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of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

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Vacant	Charleswood	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 11, 1997

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

House Business

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on this second day after the debate on the throne speech has been completed, we have an interesting variety of matters to place before the House. As I wait for the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou), I will explain to you the nature of the day as has been worked out between myself and the opposition House leader (Mr. Ashton).

As you know, yesterday, pursuant to arrangements between the opposition and the government, we were very fortunate to have some 18 or 19 bills placed before the House. We were fortunate that ministers in a timely and an efficient way presented for second reading the bills that we had before us.

Now, today, pursuant to discussions between myself and the opposition House leader, we propose to deal with the business more or less along these lines:

First, by agreement this morning, we would deal with Private Members' Business, namely, Resolution No. 6, standing in the name of the honourable member for Portage la Prairie. After the one hour for that particular matter, should there be resolution of that matter prior to the expiration of the hour, that would be good, but if not, we would then move in the second hour this morning to Resolution No. 4, standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), relating to responses to domestic violence.

After that, we would adjourn at noon or whenever we are finished consideration of Resolution No. 4 and resume at 1:30 p.m. when we deal with the Routine Proceedings and Question Period. After that, we would call bills, should there be any contributions to be made by honourable members at that time. Following that, Madam Speaker, we would deal with the government motions, as noted on page 3 of today's Order Paper, and then we would have another Question Period. At that

time, I believe the agreement is that we would deal with Resolution No. 3, standing in the name of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

Unless there are any changes, that is the order of business as we propose it. At this time, we would ask that you call Private Members' Business and call, by leave, Resolution No. 6, standing in the name of the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou).

Madam Speaker: Order, please. For clarification, the honourable government House leader said following Question Period, they will deal with bills for second reading, government motions, then another Question Period.

Mr. McCrae: I am sorry, Madam Speaker, another private members' hour.

Madam Speaker: I assumed that is what you did, but you did say another Question Period. I thank the honourable government House leader for that clarification.

Mr. McCrae: My apologies to the House.

Madam Speaker: That is quite all right.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, just before you comment on the government House leader's request, I just wanted to express to the government House leader that, in fact, there seems to be, somewhat, co-operation between the government and the official opposition in terms of private members' resolutions, where I see members from both caucuses having resolutions put in some sort of preferred order.

I know that members of the independent caucus also have some priorities in terms of resolutions, and I just make note of it at this point in time.

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, I hear the honourable member for Inkster. I had discussions yesterday with one of his colleagues in the independent caucus—that was the honourable member for The Maples (Mr.

Kowalski)—to let him know in general terms the direction we were going today and, indeed, in future sittings, if accommodations can be made for members of the independent caucus, I would want to be part of those accommodations.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Just on that, I would suggest that perhaps in the upcoming period of time in between the sessions that we sit down, both the government caucus, the opposition caucus, and independent members and follow the model we have adopted, I think, which is still to maintain our rules in terms of the draw but perhaps to see if there are not some resolutions that can be brought higher up on the Order Paper to make sure they are considered.

So perhaps if we can all sit down and come back in, I think maybe we can accommodate that. We are certainly agreeable to what the member is suggesting.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Res. 6—Potato Research

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Madam Speaker, I rise this morning to move a private member's resolution. I would like to move, seconded by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), a private members' resolution as read:

“WHEREAS 1997 was a record year for Manitoba farmers, marked by an increase in cash receipts of 13 %, a continuing increase in exports and manufacturing and a thriving agribusiness that demonstrates the importance that value-added jobs can have for the Manitoba economy; and

“WHEREAS Manitoba is the second largest potato producing province in Canada and the area of Portage La Prairie produces a significant amount of the province's potatoes; and

“WHEREAS the Provincial Government has helped strengthen the agriculture and agribusiness sector through initiatives such as the creation of the \$3.4-million fund for Agri-Food research and development

and the establishment of the Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) Program; and

“WHEREAS Manitoba farmers need to continue to find innovative ways of doing business because of the rapid changes confronting the agriculture sector.

“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the efforts of the Provincial Government to strengthen the development of value-added opportunities for the province's agricultural sector.”

Motion presented.

Mr. Faurshou: Good morning, honourable members. It is indeed an honour to rise this morning to speak in support of the resolution just read. Recently in Portage la Prairie, as recently as this summer, the McCain family opened an additional expanded plant for the processing of potatoes produced here in the province. They invested \$55.9 million, Madam Speaker, in this province and in the infrastructure which we are very proud will bring approximately 150 new jobs to the plant. However, those particular 150 jobs will be expanded once one looks at the other modes of production for potatoes that involve not only the machinery manufacturing but trucking, as well as all the infrastructure that supports potato production right back at the field level. Certainly, this plant in Portage la Prairie, now up and running and commissioned, last week had the opportunity to process 1.4 million pounds of potatoes in a 24-hour period. Without question, this plant is the most modern potato-processing facility in all of the world, Madam Speaker, of which we should be very proud that we have at our back door.

* (1010)

Now, the resolution this morning was in regards to infrastructure coming out of research. In Portage la Prairie, we are blessed with having a number of research facilities. However, I will bring my comments specifically to that operated in conjunction between the Manitoba government and the federal agency known as PFRA from the federal government. That particular facility in Portage la Prairie has been focusing on diversification and looking at new crops and how they might essentially be improved in their production, so

that we can have alternatives to the current crops already under production.

In Portage la Prairie, we have almost a third of the potato production here in the province in the immediate vicinity of Portage la Prairie. Complementing that, the PFRA facility and the Manitoba provincial government, better known as the Manitoba Crop Diversification Centre, would like to focus their activities on potatoes, Madam Speaker. Having the opportunity to enhance the production of potatoes assists everyone concerned, not only the farmers but the people that share residency within the rural of Portage la Prairie.

One can understand that living in the rural there are many activities that take place in the production of potatoes, and with potatoes there are numerous operations that involve that production. This causes inconvenience and headache to some residents, but we believe that through the emphasis placed by this provincial government upon research that we can improve the production of potatoes so that fewer field operations might take place.

I might be more specific insofar as the herbicide and fungicide applications that are taking place now in field operations. I believe they can be significantly reduced if we have the opportunity to take the technology that now exists in the development of new strains of varieties and bring them to bear in the field production. That would enhance our ability to produce a high-quality, high-yielding crop with less inputs. That will not only enhance our opportunity to have margin as a farmer, but it would also enhance the relationships that we as farmers have with our rural neighbours.

Now, everyone is perhaps aware that genetic improvements that have taken place through technology in recent years can be brought to bear on the development of new varieties. Those new varieties, I believe, are not too far in the future. However, we must be able to take forward that technology and bring it into actual production.

Now, Madam Speaker, I know I have spoken directly about potatoes in Portage la Prairie because that is a crop which has been expanding more than double the acres that have been in previously. Indeed, the

production in the Portage la Prairie area has doubled to over 30,000 acres. We expect that that particular expansion will not be the last as the equipment that has been installed recently in their production plant, or their processing plant, will be more streamlined and be able to take further raw production and will require additional field operations.

Now, in the Portage la Prairie area, we have undergone a significant increase in land value, because the value of potato-producing-quality soils is not always afforded all over this province, and fortunately we are blessed in Portage la Prairie to have quite an abundant amount of acres that qualify in low clay content there making an exceptional potato production. The farmland prices in Portage la Prairie have shown a significant bearing on an average farmland increase that we have experienced in the last year of 8.9 percent, which again is leading this nation in agricultural land appreciation, which I bring right back to the potato production which we have in the Portage la Prairie and most certainly in the area my honourable member for Pembina represents as well.

Now, I have had a first-hand observation of what has been able to take place right in Portage la Prairie. We certainly have seen an increase of an average potato production of approximately 100 hundredweight per acre. That now averages over a 175 hundredweight per acre, which comes from not only just improvements in the producer but also the improvement in varieties which we much need.

Also here in Portage la Prairie, I must say that we are going to be looking forward to the recent Manitoba Water Commission Report involving the two main water sources in Portage la Prairie at present, that being the aquifer as well as the Assiniboine River structure. We would like to support this government's initiatives to look into programs that will enhance the opportunities for irrigation and that irrigation being brought within an economical distance to more acres.

With that happening, Madam Speaker, the increased production will also be afforded us because, as one is well aware, irrigation has significantly increased over dry land the overall bottom line being hundredweight per acre.

Portage la Prairie, if I might deviate for just a moment, is an area in Manitoba that has the greatest amount of corn heat units in the province, and we have been blessed by a more temperate climate because of being in the lee of the Lake Manitoba. This has afforded Portage la Prairie the latitude and diversification to not only take on potato production but many other crops such as horseradish and tomatoes and broccoli and carrots and others. I am vastly proud of being able to represent this very diverse agricultural area of Manitoba.

I would like to ask members here present this morning for support of this resolution because, ultimately, what does occur on the farm has significant spin-offs to others within the province of Manitoba. The facts and figures to which we are all akin is, approximately, \$1 on the farm spins off to \$7 throughout this province.

I would ask the members support this resolution, because we have all looked at research, and that is even more dramatic in spin-off dollars. We have understood that a dollar invested in research has more than a fiftyfold return when it comes to the store shelves that we all are familiar in shopping within our supermarkets. So, honourable members, I would very much appreciate your support of this particular resolution here this morning.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the member for Portage for bringing forward this resolution on agriculture research which is a very important topic, and I want to tell the member that this is an important topic and warrants a considerable amount of debate. There are several members on our side of the House who are interested in the agriculture industry and are very interested in agriculture research and will be wanting to put comments on the record with respect to that.

* (1020)

Madam Speaker, I want to say that when we talk about agriculture research, this is an issue that I have been raising for many years now, calling on this provincial government to put more money into agriculture research because Manitoba has fallen way behind other provinces. When we look at what

Saskatchewan spends, \$12 million to \$14 million, Alberta spending \$7 million and Manitoba falling way behind, and we have raised this issue many times over past years. I remember when there was surplus in various funds, we had asked if government would consider since those monies were tied to agriculture that that money be put towards research. We could not make any headway with the government on it. So we were very pleased in the last budget when it was announced that there would be \$3.4 million going into the agriculture research and development and the establishment of additional research.

It is my understanding, Madam Speaker, that that fund has not been—none of that money has been spent yet, that there is some work going on it, but none of this money has been spent. So I hope that we will see the addition, although it was—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I am experiencing some difficulty hearing the honourable member for Swan River.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We heard the announcement of the agrifood research money announced again in this throne speech, and even though it was announced in the last budget, I hope that we will see additional funds put in in the upcoming budget even though this fund has not been disposed of yet.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) is wanting to put some comments. I would ask that you encourage him to hold his comments until it is his time to speak.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): I am prepared to speak, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Swan River still has 12 minutes remaining.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to recognize at this time that we on this side of the House do feel that the potato industry is very important to Manitoba. In fact, when the NDP was in power we contributed, our government contributed, significantly to the Carberry plant for expansion and to ensure that

the potato industry grew there. The NDP also played a significant role in the construction and the establishment of the Canadian food processing and research centre, which is in Portage as well, recognizing the importance of research, but that has not happened under this government.

The member for Portage (Mr. Faurschau) should recognize that this is an important resolution because his resolution will maybe encourage his colleagues to recognize how important research is and that we do keep up with other provinces. We have lost research here in this province. We have had federal research stations closed down, and I think that the provincial government has to take some responsibility for not lobbying harder to ensure that those research stations did stay in this province. I am pleased that we are now getting some money, because when the province puts money into research, it attracts other research into the province. We have letters that were written by Dean Elliot. The issue was raised by the KAP association saying we have to put money into research to ensure that we stay ahead of the game in this province.

It is one thing to expand an industry such as the potato industry, but you also have to have the research to ensure that you have the research done on disease, that you have research done on new varieties, and that is not happening in this province at this time.

There are other issues that you have to look at as well. I was at a Keystone Agricultural Producers meeting, and we talked about what is happening in this province, and one of the concerns that was raised was that this government has a fairly narrow focus. They talk about expansion of the hog industry and expansion of the potato industry, and a suggestion was made at that meeting which I support, that you cannot put all your eggs into one basket. You have to look broader. That is why we need more research. You cannot just have potato production in southern Manitoba. You have to look at other crops that can be expanded, other diversifications that can happen, and that is why it is so important that we do have the research.

I think that we also have to do—there has to be research and consideration given to the impact of growing potatoes in a particular area. When you grow potatoes, you use a tremendous amount of water, and

there have been people who have raised concerns about the impacts of using this amount of water, the impacts on the aquifer, and I think that is another area of research that has to be done. We always have to think long term. Yes, Manitoba is growing to be one of the largest potato producers in Canada; but, when you have a growth of an industry, you have to ensure that the research is done to ensure that there are not negative impacts as well.

So I welcome the additional funds that are being put into research. As I say, we have to look at our niche that we can do research in Manitoba that relates to the Manitoba industries. Alberta does a tremendous amount of research on the beef industry. Saskatchewan has also put money, \$4 million, into the beef development fund. So just what they are putting into beef compared to the amount of money that we are putting into our whole research program is—our research money that we have is a very important step, but it is quite small in comparison to what other provinces are doing.

We have to remember as well that, as we change from growing grains that we have traditionally grown in this area, we have to look at other crops, and we also have to look at research for other parts of the province and ways for additional crops to be grown. That is the weakness that we have had in this province up until now. Very insignificant money, up until this research grant was announced, the agrifood research, we were only putting up a million dollars into research compared to \$12 million to \$14 million in other provinces.

So we have much work to do. Agriculture plays a very important role in this community and in this province, and the member mentioned that the return on agriculture was one to seven. I am not quite sure. I had thought that it was not quite that high, but even if it is one to five or one to six, a lot of times people do not recognize what an important role agriculture plays in the economy of this province.

The number of farmers is decreasing. Farms are becoming larger, although revenues, the return to farmers in many cases is not increasing in proportion to the size that their farms have increased. The agriculture community and the farm families involved play a very

important part in the economy of this province, and it is deserving that we would try to do as much research as possible to help them diversify and continue to play an important role.

We talk about many other issues. We talk about providing services in rural Manitoba, bringing equality to rural Manitoba, but to have that equality in rural Manitoba, you have to have people there. At the present time we are losing a lot of people. The population is decreasing; people are having a difficult time in many cases making a living in rural Manitoba. Particularly with the change of the Crow, grain farmers are having difficulty getting a fair return for their product, so that is why we definitely need to be spending much more than we are at the present.

* (1030)

We do have to be looking at ways that we can be getting value added to our product. The potato industry is one of those industries where we have been able to get that. [interjection] The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) talks about the value-added task force that took place and the work it did, but I will leave that subject for him to discuss, because we have some disagreements on the outcome of that task force. But certainly we have to look at how we can get more value added, whether it be for potatoes or other products, whether we can look for more value to our grain products, whether we can add on more value to the livestock industry. At the present time, we have had an announcement about a pork plant being built, and I am very pleased about that, because we will finally start to get some of the value-added jobs in this province that we lost. I do not know if you are aware, Madam Speaker, but in about 1987, '88, '89, we had about 5,000 people working in the agrifood value—

An Honourable Member: How many?

Ms. Wowchuk: Five thousand. We are down now less than 2,500 in the value-added, so this announcement will certainly help us. I have to say that the government who was in power during all that time, they talked an awful lot about value-added jobs, but when you look at the numbers, the statistics from Stats Canada, we have not done well. We need to do much more. We need to look at beef processing.

The member for Portage (Mr. Faurshou) talks about the potato industry, and I commend him for talking about the potato industry, which is important to his community, because Portage certainly has a lot of advantages and a lot of producers of potatoes in that area. But we have to look broader than that. We have to look to ensure that there is an additional value-added throughout the province. All the producers in this province do not live south of No. 1; they are distributed across the province. We have to ensure that, when we are doing research, there is an opportunity for research that will benefit the people across the province.

So, as I said, Madam Speaker, this is a good resolution. I know that people on this side of the House are very interested in helping the rural community survive and grow and get a fair return for what it is they are growing. But we cannot just—and I am pleased that the government is finally recognizing that there is a need for research because, you know, in 1996-97 this government, this Conservative government, cut back on research dollars by 2 percent to the University of Manitoba at a time when we were supposed to be looking at ways—we saw them cutting back. So they cut back in 1996; in 1997-98, they have announced a program. That money has not been yet spent.

The food industry, the food-processing industry, the growth of food in this province is very, very important. We have to catch up to other provinces. At \$3.4 million it is a start, but it nowhere near compares to what Saskatchewan is doing with \$12 million to \$14 million. It does not compare to what Alberta is doing, up to \$7 million.

If this government really believes in research, they would have listened and put some of the surpluses that they had into research and attracted the additional dollars here. When you put dollars into research, you attract additional dollars. We also have to recognize that there is research that has to be done by the public sector. There is research that is done by the private sector for their own interests in many cases. There is a need for the public to do research, and Manitoba has fallen behind tremendously.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Ms. Wowchuk: You most certainly have. You cut in 1996 from the University of Manitoba. You finally made an announcement, but you have to do much, much more. As I said, Madam Speaker, the agricultural industry, the food-processing industry is important to the province. Manitoba has to get on board and start to catch up to where other provinces are. If you do that, you will see the opportunity for many people to diversify.

The potato industry is very important to parts of the province, but there is a lot of research that has to be done as well in that to ensure that it grows. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Madam Speaker, I listened with great interest to, first of all, the resolution that was put before the House, which I think is an extremely important resolution and, secondly, to the comments that the member of the opposition made in regard to this resolution and specifically the agricultural community and the contributions that have been made by various segments in government to agriculture over the last number of years.

I think it is very interesting to note that one of the reasons we are debating this resolution is not so much the specifics of the potato industry but the potato industry in relevance to what is required in the future and where we need to head in light of the fact that the federal government this last year took \$750 million out of the pockets of western Canadian farmers and did not replace it with anything, except they said: we will give you a one-time payment. When we talk about net farm incomes, of a 13 percent increase in this resolution, the net farm income was largely due to the contribution, the buy-out, the bribe that Manitobans and other western Canadian farmers took from the federal government to replace the Crow benefit. That will no longer exist after this. I suggest to you to look very closely at net incomes next year, because it will be reflected very closely by the amount of the Crow offset payment that was contributed this year, which amounted to about \$35 to \$45 an acre depending on where you were. So I think we need to be very careful when we discuss that issue.

Secondly, the honourable member for Swan River, the critic for Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), indicates that

we have not, as a province, paid attention to ag research and research dollars. She talks about the decrease in people working in agriculture, especially the value-added sector. Well, let me remind the honourable member that she should sometimes look at the positive side of what the province has done.

When I look at the capital expansion that this province is contributing to at the University of Manitoba, the \$12-million amount that we granted the University of Manitoba to increase and enhance their facilities at the University of Manitoba I think is very significant compared to what their government did when they were in power, and I do not want to get into that, Madam Speaker.

But, secondly, I also want to point her in the direction of Carman and look at the tremendous research facilities that are being built there to do exactly what this resolution is proposing to do, to add research facilities in this province. We are spending almost \$6 million, Madam Speaker, building a research facility which is already showing some very significant results. I think that is a credit to our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) and the direction that he has pointed, pointing his department as well as the university, and indicating the amount of research required and the need for research in light of the dramatic changes that are happening in agriculture today.

The one area of concern I have, Madam Speaker, is our grain sector in this province. They are going to see some wrenching changes the likes of which no other sector of the industry has incurred up to now. That will not only impact our other sectors, such as the potato industry, it will affect every segment of the agricultural industry. The devolution of the no-Crow benefit will impact us all, and research is sadly needed to ensure that we now step into the next era, which is a no-Crow benefit era.

So research is going to be needed, but not only in the potato industry. It will be needed in the livestock sector dramatically, because we will be the lowest-cost producer in all of Canada, probably in all of North America as far as the livestock sector is concerned. That leads us to all aspects of livestock production, whether it is dairy, whether it is hogs, whether it is

poultry, and the need to make some dramatic changes in those sectors is going to be there. We are going to have to do proper research to ensure that the impacts will not be negative but positive on those industries. So we need significant dollars, more than what has been indicated now.

I would suggest to our federal counterparts in Ottawa, our Liberal government in Ottawa, that if they stood by their western community, by western Canadian agriculture specifically in Manitoba, they would recognize the need to take some of that \$350 million or \$750 million that they are saving annually now and put it into research in Manitoba, not only in Manitoba but in western Canada, and designate some of that money to transportation and the research for what requirements in transportation will be needed. This is going to have a dramatic impact on the economy of Manitoba.

* (1040)

So we are going to not only have to look at the potato industry, we are going to also have to look at what Ottawa did not do in the sugar industry. We have begged Ottawa continually to recognize the fact that when the competitive factor is tariffication in all other parts of the world, and Manitoba and Canada are not abiding by the same rules, that you, in fact, lose industries.

That is what we have done in Manitoba. We have lost the sugar beet industry in Manitoba, simply because of the inaction of the federal Liberal government in Ottawa not abiding by the same rules that other countries such as the Americans and all the European countries and the rest of the sugar-producing nations in the world abide by. So that is going to require some research as to how we take that acreage and replace it with what? We need dramatic research dollars, and it is the responsibility of the federal government to recognize that they also have a responsibility to ensure that the diversification trend that is directed by federal policy will have to, in fact, be taken up, and the losses incurred there will have to be significantly transferred to the federal government. So I would ask all of us to support this resolution in recognition of the fact of the dramatic changes that are happening in the agricultural sector.

I want to deviate just a wee bit from the actual research needs. When you look at the impact to the communities in all of Manitoba—and we looked at this when the honourable Minister of Government Services Frank Pitura, Merv Tweed, the honourable member for Turtle Mountain and I toured this province extensively with the value-added task force, and when we talked to people, every one of them, every community that we visited said one thing: We are going to be dramatically impacted by the policies of government, and the policies of government will direct how our future and our economies will thrive. Everybody said: We need you to direct us to where the markets are and how to initiate and enter those markets. That, Madam Speaker, is going to take a dramatic amount of dollars and research.

I give a tremendous amount of credit to our Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), our Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), our Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), our Premier (Mr. Filmon), in having initiated trade talks, trade discussions in other parts of the world to search out markets and marketplaces and how we can, in fact, enter those markets and find ways of entering those markets, and the only way you do that, Madam Speaker, is by visiting these countries and sitting across the table with leaders of those countries and by talking about how we can trade with those nations.

I know that the members opposite do not really want to listen to what trade really means because it really means freeing up the rules under which we have moved products into various areas. That, Madam Speaker, is going to take a very significant amount of research dollars to search out the ways that we can, in fact, enter those markets. I know that the honourable members opposite—and you can hear them babbling on about their positions—I know they do not like to hear this, but we have seen a dramatic increase in our potato-processing industry in this province over the last five years. We have become the second-largest potato processor in all of Canada. What we need to do is to visit with Ottawa to ensure that Ottawa recognizes our potential in the potato industry. We need to ensure that their policies will, in fact, ensure that we can remain in the competitive marketplace with our potato industry and that they do not do to our potatoes what they did

with our sugar industry in this province. That is the last thing we want to see.

I fear that if we do not continually keep talking to the members of our Liberal government in Ottawa, they will not recognize our abilities to produce and the potential that we have to produce the best quality potatoes in all of the world. Other countries recognize that. I am afraid our own federal government does not recognize it, because they did not recognize the economic potential to increase our value-added sugar industry in this province, and that needs to be addressed.

Now, the other thing that I think needs to be recognized is the dramatic impact that we are going to have to the grain sector in this province. The Red River Valley, western Manitoba and, indeed, the Interlake, have been feed-grain producers for many, many years. We also produce, Madam Speaker, the highest quality wheat in all of Canada. Manitoba red northern wheat is the standard of milling quality wheat across the world, right around the world, and so we know that we can produce this high-quality product. We know what the cost of shipping the raw product out of this province will be. We also know that millers from across the world like our wheat to mill and turn into flour that they can use in their country for the production of bread.

Madam Speaker, what would be wrong with using that high-quality wheat in this province to mill wheat flour in this province and export finished products at value and as finished products? I am afraid that Ottawa has not yet recognized where we are and what we do and what our potential is, and I suggest that this resolution should be probably expanded, if anything, to suggest that Ottawa play a major role in the expansion of the research funding in Manitoba to our universities and our other research facilities.

With those words, Madam Speaker, I am going to sit down, but I truly ask all members opposite to support this resolution, because this is one of the true resolutions of economic development that I have seen in this House so far. Thank you.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Madam Speaker, I rise today on what I consider a very important issue for

rural Manitoba, not only for rural Manitoba but for the province as a whole.

I did not have a chance to speak in response to the Speech from the Throne. So this is the first opportunity I have had to officially welcome the member for Portage (Mr. Fauschou) to the Manitoba Legislature. I welcome him here and hope that his days as an MLA are fruitful, and I am sure he will represent to the best of his ability his constituents at Portage la Prairie. So, to the member for Portage, welcome.

Madam Speaker, I also want to say that I am very pleased that the member for Portage has brought forth this issue today for us to debate. The area of diversification and value-added are very important. There are buzzwords that have been flying around the province for quite some time, and I think that is something that we should be taking seriously, not just talking about them, not just the coffee shop end of this, but also in actually doing things that encourage our farmers to diversify, setting government policy that encourages value to be added to the products that we produce in this province.

Madam Speaker, from this side of the House, we have no doubt that Canadians, and in particular Manitoba farmers, are as good a farmer as you are going to find anywhere. I do not think there is any doubt about that. The farmers and producers that we have in Manitoba can produce, as has been mentioned, high-quality red spring wheat. The farmers in our area can produce forage crops where, I think, there is a whole array of potential for Manitoba farmers to get into to add value to the land that we have, to the produce that we produce and then export it to markets outside of Canada. I think there is great potential there. I think there is great potential in this province to keep growing as we are in the area of producing potatoes, and I think the member for Portage (Mr. Fauschou) and others who have spoken before me have been very clear in saying that the growth of the potato industry has been good for the producers here in Manitoba.

Madam Speaker, one of the things that I think we have to keep reminding Manitobans is that a very small percentage of our population makes its living farming but, at the same time, where would the rest of the population be without that small percentage of farmers

in this province who produce the very food that we eat, that we serve our children, and also, where would the province's economy be without that kind of an input from the farm community in the food that we produce for export? My opinion is that we have undervalued the worth of our farm communities. We have undervalued the worth of rural Manitoba, and we have to start setting higher on a pedestal the importance of farming to the economy and to the lives of every Manitoban.

* (1050)

Having said that, Madam Speaker, I also want to say that the farmers that I know and farmers that I represent, and I am sure farmers that the member for Portage (Mr. Fauschou) represents, are amongst some of the most conscientious environmentalists that we have in our midst. Farmers understand that what they do on their fields and in their barns all throughout this province has to be done in a sustainable way. That leads me to a few words about that very valuable aquifer, the Assiniboine Delta Aquifer, that sustains the potato industry in Portage la Prairie and Carberry and that area.

Madam Speaker, we have to be conscious always about what we do with that aquifer, what we put into the aquifer, how much we draw from that aquifer. The No. 1 issue is the quality of the water in that aquifer that sustains several communities, the Shilo base and all the irrigation that takes place in that area. The quality of that aquifer must be maintained at a high standard or we will not have that kind of sustainability that we need for long-term success in the potato industry.

The other problem that could occur with the aquifer is a quantity problem. We must make sure that we are not drawing out more water from that aquifer than is actually being replenished into it. That is very easy for us to understand. The tough part is that the government has to from time to time ensure through regulation that that is actually maintained, that we are not withdrawing more water from that aquifer than what is naturally replenished by Mother Nature.

Madam Speaker, the other aspect I think that is clear when you read through the resolution being put forward

by the member for Portage (Mr. Fauschou) is that we have to take seriously the concept of planning, whether you are talking about the potato industry, whether you are talking about the hog industry, whether you are talking about anything having to do with agricultural land. It bugs me when I see communities that are expanding outward into prime, useful agricultural land. It seems to me that we have to have some kind of land use planning to govern because we cannot keep on chewing up valuable agricultural land with communities that are expanding outward. The city of Winnipeg is a good example. Much land around the city of Winnipeg is being taken up by urban sprawl while within the boundaries of Winnipeg is deteriorating. I think this government cannot allow this to continue. We cannot lose any more agricultural land than what we are already losing.

So, Madam Speaker, I think what we need to do is have a government that is willing to sit down and work with the municipal levels of government and plan and put some thought into the problem of urban sprawl.

Madam Speaker, the other thing that we have to start taking much more seriously is the whole area of transportation. It is perfectly fine to produce the best produce in the world; it is perfectly fine to add value to the products that we have; it is perfectly fine to make greater use of the agricultural land that we have; it is perfectly fine to get our producers to diversify into more areas; but, if we cannot get that perfectly fine produce to the market, then it is not very useful at all to us, is it?

We have seen what the federal government has been doing. For years in this country we have relied on the rail system to get our produce from the farmgate to the market. The federal government, I think to its discredit, is abandoning its responsibility in performing that function. As a result, we have abandoned rail lines, the Cowan Sub north of Dauphin into the Swan River Valley is a good example. Just the other night again, another abandoned rail line, I saw this on the national news, in Saskatchewan. Time after time after time, the federal government is abdicating its responsibility in getting farmers' produce out to market.

The result is that now so many products have to be carried on our provincial highways, which means, in

effect, an offload from the federal government to the provincial government. Now it looks like the provincial government is going to have to be increasing its funding for highways just to maintain what we have got there now because there are so many large trucks hauling so much produce and beating out the roads. [interjection]

Well, the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) puts forth the idea about getting our fuel tax back, but why will this government not, instead of doing what it is doing, which is taking the provincial roads and dumping them onto the municipalities, why not look at other ideas? And that is exactly what is happening. The government is taking provincial roads and then doing just like the federal government and dumping them onto the rural municipalities. [interjection] The member for Pembina says that is wrong. You go and you talk to some R.M.s. Come up to the Parklands and talk to any of the R.M.s in that area, and they will tell you what you are doing. You are dumping provincial roads onto them so that you do not have to raise taxes to pay for them. You are dumping that onto the local municipalities.

That is not the correct way to go. That does not provide an efficient way for us as producers to get our product from our communities to the market, and that is key in here. I think everybody understands that. It is absolutely key to get the produce to market. This provincial government also has to show that it supports the local producers with the produce that they produce.

My colleague the member for Swan River (Mrs. Wowchuk) is very clear in pointing out that your support through research and development has been waning in the last number of years. For five years in a row, this government has cut funding to the Manitoba Department of Agriculture. Five years in a row. That is not support. Here is a very hands-on kind of an example of how this government could be supporting local producers. My colleague the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) brought in a bunch of food here last week to show people what kind of food is being served in some of the health care facilities in Manitoba. Madam Speaker, how about this? Would it not be great if somebody in a hospital at suppertime could open up a tinfoil-wrapped Portage la Prairie baked potato, healthy as all get-out? Would that not be much better and much better for the patient and for the

health of the patient, much better for the local economy at Portage la Prairie, to support that local producer?

Would that not be a much better idea than serving some kind of rethermalized gunk that has been processed in Ontario? Would that not be a much better option, better for the patient, better for the local Portage economy, better all around, better for people locally here in Manitoba, where we could be putting people to work producing this instead of having this done in Ontario? That is value-added. That is adding more value to our produce than having it rethermalized from somewhere in Ontario. That makes sense.

* (1100)

It was pointed out by the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) that in that one decision that this minister has made on behalf of this government that 400 jobs were lost in Manitoba; 400 jobs in Toronto were gained because of a decision by this government.

So, Madam Speaker, it is not just the larger issues that this government has to deal with, the larger issues of the Crow rate and programs supporting value-added and diversification, the government has to think of very hands-on, practical ways in which to support our producers, and I am afraid that that is just not being done by this government. Hopefully, this government will take the resolution that the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou) is putting forth today. Hopefully, they will take it to heart and work with the groups that are interested in promoting Manitoba producers and come up with some very innovative ways in which to support our Manitoba producers.

Again, that does not include making decisions like they did with the rethermalized food; that does not include cutting support for research and development. It does include sitting down in a co-operative way with farm groups like the National Farmers Union or the Keystone Agricultural Producers. It requires sitting down with the agriculture faculty at the university. It includes sitting with those of us in the opposition and asking us what our ideas are. It means you have to develop a much better relationship with the producers themselves because the producers themselves have always had good ideas on how to improve farm

practices and how to make our produce all that much better for the export market. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity again to welcome the member for Portage (Mr. Faurichou). There you are. I did not have a great deal of opportunity to say how much I welcomed him to the House in my response to the throne speech. I wanted to tell him how much I remembered my own experience as an early member—

An Honourable Member: A rookie.

Ms. Friesen: Yes, a rookie in this House, and what a tremendously steep learning curve I found. So many demands upon your time, so many pressures, both from your constituents, as well as from the daily atmosphere of the House. I wish you well and hope that you will enjoy at least some of the elements of it that I enjoy, and I congratulate you on bringing forward this resolution. Manitoba's agriculture is a very important part of Manitoba's overall economy. It is obviously something which is very important to the universities and to post-secondary education, an area for which I am the critic.

Obviously, it is also important, and I would like to draw attention to my colleague the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), who said how important it would be and how we should strive, in fact, to develop locally the products that we have in Manitoba for local use, and the example he gave of the potato, wrapped in foil on every hospital tray, coming from Portage la Prairie. Yes, that is the ideal that we should be looking for. I have, and I am sure we all do in our constituencies have, examples of that kind of local diversification and local use of Manitoba products, and they are big job providers. It is very surprising actually when you look at some of the small businesses in Manitoba, you do not really immediately take note of the number of jobs that are there, but the small bakery in my riding provides two and three shifts of work. It operates out of a very small place. It is no bigger than perhaps two or three of these seats, but it provides employment for over 20 people and none of them are minimum wage jobs. It is very important, I think that we all look at that element of local production, local

marketing, local transport. So, Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member for bringing this, and I know that he is acting in the very best interests of his constituents.

I think I agree with him on his concern about the lack of research support from Ottawa—and the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) also spoke in that same vein—and that has been a concern to research institutions and universities across the country. The impact of the loss of the transfer payments for post-secondary education across Canada, I think the impact will be felt for many, many years. We have a 30-year infrastructure of research, whether it is in the social sciences or in the agricultural sciences or in the physical sciences. We have a 30-year infrastructure that began in the 1960s as the federal government began those transfer payments to the provinces and enabled people to build up the kind of research teams in medicine and science and the social sciences that have earned Canada an international reputation, but 30 years on that infrastructure is inadequate. It is not just in Manitoba that it is inadequate. It is inadequate across the country, and it needs the return of those federal dollars. It needs the redistribution of national wealth to maintain centres of excellence that each of the provinces has an ability to maintain. So I am very much in agreement with the members opposite when they talk about the impact of the loss of federal dollars.

But you see, then I look at Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan also and Alberta and Ontario—Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario suffered equally with Manitoba in the loss of those federal dollars, but they made strategic decisions, particularly in the case of Saskatchewan—a province very similar to Manitoba in its population size and in its economic activities—and Saskatchewan decided very early on under the Romanow government that agribusiness and agrifoods and added value in agriculture would be the strategic opportunity that they would seize, and seize it they did. They went very quickly to a Bachelor of Agriculture in Food Sciences. Now I know that Dean Elliott of the University of Manitoba was lobbying this government for exactly that, and this government delayed and delayed. Saskatchewan went ahead. They had that strategic advantage in speaking to those young people all across the prairie provinces that this in Saskatchewan was where that would be.

You have only to look—it is not just the initiative that they showed in developing new academic programs—but you also have to look at the University of Saskatchewan campus and compare it to the University of Manitoba campus. We know, and we tabled documents last week in the House showing the serious emergency nature of the deterioration of the infrastructure at the University of Manitoba. The same is true in some areas as well at the University of Winnipeg, but it is the University of Manitoba which has responsibility for agricultural research. I know that the minister has been to look at those crumbling institutions, but we also know that the action from this government has been to decrease and decrease and decrease the amount of money that has gone for capital investment at the University of Manitoba as well as for academic programs.

So I say to the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou), congratulations on bringing your resolution forward, but you must begin to exert the very strong influence of the people of Portage la Prairie in the councils of your government to remind them that you cannot simply bring forward resolutions like this without having the will to support and develop the research facilities that are needed to go with it and do offer your government the example of Saskatchewan, of the constant investment of dollars. It is not just one year. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) may want to talk about the investment he may be making in this coming budget in—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) will have nine minutes remaining.

As previously agreed, the hour being 11:09 a.m., we will move to the next private member's resolution.

Res. 4—Responses to Domestic Violence

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I move, seconded by the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford), that

“WHEREAS domestic violence continues to be a serious problem in Manitoba that results in the injury and death of women across this province; and

“WHEREAS certain initiatives such as the Family Violence Court, the Women's Advocacy Program and mandatory charging have been taken by the provincial government; and

“WHEREAS survivors of abuse, their families, service providers and the community at large recognize serious shortcomings in the response to domestic violence which continues to threaten the lives of Manitoba women and children; and

“WHEREAS a blueprint for an effective response to domestic violence has been offered by several reports including the Lavoie inquiry recommendations, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry and the Pedlar Report.

“THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider preparing an action plan and timelines for implementation of province-wide changes as outlined in the Lavoie inquiry, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry and the Pedlar Report; and

“BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly urge the provincial government to consider undertaking this process in consultation with the community, and remain accountable to the community for program implementation and results.”

Motion presented.

* (1110)

Mr. Mackintosh: This resolution is very timely because it follows very closely on the public pronouncements and demands made in public of December 5. Of course, the activities on December 5 were in honour of not just the women murdered in Montreal but in recognition of the 81 Manitoba women who have been murdered in relationships by men since 1989, and, notably, our side also took action on December 5, in honour of Rhonda Lavoie.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

The resolution is also timely, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it was only a few weeks ago that the Lavoie inquiry—I will retract that. It was six months ago that the Lavoie inquiry report was released and the

government responded. We are very concerned on this side at this time about the government's response, and I will highlight two responses that give rise to this concern.

First of all, on the day that the Lavoie inquiry report was released, the Justice minister was heard to smugly say: when you are a leader in this area, where do you go to for advice?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, here was the Justice minister of the Province of Manitoba saying that in the face of 91 recommendations which said explicitly or implicitly that you, Mr. Minister, have 91 problems, 91 failures in your response to domestic violence. I say to the minister, taking your words, where do you go to for advice, you do not have to go further than the boundaries of Saskatchewan or Minnesota to find better models of dealing with domestic violence. I say shame. That is an arrogance that cannot be tolerated when looking at such a serious problem. Eighty-one women murdered since 1989 in relationships and how many other thousands and thousands of women and children have been beaten in these relationships, and yet the minister says they are leaders and where do you go to for advice? Shame, I say.

The second response from the government that causes us concern is that six months have now elapsed since the release of the Lavoie report, and in the course of that six months, there still is not a single known program, policy change or protocol difference as a result of the work of Mr. Justice Schulman.

Now I know that the government has begun a community consultation process. In a general way, we certainly welcome that and congratulate them for that process. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do not know who is being consulted, and we want to see the names and the associations that are being represented in that process. But that is not good enough that there is that kind of process, because we have already seen after the release of the Pedlar report in 1991 a similar process established by this same government that fell apart.

The Justice minister of the time turned her back on that committee, a committee that I heard from representatives on it that was effective. representative—of course, now the Pedlar report sits on the shelves of

the government like so many other reports. I have got another one here, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report, a report by the way which also recommended an implementation process that this government has turned its back on. So, it is not enough.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, New Democrats decided that Pedlar must never ever happen again. The Lavoie inquiry report recommendations must be implemented and they must be implemented on a timely basis. To do so we put forward five demands on December 5, and they were very concrete demands with time lines. These demands followed on two public meetings, one here in Winnipeg with about 75-or-so individuals, including survivors, service providers, community activists, and another meeting in Brandon. We had another follow-up meeting with representatives from the community, and a report was prepared which we entitled *Voices from the Front Lines: Community Response to the Lavoie Inquiry*.

In there the community prioritized several recommendations from the report, and we presented that report to the government. But in the course of those consultations and in the course of consultations that this caucus engaged in—as the NDP caucus Task Force on Violence against Women, which travelled all around Manitoba in 1995 and produced a report in that year—we discovered some very important shortcomings in this government's so-called zero-tolerance policy or get-tough policy on domestic violence.

The main discovery was that, in fact, there was no such thing as a real zero tolerance policy on domestic violence in this province. We gained other insights that ended up in our five recommendations, or our five demands, on the government. So, I just want to go through these five demands, and then I want to comment after each demand as to the government's response.

First of all, in honour of Rhonda Lavoie, we demanded that this government repair the damage. We have demanded that this government restore the funding cuts that it has made since 1993 to shelters, second-stage housing, to women's resource centres, to counselling services. We saw the closure by this government of the Flin Flon shelter. Now that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is what this government calls

leadership, I suppose. That really puts in context the smugness of the Justice minister when he gets up and says: where do you go to for advice when you are a leader? And they just closed the shelter, when they have just cut, through Family Dispute Services, funding to shelters across this province, when they have just cut funding to women's counselling, so that today there are waiting lists of six to 18 months for women. This smugness has to be put in the context of organizations like the Evergreen Women's Resource Centre that writes and says they feel neglected and abandoned by the current government.

So before the government get on with any more of its rhetoric, restore the cuts since 1993, some of them targeted, some of them general at 4 percent, repair the damage. In response, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to that demand in the Legislature in Question Period on December 5, did the government say, oh, yes, to be true to our word and to effectively deal with domestic violence and to really live up to the spirit if not the wording of the Lavoie report, we will restore funding? Did they say that? No, not at all. They refused. They said there will be some new money for what I understand will be an enhancement of the Family Violence Court, probation services, counselling for men, but nothing about restoring cuts that they, this government itself, is responsible for.

* (1120)

Number 2, we demanded safety for all Manitoba. We made the presentation to the Lavoie inquiry to the effect that the inquiry, although looking at a circumstance that occurred within the city of Winnipeg must look at domestic violence right across this province. Unfortunately, the commission of inquiry report really looked at the city of Winnipeg. They looked, for example, at the Winnipeg Police Service, extensive recommendations there. They looked at the Family Violence Court, which are programs only in the city of Winnipeg and did not apply those recommendations throughout the province.

Well, all taxpayers in Manitoba paid for this report and all women and children, all Manitobans, are entitled to be protected from domestic violence. This government has an obligation to extend the recommendations in the Lavoie report province-wide,

and the strongest condemnation of this government's action after the release of the Lavoie report was the fact that it put together an implementation committee of three people, all of whom are Winnipeggers. There was no representation from rural and northern Manitoba. What is particularly galling about the government's response and this perimeter vision of this government on this issue is the fact that when the NDP travelled around Manitoba, the area of greatest need was outside of Winnipeg, particularly in rural and remote communities in the North.

So we looked at the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry recommendations and, lo and behold, there are five recommendations in there to deal with aboriginal women's safety that have been ignored by this government. So we say in this resolution, do not just look at the Lavoie recommendations; go back and look at AJI. When we asked the government on December 5 if they would be prepared to increase the representation on the implementation committee for rural and northern input, this government and this Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) had the gall to say they are going to do one better. They are going to bring in rural and aboriginal representation on the consultation end. That is not one better. It is good, I am glad they are doing that, but I think it is the implementation committee that this government had better look to. That is where the final decisions will be made on what recommendations go to the cabinet for implementation.

The third demand was let us have direct democracy on this one. It is not enough to have statements that, well, the report will go to community groups and an input will be given and we will go on with some implementation scheme. Let us have a new, innovative technique put in place here. Let us have the Ministers of Justice and Family Services or the Premier account directly to the community at annual sessions, beginning in one year, and that way they can have direct questions and answers with those who are on the frontlines, those who are survivors. Did the government say they would do that? No, they denied it. They said they would not do that.

Our fourth demand, protect now. Enact legislation in this session modelled on Saskatchewan law as recommended by Lavoie and prioritized by the

community report that we have prepared. Protect Manitobans from domestic violence on the civil side in a more effective way and introduce legislation regarding stalking. Again, there was no commitment from the government opposite beyond a vague statement that the legislation would be introduced, and I am afraid they will put that over to an election campaign. The legislation must be introduced now. Indeed, the legislation on stalking has even been drafted by the Law Reform Commission and is available to the members opposite.

Finally, we said, listen. Respond to the report, voices from the frontline, in writing so that we know the government has listened to those in the community.

In conclusion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I urge this Legislature to support unanimously this resolution. Let us implement now looking and embracing the five demands that we have placed on the government, not just the Lavoie report, but the outstanding recommendations from the Pedlar report and the outstanding recommendations regarding aboriginal women from the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry report. Thank you.

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to thank the opposition critic for his comments and thoughts on this matter, and it will certainly give me and my department material with which to work to analyze our own plans to ensure that we take into account not just what government officials or politicians may view as priority issues, but indeed that the very, I think, well-stated concerns of the opposition are in fact met in any programming that the government has implemented and indeed will be implementing. So I want to thank the opposition critic for his thoughtful and helpful comments.

The report of Mr. Justice Schulman was released on August 19, 1997, and that report was released to the general public to ensure that the general public had an opportunity to examine the report, to look at the recommendations, as indeed it was necessary for ministers of the Crown, my colleague the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) and I, during that month period or so, to examine what in fact could be done in terms of implementing those recommendations.

There are many very, very thoughtful recommendations that Mr. Justice Schulman presented to us.

* (1130)

So, when we released the report on August 19, we wanted to ensure that we did not prejudice any of the recommendations, that we ensure that those recommendations would be given full consideration by our staff, by government and, indeed, by opposition members. So it was then on September 19, 1997, approximately one month later, that the Manitoba government made certain very firm commitments in respect of this issue. I think it is often easy to make promises but not back those promises up with money. We looked at that particular issue and said that additional funding is required, and that was indeed a recommendation of Mr. Justice Schulman. Mr. Justice Schulman did not put a price tag on what his recommendations would cost, but clearly in looking through the recommendations, they would involve new expenditures, and our departments had to take a look at that new demand for expenditures. So we announced a general plan to implement those recommendations.

The government of Manitoba announced a \$1.7-million increase in annual new funding in order to implement Justice Schulman's recommendations. Indeed, the government also announced the establishment of a committee to assist in the implementation. The actual committee, the formal committee was three people headed by Jane Ursel, who, of course, is a well-recognized authority in the area; Marlene Bertrand, an official with the Ministry of Family Services and who has an extensive history in the area of front-line work in respect of family violence. Her experience, of course, is not limited to Winnipeg, but indeed she was on the front lines outside of Winnipeg doing very, very progressive things. Furthermore, an official in my department was also appointed to that committee.

The whole issue of whether or not a committee should be a large one or a small one is a difficult issue. We want to get the viewpoints of everyone in these committees, and yet we do not want to make the committee so unwieldy that nothing gets done. So we gave Dr. Ursel very, very broad authority to ensure that, as she implemented those recommendations, she

consult with the community. I must say that Dr. Ursel has responded in a very positive way to ensure, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the community is involved in this.

I remember that, when I worked as counsel to the Kimelman commission on Indian and Metis adoptions, as the committee was called, we had a very large committee of about 14 people and the committee was very, very unwieldy. Yes, it had representation from every sector, but it was very difficult getting any kind of consensus. I know the kind of concerns that Judge Kimelman had in that respect, and this was under the NDP government. Indeed, one day Judge Kimelman simply walked into the committee meeting and changed the committee from 14 people into one person, which was himself, but he retained the others as advisors to the committee. So I know in my own thinking in approaching how one best has a small enough group to get the implementation done and also community voice.

I took that experience into account, and we wanted to avoid the problem that the government had created in mandating Judge Kimelman back in the early '80s. So what Jane Ursel here is doing is, in fact, to set up a process for community involvement in the implementation committee, and this committee is carrying on its work through the use of working groups that will deal with clusters of recommendations.

To date, three working groups and one advisory group have been established. So we are not just talking about an isolated committee of three people. Indeed, even to suggest that someone of Dr. Ursel's stature does not know what is going on in this province is a bit of a stretch, and then coupled again with the experience that Marlene Bertrand has, it casts some doubt on those kinds of statements.

These three working groups, the first is the family violence working group addressing recommendations 18 through 37, and that is 20 recommendations that that working group will deal with. The second is the community and youth corrections working group addressing recommendations 47 through 59. That is 13 recommendations. The third group, the public awareness working group, addresses recommendations 82 through 84, and those are three recommendations, very substantive recommendations as well.

Now, in addition to the working groups, an advisory group has been established to provide advice to the internal working group working on civil restraining orders and the report of the Manitoba Law Reform Commission in civil responses to stalking.

So what Dr. Ursel has done is not only involve many community members—and I will talk about the composition of this organization in a little while—but has integrated the work of the Schulman report and the Lavoie implementation committee into the other committees to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach. It was certainly Dr. Ursel's public comments that we are now in a position to continue to work on the Pedlar report. Much has been done and much can now also be done in conjunction with the Lavoie report.

So I am very pleased at the approach that Dr. Ursel has taken. It is a progressive approach. It has involved community members, not just from Winnipeg, and it also involves other government groups that are implementing various reforms that had been recommended during the time that my colleague the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) was occupying this position. I think that must be recognized, what the member did when she was in my position in terms of bringing together this very extensive work and indeed recommending that the Lavoie inquiry proceed. I think Manitobans owe the former Attorney General a gratitude for making those very strong recommendations to cabinet that we proceed in the fashion that we did, because we are seeing the results of what she did today.

I might give you just some example of the type of advice and what is going to be happening. So now early in the new calendar year, additional working groups will be established to implement further recommendations. One of these is the domestic violence offenders working group addressing recommendations 71 and 73, the conjoint treatment working group addressing recommendations 72 and 74 and the supervised access centre working group addressing recommendations 72 and 73 and the training development working group.

Now, these working groups will have over 60 individuals from the community; so in addition to the three main members who are co-ordinating all of this,

60 individual members on various committees. Of these members, over 20 of them are from outside of Winnipeg, and nine represent northern Manitoba. Over 90 percent of the Family Dispute Services funded agencies will be on the working groups as well as other agencies. The committee then is moving ahead as quickly as possible in balancing the need to consult with the need for action.

The committee is meeting with those responsible for recommendations outside of the jurisdiction of the Province of Manitoba, such as the chief of Winnipeg Police, to ensure a co-ordinated and consistent approach, and I must thank the Winnipeg city police and the other police forces who are working together with us in implementing Lavoie in a broad, broad manner. So this is not an issue simply for the government of Manitoba. This is an issue for all Manitobans. Again I can only commend Dr. Ursel and the very sensitive way she has brought into play all of the community organizations.

When one talks about all of these committees, does it bog down the work? That is why we have ensured that Dr. Ursel remains in control of the implementation, together with Marlene Bertrand and Mr. Ron Perozzo from my office. Again, providing access into government to ensure that the appropriate resources are in government and can be brought to assist the community, very important. It is sometimes difficult when you simply have a chairperson who may not have the connection with government, that we do not want to isolate that chairperson. We want to grant that person access, not only to the \$1.7 million in additional funding that we have given and the other \$10 million that we spend on an annual basis in this area, but we want to ensure that existing government resources are used in a co-ordinated fashion.

When will these recommendations be addressed? The committee has indicated that they want to have those that address the provincial government's responsibilities by October of 1998. Now I do not know if that is too optimistic. I am certainly not putting them under any time pressure. If in fact something needs to be done in terms of adjustment, Dr. Ursel has that jurisdiction. I think I publicly stated that we have that confidence in her to be flexible in the timetable as

well as who she consults with. I have great, great trust in her.

* (1140)

The government, of course, is looking at victims' services generally and is moving ahead with recommendations, legislation and that, perhaps, one of my other colleagues can address perhaps in the context of this debate, but thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): It certainly does not surprise this side of the House to hear the minister on the record say today that he does not believe in timelines. In fact his government's record on the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry and on Pedlar has made very clear, I think, not only to this side of the House but to the women of Manitoba that this government does not believe in timelines. I am very sorry that his disbelief in timelines might once again come to play in regard to the recommendations of the Lavoie inquiry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think as well the minister has implied in his remarks today that this side of the House does not have faith in Dr. Jane Ursel. I think he has gone even further than that and has suggested that we do not respect her reputation. I want to, on the record, correct that unfortunate misrepresentation. This side of the House has all kinds of respect for Dr. Jane Ursel. I know that in my past life as an academic I have had the pleasure of working with her, and I have a high regard for her. I know my colleague from St. Johns shares that regard, so that is very wrong of the minister and, I think, disrespectful to Dr. Jane Ursel.

I also want to address his implication, his inference that we do not have respect for Marlene Bertrand from Family Disputes. Again, in a past life, I had all kinds of opportunities to work with Marlene Bertrand and we know that she is a respected member of the community. Now the minister said that she had front-line experience and I quite agree that she had front-line experience. I want to underline the verb "had" because, with all due respect with respect to Marlene Bertrand, she has been separated from the front lines of the community for quite some time. I know she did her work in Brandon, and I know she did fine work in Winnipeg, but she is

not a front-line worker now and has not been for some time.

The third person on the committee is a representative from the Justice minister's office, Ron Perozzo, and I do not know Mr. Perozzo, but I am sure that he is a very competent and capable person as well. The point that the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) was making and the point that I bring again to this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that there is nobody who is currently working on the front lines of domestic violence on that committee. There is no community advocate or activist on that committee. We have two bureaucrats and an academic and as skilled and competent and gifted as those persons may be, they are not community members. Either we believe in community representation, we believe in allowing the community a voice or we do not. Apparently this government does not, and consequently there is not representation.

Now, I have heard about all these subcommittees, and I think the minister said there were 60-some persons from the community on these subcommittees, and that is to be commended. The problem is that those persons are not on the implementation committee and therefore do not have the power. To give people responsibility without power, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think is often to put them in a very, very difficult position.

Leaving that aside, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have been working in the area of violence against women since 1980, and I am very, very tired. I am tired of seeing one government initiative after another fail. The women in this province are tired. They are tired of coming to government. They are tired of holding out their hands and getting very little in exchange. It seems to me that the more things change, the more they stay the same. I can go to any meeting of a group of women anywhere across this province tonight or tomorrow, and I can tell you what the two lead issues are going to be. I see the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) shaking her head because she knows, (a) daycare, (b) violence against women—it was the case in 1980. It is the case in 1997.

Now, under a New Democratic government, we made a lot of progress on the issue of daycare. It is really

despicable that this government has reversed that trend. However, that is not my topic for today. The topic is violence against women.

You know, as I read the resolution put forth by the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), it is so sensible. It is so obvious that this House should be supporting that resolution. He simply calls, if I may sum it up, for an action plan and time lines for implementation of provincial changes as outlined in Lavoie, the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry and Pedlar, and he also calls for community consultation and accountability remaining accountable to the community. That seems to me to be only common sense.

What could be clearer? What could be more obvious? What could be more worthy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of taking to a vote today in this House and passing than this resolution from the member for St. Johns? It is obvious, it is axiomatic, it is apparent that we need to pass this resolution if we are going to do something about violence against women. I might add, the ludicrousness of this government if it chooses not to support this resolution is that the Lavoie inquiry and Pedlar, and the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry were all commissioned by this government. So once again we may be, I hope not, in that position where the government does not support its own work.

I want to point out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, at this time that some of the pioneering work in violence against women was begun under the Pawley government. The Pawley government was responsible for the Women's Advocacy Program, for starting that program. It was the Pawley government that first implemented a version of zero tolerance later strengthened by my colleagues opposite, and they are to be commended for the work that they did.

But what I want to do today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is call on this government to show its commitment to women in Manitoba, to show that they are serious when it comes to violence, when it comes to ending violence, to show this by supporting this resolution.

I want to call to the minds of the people in the House today the Minister of Justice's (Mr. Toews) words when he released the report of the Lavoie inquiry. I know

that the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) has already done this, but I would like to do it as well. I remember being quite shocked, Mr. Deputy Speaker, being in the anteroom and not in the press conference itself to hear him quite swaggeringly say: when you are the leader in the field, where do you go to for advice? Well, the member for St. Johns has already pointed out that there were 91 recommendations in the Lavoie inquiry, and so 91 pieces of advice, an indication of 91 failures. The member for St. Johns has also pointed out that the minister could go to our neighbour to the west, Saskatchewan. He could also travel slightly south to go to Duluth, Minnesota. He could consult with people in San Diego. He could show some leadership, he could show some real leadership, by taking any one of these actions.

One of the ironies, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thought one of the very tragic ironies—here is a minister bragging about being a leader in the field in October 1997, and in this year six women have been murdered; in 1996, 12 women were murdered—that makes 18 murdered women in two years, which tells me, maybe not the Minister of Justice, that his best and his leadership is simply not good enough. So where could he go from here? We have given some suggestions.

* (1150)

Another place that he could go to would be to start implementing the recommendations of Lavoie, of the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry and also Pedlar. The Minister of Justice himself could meet with the community. The member for St. Johns and I met with the community, feeling that the community had been closed out of the whole implementation process surrounding Lavoie. We met with the community. The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) joined us for one of those meetings and made a very fine speech, greatly pleasing to community members to find that there is some leadership in this province, that there is a party that has a leader that is willing to support an end to violence against women.

Leaving that aside, we had three meetings with the community—September 23, we travelled to Brandon. In October, we had other meetings. In October and November, we received submissions from people all over this province, and I think you will remember, Mr.

Deputy Speaker, that on December 5 we tabled a report in this House and we also asked questions that turned around five demands, five simple demands.

I do believe I am running out of time. I am going to quickly sum up those five demands. We asked that the damage be repaired. We pointed out that, since 1993-94, 4 percent has been cut from the budgets of most shelters, second-stage housing, counselling services and women's resource centres. Women's resource centres I will take as an example here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because they do a lot of preventative work. They meet with women. They help women form safety plans. They try to build community. Most women's resource centres in this province—I should not say most—all of them have counselling waiting lists of somewhere between six and 18 months. This, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is not the kind of support we should give to preventative services. We have cited the number of dead women, and yet this is how we work to prevent violence against women.

The member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh) also discussed the issue of safety for all Manitobans. When the NDP travelled North, travelled throughout the province in preparation of our Task Force Report on Violence against Women, we learned that one of the areas where violence is most severe—now I should perhaps rescind. What I really want to say is where services are most lacking is in northern Manitoba, and yet we have a report here that does not really cover people living in northern Manitoba.

We also called for direct democracy, that is, an annual meeting between the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) and the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) or with the Premier (Mr. Filmon), better still the Premier who does not seem to want to meet with women in this province, but an annual meeting whereby people in the community could question the government about the implementation of the Lavoie inquiry, about time lines, et cetera, and the Premier would be there to answer their questions and concerns. Direct democracy seems to us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a very good idea, and as we know from the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh), nobody cares like this Premier. So I would have thought he would have embraced this idea but, no, he did not seem to go for that one at all.

We also called for legislation. Protect Manitobans now. We also suggested, called for the government to listen to the community and to respond to the community report that we submitted in writing as soon as possible. And now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in order that we can proceed to a vote on this resolution, I will take my seat. Thank you.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister responsible for Status of Women): This is a very serious issue. It is an issue of major concern to women and to families across our province, and I am very happy to have a little bit of time to speak on it this morning.

I have listened to the two speakers from the NDP, and I certainly have heard a lot of revisionist history, perhaps a great change of heart from the NDP, from their time when they happened to have been in government during 1988 when, I understand from my colleague the Minister of Justice, at that time it certainly was the position of the Attorney General at that time to put domestic abuse victims in jail for contempt of court where they refused to appear to testify against their spouse.

I also, Mr. Deputy Speaker, look back on some newspaper clippings where I see in January 1988 that it is reported Winnipeg's only shelter for battered women has been told it lacks adequate plumbing, heating, electrical systems and should be closed down. I look at April 1984 under an NDP government where it says battered women are being turned away from designated shelters in Manitoba because there is not enough room for them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the record of this government, its concern for the safety of women—I will just begin by speaking about our shelter model, because it has been recognized as one of the most comprehensive shelter models in Canada with volume-sensitive per diem rates, follow-up counselling. We implemented a new model in 1992. We doubled the operating grants, reduced per

diem rates thereby ensuring the financial stability of smaller shelters and 24-hour access.

There is a great deal of revisionist history going on by the members of the NDP who are attempting to speak about some level of sensitivity. This is a serious problem. I would say that what would be best for the women of Manitoba would be that we in fact do begin to work together and recognize the steps that are able to be taken and support the people who are in fact taking these steps.

When this government commissioned the Lavoie inquiry, we were looking forward to seeing what would be recommended, and this government acted immediately upon the recommendations of that inquiry. We acted first of all immediately by setting up the implementation committee chaired by Dr. Jane Ursel. Dr. Jane Ursel is a very well-known researcher in this area. She is, I believe, recognized by the community and also by members in government and the academic community as an extremely good person to look at conceptualizing how the actual implementation can occur across this province. My colleague the Minister of Justice (Mr. Toews) has spoken about her conceptualization and the work that is in fact now in place with the committee acting expeditiously and with advisory committees being set up.

This government also immediately put forward an additional \$1.7 million, money on the table to assist in areas of domestic violence and to assist women in this very serious situation. So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is very important to recognize that we have acted upon this report and that we will be looking forward to the further recommendations put forward—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have 11 minutes remaining.

The hour now being twelve o'clock, this House is now recessed until 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 11, 1997

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY			
		Struthers	417
		Friesen	420
Private Members' Business			
Res. 6, Potato Research		Res. 4, Responses to Domestic Violence	
Faurschou	410	Mackintosh	421
Wowchuk	412	Toews	424
Penner	415	McGifford	426
		Vodrey	429