemned by all the municipalities in British Columbia. Why has it been opposed by municipalities? Because it needs lawyers and courts. The difference between a national trade agreement and the TILMA trade agreement is one agreement leaves no lawyer left behind, which would satisfy the member opposite. It would be a litigious process, and the agreement that is being reached by all the provinces would be a panel kind of decision making that would allow for margarine of western Canada to go into Québec where it belongs, Mr. Speaker, and that's what we're fighting for.

Bill 38 Public Hearings

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, Manitoba's No. 1 in equalization. Manitoba's No. 1 in debt. Manitoba's No. 1 in taxes. Isn't this Premier proud of that record? Manitoba is seen as the poor cousin and this Premier is No. 1 squeegee kid in the country. He should be proud of that too.

Mr. Speaker, it seems the Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak) wants to play Manitoba's version of Monty Hall's *Let's Make a Deal*. In today's *Free Press*, he says that he will let bills 17 and 37 go through to the fall for further consultation.

Here's what's behind door No. 1. Will the Finance Minister let Bill 38, the unbalanced budget legislation, go to the fall for full public consultation? Will he make it part of the deal?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I find it rather passing interesting that the Member for Brandon West, when he was in the standing committee in Parliament, when he was complaining about the fact that Manitoba and Québec were the only two provinces in Canada that have banned union and corporate donations, he went on in the committee and said: The problem I understand our counterparts in Manitoba encountering is there's no public contribution component to their legislation in Manitoba. In Manitoba, there's a piece of legislation

that bans union and corporate donations. However, they do not have a public financing component. As a matter of fact, sir, there is now a democratic deficit with the piece of legislation put in place in Manitoba.

He said one thing at the committee. Like Monty Hall, he's trying to make another deal here, but he's Monty Hall with duct tape on his mouth because he won't let people speak out at those committee meetings here in Manitoba.

Mr. Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, I would think maybe the Premier wants to sit in a committee in Parliament as well. Maybe he has the opportunity in one of the constituencies that are coming up that maybe the member also wants to take, in Transcona, wants to take.

Mr. Speaker, this isn't duct tape in those committees. Bill 38 is the most dangerous piece of legislation that will affect Manitoba taxpayers in ways they cannot even imagine. The only gap in Bill 38 is the gap between income and expenses.

Will the Minister of Finance agree to let Bill 38 go through to the fall so he can explain to Manitobans why he is unable to balance his budget without using our Crown corporations?

* (14:00)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, under the old legislation that the members would cling on to as they cling on to the '90s, that allowed them to sell a Crown corporation with the second and third lowest telephone rates in the country, the Manitoba Telephone System. They sold that Crown corporation in order to balance the budget and what's the legacy of that? Among the highest telephone rates in the country. That's the legislation the members opposite—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I need to be able to hear the questions and the response, please.

The honourable Minister of Finance, have you concluded? You still have some time.

An Honourable Member: No, I'm just getting going.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Finance.

Mr. Selinger: Thank you Mr. Speaker. And that legislation that he wants to cling on to also completely ignored the pension liability for civil

servants and teachers, something which left unaddressed would have grown to over \$8.5 billion.

I know why members want to cling on to the old legislation. They could sell assets, ignore pension liabilities, double count revenues in and out of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. All of those features will be illegal under our new legislation.

Mr. Borotsik: Mr. Speaker, the only Klingon living in a fantasy world is the Finance Minister at this point in time.

He can cling on to his overexpenditures, Mr. Speaker. He can cling on to revenues that are going to be reduced, but what he can't cling on to is the fact that he hasn't consulted with Manitobans. This minister is always proud of the fact that he goes out on his pre-budget consultation, but he won't consult Manitobans with the most important piece of legislation that he will ever put before this House.

Why will the minister not take his dog and pony show on the road? Why does he not want to give Manitobans the opportunity to voice their displeasure?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has never really taken the time more than to drop in at a budget consultation. If he would have stuck around instead of spending his time outside the building helping us with [*inaudible*] he would have noticed that we did tell Manitobans that we were moving to full summary budgeting. He would have noticed that in our budget consultations we explained the budget as a full summary budget. He would have noticed in last year's budget we said we're going to full summary budgeting. He would have noticed in the penultimate budget to the election that we said we were going to full summary budgeting.

He would have noticed that we had a consulting firm go out and consult all the Chambers of Commerce, all the business organizations, all the social groups. He would have noticed that that report is on the Web site. If he would have paid attention, Mr. Speaker, he would have seen this coming three years ago and he would have known that we—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I ask the honourable Member for Brandon West for some co-operation please. When I'm trying to hear the response, the shouting over is making it very, very difficult. I'm asking the co-operation, please.

Northern Child and Family Services Authority Distribution of Funds

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, in the 2007 fiscal year the Northern Child and Family Services Authority received 50 percent more funding from the Province. With that money they doubled their budget for their annual general meeting, spent an extra \$21,000 on travel, created a new line item for a board honorarium, introduced a new line item for professional fees worth \$85,000, created a new line for strategic planning and increased the budget on miscellaneous spending tenfold.

Is the minister satisfied that every dollar provided to the northern authority went to supporting the front-line care of children and families?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Mr. Speaker, the northern authority is responsible for six agencies under its jurisdiction, and, indeed, funding has been increasing for the authorities in order to ensure that there's a more robust approach to child welfare in Manitoba.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, there are increases for staffing, increases for training, increases for most items in child welfare. It's part of the investments that are needed and are long overdue.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago we asked the minister about the northern authority's proposal to fund public service announcements. His response was to send a letter to the authority telling them not to do that, but the communications manager of the northern authority said that some of the ads had already been produced.

Can the minister tell the House which agency spent money on the ads, how much went to the project and how he plans to recoup the misspent funds?

Mr. Mackintosh: I understand that the Child Protection branch has asked information of the authority to determine if any expenditures have been made and what the extent of them are in terms of the advertising that was the subject of some discussion a couple of weeks ago.

Mr. Briese: Mr. Speaker, this minister has allowed mismanagement and misspending to occur on his watch, and children are the ones who lose out as a result. Also within the northern authority's financial statements are two brand-new line items worth \$200,000, one called a communication strategy and a second called research and development.

Can the minister tell the House how this funding is supposed to help to provide front-line care to children, and did his department approve those financial statements?

Mr. Mackintosh: The department analyzes the statements, the spending of all the authorities, and that has been taking place in the past and will continue to take place. Indeed, there now are stronger accountability mechanisms in place recognizing that there is a need for greater scrutiny.

What we're seeing across the province is a bearing-down on shortcomings, not just in terms of services but also in terms of operations. There are several reviews under way, and those are important in order to strengthen the system. But we ain't seen nothing yet, Mr. Speaker. That is going to be the status quo, and there's going to be multiple reviews every year going into the future. We have to strengthen the system. We're bound and determined to do that.

Child and Family Services Agency Priority of Child Safety

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): The minister is saying, you haven't seen anything yet. We see a minister that's totally irresponsible and not taking the responsibility for the actions.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family Services has said he was out of his skin after hearing evidence of serious mismanagement, nepotism, misspending and neglect at a northern Child and Family Services agency. Yet this minister has done nothing except alternate between wringing his hands and pointing his fingers at the federal government.

Can the Minister of Child and Family Services assure the House that all children in care of this agency are safe and accounted for and that the front-line staff is getting the support they need?

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): In terms of this particular agency, there has been allocated 8.5 more positions in terms of front-line relief.

But, Mr. Speaker, what's important in the context is that the money, though, overall be used for protection of children and family well-being, and that is why there's a review ongoing to determine just that.

Family Services Department Premier's Response

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): My question is to the Premier (Mr. Doer). I wonder if the Premier can indicate what steps he has taken, given that he's at the head of government, to take responsibility for mismanagement within the Department of Family Services.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Housing): Well, Mr. Speaker, the Department of Family Services flows funding through about 1,200-plus arm's-length agencies across Manitoba in many areas, including in child welfare. As a result, it was recognized, as a result of shortcomings identified, that there needs to be stronger accountability mechanisms.

Those mechanisms were disbanded in the 1990s under the former government because I guess they didn't like to spend money on management. That, Mr. Speaker, though, really flies in the face of the need to ensure that all of those arm's-length agencies are spending money for the purposes that the Legislature sent them there for.

So, Mr. Speaker, we're now into a new era of accountability. We have about 20 new positions now that enhance accountability from these agencies within the department.

Mr. McFadyen: I want to ask again to the Premier (Mr. Doer) whether he's going to take responsibility for what's going on under his watch. He has the Minister of Family Services, who refuses to take responsibility, who said after he was caught in this House that he was out of his skin, even though he was aware of issues occurring under his watch some 11 months earlier or even sooner than that. Children in this province deserve better. They deserve a Premier who's prepared to take personal responsibility for what's going on under his watch. This is the fourth Minister of Family Services to serve under this Premier, trying to clean up the messes created by this Premier.

Why won't the Premier take responsibility for what's going on under his watch?

* (14:10)

Mr. Mackintosh: Well, the irony is, Mr. Speaker, that the independent reviews have found that the messes in the child welfare system pre-date actions

by this government. They go way back many years, so there's more than enough blame to go around.

But what has happened is this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, has taken responsibility for strengthening the child welfare system that has been long overdue, first, by way of devolution; second, by way of Changes for Children and now by way of operational reviews. I can say, on the part of the Premier, I have welcomed and I have respected his contributions to strengthening the child welfare system through those mechanisms.

The increases to the budget, Mr. Speaker, are in no small way thanks to the Premier of Manitoba.

Mr. McFadyen: Well, what a disgraceful situation. They have been in government now for close to nine years. Every time one of these stories breaks, they promise a, quote, unquote, new era of accountability, Mr. Speaker. We're tired of hearing about annual announcements of new eras of accountability when the problems go on and on.

We now have new evidence coming into the House today from the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese) of line items built in, new line items built into a budget.

The Premier is ultimately responsible for the government that he leads. This is his fourth Family Services Minister since he became Premier.

Will the Premier stand up and take some responsibility for the care of children in Manitoba?

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, if you don't conduct operational reviews, if you don't have an accountability mechanism in place in your department, you're not going to uncover the shortcomings. You just turn a blind eye to all the shortcomings.

What is happening is a routing out of shortcomings, Mr. Speaker, and a correction of them. We're going to continue to see the routing out of shortcomings, and, yes, as I said the other day, cleaning up is dirty business. It has to be done and we're prepared to shoulder all of those findings. They have to be found out in order to act on them. Members opposite, a big blind eye, creating huge problems that are still being felt in no small way all across the system.

You can't abandon accountability mechanisms and think that there's no consequence, Mr. Speaker. There has been a consequence, and we're dealing with it.

Bill 31 Government Withdrawal

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, we heard from a number of presenters to Bill 31 last night that the bill has some serious flaws that will neither increase access to public information nor protect people's privacy. We heard from experts in the field of privacy. We heard from original drafters of legislation. We heard from people that were once again presenting the same concerns they had over four years ago. We heard proposed amendments. We heard loud and clear that this government did not consult on this legislation.

Will the minister now announce today that he will withdraw Bill 31 and develop more effective legislation?

Hon. Eric Robison (Minister of Culture, Heritage, Tourism and Sport): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to announce that, in fact, public consultations were held throughout the province of Manitoba, led by the Minister of Healthy Living (Ms. Irvin-Ross).

Together with her committee they heard presentations from several Manitobans. Among the most common requests heard during the public hearings were the oversight of access to information requests, and we're responding with Bill 31.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Speaker, two nights ago we heard from Gaile Whelan-Enns, who spoke about the shortcomings of this bill. She was one of the original drafters of the bill 20 years ago, but she wasn't consulted.

We heard from Brian Bowman, whose credentials prove him to be a privacy and access expert not only in Manitoba, but across Canada. He was not consulted.

We heard from Elizabeth Fleming as she outlined the broken promises by the NDP by not creating a full privacy commissioner and, in fact, clamping down on access to information.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister now withdraw this bill, or will he ram it through with no regard for Manitoba's right to access and right to privacy?

Mr. Robison: You know what, Mr. Speaker? What we're doing with Bill 31 is doing three things: First of all, we're creating a privacy adjudicator, a new independent office of the Legislature; we're changing the period that Cabinet documents remain sealed from 30 to 20 years—I think that's substantial—the

legislation that requires ministerial expenses be tabled on-line annually.

I heard the speakers that the member refers to. I believe that all their advice was taken very seriously, and I still believe that the bill we're debating currently in the committee is a bill that is suited for Manitoba.

Mrs. Taillieu: Well, Mr. Speaker, this Bill 31 has some serious shortcomings and it should not proceed. The minister himself admitted that he doesn't have a clue about his own legislation. Mr. Brian Bowman said that there were aspects to this bill that are, and I quote, dangerous. When you have a minister who does not understand the legislation, that refuses to consult with experts, that certainly sounds like a recipe for disaster.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister do the right thing? Will he withdraw Bill 31 or is he going to proceed with legislation that could endanger people's right to privacy?

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I find the remarks made by the Member for Morris offensive not only to our hardworking staff in government but, indeed, to those other people that were consulted in the public hearings.

The bill, itself, will give the Province an adjudicator and also the power to that adjudicator to issue binding orders. This is comparable to commissioners in B.C., Alberta, Ontario, and P.E.I. Mr. Speaker, I think we're doing a damn good job.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I heard one word that I would consider to be unparliamentary. I would respectfully ask the honourable member to withdraw that one word.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, gladly. I'll replace that with a very wonderful job.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable member for that. *[interjection]*

Okay, look, I don't know what's going on today, but it's one of those days. The other side—part of the House is not accepting it as a withdrawal, so I kindly ask the honourable member to unequivocally withdraw that one word.

Mr. Robinson: Mr. Speaker, I withdraw "damn" and replace it with a wonderful job.

Mr. Speaker: Look, order. When there's instructions by the House, by the Speaker, it is up to the satisfaction of the Speaker. It's not up to the

satisfaction of the House. It is up to the satisfaction of the Speaker. If I accept that as a withdrawal or if I don't accept it as a withdrawal, then I can ask for a further withdrawal. If I don't get it, then I can name the member, but it's to the satisfaction of the Speaker, not of the House.

The member had said that he withdrew that word, and he wanted to replace it with another word. *[interjection]* Order. Can I finish? We have a lot of Speakers here today. Order. I'm just going to ask the member to just unequivocally withdraw that one word.

Mr. Robinson: Well, Mr. Speaker, I thought I did, and I do withdraw that word.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable member for that.

Flin Flon Health Assessments Tabling of Report

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, yesterday, in question period, we were treated with the spectacle of the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) pretending to be the Minister of Health. It's no wonder our health-care system is in a little bit of trouble.

My question, since it didn't get answered yesterday, to the Minister of Health: Has the Department of Health, the Chief Medical Officer of Health for the NOR-MAN Regional Health Authority or anyone under her department done a study to look at the presence of cancer or other diseases in Flin Flon? If so, I ask the minister to table the study and, if not, I ask, why not.

* (14:20)

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Perhaps, unlike the members across the House in the Liberal Party, members on this side of the House speak to each other and work together. That's why, together with the Minister of Conservation, a health assessment is going on currently in Flin Flon.

I think it's very important for the member to reflect, perhaps, on some of the comments this morning on CJOB from Dr. Dhaliwal, the head of CancerCare Manitoba. When he was speaking about the member's comments, when you talk about the lower survival rate, the same book from which the member of the opposition—and we're grateful to him for drawing attention to the burden of cancer, but as he knows, as a previous physician at CancerCare Manitoba, you have to look behind the figures.

The member of the opposition said the risk factors are not that different, but, in fact, the data shows that they are different.

Mr. Gerrard: The fact is that Manitoba's age-standardized mortality rates for cancer are considerably higher than Alberta. Dr. Dhaliwal and I are discussing some of the things, but the reality is the rates in Manitoba are much higher than Alberta even when they're age-standardized.

The other thing is that we have a community in Flin Flon greatly concerned about high levels of toxic metals, and the minister hasn't even looked at the incidence of cancer in Flin Flon. It was left to the Liberal Party to do it.

The minister needs to get doing her job. I ask the minister to get to work. Why has she not done the proper work in Flin Flon? When will she do her job?

Ms. Oswald: I'll adjust my mike because apparently the member opposite hasn't heard us say that there is a health assessment going on currently. Furthermore, when we see any area in Manitoba, any community in Manitoba, where there are incidents of cancer that appear to be higher, of course we work in partnership with CancerCare Manitoba to ensure that whatever can be done is being done.

I remind the member that the head of CancerCare said this morning: Well, some of the risk factors, of course, need to be addressed. The member opposite from the Liberal Party said that the risk factors are not that different, but, in fact, they show they are different.

The commentator on the radio said: So what kinds of risk factors? Like obesity, inactivity, smoking and some of the risk factors that manifest 10, 20 years later. So the member opposite needs to—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: There was some misquoting going on. The reality is this, that there wasn't as much prevention going on historically in Manitoba as there should have been. The reality is, the bottom line is right now, cancer prevention—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), let's have some decorum.

The honourable member for River Heights has the floor.

Mr. Gerrard: Compared to Alberta, cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment can be much better in Manitoba.

I was greatly saddened last night, Mr. Speaker, to get an e-mail from someone who recently lost a loved one to cancer. She told her story and provided information from her loved one's treatment to a doctor in the United States and was told, anywhere in the world, your loved one would have got better care than he received in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot allow the current state of affairs to continue. We must aspire to do better. I ask the minister to get to work and do better.

Ms. Oswald: Well, Mr. Speaker, I wish that this weren't true but every member of this House, regrettably, has lost a loved one to cancer. Every member of this House, I would be willing to bet, has a family member or loved one right now that is battling cancer.

I want to say to the member opposite that the professionals at CancerCare Manitoba are specialists, are family doctors, are working in Manitoba, in Flin Flon and in every community in this province to ensure that we win the war against cancer. We do that through research. We do it through screening.

The member made my point about prevention and screening, really. We just started some of those programs. We're going to see a difference. We need to do that for the families in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Mr. Speaker: Order. I have a ruling for the House.

During oral questions on May 7, 2008, the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) raised a matter of privilege regarding a letter sent to all MLAs by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) indicating that paper copies of Volume 4 of the Public Accounts would no longer be available. The honourable Member for Russell asserted this action would have an impact on the ability of MLAs to do their jobs. At the conclusion of his remarks, the honourable Member for Russell moved that this matter be referred to the Committee on Legislative Affairs and be reported back to this House. The honourable Minister of Finance, the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), the honourable Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson), the honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak), the honourable Leader of the

Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) and the honourable First Minister (Mr. Doer) offered advice to the Chair.

I took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities. There are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for the matter raised to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege. First, was the issue raised at the earliest opportunity, and, second, has sufficient evidence been provided to demonstrate that the privilege of the House had been breached in order to warrant putting the matter to the House. The honourable Member for Russell indicated that he was raising the matter at the earliest opportunity, and I accept the word of the honourable member.

Regarding the second issue of whether a prima facie case of privilege has been established, the ability of members to do their jobs is an important issue. There are various protections provided by parliamentary privilege which are in place in order to ensure that members are able to perform their parliamentary duties in the House. I should note, however, that there are distinctions in the protection provided by privilege and that not all duties and functions performed by members are protected by privilege. For example, privilege provides the protection of freedom of speech, but only in the context of comments made in the House during a parliamentary proceeding. As the House well knows, comments made outside of the House are not protected by privilege.

Privilege also provides the protection of freedom from arrest in civil actions, exemption from jury duty, exemption from appearing as a witness and freedom from obstruction, interference, intimidation and molestation. Privilege, however, as noted by Joseph Maingot, concerns a member in the capacity as a member and not as a minister, a party whip or a party leader, parliamentary secretary or critic. Therefore, when looking at allegations of breaches of privilege, it is important to assess in what context the action complained of has taken place and whether it involves a proceeding of the Legislature and whether it involves the duties of an MLA performing as an MLA in the Legislature and not as performing the duties of a minister, leader, whip or critic.

The honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) indicated that a letter circulated by the honourable Minister of Finance stated that Volume 4 of the Public Accounts would no longer be available in paper form and that the material would alternately

be available on the Internet and in CD format. During the discussion of the issue, the honourable Minister of Finance indicated that, yes, paper copies would be made available to members. I am glad that the honourable Minister of Finance did make this distinction, because according to The Financial Administration Act, the volumes of the Public Accounts, including Volume 4, are required to be tabled in the Legislature, and by practice are also referred to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts. I should note for the information of the House that it is not acceptable to table reports in the House in CD format only. Paper copies of reports are necessary when reports are being tabled in the House.

* (14:30)

So, given that Volume 4 of the Public Accounts is a report that is required to be tabled in the Legislature and has yet to be tabled, when it is tabled it will be necessary for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) to provide paper copies. In addition, paper copies will also need to be provided by the Department of Finance to the Journals office when the report is tabled so that there are sufficient copies of the report for referral to committee, and to also comply with the regular distribution of sessional papers as conducted by Legislative Assembly offices.

Given that assurances were given by the Minister of Finance that paper copies of Volume 4 of the Public Accounts will be made available, at this stage I would find that this is more properly a matter of order and not privilege. Therefore, I do not find there's a prima facie case of privilege, but I would encourage the government and government departments to be mindful of the requirements for paper copies when reports are tabled in this Legislature.

Point of Order

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, the honourable Member for Russell on a point of order.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I thank you for your ruling, but, secondly, on a point of order, when we were dealing with Public Accounts meeting, the minister indicated that he would be tabling Volume 4 because we could not deal with it in Public Accounts until it is tabled. That was according to the Clerk of the Legislature who was in committee, and I'm

wondering whether or not the Minister of Finance will be tabling this shortly so that we could in fact deal with it in Public Accounts.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order, the honourable member does not have a point of order. It's a procedure of the House when ministers table their reports. I can't instruct them to table a report now or tomorrow. It's up to the government when they are ready and when they are tabled. So the honourable member does not have a point of order.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Riding Mountain National Park 75th Anniversary

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Today I rise to congratulate and to bring to the public's attention the 75th anniversary of the Riding Mountain National Park. For the past 75 years, local residents and tourists have been enjoying Riding Mountain National Park, a combination of recreational and leisure attractions and the sheer natural beauty of the rugged landscape.

In a celebration of this anniversary, the park will be hosting a homecoming weekend from July 25 to 27, this summer. The weekend will celebrate many of the park's attractive outdoor features, from trail riding and canoeing, to couples originally married amidst the scenic grounds renewing their vows.

The weekend also invites visitors to engage in the storied history of both the park's natural as well as social development. While the purpose of the weekend is to celebrate the most recent 75 years as a national park, human involvement in the local area reaches much further back. Anthropological artifacts reveal that humans traversed the same beautiful landscape, as park visitors now routinely do, over 10,000 years ago.

Prior to becoming a park, the area was inhabited by various groups of Aboriginal people and today is home to the Keeseekoowenin Ojibway First Nation people.

In 1930, the area was designated a national park, and in the following few decades much of the infrastructure, which still exists within the park, was built. The legacy of 1930s make-work projects, as well as contributions from conscientious objectors stationed in the park, and even 440 World War II German prisoners of war remain a lasting testament to the park's role in our nation's social history.

In concluding, I invite all Manitobans to come and enjoy some of the most majestic natural scenery

in our great province and to celebrate in the unique history of what makes up the past. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

13th Annual Maples Collegiate Unity March

Mr. Mohinder Saran (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight the 13th annual Unity March organized by the Unity Group at Maples Collegiate, which took place this morning. The 12-kilometre walk, which began at Maples Collegiate and ended on the front steps of the Manitoba Legislature, has been taking place every year since 1995. It symbolizes the ideals of respect, tolerance and peace, and raises awareness of racial discrimination. I was privileged to be able to walk with and speak to the students about the importance of respect and tolerance in our world today and congratulate the group.

The Unity March reminds us all that promoting peace and ending discrimination and racism in our communities is an ongoing work that we all must be engaged in. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to say that several hundred students and staff participated in today's march, demonstrating their dedication to the cause of peace and their commitment to working towards peace in their own lives.

On behalf of all my honourable colleagues in this House, I would like to thank Chuck Duboff, who founded the Unity Group at Maples Collegiate, for his 13 years of hard work with his student group.

I would also like to commend the students who are members of the group as well as the students and staff who participated in today's march for their dedication to social justice in this city. As the representative of this constituency, I feel privileged that these students are a part of my community. Their work at Maples Collegiate and throughout Winnipeg is invaluable and they are truly an inspiration to us all. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Vita Cubs Baseball Team

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, on June 7, 2008, 1955 to 1960 Vita Cubs baseball team will be inducted into the Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame. The Cubs were selected in a small-community category and they are the first team from southeastern Manitoba to be inducted in this class.

During the five years for which the team is being honoured, the Vita Cubs won their league championships in 1955 and 1959. They remained

among the top levels of their leagues during the other years. The local boys travelled throughout the area, playing in the Sunday-only league games and tournaments. Frequent competitors included teams from Vassar, Dominion City, Grunthal, Tolstoi, Ridgeville, Woodmore, Sarto, Sundown and Rosa, as well as teams from just across the border in the United States.

Like many small towns in Manitoba, the Vita Cubs baseball games were community events where sizable crowds would cheer on the local team. For many of the players, the games were family events with parents watching, siblings playing and life-long relationships being built on and off the field.

Steve Derewianchuk, from the 1955 to 1960 Vita Cubs team, has been previously inducted into the Manitoba Hall of Fame in 2007 for his achievements throughout his career, spanning over three decades. Mr. Derewianchuk's Vita team mates will be joining him in the Hall of Fame come June, when the 12th Annual Induction Banquet will be held in Morden. The 37 players, managers and coach will receive statuettes from the organization during a ceremony to pay tribute to the team's accomplishment during the five-year span.

This honour reflects the outstanding contribution the Vita Cubs made to development of the sport of baseball in the area. Their success and dedication to the game inspired generations after to play. These men should be very proud of their achievements as part of their successful baseball team, and they're certainly deserving of the recognition in the Manitoba Baseball Hall of Fame.

I now ask the House to join me in congratulating the 1955 to 1960 Vita Cubs. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Strathmillan School Tree Planting

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): Mr. Speaker, I'm incredibly heartened that we are educating the next generation with a profound understanding and appreciation for the environment.

I recently joined grade 3 students at Strathmillan School in my riding of St. James, as they celebrated the planting of three trees in their schoolyard. The project started when the grade 3 students became concerned that diseased trees in the schoolyard had been cut down. They felt strongly that the trees needed to be replaced. The students researched what trees were best-suited to the environment, how much

it would cost to purchase and look after them and the best conditions for them to grow.

The students fundraised money to purchase and look after the trees. At the planting ceremony, students stood up to talk about why trees are important to them. They talked about how they freshen our air, give us shade and give animals a safe place to live, among a host of other excellent reasons.

The next phase of the fundraising project will be the creation of murals on three walls, featuring a tree on each wall. Students will be able to purchase a leaf for a nominal cost on which to put any name they wish. Those directly involved will have apples to sign on those trees.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at the children and young people in our schools, we need to always bear in mind that we are looking at what our society will become. I was touched with the maturity and high level of awareness that these grade 3s showed about trees and our entire environment.

I would like to thank Mrs. Marlatt, Mrs. Baydock, Mrs. Matyi, Mrs. Thiessen, parents and particularly all the grade 3s who have made this project their own. They have shown that we can change our world, one tree at a time. Thank you.

* (14:40)

13th Annual Maples Collegiate Unity March

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I'd like to compliment the students from Maples Collegiate who came on their walk against racism and for unity, led by Chuck Duboff and the other teachers and many students who have been involved. I'd like to congratulate them for their efforts against racism and their efforts to bring a united world.

I would also like to congratulate the students at Springfield Collegiate for their interest in the Democratic Republic of Congo, issues like HIV/AIDS in Africa and poverty. I was there this morning and they're a keen and passionate group of students, Amy-Lynn Saunders and others, and I'd like to pay a tribute to their efforts.

Mr. Speaker, one of the issues that have been brought forward by Chris Lorenc is the inland port and the Mayor's Trade Council report. Certainly, the inland port is something that should be supported. We are surprised the Premier (Mr. Doer) is not doing more on this issue.

Lastly, Mr. Speaker, I would comment on the cancer rates between Manitoba and Alberta. There is a dramatic difference between the two, and the mortality rates for cancer are much higher in Manitoba. This needs to be investigated. We should not be trying to defend the status quo, as the government is trying to do, but we should aspire to be the best in the country and we should learn from other provinces where they have done things which are working. Thank you.

GRIEVANCES

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

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Yes, on a grievance.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Turtle Mountain.

Mr. Cullen: Mr. Speaker, it's certainly popular on this side of the House to have an opportunity to discuss a grievance. I understand the reluctance from the members in government for us, as opposition members, to be allowed a few minutes to put our words on the record on some of the issues that we feel need addressing in Manitoba.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the content of my grievance today is about democracy or, in fact, the lack of democracy in Manitoba. This point has hit home with the recent things that have been going on, in terms of the Legislature and legislation brought forward with the government and some of the things that are happening in committee over the last few evenings.

Mr. Doug Martindale, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

It really highlighted the fact for me this week when we had the opportunity—we had a very special visitor from Ukraine. We had the prime minister of Ukraine here visiting in Manitoba.

An Honourable Member: The president.

Mr. Cullen: The president is the proper term? Sorry, Mr. Acting Speaker. I want to clarify that it's the President of Ukraine. I think it was certainly recognized by all Manitobans as a very important occasion when he took the opportunity to visit us here in Manitoba.

We understand the fights and all the frustrations that the people of Ukraine have gone through over the years to get themselves to a point where they actually have a democratic system in place. We, as

Manitobans, have probably taken our democracy, if you will, for granted over the last few years.

Manitobans aren't one to usually come out and speak in loud numbers and picket in front of the Legislature and those sorts of things. What we're seeing now, through the committee process, is Manitobans speaking out. They're coming here in fairly vast numbers to speak about some of the government legislation that has been brought forward. Mr. Acting Speaker, I think what it's a sign of is—it's a sign of this government taking the time before bringing legislation forward to actually consult with Manitobans, to see if Manitobans really want changes to legislation.

This is what we're seeing, Mr. Acting Speaker, Manitobans coming forward in revolt of what this particular government is trying to bring forward in terms of legislation.

I just want to talk a little bit about a few bills in particular. First of all is Bill 17. This bill is going to basically etch in perpetuity the moratorium on hog development in covering about two-thirds of Manitoba, agricultural Manitoba. So it will have a very significant impact on a lot of Manitobans, and it really will impact the economy of Manitoba. I think that's something that the government has to recognize, that it's not just singling out the hog industry, but it's actually having a very direct and a very big effect on the economy of Manitoba. It will also impact the economy of Winnipeg.

Now, at the end of the day, Mr. Acting Speaker, we, on this side of the House, believe in having clean water for all Manitobans, but we want to see some real effects at the end of the day. We want to have regulations or programs in place that will actually make a difference in providing clean water to Manitobans. We're not sure this particular legislation will actually result in any cleaner water to Manitobans.

We already have a lot of regulations in place dealing with the hog industry in Manitoba. The government already has the ability to single out any problem issues they may see with very individual hog operations. It may be extended not just to hog operations, but beef operation as well. If any individual operation is being seen to pollute the environment, the government has the regulations, they have the authority, they have the people to go and address those individual situations. They don't have to bring in legislation which provides a moratorium on further development within the

province. Again, Mr. Acting Speaker, it's a political statement that this particular government has made, and it won't address, in real terms, water-quality issues in Manitoba.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I talked to a local producer today who is very upset in my particular area. He understands the impacts that it can have on farm values and farm properties if this particular legislation is going forward. He recognizes, in his area, other regulations this government has brought forward in trying to deal with water-quality issues have made a substantial impact on his particular area, and actually driven some of the producers off the land. So we're not exactly sure—and we know—we must say that it does impact the economy of Manitoba, the regulations that the government brings forward, and they have to be accountable for the regulations they bring forward. That's why we see over 300 people registered to present on Bill 17.

A couple other issues. Bill 37 is going to come forward, has been debated for a very short period of time here, at the Legislature. Now it's going through to committee and we're finding hundreds of Manitobans coming forward to speak out on that particular legislation, Mr. Acting Speaker. We know there are a lot of things on that particular bill that will impact how democracy is viewed here in Manitoba and how Manitobans and taxpayers will be forced to fund political parties—something unheard of at this point in time in Manitoba.

Manitobans recognize that it's something that they don't want to be a part of. That's why they are coming here to spread the word that that's something they do not want to see in legislation. It's time that the government took notice of this particular group of individuals that are coming forward. They represent Manitobans from all sectors of the province who want to have their voice heard and changes made. In fact, they want to have this particular bill removed from the Order Paper as well.

The same thing, I think, we're going to hear with Bill 38. That's the bill that discusses the balanced budget and taxpayer accountability, how that whole process will unfold.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Mr. Speaker, we're certainly concerned on this side of the House that this will give the government of the day free rein in terms of spending, and that's very unfortunate. We, as Conservatives, brought forward legislation a number of years ago that we

felt Manitobans were looking for so that governments of the day would be forced to balance the budgets on an operating basis. It's something that all Manitobans, I believe, believe in that sort of process. But this government, for some reason, goes against what Manitobans, ordinary Manitobans, would like to see in writing. They've brought forward their own legislation to give themselves cheque-writing authority beyond their means. That's clearly something that Manitobans do not appreciate because we do have a lineup of presenters lined up to discuss Bill 38 as well.

* (14:50)

I think when we go through this whole committee process, Mr. Speaker, all of this legislation has been rammed here, get to the point of second reading. Now we've got about two weeks to deal with all the legislation. There are about 25 bills that have to be taken and put through committee, and it really doesn't give Manitobans a fair, even opportunity to discuss those pieces of legislation.

It's clearly time for reform in how these pieces of legislation are brought forward. Mr. Speaker, I think how we deal with committee, how that committee stage is handled, and how we provide Manitobans a reasonable opportunity to come in and discuss, on their terms, how they feel this legislation going forward. So I think it's very important.

One other issue I just want to highlight as I see my time is ticking away here is the whole idea of the Hydro issue and how this particular government is getting directly involved with a Crown corporation and the operation of a Crown corporation. It's very undemocratic, we think, Mr. Speaker, that this government will view it as their policy to take over \$2 billion out of Manitoba taxpayers' pockets just on their own whim and why they want to provide that particular line on the east side of Manitoba versus what common sense and the experts at Manitoba Hydro say, a line should go on the west side of the province.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for your time, but I think Manitobans are starting to wake up to the fact that this New Democratic Party is no longer about democracy. It's all about how they intend to stay in power for the next few years.

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

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a grievance today. I'll try and centre my grievance

around the democracy, or the lack of democracy, by this government. As my colleague has pointed out, we could start with the bipole line. We have an opportunity to address the poverty of a number of people on the east side of the lake with a line, also an all-weather road, and we already see that there has been some environmental studies done for that line. No consultation, or not enough consultation, with those people on that side of the line. Apparently, there has been some, some six, seven years ago. However, recently, many chiefs from that side of the lake have expressed terrible concerns, or concerns about the lack of consultation, the lack of opportunity for the members of their tribes and their clans on that side of the lake.

This is an infringement, Mr. Speaker, on democracy in this province. They've suggested that the line would go down the west side of the province. There's been no consultation on that side of the province either. The amount of money that would be wasted to go down that west side of the province is thousands and thousands and millions of dollars.

Mr. Speaker, as we've raised, or I have raised in this House a few times now in the short time that I've been here, that I've been elected—and democratically elected I might add—I've raised a situation about a bridge, a bridge in the constituency of Emerson over the Letellier River, or over the Red River at Letellier. The millions of dollars that are wasted on a west-side line could well be used to replace some of the infrastructure in this province, infrastructure such as that bridge, which poses probably a danger, not just probably, it does pose a danger to the many people—men, women and children, schoolchildren—that cross over that bridge daily.

However, I'm sure that there are other bridges in this province, other structures, infrastructures in this province, that that money could be well used for, Mr. Speaker, and so I would suggest that democracy has not been practised and not been exercised in this decision for the Bipole III. When we do take power, we will change that to the east side, not west side.

Bill 15 is the climate change act, Mr. Speaker. Yesterday, we heard a number of discussions. We all have a concern about the environment. There's absolutely no doubt that everyone in this House has a concern about the environment of this province; however, to say that we will introduce a bill that will deal with some of the issues of the climate change, but we will only reduce some of the carbon loading by 5 percent over the next three years, 95 percent

after the next election—[interjection]—maybe, as some of my colleagues have pointed out and some of the presenters pointed out, this was totally unacceptable.

This legislation is a feel-good legislation. I don't believe that it has had the consultation that the democracy of our province demands. It's not had the consultation throughout the province. I would suggest that that bill be withdrawn and carried to fall, but have community consultations throughout the province, so that people in this province understand exactly what's being put before them, because what they've seen was a feel-good announcement. They don't realize that there's no commitment until after the next election and, only then, will we address it, which might be carried on until after that next election, Mr. Speaker, depending on who is elected.

Bill 17 is near and dear to my heart, as I've been engaged in agriculture for many, many years, Mr. Speaker, many years. Democracy has been trampled. Democracy has been trampled by Bill 17. The bill has been brought forward with no justification, no justification at all. There was a pause put on this province in one industry, which said it was accused, it was unjustly accused of being the main polluter for Lake Winnipeg.

Our concerns for the waterways of this province, our concerns for the lakes of this province are matched and overly match any concerns on the other side of the House. However, the hog industry was singled out. Unfortunately or fortunately, it has been proven that their percentage of contribution to the pollution is miniscule.

However, after one year of a pause and an extensive environmental study by a group and after the First Minister (Mr. Doer) made public statements that, once that environmental impact study was completed and the results were tabled, the pause would be lifted, Mr. Speaker, democracy again was trampled.

Democracy was trampled because, as they tabled the results of the Clean Environment Commission's study, they placed a moratorium over a large portion of this province. In that part of the province is where there has been and is hog production. They have now said there will be none—no expansion. Mr. Speaker, they have discarded science; they have discarded the advice of experts and they did this for a feel-good announcement, a fanfare announcement.

* (15:00)

It will change nothing; it will change nothing of what leaves that land. It will not reduce what goes into the lake today, tomorrow or the next day. However, they took away the basic civil rights, the basic civil rights that people—and, Mr. Speaker, I ask you and I ask many, many more people in this House, where their ancestors came from and why they came to this country. They came from a country where they were oppressed and depressed by governments, by governments that controlled every aspect of their life, by governments that made every decision for them. They came here because they had the freedom to practise their religion. They came here because they had the freedom of speech. They came here to practise however they wished to feed their families as long as it was within the law.

We put a moratorium, this government, today, put a moratorium on people who were obeying the law. They obeyed the law and a moratorium was put on them. That took away a basic civil right. This government should be challenged. They should be challenged in a federal court, Mr. Speaker, because they have taken away that basic civil right.

Bill 37 continues, continues to bash democracy. Mr. Speaker, they say that we will have all of our communications vetted. Our communications are going to be vetted by a body of people, a committee, appointed by the sitting government. I ask the members opposite to sit in my chair and look at that legislation and see if they would be happy with that legislation. Would they be happy with that legislation if they were sitting in my chair where they will likely be sitting in three years? I will be glad to turn it over to them. Our democracy has been trampled on in Bill 37 by this type of—thank you, Mr. Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): Could you please call third readings in order? Could you then, if we complete third readings, our intention is to move into Committee of Supply.

If there is still time, Mr. Speaker, we could then revert to second readings, the bill for budget implementation, Bill 44.

Mr. Speaker: We will resume debate on concurrence and third reading. If there's time, we

will move into Committee of Supply, and, if there's also time, then we will do the second reading on Bill 44.

DEBATE ON CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 3—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Right now, I'm going to call to resume debate on concurrence and third reading of Bill 3, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck). What is the will of the House? Is the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina? *[Agreed]*

The honourable Member for Steinbach, to speak to Bill 3.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I rise to speak to Bill 3, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act.

I had the opportunity yesterday to speak a little bit on one of the Justice bills, the reason being that there is a lack of law and order here in the province of Manitoba. We see it almost daily in our newspapers. It's hard to not pick up a newspaper on any given day and see some sort of a reference to violence in the province of Manitoba, some sort of a reference to Manitobans not being able to safely go onto the streets of their communities at certain times, really, almost any time, and not feel confident that their families are safe in their communities.

I hear it from not only my own constituents, but, certainly, from constituents of members across the way. Without exception, whether it's an urban member or a rural member, there are significant and serious concerns with the fact that, in our province, we're leading the country in a category or in categories that we wouldn't want to lead the country in. Whether it's violence, whether it's others, like auto theft, Mr. Speaker, other property crimes or other property offences against individuals, there is a number of different categories where we take no pride in leading the country, and yet this government seems to be either unaware or unable or unwilling to take measures to try to reduce crime.

Oh, they talk a good show sometimes, Mr. Speaker. They like to swagger in and out of different places and try to—*[interjection]*—coffee shops, whether it's in Minto or in other places and try to say, oh, we're doing something on crime, you needn't worry. Yes, in fact, the Member for Burrows (Mr.

Martindale) points to himself and says that he does the swaggering as well, and certainly he does.

I saw one of his mail pieces, one of his mail pieces that, in fact, could soon be illegal, that he put out into his riding recently with misinformation about crime, trying to tell Manitobans and his constituents that crime is getting better and that they had nothing to worry about, that they could safely—you know, and it's unfortunate because the Member for Burrows puts out that partisan type of mail to his constituents. I'm sure he hasn't had the opportunity to speak to his Premier, to go to his Premier and say, what are you trying to do to clamp down on my communications?

Maybe it was that particular piece of mail that led us to this place in the Legislature. Maybe the Premier (Mr. Doer) saw that piece of rubbish, Mr. Speaker, that piece of dribble and said we need to bring in legislation because the Member for Burrows is so wrong and so misplaced in what he's saying about crime, so misguided that we had to bring in legislation to clamp it down. Or perhaps it was in the riding of the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) who has a number of her own challenges and problems these days as hundreds of Manitobans line up to speak to a bill that is going to hurt farming, the anti-farming bill in Manitoba.

I just received, I think, an update on the number of presenters who are to speak to Bill 17. Mr. Speaker, 349 Manitobans have signed up and said—and that's just today. It seems to be growing, I wouldn't say exponentially, but, certainly, by 25 or 30 a day it continues to grow as Manitobans learn about the undemocratic piece of legislation towards farmers that this Minister of Agriculture, in collusion and in a cabal with her Premier and with all members of the government has decided to try to drive farmers out of the province and out of business.

Specifically, when it comes to crime, I know that I had the opportunity to speak to constituents of the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Lemieux) often, whether it's in Falcon Lake or in Landmark or throughout La Verendrye, many property crimes take place. I hear that they try to call their MLA, the Member for La Verendrye, try to get a hold of him to express their concerns and often they never receive a response back. He either doesn't want to respond to the concerns that they raise or simply doesn't have an answer.

Perhaps he's ashamed of his own government's record. It's funny, because I've seen some of the

material that he's put out into his own riding, partisan material, trying to give a wrong impression about what's happening in Manitoba. Maybe it was that piece of literature that the Member for La Verendrye put out that the Premier said this is wrong, we need to clamp down on this misinformation, but I think that there's an easier way than going after the Member for Burrows—[interjection]

Point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Goertzen: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I heard the Member for Burrows make a comment about my dedication to this House and to the constituents of my riding. I refer to section 64 of *Beauchesne's* and reflections upon members.

I would, Mr. Speaker, say that I take my job here in the Legislature and my duty to all of my constituents in the riding of Steinbach very seriously, and I disagree that the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) would put a negative reflection upon me in this House.

*(15:10)

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

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): On the same alleged point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Usually, when members are debating, there's some give-and-take back and forth. Normally, they respond in debate, Mr. Speaker. I realize the member seems to feel he's on a bit of a roll here, coming out of committee where he—I think he's been trying to set the record for the most number of out-of-order points of order. He's got me beat any day.

Mr. Speaker, it's also quite unusual to interrupt your own speech on a point of order. I think if you were to consider what happened, there was some friendly banter back and forth. The member is getting slightly too sensitive. Maybe it's sleep deprivation from the committees, but there was no point of order.

I know the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) was simply trying to assist the member in sticking to the bill and making appropriate comments. So I think he was actually helpful, not

hurtful, and certainly didn't violate anything in *Beauschene's*.

Mr. Speaker: On a point of order raised by the honourable Member for Steinbach, I'm sure all honourable members take their duties very, very seriously.

I would rule the honourable member does not have a point of order.

Mr. Goertzen: With respect, I challenge your ruling.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged.

All those in favour of sustaining the ruling of the Chair, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the ruling of the Chair, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Goertzen: A recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

* (16:00)

Mr. Speaker: A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

Order. The question before the House is: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

Division

A RECORDED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Allan, Ashton, Bjornson, Blady, Brick, Caldwell, Dewar, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Marcelino, Martindale, McGifford, Melnick, Oswald, Reid, Robinson, Rondeau, Saran, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Wowchuk.

Nays

Borotsik, Briese, Cullen, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Faurschou, Goertzen, Graydon, Lamoureux, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 28, Nays 19.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: We will revert to resume debate on concurrence, third reading and Bill 3.

Mr. Goertzen: I want to conclude my comments on Bill 3. You know, in reflection, it's possible that I overreacted slightly to the comments for the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale). I've had an hour to reflect. I know that the Member for Burrows is an honourable individual, and I certainly take no offence to his comments.

Now, going back, Mr. Speaker, to the point of crime in the city of Winnipeg and in Manitoba, and the fact that we continue to lead the country in a variety of different areas of crime, whether it's violent crime or property crime. I know that members opposite don't like to speak about this subject because they know that their record is so abysmal. After having eight years to correct the problem, to make an impact, to make a difference in the amount of crime in Manitoba, there doesn't seem to be any change. In fact, the longer the NDP are in government, the worse the problem seems to get. We're now on our second Minister of Justice, and we don't see any improvement from the previous Minister of Justice. There still continues to be rampant crime in the city of Winnipeg and throughout Manitoba.

You know, we talked yesterday a little bit and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Chomiak), when he was moving second reading, sorry, third reading on this particular bill, suggested that we have some of the toughest drinking and driving provisions in the province or in the country of Canada. In fact, we do. There are very tough measures in place for the drinking and driving in Manitoba, but a large part of that, Mr. Speaker, and this was admitted by the Minister of Justice, was that a lot of those provisions were brought in by the previous, Conservative-Progressive Conservative-government in Manitoba, often to the opposition of the naysayers opposite, the now-government, who said that a lot of those provisions wouldn't be constitutional or wouldn't work in practice.

In fact, we had members of the government suggest that provisions to seize vehicles for drinking and driving wouldn't withstand constitutional and

Charter challenges when in fact they did, Mr. Speaker. Over time, we've seen that not only did it withstand the constitutional challenge, but many other provinces across Canada have emulated what we did as a Progressive Conservative government in Manitoba. Setting the framework and setting the base for that hasn't always been given credit by the members opposite and it's not always about getting credit, of course.

Of course, it's more than just simply legislation. You know, I've said before and it's been echoed by others, including Mothers Against Drunk Driving and other organizations, Mr. Speaker, that you can have the toughest laws in the world. You can have the toughest laws in the world, but, if you don't have police officers to enforce those laws on our streets or in our rural areas, it really doesn't matter because a piece of legislation itself doesn't enforce the law. It's police officers who, ultimately, enforce the law. And there are many places in Manitoba where there aren't adequate police resources.

* (16:10)

I know the government will say that they've added X amount of police officers in either the city of Winnipeg or other places in rural Manitoba, but what they forget to remind Manitobans or to say to Manitobans is that what they've really done is added funding positions, but not necessarily people to fill those positions all the time. Empty funded positions don't fight crime either, Mr. Speaker. It's often considered a phantom police force.

So this government needs to look at a holistic approach. It's not just about creating new laws or tougher laws. It's about ensuring that those tougher laws can be enforced because there are people there to enforce them, but also looking at the root causes of crime, Mr. Speaker, tackling drug addiction and tackling the drugs that are on our streets or in our schools.

We see the youth crime that we have in the province of Manitoba. So much of that is fuelled by the drug industry in Manitoba. The finances for these youth gangs that come from the distribution and sale of drugs, Mr. Speaker—they obtain weapons and other illegal items through the trading of drugs for weapons across borders and within Manitoba itself.

We continue to hear that the problem isn't getting better, Mr. Speaker. The problem is getting worse and, yet, this government will point to a variety of different programs, whether it's the

Turnabout program or Lighthouse programs, and say this is solving the problem. After eight years, it simply isn't solving the problem, not that there's not some inherent merit to some of those programs because, of course, there is merit to some of the programs, but that simply isn't working in and of itself.

It's not enough just to say you're going to open up a gymnasium from 10 o'clock to 12 o'clock, because we know many of the young people who are committing crimes and others aren't interested in going to those facilities between 10 and 12 o'clock. So what do we do? Throwing the doors open doesn't necessarily mean they're going to take that option and come into those facilities to play basketball or to be involved in any other sort of sporting activities.

There does need, and I say on principle, Mr. Speaker, there does need to be corrective measures when it comes to punishments for crime. We know that there are many different instances where young people begin their criminal life on very small crimes, whether it's shoplifting or other sorts of things; introductory crimes they're often called. The police officers refer to them as first-level-entry crimes. They learn from there; they learn about the system. They learn not to be intimidated by the justice system because they realize that they often are immune to some of the punishments within the system, and they begin to move up to higher-level crimes.

There are plenty of opportunities for the provincial government to intercede at a very early stage, whether it's minor, relatively—we would consider them minor. I know retail businesses wouldn't consider them to be minor offences but, in a Criminal Code context, minor offences like shoplifting.

To intercede and to say, okay, we're going to have a consequence for those lower-level crimes, so that there's a clear message sent at an early and young age that, no matter what sort of crime is committed in the system, there will be a consequence and an increasing, a ratcheting-up of consequences for higher and higher offences.

That, I think, is really one of the ways you attack the root causes of crime, by ensuring that you have early intervention for a young person. I don't know that members opposite would completely disagree with that in theory, but the reality is they've been in government now for almost nine years. They've had the opportunity to put those programs in. Many of

the young people at very young ages, 13 and 14 years old, who are committing serious crimes, were three or four years old when this government came into office. So they've grown up under the programs and under the mantra and the justice system of the NDP government. Yet we see the problem getting worse and not better, Mr. Speaker.

So, when we look at legislation like the one before us this afternoon, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, Bill 3, we know that it's not just about bringing more pieces of legislation into the House. It's not just about papering the statutes of Manitoba with more pieces of legislation or amending acts of legislation that already exist. It really is a culture. It's a culture and an attitude, a mentality that you start at the top and you bring it through the entire Department of Justice, that we're not going to stand for any sorts of crimes.

It's a little bit like the tipping-point theory or the broken-window theory, that you need to find that point where things start to make a difference; it often is at a lower level. Mr. Speaker.

We've seen what happened in New York City. We had the opportunity a few years ago now to have Rudy Guiliani come to the city of Winnipeg and have a discussion on how they were able to reduce crime in New York City which, at one point, was considered one of the most violent cities in the world. Now, I would say, on a per capita basis, that New York City would be safer than a city like Winnipeg, particularly in the downtown area where the Times Square area of New York City has been cleaned up almost completely and residents feel safe, and many visitors that they get to downtown New York and the Manhattan area feel very secure in walking those streets because they took an approach that even small crimes were going to be prosecuted; they were going to be followed up on because they realized that, if you go after some of the small things that were happening, often it led you to the larger fishes, police officers might say in their vernacular. You could go after the smaller, somewhat petty crimes, but it led you to other things because if somebody was breaking the law on the street, whether it was a vandalism law or some other smaller crime in New York, often they had a warrant or they had some other criminal behaviour. So they cracked down on all the lower-level crimes, and they found in time that the higher-level crimes were reduced, too, because they were bringing off those individuals who were committing a variety of levels of crime.

So there are many different approaches to try to reduce crime in Manitoba and in the city of Winnipeg, more specifically, but this government simply doesn't have the will or the attitude. They like to point to the federal government. Mr. Speaker, they like to point to the federal legislation and to say it's all about Parliament. Certainly, there is a division of responsibilities. We know, constitutionally, that there are certain powers that are granted to the Province of Manitoba and certain powers that are granted to the federal government, but, in that division of powers, there are many powers that rest with the Attorney General of Manitoba.

It wasn't set up as a paid lobbyist position. There really are reasons why we have an Attorney General in the province of Manitoba. It's not simply to board a jet to Ottawa every week to try to lobby the federal government to take some sort of action on their level. We certainly don't see the federal Minister of Justice getting on a plane and coming to Winnipeg every week and telling the provincial Minister of Justice what to do. I'm not sure why I would go in the reverse direction because we know that each level of government has its own significant responsibilities to take care of.

So I would encourage the now-Minister of Justice, having replaced the former, the current Member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) as the Minister of Justice after seven failed years in his tenure, to ensure that real progress is made and that real action is taken. It's not just about trying to get good headlines and putting out press releases. It is about changing the culture within government and within the Department of Justice, but it starts at the top. The tone always starts at the top, Mr. Speaker, in terms of how you're going to set priorities in a department, how you're going to use limited resources, where you're going to prioritize those resources to ensure that they have the largest effect over a short period of time, as well as a long period of time.

I recognize, Mr. Speaker, that my time is running short and there might be comments from other members and—*[interjection]* Maybe there won't be and we'll hear speakers in the days, weeks and, perhaps, months ahead on this legislation as we go through the summer trying to deal with different pieces of legislation. So I look forward to hearing comments from members opposite regarding this legislation and how it is we can continue, or start, perhaps, to make Manitoba a safer place and Winnipeg a safer city. Thank you very much.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I, too, just wanted to put a few words on the record in regard to this bill. I did have the opportunity, in second reading, to emphasize the importance of street racing and how constituents—and I would argue not only my constituents but all constituents—have concerns in regard to the issue of street racing. The principle of the bill and what the bill is going to be doing, I think, goes a long way in satisfying some of those interests.

Mr. Speaker, the reason why I chose to stand up at this time on the bill is to emphasize the point that we're glad to see the legislation, that it will ultimately pass third reading and be given royal assent. We hope that it will have a positive impact on curtailing street racing in our communities but, at the same time, I wanted to talk a little bit more in general about the issue of crime and safety. People want to feel safe in their streets and this is just one offence that causes a great deal of concern.

Mr. Speaker, the other day in question period, I was able to raise the issue of something that was really important. I believe, too, in particular, North End residents—and I look to the members for Burrows, St. Johns and The Maples. Those three in particular and my constituency combined have relied, in the past, very heavily on the community police office that's located on McPhillips Street. Many of the types of offences that this bill deals with, I would suggest to you even comes up in through our community police office.

*(16:20)

My understanding is that that community police office was a very busy office and provided a wonderful service. What concerns me is that the government has campaigned in the last three election campaigns on the issue of crime and safety and making our communities safer.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this most recent action is not going to make our communities safer. Ultimately, it's a question of whether or not the government of the day supports the concept of community police offices. Our police chief—and I respect the decisions that are being made by our police chief and the local police establishment—but what we have to recognize is that they are attempting to allocate their resources the best way that they can given the limited amount of resources that they have.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

You'll recall earlier in the year I raised the issue in terms of we need to have more police on our streets than in our hospital institutions where we have literally thousands of police hours that are being wasted because they are no more than glorified security personnel at the hospital. Or if we take a look at our courts and the amount of police officers that are in our courts that, I would ultimately argue, again, well into the thousands of hours. But I would ultimately argue that it doesn't have to be that way.

The Province needs to show more leadership in dealing with those types of issues in hopes that ultimately, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we would have the ability to continue with community police offices. It is a question of whether or not you support the concept of community police offices. We in the Manitoba Liberal Party do support that concept.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I was always of the opinion that the New Democratic Party also supported that concept because they campaigned on it. Manitobans, in particular residents of north Winnipeg, believe that the community police offices would stick around if the NDP were to have been given another mandate. They have been given another mandate. They expect the government to live up to its word. It reminds me of the end to hallway medicine.

You know, hallway medicine was terminology that was coined by the current Premier (Mr. Doer) when he was actually in opposition. When he was Leader of the Official Opposition, he was the one that coined the phrase of hallway medicine and made the commitment to get rid of it. Manitobans were very disappointed when the Premier failed on that commitment. Now we see the Premier is failing yet again on another commitment that's really important to Manitobans, and that is the commitment where he said—and it's in their printed material. I suggest even you, as the Madam Deputy Speaker, if you reflect and look at your printed material that went out to St. James, or any NDP candidate was to reflect on the material that they circulated—what they promised was safer communities.

I question the government as to why it is they believe that there is no obligation on this government to ensure that we have community police offices in our communities. I believe that they're exceptionally well utilized, given the resources that they did have. I believe that, given the opportunity, they could have been enabled to continue on well into the future. I receive many calls, many discussions throughout the

year. The value of community police offices in the minds of the constituents and beyond, not only my constituents, for community police offices was very high. The public had an expectation.

I respect in terms of what it is that the police chief is saying, but, sometimes, one has to agree to disagree because ultimately, if the will was there, we should be able to sustain those community police offices, Madam Deputy Speaker. Unfortunately, without the Province of Manitoba keeping its word in terms of community policing or providing community safety, it's going to be very difficult to see many of these community police offices survive. I do believe that it is a mistake.

You know, one of the things I like to do is to try to gauge in terms of what my constituents are thinking over a period of time. An example that I could give with that is in regard to health care again because—and I go back to health care because health care is an excellent issue in terms of, and has been an issue for many, many years, and I've been able to get a fairly good gauge as to what the public has to say about health care in the province of Manitoba. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, I plan to do more of that in the area of crime, because at the end of the day it's going to be interesting to see whether or not people are going to feel safer on the issue of crime in the communities.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

To me, that's what in part this bill is about. We have individuals that are very much concerned about street racing, and they wanted government to do something in regard to it and they have, through this bill. That's why I say I don't mind giving government credit where credit is warranted. So I think that the bill is good, but, Mr. Speaker, the citizens also, I believe, support community police offices. The government has been exceptionally quiet on that issue. So, on the one hand, they're trying to appease the public by talking about what they're doing with street racing, but, on the other hand, they're letting these community police offices close to the degree in which I believe it's taking policing out of our communities. I think to accomplish some of the things that our new chief wants to be able to do, had the Province been doing its homework, then he would have been able to have those types of police hours necessary, I believe, in order to compensate.

What it all boils down to, Mr. Speaker, I suspect that if we were to do some sort of an analysis, that if we were to take a look at those thousands of hours

that are being wasted because of the provincial government not acting, those hours could have been used to keep our community police offices open.

So, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to use this opportunity to highlight what I know is a very important issue to people living in north Winnipeg—I would ultimately argue to all Manitobans—and that is the principle of community police offices and emphasize that the government has dropped the ball by not doing what it should have been doing in terms of dealing with assisting our police force in terms of the allocation of police office hours, such as our hospitals.

* (16:30)

So, with those few words, we're prepared ultimately to see the bill become law because we recognize the value of what it is that the principle of the bill itself is trying to do.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any other speakers? When this bill is again before the House, it will remaining standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

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

Mr. Speaker: I will now call Bill 4, The Provincial Court Amendment Act (Family Mediators and Evaluators), standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina?

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. It'll remaining standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

Any speakers? Okay.

Bill 5—The Witness Security Act

Mr. Speaker: I will now call Bill 5, The Witness Security Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed. It will remain standing in the name of the name of the honourable Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck).

No speakers? Okay.

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

Mr. Speaker: I'll move on to Bill 7, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Child Pornography Reporting), as amended, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed. Okay, so it will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

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

Mr. Speaker: Bill 8, The Phosphorus Reduction Act (Water Protection Act Amended), standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina?

An Honourable Member: Okay.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, it will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

Bill 9—The Protection for Persons in Care Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Bill 9, The Protection for Persons in Care Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed. Okay, it will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

No speakers? Okay.

Bill 11—The Optometry Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Bill 11, The Optometry Amendment Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, it will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

Bill 12—The Securities Transfer Act

Mr. Speaker: Bill 12, The Securities Transfer Act, as amended, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Okay. No speakers? All right.

Bill 18—The Testing of Bodily Fluids and Disclosure Act

Mr. Speaker: Bill 18, The Testing of Bodily Fluids and Disclosure Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina?

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Okay, it will remain. Any speakers? No, okay.

Bill 20—The Gunshot and Stab Wounds Mandatory Reporting Act

Mr. Speaker: Bill 20, The Gunshot and Stab Wounds Mandatory Reporting Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina.

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed. Okay, so it will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Pembina. Any speakers? No speakers.

We will move into Committee of Supply.

Madam Deputy Speaker, please take the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

The Acting Chairperson (Ms. Marilyn Brick): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

The committee has before it for consideration the motion concurring in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2009.

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

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I'd like to ask the Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk), if she can point in the CEC report commission where the CEC report commission recommends a moratorium on hog expansion.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader): Well, I think the member knows that the Minister of Agriculture has been attentively awaiting the start of Committee of Supply, and in fact, will be more than happy to answer this question, and in fact, has been on call all week and would, I'm sure, be more than glad to talk about the Clean Environment Commission, although I would assume that could just as easily, probably more appropriately, have been asked of the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers), who might have been in a position to answer a bit more immediately, being the Minister responsible for the Clean Environment Commission.

I think the member opposite wasn't interested, necessarily, in an appropriate answer, but I'm sure that the Minister of Agriculture—in fact, perhaps the Minister of Conservation, as well, will bring him up to date on this important issue.

Point of Order

The Acting Chairperson (Ms. Brick): Point of order, the honourable Member for Steinbach?

Mr. Goertzen: On a point of order. I don't know if I've ever seen a situation where the minister of the Crown intervened when I asked a question.

We're allowed to ask questions of whichever minister of the three ministers we've asked for. That's why it's called concurrence. Then the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs stepped in and said that I should actually be directing to the Minister of Conservation.

Madam Acting Chairperson, is this a new precedent that the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs will now try to ferry and determine and become airport security in determining who should be answering the questions? Because why am I bothering to ask questions of anybody if he can just direct to who he wants to?

Mr. Ashton: Well, on the same point of order.

You know, the members opposite asked for three ministers. We went into concurrence. We had two of those ministers immediately ready to answer the question. The other minister was available to answer the question within one minute of the question starting.

We could have delayed going into committee, but I thought, given the fact that members opposite asked, through the rules, that ministers be available—in fact, I did try and signal to the member to see if he would have preferred to wait for the House to do it.

This is something we do. I've seen this done no matter who's in government, but, when you have an item which is not a standing order, and you do not know the exact time in which you are going to go into Committee of Supply—even before we had a standing rule that allowed members opposite to request ministers, on a courtesy basis, we have always ensured that we get the appropriate ministers in. In this particular case, the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) was available to answer the question within about one minute. So it's not a question of myself doing anything other than, as deputy House leader, pointing out the degree to which we had, in this case, the minister responsible for the area the member was talking about available, anxious and willing to answer the question—one of the ministers the member did request. The Minister of Agriculture is available now.

My suggestion to the member opposite, and by the way, we're both acting House leaders, but, if he wants to not proceed in a way we've always done—which is a matter of courtesy—try to arrange the business so that we ensure that questions are answered and have the appropriate ministers available, that's available too. The members who were requested have been available all week. In fact, as I pointed out, the Minister of Agriculture is available to answer the question.

So there's not only not a point of order, I think the member is playing some games with the way we proceed around here. If he would rather—and I don't

know if this is official comment in role of acting House leader—if he would rather have it that we just simply adjourn until we're ready to go, we can deal with that in the future. It just seemed more appropriate, since we had ministers available to answer questions already, to go into it.

* (16:40)

I will accept responsibility as acting House leader for not wasting more time of the Legislature this afternoon. But, if the member prefers that approach, I certainly look either privately or, you know, in terms of whatever discussions that we can proceed that way. That's not the way we normally deal with it largely because this is not a standing order. We don't know when concurrence is going to occur. That's up to the opposition. When it does happen, we act immediately to make sure that we have the ministers available. That's what we did.

The Acting Chairperson (Ms. Brick): I would like to advise members that when we are sitting in concurrence, there are three different ministers who are sitting, thereby providing the opportunity for a variety of ministers to answer questions.

* * *

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): This question is to the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers). I have, since over the last 12 months, asked the Minister of Conservation if, in fact, he and his department could see within their budget to expand or extend the hazardous material depot in the city of Brandon. We currently have a depot in the city of Brandon that is extremely well received, in fact, so much so that when a half-a-day depot is called, there are people who are turned away with hazardous materials, whether it be oils or paints or other hazardous materials. I would think that the Minister of Conservation would certainly like to see those materials collected in a safe fashion and disposed of in a safe fashion but, unfortunately, he can't seem to find within his budget of \$123 million the few thousand dollars it would take to extend that hazardous material depot.

He has on numerous occasions, Madam Acting Chair, indicated for me just to wait, that there is some news coming, that there will be an extension, that, I assume, he needs to wait for an election to make an announcement, which seems to be the modus operandi of that particular minister.

I wonder if the minister could, today, explain why he can't extend that depot, what the cost would

be to extend that facility for a period of time, and we're not talking 300 days out of the year. We're simply talking three or four, perhaps even five days in the year to have a full-day hazardous material depot extended to my community. I wonder why he can't find the few thousand dollars within this \$123-million budget to extend that hazardous material depot.

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): It's quite amazing to hear the member across the way who, day after day in this House, gets up and accuses us of not balancing budgets and setting up the rules to go on a go-forward basis to blow through the budget. Oh, we're going to be raiding Hydro, we're going to be raiding this, we're going to be raiding that, and then what does he do to come to concurrence with? Oh, spend more money.

The other thing, Madam Acting Chairperson, is the Member for Brandon West should get his facts straight. He makes a wisecrack from his seat about elections and it's going to take an election to get us to make a decision. Well, he should look back to when the last election was, which I may remind him that great day in this province was just over a year ago—

An Honourable Member: A year and a week.

Mr. Struthers:—a year and a week. The request that he has made came since that election. That request that he made of me several times last summer and through the fall and over the winter followed the last election. It was after the last election, at least three and a half years to the next election, and we still did the right thing by organizing a roundup all across the province, Madam Acting Chair, including his own community of Brandon, in which we were very successful in providing Manitobans the opportunity to bring forward hazardous waste, electronic waste, or not only the fine citizens of Brandon, but right across the province of Manitoba.

You know, it's not a real good strategy on the part of the Member for Brandon West, not a very good persuasive strategy to be connecting this to an election, which he's factually incorrect on, to connect this to the budget which he's huffing and puffing about in this House all the time and saying what big spenders we are and then encourages us to spend more.

The other thing I noticed that the Member for Brandon West just did was he just bad-mouthed the work that we've been doing to establish in his community a day-to-day, ongoing, more reliable way

in which we can provide his citizens with a way to get rid of these hazardous wastes, without waiting for the next roundup to come along, which is our long-term strategy not just in his community, but across this province.

I'm really disappointed to hear the member say that we shouldn't be going that route. Manitobans want us to have them, at least in the short term, provide for another roundup which we are doing, which we are doing as of today. It will be in his community as it was last year; it will be in lots of Manitoba communities.

His constituents will have lots of opportunities to bring forward their old computers, their old televisions, their old electronic devices. They will have a chance to go into their basements and into the shed out at the back, get the turpentine and the paint and whatever else and bring it to the depots again, just like they did last year; his constituents will have that opportunity.

That's fine, but we're not going to rest there. We're going to put in place in this province a very reliable, long-term system in which we collect on a day-to-day basis from the people of Manitoba, so that they're not storing them in their basements and in their sheds.

I'm really glad that the old days of taking hazardous waste and dumping it in sewers or dumping it in the river or dumping it in the ditch, that that is considered passé because now we can put in place a system that actually, truly, protects the environment and our water.

I know that the Member for Brandon is looking forward to the day when we have a system in place. I'm very disappointed to hear that he wouldn't support that in the question that he just asked me.

Mr. Borotsik: I have to say that I think the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) is trying to hide his inefficiencies and inabilities with sarcasm, and it doesn't work all that extremely well. The minister is not apt to be terribly good at sarcasm at the best of times.

I'm totally serious when I ask the minister with respect to a very-well-received hazardous material depot in my community. I would wish that he would answer the question honestly. There are two and maybe he should listen carefully.

How many days will there be a hazardous waste depot set up in Brandon this year?

Will it be expanded in the number of days? If not, is it a matter of cost? If so, how much would it cost to expand that extremely well-received depot?

I know the minister doesn't want to have hazardous materials put in ditches; I know he doesn't want them put down sewer systems. I know he doesn't want them put in backyards and front yards. He wants to have those hazardous materials collected in a reasonable fashion.

Could he answer those questions for me with a little less sarcasm, perhaps a little bit more knowledge?

Mr. Struthers: I'm a little worried because, if anybody in this Legislature knows about sarcasm, it's the Member for Brandon West, so maybe I'll give it another crack. I feel badly that the member thought I was being sarcastic because I think I fully answered his question.

* (16:50)

I told him that there will be another roundup. It will be all over the province; it will be in Brandon. There will be days in Brandon and they will be published; they will be announced. There will be lots of opportunities for his constituents to come and drop off whatever they need to drop off.

We will be organizing that. We will make sure that the member, once that decision has been made, is fully aware of that. That is an announcement that certainly will be made public to as many Manitobans as we possibly can, because we want to make sure that we get as good, and maybe even a better turnout than we did last year. So we're looking at expanding the number of days, and when the exact number is available for the city of Brandon, that will be made very public.

Mr. Borotsik: Madam Acting Chair, the numbers of days and the hours of operation could not accommodate the turnout last year. That's, I suppose, a positive thing because people are certainly taking up the opportunity to dispose of hazardous materials the way we would like to see them disposed. So they were not accommodated last year, and I go back to the minister with a simple question.

He tells me again, which is about the fourteenth time, to wait for an announcement. All I would like is a simple answer to my simple question. Will there be an announcement that extends the hours and the days of the Brandon hazardous material depot? First question, simple question. I won't make it very

complex with two or three questions. Just one would suffice now and then I'll go to the next question.

Mr. Struthers: Well, Madam Acting Chair, by breaking up his questions into smaller bits, I'm hoping he can find that easier to follow along with. When we look to organize the roundup that will take place around the province, including Brandon, we look at what we learned from last year, and we makes the changes to accommodate, to make sure, as the member quite rightly points out, to allow Manitobans to bring in even more tonnage of electronic waste, more pails of paint and other hazardous waste.

We will be making decisions in Brandon in such a way that we've learned our lessons from last year. In those communities where we need to increase the amount of hours, increase the number of days, based on our experience from last year, those decisions will be made, and they will be with an eye on providing as much opportunity for his constituents as possible to bring in that electronic and hazardous waste.

Mr. Borotsik: Well, it's obvious that the bureaucrats haven't told the minister just how many hours and how many days are going to be expanded anywhere throughout the province of Manitoba.

Now, the minister—and it is his department, I think, and he does have an Estimates book—I wonder if he can point to a line item in the Estimates book as to the cost of that particular program, the collection of hazardous materials and computer equipment and other types of materials that this program involves.

Can he point to the line item as to the actual cost of that program and how much his department spends on an annual basis on that program?

Mr. Struthers: Given the experience of the Member for Brandon West, I would ask him to think back to his days as mayor when he was the political leader and there were bureaucrats that worked, and I know many of them in Brandon worked very hard to carry out the political decisions that he and his council made.

It works a lot like that, I want the Member for Brandon West to know, when you're a minister and you have a department. I have some of the best bureaucrats in the country working in the Department of Conservation. They sit with me on a regular basis, and I indicate to them what our political direction is, and the bureaucrats find the best way to get that political direction accomplished.

They work very hard at that and they do a very good job.

So, Madam Acting Chairperson, when I and our government decided that we were going to do another roundup, I said to them, let's look at what we did last year; based on our experience last year, let's make the adjustments for this year to maximize the amount of hazardous waste and electronic waste that we can get out of the environment. That's what they're doing. That's what they're working very hard at, and we will be making announcements along those lines in the very near future.

The point that I want to make sure that the Member for Brandon West understands is that that's not the end of it, that we are moving forward with some regulatory changes to set up a long-term framework, a long-term system that will allow his constituents to bring forward their hazardous waste and electronic waste on a regular, routine day-to-day basis. That, I think, is where we have to end up with this. I know the Member for Brandon West shares our concern about these wastes being in our landfills or in our water table or in our rivers and streams. I know that he wants to work with us to divert those into a much more environmentally friendly system, which is what we will be providing for the citizens of Manitoba.

Mr. Borotsik: Well, obviously, the minister doesn't know his budget, doesn't know the line item, and doesn't know how much it costs for that particular program. That's all he had to say; he didn't have to go on and on and on. With respect, Madam Acting Chair, he obviously made reference to the fact that I was very fortunate to be the mayor of the city of Brandon. I look at that experience as being one that's been very enjoyable and certainly, it was something that I took great pride in.

I did also—[interjection] Well, actually, the former Member for Brandon West probably wishes I was there still. Who is the former member? Oh, right, he was a member of the NDP. Yeah, the former member no longer—he wished, I'm sure—stayed some place else. But that was just a heckle I had to respond to.

When I was there when we put in programs, when we put in programs and we talked to our administrative staff, we usually gave them directions. We gave them parameters; we understood what those programs were going to cost. We really didn't want to give carte blanche, which I'm sure the minister doesn't want to do because I'm sure that he wants to

maintain or certainly stay within his \$123-million budget. The question was pretty simple: Is there a line item? Minister didn't answer. Does he know what the program costs? The minister didn't answer. All he has indicated—and by the way, I think that probably is the way that this government operates. They don't really know what the cost is; they just do and obviously have the poor Finance Minister try to scramble and balance the budget and find more revenue.

Last question—and if the minister doesn't know, that's okay; it's okay to say, I don't know. Does the minister know what the cost and where the line item is of that particular hazmat program? Can he show it to me in his Estimates book?

Mr. Struthers: Well, the Member for Brandon West did actually show up at Estimates. In the last 30 seconds of the Estimates process, the member did show up. He asked me very quickly whether there was going to be a program in Brandon and I said, yes, there is going to be a program, and there will be opportunities for his constituents to bring their hazardous waste and their electronic waste. It was literally in the last half minute of Estimates. So I give the member some credit. He did come to Estimates and squeezed it in right at the end before his colleague kind of shooed him away because they wanted to wrap up my Estimates according to the agreement that we had.

So I would have loved to have spent more time in Estimates talking to the Member for Brandon West. I would have loved to spend more productive

time with him talking about—*[interjection]* I would have loved to spend more—*[interjection]*

The Acting Chairperson (Ms. Brick): Order. The Minister for Conservation has the floor. It would be much appreciated if we give him the opportunity to answer the question.

Mr. Struthers: Thank you, Madam Acting Chairperson. I know that when we do get this program, the roundup going, and then when we move into a longer-term program—

The Acting Chairperson (Ms. Brick): Order. I'm sorry, the time is 5 o'clock. According to the rules, there is supposed to be an indication at the end of each day of sitting in concurrence, whether questioning for the listed ministers has been concluded or whether the questioning will continue.

Is there an indication of whether the questioning for the ministers of Conservation, Education and Agriculture is concluded, or whether the questioning shall continue on another day?

Some Honourable Members: Continue.

The Acting Chairperson (Ms. Brick): Thank you very much. It shall continue.

The time being 5 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, May 28, 2008

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