

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

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 13, 2005

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PETITIONS

Ambulance Service

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

In May 2004, 46-year-old Peter Krahn suffered a heart attack while exercising in East St. Paul and was pronounced dead just under an hour later after being transported to the Concordia Hospital in Winnipeg. Reports show that it took nearly 18 minutes for an ambulance to arrive for Mr. Krahn.

The Interlake Regional Health Authority claims that 21 minutes is an acceptable emergency response time, whereas the City of Winnipeg uses a benchmark of 4 minutes.

Ambulance coverage for East St. Paul is provided from Selkirk, which is almost 25 kilometres away.

The municipalities of East St. Paul and West St. Paul combined have over 12 000 residents.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the provincial government to consider providing East St. Paul with local ambulance service which would service both East and West St. Paul.

To request the provincial government to consider improving the way that ambulance service is supplied to all Manitobans by utilizing technologies such as GPS in conjunction with a Medical Transportation Co-ordination Centre (MTCC) which will ensure that patients receive the nearest ambulance in the least amount of time.

To request the provincial government to consider ensuring that appropriate funding is provided to maintain superior response times and sustainable services.

Signed by Kim Scott, Jim Scott, David Benesocky and many, many others.

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

* (13:35)

Education Support Levy and Special Levy

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

All Manitobans are concerned about providing a high quality of education to students.

The current model of funding education through property taxes no longer works.

Education is a provincial responsibility and provincial funding of the operation of Manitoba's public schools has fallen every year under the current Doer administration to the most current level of 56 percent.

Residential property tax bills continue to rise as local school divisions are forced to turn to property owners to offset decreasing provincial government funding.

The Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) has shown little action in finding a long-term solution to providing school divisions with predictable, stable and appropriate funding for public education.

Manitobans pay among the highest property taxes in all of Canada.

The elimination of the Education Support Levy and Special Levy on residential property and farmland would reduce property tax bills by

approximately one-half and enhance transparency and accountability in the funding of public education.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) to consider accepting that the funding and delivery of public education is exclusively a provincial responsibility.

To request the Premier of Manitoba to consider eliminating the Education Support Levy and Special Levy from all residential property and farmland in Manitoba.

The petition is signed by R. Rogers, R. Nowell, R. Leninson and many, many others.

Teachers' Pension Plan Pension Adjustment Account

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background to this petition is as follows:

After contributing to the Teachers' Pension Plan Pension Adjustment Account (PAA) which funds the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) since 1977 until the year of our retirement from the profession of teaching, we find ourselves facing the future with little hope of a meaningful COLA, and with the resulting severe loss of purchasing power.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the provincial government to consider funding the PAA to ensure that we receive a reasonable COLA, and that any loss of purchasing power we will face will be minor.

This petition is signed by Allan McAulay, Bob Cochrane, Dennis Wilson and Ben Veselovsky.

Crocus Investment Fund

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:

The Manitoba Government was made aware of serious problems involving the Crocus Fund back in 2001.

As a direct result of the government ignoring the red flags back in 2001, over 33 000 Crocus investors lost over \$60 million.

Manitoba's provincial auditor stated "We believe the department was aware of red flags at Crocus and failed to follow up on those in a timely fashion."

The relationship between some union leaders, the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the NDP seems to be the primary reason as for why the government ignored the red flags.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to consider the need to seek clarification on why the government did not act on fixing the Crocus Fund back in 2001.

Signed by Josie Olea, Minda Santos and Ralph San Juan.

Wuskwatim Project Development Agreement

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

The background of this petition is as follows:

The Government of Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro have stated publicly that a referendum vote including all NCN band members will be held as part of the approval process for the Wuskwatim Hydro Project.

The Government of Manitoba and Manitoba Hydro have stated that the Wuskwatim Hydro Project and associated hydro transmission lines will not proceed without the support of the majority of NCN band members through the Wuskwatim Project Development Agreement Referendum.

NCN band members were not properly informed and consulted concerning the terms and implication of the Wuskwatim Agreement in Principle.

The partnership agreement to be approved by the Wuskwatim PDA Referendum will largely determine the economic future of NCN First Nation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro (Mr. Chomiak) and the Government of Manitoba consider ensuring an informed, appropriate and fair Wuskwatim Project Development Agreement Referendum vote, and a vote overseen by an independent qualified third party such as Elections Manitoba.

Signed by Sandy Spence Sr., Louis McIves, Sharon McDonald and many others.

*(13:40)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Flood Conditions

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): Mr. Speaker, I rise to present a statement and update the House regarding Manitoba's flood situation thus far.

Mr. Speaker, as all Manitobans and members of this House know, our environment can be quite unpredictable. We have had to deal with very unseasonable weather events starting in western Manitoba, now moving to the south. As flood levels in western Manitoba continue to climb from the very high levels experienced in early June, Manitoba Water Stewardship's Hydrological Forecast Centre has now issued a flood warning for the Red River and its tributaries due to recent heavy rainfall.

Levels of the Red River have now risen 3 to 4 feet since last Friday. Additional rises are expected in the range from 12 feet at Emerson, 10 feet at Morris, 7.5 feet at St. Adolphe, 6 feet at the floodway inlet and 5 feet at Selkirk. Minor flooding of low-lying lands along the river is expected at the time of the crest. Water will begin to naturally flow into the Red River Floodway tomorrow, and the crest dates range from June 24 at Emerson to June 27 in the Winnipeg area. The river level in downtown Winnipeg this morning was almost 15 feet. The level is expected to rise to nearly 17 feet. We are currently reviewing possible operation of the Red River Floodway.

The major rises in the Red River are a result of rain over the U.S. portion of the watershed Saturday night. Additional heavy rain is expected today as

another weather system moves north into the valley. Levels of most Manitoba tributaries of the Red River have risen sharply since Saturday night due to rain falling on saturated ground. Many streams are running bank full with minor flooding of low-lying areas. Smaller tributaries have crested but larger ones such as the Rat River, Morris River, LaSalle River will crest tonight or tomorrow. The diversion on the Morris River at Rosenort will be operating for the next few days to prevent excessive water levels at the town.

River levels in the Interlake are rising sharply due to additional heavy rain. Minor flooding may occur in low-lying areas around the Icelandic River. The Assiniboine River has crested upstream of Virden, and a crest is expected at Brandon later on today. Levels continue to rise in the area from Spruce Woods to Winnipeg with near bank-full conditions as of this morning. The Portage Diversion will be put into operation later today to prevent flooding in the portion from Portage la Prairie to Headingley. Levels of the Souris River are near the crest at Melita, but levels will not fall for a few more days due to the continued rises on the Antler River. Additional rises of half a foot or so are expected from Souris to Wawanesa. Flooding of valley lands from the U.S. boundary to Hartney will continue for another 10 days or so, even with dry weather, given current weather conditions.

River levels have risen in eastern Manitoba due to Saturday's rain, but flooding should be narrowly avoided on the Whitemouth and Birch rivers. We will continue to watch and assist the areas of the province that continue to experience high waters.

Using the most up-to-date predictive technology models, scientific and historic knowledge and our collective experience, the Province has responded efficiently to this unseasonable flooding. Mr. Speaker, the Province will continue to monitor events and provide increased protection to communities during this unseasonable event, using flood control structures such as the Red River Floodway, the Portage Diversion and the Shellmouth Reservoir. We will also continue efforts to ensure all environmental concerns are fairly addressed.

I would like to thank the municipalities, the provincial staff and all of those who have worked diligently throughout this event. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (13:45)

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, we also want to thank the minister for giving us an update on what the situation on most of the rivers and streams are in the province of Manitoba.

Those of us who live in the area that is severely affected by the unseasonable amounts of rain that we have seen over the last three weeks in the southern part of the province of Manitoba is nothing short of a disaster. Western Manitoba has seen rain amounts in one rainfall as high as 11 inches. The eastern part of the province has seen three different rain events now amounting between 2 and 6 inches at a time, and it has led towards fields, pastures and other parts, roads being flooded and culverts being ripped out across the southern part of Manitoba. This has led towards a disastrous kind of situation whereby farmers are not able to get into their fields. We are seeing tractors, big tractors, machinery stuck all over the place and farmers attempting to get water off their fields so they could get access.

The worst disaster is on livestock. I got a phone call on Saturday saying, and he said you are my representative. This farmer said, "I have cows walking around pastures up to their bellies in water. How do I feed them and how do I care for them?" Their pastures are being wrecked and this similar situation is occurring in the farmland areas that need to have crops put in. There are airplanes flying now canola onto the fields, and without having any cover on the canola seed, the canola seed is rooting. Certainly what needs to happen, Mr. Speaker, is there needs to be a provision that the chemicals that will stem the weed growth in those fields can be somehow applied, and the only way to do it now is by air because there is no equipment that can travel in these muddy soaked fields anymore.

The second issue that needs to be addressed is the infrastructure. The destruction of the infrastructure, roads being ripped out, culverts being ripped out, bridges damaged, and all because of rain that we have not seen very often in Manitoba. I believe that the economic situation is disastrous out there. I believe that the Province of Manitoba and the federal government are going to have to band together and make available funds to be able to allow these people to take care of their cattle and their livestock. For those who cannot put crops in the ground, somehow measures are going to have to be put in place to ensure that the disastrous financial

situation that most of these people find themselves in now will have to be addressed somehow in a far more meaningful way than any program that we have seen now.

This is truly a disaster, Mr. Speaker, and we ask the current Province of Manitoba to intervene in a meaningful way that will help support that economic base that we depend on.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I ask for leave to speak to the minister's statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, there are clearly parts of rural Manitoba which are experiencing a major crisis at this point because of the water levels, and it is affecting farmers and indeed others because of the amount of rain that we have had. It clearly is much more serious in some parts of the province, in some local areas than in others, but, nevertheless, it is very serious. Clearly it needs not only urgent attention, but I would suggest that there is some need for better long-run planning in terms of water management and drainage issues.

What we are experiencing was predicted by a number of the models of climate change which suggested that in the spring we would have increasing amounts of wet weather. After the 1999 flood in southwestern Manitoba, I pointed out that there was need for a much better provincial strategy for water management and drainage so that if we got into this kind of situation we would at least be able to be a little better off than we were there. This government has not, unfortunately, acted. We are in a very difficult situation at the moment, and we can just only hope that the weather dramatically improves soon. In the meanwhile, the government is listening and doing everything it can. Thank you.

* (13:50)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from Stanley Knowles School 51 Grades 5 and 6 students

under the direction of Ms. Marilyn Calderon and Ms. Sandy Masters. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

Also in the public gallery we have from Christ the King School 16 Grade 5 students under the direction of Mrs. Shirley Gendron. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Allan).

Also in the public gallery we have from the Academy of Broadcasting 14 visitors under the direction of Mr. Brad Middleton. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Minto (Mr. Swan).

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Agriculture Industry Excess Moisture Payment

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, in 1999 the former PC government brought in the \$50-per-acre excess moisture payment for unseeded acres. The NDP government has continued this policy of \$50 per acre. However, during those six years input costs for fuel, fertilizer and chemicals have skyrocketed, and the \$50 per acre simply does not meet current needs.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the wet seeding season that we have been experiencing will the Minister of Agriculture assure Manitoba farm families that her department will review this payment immediately and consider increasing it to a more appropriate need for our farmers in this province?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): I would like to correct the record for the member opposite where he talks about his government bringing in the excess moisture insurance. In fact, under the previous administration, Mr. Speaker, there was an excess moisture insurance that the producers have to pay for. It was this government when we took office that brought in excess moisture insurance that covered all producers. As much as members opposite would like to take credit for it, I would like them to look back at history and check the record. The producers, in fact, had

asked them for excess moisture insurance, but they did not bring it in.

Mr. Speaker, with those few comments I would also like to say that I have had the opportunity to visit producers in eastern Manitoba, producers in western Manitoba, and it is a very difficult situation. Many people will be drawing on the excess moisture insurance that we put in place.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, it was Harry Enns that brought that in for the minister's information. Maybe she should go back in Hansard and do her history lesson.

We on this side of the House appreciate the increased costs that farmers are facing. Fuel and fertilizer have doubled since 1999. These are maintenance costs that go on to land whether they are seeded or not. The current \$50 per acre payment does not address the need to offset unseeded land expenses.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister commit today to review the rate of insurance on these acres?

Ms. Wowchuk: Again, it is very interesting that members opposite want to try to take credit for a program that they refused to bring in, Mr. Speaker. They refused it and you can check the records.

Mr. Speaker, with regard to the situation faced by producers, the excess moisture insurance program that we have brought in is going to help those people who have not been able to seed. I had many discussions with producers and certainly there is the whole issue of input costs that producers have put into the ground in the land that they have already seeded. Those costs that producers take on when they put a crop in when they have lost the crop there is crop insurance, whether it be the excess moisture insurance where they could not seed or crop insurance if they lost the crop.

* (13:55)

Mr. Eichler: Obviously the minister is not prepared to move on this issue. Manitoba farmers and ranchers have been hit extremely hard by the heavy rains the last month, particularly storms in the last two weeks. Many farmers simply do not have the opportunity to seed the needed acres of farmland.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister assure farmers that sufficient dollars will be in place to assist these farmers hit hard by excess rain in the province?

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, as I said, I had been visiting with producers and there is no doubt that there are serious challenges out there. There is crop insurance. Crop insurance is the best program you could have to help producers in their production. These people cannot get their crops in.

There are also, Mr. Speaker, other programs that I had discussion with with the producers. The producers have asked about whether there is a possibility for an advance on CAIS for them as there was for the cattle producers. Those are the kinds of discussion that I am having with producers.

I would encourage the member opposite to table any information he has where the previous minister brought in the excess moisture insurance that is in place right now, Mr. Speaker. He cannot do it. He should not. The record will show it cannot be done, but I want to put on the record clearly there are very serious challenges that our producers are facing today.

Crocus Investment Fund Public Inquiry Request

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we, on behalf of Crocus unitholders, all taxpayers, and for the sake of venture capital in Manitoba, have repeatedly called for an independent public inquiry into this Crocus scandal. The scathing Auditor General's report clearly stated that there are a number of questions around Crocus investment transactions and operations that are still outstanding. It clearly states that there are a number of red flags that were ignored by this Doer NDP government. It seems that everyone, everyone except those who are responsible for this Crocus scandal, want an inquiry, and that, in itself, raises many questions.

Can the Deputy Premier (Ms. Wowchuk) explain to Crocus unitholders and all Manitoba taxpayers what the NDP government is hiding and why they refuse to call a much-needed public inquiry?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General recommended that in terms of follow-up to his report that a number of actions be taken. We have followed up on all of

those things. We have referred the matter of criminal allegations. We have referred the matter of anything relating to justice issues or criminal issues to a special prosecutor from Ontario. I am sure that individual will be making a recommendation shortly.

We have requested the Securities Commission to go back farther to review all past filings and possible securities violations. We have put in place an implementation team to look at future and any other required legislative amendments, and we have actually gone beyond what the Auditor General required. We have referred to the revenue collection agency any tax improprieties which may have occurred.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, it is the Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province who still has not explained why he said he would only deal with the Auditor's report. He has not explained why he said that is all he can deal with when he knows full well that the Auditor said his investigation was concluded with a number of questions still outstanding and he emphasized that a more in-depth review was needed.

Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General could not answer all of the questions necessary to get to the bottom of this Crocus scandal. We know the Manitoba Securities Commission knew of three instances of concerns and did nothing. As it was stated in a media report, like the government, the Manitoba Securities Commission cannot get to the bottom of its own failures.

It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, who is the minister responsible for the Manitoba Securities Commission. It is the Minister of Finance. Will this NDP government stop hiding the truth from Manitobans and have the courage to immediately call for a public independent inquiry?

Mr. Selinger: As I have said earlier, Mr. Speaker, all the items that the Auditor recommended follow-up on have been moved to the proper independent authorities to be followed up on. The Securities Commission responded to the recommendations made by the Auditor General. The chair of the Securities Commission has gone on record that they did follow-up on the incidents mentioned in the report and that they have put recommendations in front of the Crocus Fund at an appropriate time to make sure that there was no advertising in pay envelopes. That was abolished in 2001.

Our legislation, which is in front of the Legislature this week for passing, abolishes any marketing practices which have occurred in the past and there was a warning to properly follow up valuations, and the Crocus Fund accepted that advice.

* (14:00)

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, the NDP government should not be hiding from those things that are not included in the Auditor's report. Crocus unitholders and all Manitoba taxpayers need to know the whole truth, not just part of it, and this NDP government owes it to them to be held accountable for not acting on the red flags and internal warnings that they were given.

Will this NDP government stop hiding the truth and order an independent public inquiry into this Crocus scandal that this NDP government has allowed to go on year after year after year? Will they do the right thing and call for an independent public inquiry today?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the Auditor General explained very clearly why he thought there was a problem inside the Department of Industry with their conflicting roles. He explained there was role conflict between the promotional and the regulatory part of the joint responsibilities that were located inside the Department of Industry. We have accepted his advice in that regard. We are splitting those functions.

He also indicated that there was an overreliance on trust. We have accepted that recommendation, and now we will rely on the rule of law to make sure regulations and laws are followed. The Auditor's recommendations have been accepted by us. They have been acted on by us, and if we pass this legislation this week we will ensure these things cannot happen again.

Crocus Investment Fund Reinvestment of Funds

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, in 2002 this NDP government passed legislation to remove the cooling-off period on reinvestment of funds into labour-sponsored funds. This legislation encouraged immediate reinvestment of funds into Crocus and was designed to resolve the

cash problems that Crocus was facing. The Minister of Finance knew that the Crocus had cash problems in 2002. He knew about this red flag and he turned a blind eye to it. I ask the Minister of Finance why did you turn a blind eye to all the red flags. Why did you turn your back on more than 33 000 Crocus unitholders?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the change to which the member refers was done in order to make sure that the treatment at the provincial level was equivalent and the same as the treatment that was accorded at the federal level. The federal government had decided to allow for immediate rollover of investments with a tax credit attached to it. It would not have worked unless the provincial government, and normally the provincial government follows the federal government when they make that kind of a change. That is what they did in this case and that was the standard across the country.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, this NDP government clearly knew of cash problems in Crocus in 2002. They passed legislation to encourage investors to reinvest in Crocus. The Auditor General has stated that the Finance Minister has misled Manitobans by omission in his financial statements. Those are the words of the Auditor General. Now the Minister of Finance is misleading Manitobans by omission on the Crocus file. He did not give all the facts to Manitobans and clearly encouraged Manitobans to invest and reinvest in Crocus. I ask the Minister of Finance this: As you misled Manitobans on your financial statements, why did you mislead Manitobans by omission on the Crocus file?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the financial statements in this province were completely open and available to everybody on an actual operating basis. We followed the practices of the balanced budget legislation as it was put in law by members opposite. We reported for the first time in history on a summary basis following the public accounts, all in our budgets. I have indicated why we rolled it over. On page 184 of the Auditor's report, it very clearly indicates that Crocus preferred a legislative solution to the liquidity problems that everybody acknowledged could be a potential issue with redemptions.

Crocus also indicated that they had other solutions to solve that problem. They said they

preferred a legislative solution, but they expressed confidence that they had other solutions. We were aware of that. The Auditor's report confirms that, and we did not act with anything but prudence as we moved forward.

Mr. Hawranik: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance clearly knew about cash problems in Crocus as early as 2002 but he chose to ignore it, just as he chose to ignore all the other red flags. Instead of calling for a review of Crocus, as suggested by his own department official, he chose to encourage Manitobans to invest more money to keep Crocus afloat.

I ask the Minister of Finance why did you choose to abandon more than 33 000 Crocus unitholders in favour of your union friends?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member pursues the conspiracy theory which flies in the face of the evidence. It flies in the face of the evidence. We are the government that gave special powers to the Auditor General to do specific investigation of labour-sponsored venture capital in this province. Nobody was acting with anything but the best interests of the public in mind when we gave those special powers to the Auditor. That is why we have this 245-page report in front of us. Those powers never existed when the members opposite were in government. This government brought in the strongest consumer protection legislation called The Class Proceedings Act in the history of this province—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Selinger: As I was saying, the strongest Auditor General's legislation, the strongest consumer protection legislation. Those pieces of concrete evidence fly completely in the face of the conspiracy theory the members opposite had put forward.

Crocus Investment Fund Information Tabling Request

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, more misinformation from this minister. The Auditor General always had the power to go in and investigate Crocus. That was always there. This Minister of Finance has responsibility for the

integrity of the tax system. He has an obligation to the people of Manitoba to set a high bar for his behaviour. He has obviously failed. He has mishandled the raid on Hydro. The Auditor General has called into question his financial statements calling them misleading by omission and he committed a grievous error when he turned a blind eye to the warnings from his department and ignored the situation at Crocus. Today, once again, he refuses time after time to table the internal memos referenced by the Auditor General.

I would ask him today if he would, in this House, table those memos as referenced by the Auditor General. Let the public and the unitholders know once and for all exactly what warnings were raised with his government.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I referred the request for the e-mail, actually, the e-mail conversation between officials in Finance and officials in Industry to the Freedom of Information officer. He has come back and he has strongly recommended that, under the policy put in place in February of '99, these memos not be released to the public. They should be released to the Auditor which we have done. They should be released to anybody that wants to investigate any of the activities that are going on here. In order to protect a free and open conversation among public servants, of which there are thousands every day by e-mail and other forms of communications, because without putting any chill on that, the policy was put in place by the previous government. We respect that policy and we are following that policy.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, I can assure the minister opposite that I want to investigate what is going on at Crocus and what this government's role was in it. This is not an issue about—

An Honourable Member: Did you join the class action?

Mr. Loewen: I am part of it. This is not—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, Oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, this is not about protecting public servants. Public servants know full well every day when they act on behalf of

government that they come under public scrutiny. This is a clear attempt by this government, directly contrary to recommendations from the Ombudsman that this type of information should be released to the public. It is in the public interest. It is in the minister's interest to hide it.

I would ask him why is he not releasing these memos to the public. It is in the public interest to know what these ministers are hiding.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, to give greater clarity to the answer I previously gave, the Manitoba Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Resource Manual put in place in February of '99 says the following: Section 23.1 protects the free flow advice and the deliberative process involved in the decision making and policy making by a public body. These are intended to ensure the full and frank discussion of issues takes place among officials.

The member opposite has suggested heads should roll. That is exactly why the policy was put in place, to protect members from professional civil servants from being harassed by members opposite.

* (14:10)

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, I have suggested heads should roll, and it should be the Minister of Finance's head that rolls over this. This is not about the actions of the public service. The public servants did their monitoring. They asked the government to step in and conduct an investigation. The government, the Minister of Finance, are the ones that turned a blind eye. Investors, unitholders, taxpayers, have a right to know why this minister and why this government turned a blind eye to their needs.

Mr. Speaker, this is not about public policy. These are memos about problems with a specific part of government, specifically the Crocus file.

I would ask the minister today to do the right thing. If you do not think it is right, contact the Ombudsman. Take his advice. Release those memos, release them today.

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, I am following the strong recommendation of my Freedom of Information officer, and that officer—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Selinger: —has followed the policy put in place in February of '99 to protect free and open discussion among public servants about issues of the day to give advice without fear or favour of heads rolling. As the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission, I will stand up for our public servants by being bullied by members opposite.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for Fort Whyte, on a new question?

Crocus Investment Fund Investment Limit

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): On a new question. Unfortunate choice of words by this minister, given the fact that we see bullying rising in this province. The only one that is bullying the public servants is this minister.

Mr. Speaker, in 2002 this government voted in a piece of legislation which this side of the House opposed, which effectively allowed an investment into a company called Westsun that was over the 10% limit that was allowed under the act to go ahead and for it to be treated as something that was onside with the act.

Mr. Speaker, this Minister of Finance knew that there were problems at Crocus. He had been warned by his department. He knew that there were liquidity problems. He knew there were pricing problems at Crocus, yet he and his government passed this piece of legislation.

I would ask the minister today why, under his watch, would he pass and recommend and vote for a piece of legislation, which basically in a cover of darkness allowed an investment that was well over the limit intended, to go ahead.

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Industry, Economic Development and Mines): It is important to note that the 2001 legislation put in for the first time official reporting so that people would be able to identify pricing, liquidity and reserve requirements. Before that there was no official reporting from Crocus or ENSIS to the government. So the 2001 legislation made sure that there were

some requirements to report from the funds to government on their policy initiatives. That was an important factor. It was also important to note that the \$35 million lost by Westsun, Winnport and Isobord, those investments were started under the previous government.

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance, the head, the chair of Treasury Board. His government brought in an act which overnight changed a very meaningful requirement in the Crocus act that said not more than 10 percent of the funds of Crocus would be involved in any one investment. They changed that overnight and now, after they got the Auditor General's report, they are changing it back saying they are doing the right thing.

I ask the Minister of Finance, the chair of Treasury Board, to explain his actions. Why did he let that legislation go forward? Why did he not ask the tough questions then? Why did that happen under his watch? Why does it have to be changed back after the horse is out of the barn? Will he stand up and explain to unitholders and people in Manitoba how he could have let that happen?

Mr. Rondeau: As I mentioned in the previous question, the whole entire process of getting official reporting from Crocus and ENSIS was begun on that 2001 legislation.

Also, if the members would note, we also changed The Auditor General Act to ensure that he had the ability to go into any organization that received tax credits or government funding. We also continued to work from the Department of Industry with both ENSIS and Crocus to get the information, so there has been a development of having a formal reporting process, the forms, et cetera. That was what was started in 2001. Prior to 2001, there was no formal reporting on liquidity, on pacing or reserve requirements. So, in 2001, we strengthened the reporting. That is what happened then.

Mr. Loewen: I can fully understand why the Minister of Finance is sitting red-faced in his chair, because that monitoring was not done. The power was there all the way along for the Auditor General to go into Crocus on any day, on any time, and if they do not believe that they can ask the Auditor General about that. That is a fact.

Mr. Speaker, the issue here is why the Minister of Finance, the chair of Treasury Board, sat by. He knew that the fund was in trouble. He knew there were liquidity problems. He knew that it had invested more than 10 percent in any one company, and yet he sat by quietly while a piece of legislation, which was opposed by this side of the House and supported by his government, was passed, which overnight, basically, allowed Crocus to skate around these issues.

He is culpable in everything involved in this Crocus file. He needs to understand that. He needs to take accountability. Stand up, explain why you will not release the memos and explain why you voted for a bill that made life easier for Crocus and tougher on 33 000 Manitobans.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): I have clearly put on the record the policy that was put in place by the former government to protect civil servants from being harassed and from being threatened to have their heads roll. The member opposite should understand the policies the former government put in place. He should know that the best guarantee of a good public service is the free flow of information, to be able to function without fear or favour.

By the way, all that information is available to the Auditor General. All of that information is available to the special prosecutor. All of that information is available to any legal inquiry that will ensue from here on in, including a class-action suit. All of the information will be put in an arena where it will be properly adjudicated. That is what we have promised. That is what we will do. The legislation passed in 2001 tightened the requirements and solved the problems that were ignored by the members opposite.

Health Care Services Private/Public Partnerships

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): Mr. Speaker, a historic Supreme Court decision last week has sparked a great deal of debate across Canada about the right of individuals to receive timely access to health care services in our country. The Supreme Court's decision notes that the introduction of private components will not result in the destruction of our public health care system.

Unfortunately, this NDP government's ideology continues to prevent any kind of contracting out of services to the private sector to provide publicly insured services for Manitobans waiting in pain.

Mr. Speaker, why will the Minister of Health not follow the lead of premiers and Health ministers across the country and consider partnering with the private sector to provide timely access to health care services that Manitobans want and deserve?

Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Health): I wish the member opposite would read the actual Supreme Court ruling because what it says, Mr. Speaker, is that private individuals should be able to pay private dollars to private facilities for private health care. It says nothing whatsoever about the public sector having to purchase services on behalf of private individuals in private care. I wish she would read the report.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we do contract with private facilities. We contract with Western Surgical Centre for eye cataract surgery, for example, among other procedures. We do not have an ideological block against working with the private sector in order to perform volumes of service that we wish to purchase. It has been done for years under numbers of government. We are not ideologically bound. What we believe in is medicare.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (14:20)

Mr. Sale: Mr. Speaker, what we do believe in is medicare, and if the member opposite would care to read the report she would find that all seven Supreme Court judges do too.

Mrs. Stefanson: Now we have heard it all, Mr. Speaker. This is unbelievable because this government is the government that puts its ideology all the time ahead of what is in the best interests of patients and Manitobans.

Dr. Albert Schumacher, head of the Canadian Medical Association, stated, and I quote, "When it comes to health care in Canada, private health is not some sort of bogeyman. We need real debate on the role it has played and the role it continues to play and will play in our system to advance the health of all Canadians."

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Health put his ideology aside, focus on what is in the best interests of patients and engage in meaningful consultation with private health care providers in Manitoba?

Mr. Sale: Let me tell the honourable member, Mr. Speaker, through you, what happened in southern Britain when the government there insisted on contracting out covered services to the private sector. Southampton hospital had a plan for the inevitable closure of a ward and staff redundancies, layoffs, and I now know that patients are too complex for the treatment centre which was contracted out for, but the national health service unit is no longer available.

So those patients are in limbo and do not appear on any waiting list. This spokesman for a private consultant also said that treatment centres were inevitably cherry-picking the easiest and cheapest patients. They simply do not have the resources such as out-of-hours staff and intensive care beds to do the more difficult cases. That has been the case in Australia, it has been the case in New Zealand and it has been the case in Britain. Just go south of the border and find out how many people go bankrupt because of private sector medicine.

Mrs. Stefanson: Mr. Speaker, speaking of southern Britain, even the Labour Party in Britain has realized what is in the best interests of patients in Britain, and it is doing the right thing and looking to private providers of health care in that country. I would suggest that members opposite take a book out of their chapter.

This Minister of Health has received numerous proposals from private clinics offering to provide a variety of services at cost in order to bring down wait lists in our province, yet this NDP government has not even acknowledged these proposals.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister consider this Supreme Court ruling as a wake-up call that Manitobans deserve timely access to care, and will he consider contracting services with the private sector in order to provide Manitobans with the timely access to health care services that they want and deserve in our province?

Mr. Sale: Mr. Speaker, in 2000, the wake-up process began after we put forward our first budget when we began to shorten the waiting list for radiation treatment from eight weeks to one week, when we began to shorten the cardiac waiting list from an

unacceptable rate that Doctor Koshal said was clearly not in the interests of patients to less than 100 people waiting for elective surgery for cardiac care in Manitoba.

It began when we put MRIs and CT scans into rural Manitoba and repatriated 1400 surgeries to Selkirk Hospital, when we put hips and knees in Brandon and Boundary Trails. That is when the wake-up process began. So our MRI lists are shorter, our CT list in Winnipeg this week is eight weeks, eight weeks, down from over sixteen weeks. We are making progress. We have more work to do and we will continue to do it, Mr. Speaker.

Crocus Investment Fund Government-appointed Directors

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, today at one o'clock the Crocus Investment Fund board has acted in a fashion that has once again dramatically exposed the incompetence of this NDP government. Just days ago, the Minister of Industry said his Bill 51 would provide for four directors to be elected by shareholders and that these directors would have a major say in the decisions affecting the future of Crocus. Instead, before the minister's bill could even become law, the Crocus board has already made their major decisions. The minister unfortunately is very good at closing the door after things have already happened.

Can the Minister of Industry explain why he has botched his job and why all four democratically elected shareholders were not in place before such critically important decisions were made on the future of Crocus?

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Industry, Economic Development and Mines): The member should know that there are two venture capital funds, ENSIS and Crocus, and the law applies to both of them. If you take note that was one of the suggestions that we provide support for both labour capital funds in the province.

The other thing that the member should know is that changes, potential changes that are offered by the board, who is managing the fund, as we said before, is managing the fund, requires two thirds approval by shareholders. So the shareholders will get a say. The other thing is that we also will be working forward to ensure that there is support for

more investment in the province to make sure that we continue to grow the economy. So what we are doing is we are being proactive as far as having the ENSIS board have better representation. We are ensuring that the boards have better representation on each of the boards and that is the appropriate thing to do.

Public Inquiry Request

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, surely the critical need was to address things for Crocus quickly. Frankly, with all that is now known about the Crocus Investment Fund, it is time to call a public inquiry. Manitobans need to know why things went so dramatically wrong. To many Crocus seemed like a good idea, but it went disastrously off the rails under this government. We need a report which will make recommendations on the future of venture capital for companies in Manitoba. Was the attempt to raise made-in-Manitoba venture capital all wrong or do we still need made-in-Manitoba venture capital, and, if so, what can be done?

Third, we need a report to provide advice to government on what is a reasonable course of action. Is there a better way than facing the huge and costly lawsuits?

I ask the Premier (Mr. Doer) will he act today and call a public inquiry.

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Industry, Economic Development and Mines): Mr. Speaker, maybe the member opposite has not read the Crocus investigation by the Auditor General. That provides us direction. It provides us the direction to aid the MSC where they will do changes. We have put in place a transition team, which are experts, who will help us lead to the future. Any of the criminal allegations have gone to the Attorney General's office to be dealt with. We have actually had someone from Ontario come in, an independent prosecutor, look at these charges. We are moving forward and we are doing it in timely fashion.

We have had about 10 days since the Auditor General's report to introduce the bill, have public hearings and move forward. Within the next four days, we are going to have the third reading to allow venture capital to move forward. I would say from a month to now we have gone far.

Crocus Investment Fund Public Inquiry Request

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, we want more than direction on the Crocus file. We want the truth on the Crocus file. This government is in fact scared of a public inquiry. That is the reality of it. They do not have the political courage in finding out what the truth is in terms of what has happened on the Crocus file because it will show just how incompetent this government really and truly is, and it will show their bias towards their union friends. That is the reason why.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans have a right to know the truth and for that reason I would ask this government to do the honourable thing and acknowledge the need for a public inquiry. We will not settle for anything less. Manitobans deserve and have a right to know the truth. This government should call for the public inquiry today.

* (14:30)

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, we had the courage to bring in a very strong Auditor General Act which gave specific powers to investigate labour-sponsored venture capital in this province. We did that without fear or favour. We wanted to make sure that every tax credit would be used effectively and usefully and the Auditor General has a 245-page report to react to that.

In 2003, we proclaimed the strongest consumer protection legislation in the history of this province, knowing full well that that legislation, that Class Proceedings Act could be used to sue government, its agencies, or people in the corporate sector. We have been concerned about doing the right thing, especially when it helps Manitobans, and that is the way we will proceed in the future.

Veterinary Laboratory BSE Testing

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, as we are all aware, BSE and other animal health issues have created significant challenges for Manitoba agricultural producers in rural communities. This morning the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives participated in the grand opening of a facility that will make our province better equipped to meet those challenges.

Would the minister please tell the House about this grand opening?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased to be at the university this morning with my colleague, the Minister of Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford), to announce the opening of a new Level 2 lab that will meet the needs and we will now be able to do our testing for BSE and TSE right in this province.

Mr. Speaker, when BSE hit us, we saw we did not have the capacity. We were having to send our tests to other provinces. We will now be able to do the testing and meet our requirements of testing the number of animals to give the consumer and the public the confidence that indeed we do have a safe product and that we, in fact, will, through this announcement, we will be able to have tests done immediately right here in the province when animals have to be tested.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

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

Following Oral Questions on Tuesday, June 7, 2005, the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) raised a matter of privilege regarding answers to questions given by the honourable Minister of Family Services and Housing (Ms. Melnick). The honourable Member for River Heights contended that the honourable Minister of Family Services and Housing provided answers which were at odds with a newspaper article and with a letter that the honourable member had tabled concerning whether or not the former Minister of Family Services had been aware of problems at Hydra House in the spring of 2000.

The honourable Member for River Heights concluded his remarks by moving that this matter be referred to the Committee on Legislative Affairs for consideration of disciplinary actions respecting the Minister of Family Services, the Member for Riel. The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) and the honourable Official Opposition Leader (Mr. Derkach) also offered advice to the Chair on the matter.

I took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities. I thank all members for their advice to the Chair on this matter.

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 privileges of the House have been breached in order to warrant putting the matter to the House.

Concerning the first condition, the honourable Member for River Heights asserted that he was raising the matter at the earliest opportunity, and I accept the word of the honourable member. Regarding the second condition, whether there is sufficient evidence that the privileges of the House have been breached, it is important to determine whether parliamentary privilege has been breached in the actions complained.

Joseph Maingot, in the second edition of *Parliamentary Privilege* in Canada, advises on page 241 that to allege that a member has misled the House is a matter of order rather than privilege. In addition, it has been ruled by Speakers in Manitoba that the member raising the matter of privilege must furnish proof of intent.

Speaker Phillips ruled so in 1987, while Speaker Rocan made similar rulings seven times between 1988 and 1995. Speaker Dacquay made nine such rulings between 1995 and 1999. In a ruling that she gave on April 20, 1999, she advised that short of a member acknowledging to the House that he or she deliberately and with intent set out to mislead, it is virtually impossible to prove that a member had deliberately misled the House. Similarly, Deputy Speaker Santos made one ruling finding no proof of intentional misleading in 2001, while as Speaker I have made six such rulings during the period 1999 to 2005. I have looked very carefully at the responses given by the honourable Minister of Family Services and Housing and could find no admission of intent to deliberately mislead the House.

In addition, *Beauchesne* Citation 494 states it has been formally ruled by Speakers that statements by members respecting themselves and particularly within their own knowledge must be accepted. It is not unparliamentary temperately to criticize statements made by members as being contrary to the facts; but no imputation of intentional falsehood is

permissible. On rare occasions this may result in the House having to accept two contradictory accounts of the same incident. This citation is supported by two rulings from Speaker Rocan and by four rulings from Speaker Dacquay.

Also, as I ruled in the House on April 29 of last year, in a comparable situation where a matter of privilege was raised in the Canadian House of Commons concerning whether a response given by the president of the Treasury Board was false in comparison with other available information, Speaker Milliken ruled on February 19, 2004, that it is not the Speaker's role to adjudicate on matters of fact.

Although this issue is one that is of obvious importance and of significance to many members in the House, with the greatest of respect I must rule on the basis of the procedural authorities and on the basis of rulings from previous Manitoba Speakers. There is no prima facie case of privilege.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Philippine Canadian Centre

Mr. Cris Aglugub (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight a special ceremony that I attended on Saturday, June 11. This ceremony marked the unveiling of a recognition wall at the Philippine Canadian Centre of Manitoba to honour the supporters and patrons of the centre.

As the MLA for The Maples, I had the privilege of attending this event to bring greetings on behalf of the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the Government of Manitoba. As a former president of the Philippine Association of Manitoba, I have had the good fortune of establishing the first Philippine centre in Manitoba and in Canada in 1984. Since then our community has grown and required a bigger facility. I am happy to say the new Philippine Canadian cultural Centre was officially opened on July 24, 2004.

Mr. Speaker, the recognition wall is an important part of the Philippine Canadian Centre which honours the major supporters whose donations made the centre a reality. This includes individuals, organizations and companies from in and outside the Filipino community. I want to thank all the supporters of the centre for their generous financial contributions.

Our government actively supported the building of the Philippine Canadian Centre of Manitoba through our participation in the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure Program and other supports such as the Community Places grant announced in September 2004. I especially want to thank the other two levels of government for their contributions. This includes the Government of Canada and especially the City of Winnipeg.

* (14:40)

I thank Dr. Romulo Magsino, Dr. Rolando Guzman and Mr. Fausto Yadao for their untiring commitment toward the completion of the centre. It will be the source of pride and a gathering place for the Filipino community in the years to come. I also thank the staff and volunteers of the Philippine Canadian Centre of Manitoba for hosting this event. I congratulate all supporters honoured and wish them and Manitoba's Filipino community continued success. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Veterans Way

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): Eight months ago, the City of Brandon renamed a short stretch of road within its city limits, Veterans Way, to honour veterans. Since Brandon fittingly renamed this portion of roadway, I heard from numerous veterans and their families, the Rural Municipality of Cornwallis and many concerned Manitobans, all who wanted to see the provincial section of the low road to Shilo renamed. Mr. Speaker, the voices of the veterans in the Minnedosa consistency and surrounding area have finally been heard.

On June 10, I had the privilege of attending a renaming ceremony of the remainder of the Provincial Road 457, which passes through the Rural Municipality of Cornwallis. Among those who shared this moving celebration with me were Mr. Scotty McIntosh, Reeve of the R.M. of Cornwallis; Mr. Charles Carlson, past president of the Royal Canadian Legion Branch No. 3 and Lieutenant-Colonel Tom Doucette, Base Commander of CFB/ASU Shilo. This day would not have been possible without the vision and dedication of the many veterans, local legions and the Rural Municipality of Cornwallis, the personnel at CFB Shilo and many others.

Veterans Way will stand as an enduring tribute and reminder of the sacrifices and contributions of

our veterans. As a main route between Brandon and CFB Shilo, countless servicemen and women have travelled this roadway, and this is a fitting acknowledgement for those courageous individuals.

In this Year of the Veteran and beyond we must respect our veterans and commit to memory their deeds. We have a responsibility to remember the past. Renaming Provincial Road 457 Veterans Way was more than symbolic. It will stand as a daily reminder, and I am pleased to finally see it a reality. Thank you.

Manitoba Marathon

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, June 19, Father's Day, over 11 000 Manitobans will lace it up in the Manitoba Marathon in support of Community Living Manitoba. The Manitoba Marathon has grown over its 27-year history and now is the largest participation sports event in the province.

In addition to the signature event, the 42.2-kilometre full marathon, The Manitoba Marathon includes a half-marathon, a marathon relay in which five runners divide the full marathon course, a 10-kilometre walk and the 4.2-kilometre Super Run, which is very popular with children and novice runners.

All events begin and end at the U of M Fort Garry Campus. The finish line at University Stadium is a place where many happy and emotional stories are played out. The Manitoba Marathon gives all runners and walkers their own chance to challenge themselves and enjoy their personal victory as they cross the finish line. It is incredible and humbling to witness the accomplishment of those who have chosen to take on the challenge of completing an event. It can truly be said that all who participate are champions. The participants, together with many great volunteers and even entertainers along the race course, are part of a very special event.

Those Manitobans choosing not to run or walk still have several ways to assist. There are always opportunities for volunteers and, while it means a very early morning on race day, most volunteers return year after year.

This year the Manitoba Marathon is offering souvenir purple shoelaces as part of its Lace it Up campaign.

As well, Manitobans can make a pledge for any participant. The funds raised by the Manitoba Marathon are applied to projects which assist people living with an intellectual disability to move into the community. Working with Community Living Manitoba, the Manitoba Marathon Foundation, Inc. allocates money to new projects across our province.

Mr. Speaker, I salute the Manitoba Marathon, a great family event for a great community cause. Thank you.

La Verendrye School (Portage la Prairie)

Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I am proud today to rise and share with my fellow honourable members an outstanding and innovative school in my constituency that motivates young people to reach their full potential, remain active and healthy.

For the seventh consecutive year, La Verendrye School in Portage la Prairie has earned national recognition from the Canadian Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance. I would like to congratulate all students from kindergarten to Senior 1 for winning the National Platinum Award for a quality physical education program.

As a part of the well-rounded curriculum, La Verendrye School dedicates more than 150 minutes per school cycle to physical education. The school also offers a wide variety of extracurricular sports programs with intramural sports for all grades during lunch hour.

Indeed, La Verendrye School is a shining example of a proactive approach to wellness and healthy living that lasts a lifetime.

I would also like to commend the professional staff of La Verendrye School that provides such exceptional academic guidance and enrichment to their students, with special recognition to the principal, Mr. Larry Muirhead, vice-principal, Mr. Shawn Harkness and physical education staff, Mr. Mark Sokolowski and Ms. JoAnne Clark-Gillespie.

Mr. Speaker, La Verendrye School is an important educational institution for the Portage la Prairie community that has educated many talented young people, and I am confident that they will

continue with their exceptional practices. Once again, I would like to congratulate the staff and students of La Verendrye School for such an outstanding accomplishment. Thank you.

United Church of Canada

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, June 10, 2005, the United Church of Canada celebrated its 80th anniversary. The United Church is the largest Protestant denomination in Canada with over 3 million members in 3677 congregations nationally. It has a rich history in Canada and in the province of Manitoba.

The United Church of Canada was inaugurated in Toronto on June 10, 1925, by the joining of the Methodist Church, the Congregational Union of Canada, part of the Presbyterian Church and the General Council of Union Churches which had a prior presence in western Canada. This historical joining of denominations was in response to serving the needs of those living in remote reaches of Canada.

Locally, the Conference of Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario churches is one of 13 regional bodies of the United Church of Canada. The conference includes approximately 249 congregations with over 49 400 members.

My own congregation, Atlantic-Garden City United Church was reported by the *Winnipeg Free Press* on December 6, 1941, as being the first United Church to be born in Winnipeg after church union in 1925, and, therefore, is also celebrating its 80th anniversary as a United Church congregation.

The United Church of Canada has a long history of promoting peace, co-operation and social equity. During the Depression, United Church members advocated for fair employment standards, universal health care and a just social system. The United Church was the first denomination to ordain women in 1936. We have a long history of taking courageous stands on faith issues such as an inclusive policy for ordination and supporting same-sex marriage.

I congratulate the United Church of Canada on reaching its 80th anniversary. May we continue to practise a faith that issues in action.

**MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC
IMPORTANCE**

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I rise this afternoon to put forward a matter of urgent public importance. In accordance with Rule 36, I rise this afternoon on the topic of hardship being faced by rural communities, farm families and ag Manitoba as a result of the ongoing flooding crisis in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing the honourable Member for Russell, I believe I should remind all members that under Rule 36(2) the mover of a motion on a matter of urgent public importance and one member from the other parties in the House are allowed not more than five minutes to explain their urgency of debating the matter immediately.

As stated in *Beauchesne* Citation 390, urgency in this context means the urgency of immediate debate, not of the subject matter of the motion. In their remarks, members should focus exclusively on whether or not there is urgency of debate and whether or not the ordinary opportunities for debate will enable the House to consider the matter early enough to ensure that the public interest will not suffer.

* (14:50)

Mr. Derkach: I am very clear on what my responsibility is in the next five minutes, Mr. Speaker, and I do intend to address that issue.

Mr. Speaker, I think that the evidence is before us. The government has just issued a news release on the flooding situation in the Red River and that it is indeed an emergency matter. The Minister of Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton) has issued a flood warning for the Red River, and we have seen that throughout the province. This morning I had the opportunity to drive in from the west, and I have never seen certain areas, or smaller areas, if you like, with that amount of water lying in the fields and actually causing streams and torrents through fields and meadows.

So, Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an emergency situation for us to be able to debate because we have only four days left in the Chamber. It is for this reason that I think all members of this House should probably express from their perspective what their current situations in their parts of the province are.

We need to have an intelligent debate on what perhaps we as legislators should be looking at in doing for the people of this province. It is just not the communities here that are in danger, but I think the economic disaster that is looming out in agro Manitoba is one that we have to pay attention to.

Mr. Speaker, farmers right now are in a position where the seeding date has passed by. If we are going to get any kind of a crop, we have to rely now on the goodwill of Mother Nature. Sometimes we have extended seeding periods for 10 days, but I would have to say that none of those have really proven successful. The seeding season is over for the year, and I think that we are in a situation now where we have to salvage what is out there, and we have to perhaps show that there is some good will from government and from this Chamber in terms of standing with Manitobans who are suffering through this incredible crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that in two years in a row we have seen this sort of thing happen in our province. First, we were hit with the BSE issue that caused no end to the financial ruin on the farm, and now we have a situation where the weather for the second year in a row has caused this type of situation to, I think, become a very emergency situation in terms of addressing it immediately.

I notice that the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) is here, and I know that she would want nothing more than to try to do the right thing for the people who are suffering. So I think that it is our obligation as legislators to be able to address this issue. I think Manitobans probably want us to. They are probably out there wanting to know what we as the Legislature have in mind in terms of assisting in this time of need.

I know there is going to be flooding along the river. I know that there is still a wall of water coming from the Assiniboine and another one moving towards the city here on the Red River. That is going to cause a problem right here at The Forks and in this city. We have to be cognizant of that. I know that officials in the departments are out there doing what they can, but I think in terms of policy, in terms of dealing with this emergency, it is up to the government and up to this Legislature to find a way and perhaps to even go to the federal government. That certainly should not be out of the question because there is such a thing called the rainy day

fund, and if it has ever been raining, it is right now in this province. Perhaps this is the time when we are going to have to reach in to that rainy day fund to make sure that citizens out in agro Manitoba are not going to be once again left holding the bag, not left once again trying to fend for themselves. I think we have an obligation as a province to look after our citizens, and this is one of those opportunities that has presented itself in a very untimely way. But it is just Mother Nature sending a message, I guess, to all of us that she is still in control.

Mr. Speaker, for that matter I rise today to put forward the case that this afternoon we should set some time aside to debate this, very, very important emergency issue. Thank you.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, we looked at the provisions of Rule 36(1), but particularly in light of the nature of this concern, a very serious concern. I myself saw first-hand in western Manitoba the effect the ongoing rain has been on the fields out there. It would be our view that this is a matter that deserves consideration of the House at the earliest opportunity, and we are prepared to have that emergency debate today.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, briefly, clearly this is—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable member would need leave because it is only members of recognized parties in the House—does the honourable member have leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: This issue is clearly a major one at the moment. As I said earlier on today, there is a crisis in a number of areas in rural Manitoba. Clearly, we would benefit from having a debate today. So I certainly am in support of having the debate.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable members for their advice to the Chair on whether the motion proposed by the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) should be debated today. The notice required by Rule 36(1) was provided. Under our rules and practices, the subject matter requiring urgent consideration must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if the matter is not given immediate attention. There must also be no other reasonable opportunities to raise the matter. I do not doubt that this matter is one that is of serious concern to a number of members in the House and to some

members of the public, notably those in rural and agricultural communities.

I have listened very carefully to the arguments put forward. However, I was not persuaded that the ordinary business of the House should be set aside to deal with this issue today. Although members believe this issue to be a serious one, I do not believe that the public interest will be harmed if the business of the House is not set aside to debate the motion today.

Additionally, I would like to note that there are other avenues for members to raise this issue, including questions in Question Period, raising the item during consideration of the concurrence motion in Supply. Therefore, with the greatest of respect, I must rule that this matter does not meet the criteria set by our rules and precedents. I rule the motion out of order as a matter of urgent public importance, but, seeing the willingness of the House to debate this motion today, I will allow it. Seeing there is an agreement by the House to debate this matter today, I respect the wish of the House and I will allow the debate to begin.

The question for the House is shall the debate proceed. *[Agreed]*

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, it is an honour to rise today to talk about this very important issue affecting all Manitobans, not just rural Manitobans. Over the last 10 days we have heard about torrential downpours, washed-out roads and flooded farmland. Seeding has already been placed behind due to the excess moisture when record storms since June 1 have dumped 100 to 180 millimetres of water over much of western Manitoba in a 12-hour period. Storms have hit a tract of land 80 kilometres wide, extending north from the U.S. border as far as Parkland. Since those storms took place more rain has fallen in southern Manitoba, first a 50-millimetre rain last week, then another heavy storm over the weekend, further compounding the problem.

* (15:00)

Even today, we are experiencing more rain, Mr. Speaker. Many Manitoba communities are struggling with high water. Several rural municipalities have placed themselves in states of emergency. Thousands of acres of farmland are under water. There are going

to be millions of dollars in damages caused by the excess rain because of seeding problems. Many areas of the province were already experiencing delayed seeding as spring rains slowed the early stages of season. Deadlines to get crops seeded to qualify for Manitoba crop insurance are rapidly passing us right now with some canola deadlines already passed.

The cereal crops and flax crops are nearly a week away from today. Farmers are unable to get machinery out onto the fields without getting bogged down in the mud and are going so far as to attempt aerial seeding. However, that option is just not realistic for most producers.

If unable to seed, farmers will be forced to rely on excess moisture insurance. However, with input costs such as fuel and fertilizer doubling over the last five years, the \$50-per-acre payment does not accurately reflect the true need, Mr. Speaker. It takes significant cost to prepare land for seeding and those costs are borne by producers whether they get a crop planted or not and \$50-per-acre moisture payments simply are not enough with today's input costs of the seeded land that has been flooding. In western Manitoba, much less wetland has gone unseeded, but the heaviest storms hit this area the hardest.

Many producers now have seen overland flooding or seed or crops left under water altogether. Land that was previously seeded is not eligible for excess moisture payments without replanting before crop insurance deadlines, something almost impossible to do to accomplish the thousands of flooded acres producers are not going to be left without any type of support.

Government must step up and address the needs of these producers. They should announce immediately the plan to deal with this situation. Weeds have also become a major problem, a major concern for our producers. Crops that are not under inches of water are instead sitting under a feet of weeds. The process of weed treatment is going to be severely hurt by the ongoing rains, unable to get equipment onto the land. The only option is aerial spraying and there are restrictions as to which chemicals can be applied aerially.

With respect to the livestock, Mr. Speaker, heavy rains have left mud holes where there used to be pasture land before. One rancher has said that his cattle have been left in the mud up to their bellies

and that animals are tearing up the pasture lands. How am I going to feed them, he has asked. The rains are obviously going to be affected with regard to the hay production only adding to the concern of those ranchers who have seen their herd swell in the event of the BSE crisis by some 30 percent in their herd increases.

Heavy rains have left heavy manure storage facilities with major concerns. Have they been able to empty their pits? We know I had several calls over the weekend from some hog producers in the Steinbach area where their lagoons are getting full and unable to get that manure out onto their land, and their fear that these may become a crisis and bust any day because of the excess moisture.

Several municipalities have declared themselves in a state of emergency and the Province has added a flash warning issued for much of the western province with the Town of Strathclair going as far to making cuts in several roads in order to alleviate flooding on land and threatening to flood basements.

The R.M. of Daly, Reeve Evan Smith has said there are not any farms around here that have not been affected. There are at least five more bridge washouts and road closures that we did not have in the spring. He went on to add that we could not guess what the damage would cost to repair, but that R.M. was still repairing \$100,000 with the damage from the early May flooding.

Mr. Speaker, I know within the Interlake region itself, we have not seen since the time I have been there and talking to the older producers within the area, the amount of excess moisture that is in that area alone. I talked to one farmer who was fortunate enough to have 80 percent of his crop seeded, one of the rare ones. In fact, he is a past MLA, Mr. Ed Helwer from the Gimli riding, and he had 80 percent in, which now is 60 percent under water.

It leaves us to believe that the minister and her staff have to be realistic in dealing with the farmers with the issue that is at hand. I know the minister is debating whether or not the coverage would be either through the CAIS program or whether the insurance program, but, regardless, the point is that the farmers need this cash now. We urge the minister and her government to make sure that the cash dollars flow immediately in order to make sure these farmers in a time of crisis—it has not been one year, it has not

been two years, but now we are on to our third year. We went from drought in 2003 to excess moisture in 2004, and now in 2005 we have farmers that are not even going to be able to get last year's crop off.

I know that we had a farmer by the name of Dan McRae, who lives in the Selkirk area, farms close to 4000 acres. He has 1600 acres in, 2000 of which is still unseeded, and two weeks ago, in order to make sure he was ready in case the weather changed, he went out and burned last year's crop in order to make sure that he would be able to do his part and to make sure that he was able to get a crop in and, hopefully, make a sustainable living off his acreage that he needs.

So, Mr. Speaker, I know there are a number of others who want to speak, and I just urge the minister and her government to make heed of our MUPI that we brought forward today, to make sure that that side of the House is onside with us and, if nothing else, the minister could forward those dollars. I know we have a number of farmers who have loans coming this fall that are due, that the government has placed the farmers another \$70,000 in debt plus interest which is going to be becoming due this fall, and we know there is going to be enough hardship that is placed on the farmer without meaningful cash dollars that are going to be made available to them. So, having said that, I will leave it at that and let the other members speak.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to put a few comments on the record regarding the issue that the members opposite have brought forward. I want to say that I had the opportunity on Thursday to visit with producers in the southwest part of the province. Certainly, there is a large amount of rain that has fallen in that area, and there is a lot of area that is covered by water. On Friday, I had the opportunity to visit in the eastern part of the province where the situation is also very difficult.

In the southwest part of the province, it would appear that most of the land has been seeded, so in that case there will be some people who will qualify for excess moisture insurance, if they have not seeded. But, if they have seeded, Mr. Speaker, if their crop is lost, there is reseeding insurance. If the crop is completely lost, they would be able to put in

a crop insurance claim. So there are various tools there.

On the eastern part of the province, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite talks about crop that is still out and, yes, in fact, I did see some soya bean crop that was still out in the field and very poor field conditions where people are unable to seed.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Indeed, there will be many acres on the eastern part of the province that are going to qualify for excess moisture insurance. Mr. Speaker, I have seen areas where there were cattle that had to be moved, and there were concerns about how people were going to get their cattle out to pastures. In some areas you see this extra moisture and you think, well, okay, this is going to allow for a better hay crop this year, but again, there are challenges with that issue.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are very fortunate that we do have the kinds of programs that we have in place right now. I wanted the opportunity on Thursday and Friday to just hear first-hand from producers what they were feeling and looking at what changes might be made on how we could address the issue. As I say, for the people who have a crop there is excess moisture insurance, there is reseeding insurance, and there is actually crop insurance.

With respect to the ability to get cash into producers' hands, I was very pleased that on Friday the federal government put out a news release that they had finally got enough signatures so that the money that is being held in CAIS accounts will now be able to be withdrawn. That is some \$63 million that we will be able to flow out of accounts and put back into farmers' hands so that they can, indeed, use that money.

An Honourable Member: That is farmers' own money.

* (15:10)

Ms. Wowchuk: I hear the member from Emerson talking about farmers' own money. Indeed, it is the farmers' own money, but farmers were very concerned about their money being held in accounts. This will also help with cash flow.

Mr. Speaker, there is also the CAIS program, and the discussion I had with some of the producers

was the issue of whether there could be an advance on CAIS as there was for the cattle producers in order to help with cash flow.

All of those are important issues. I want to say that although the member opposite was talking earlier in the day about the Conservatives bringing in the excess moisture insurance, I want to put on the record that this program for excessive moisture was announced on January 4, 2000, under this administration where the Premier (Mr. Doer) and I announced a significant boost to the Manitoba farm community with the establishment of a new excess moisture insurance program as part of basic crop insurance coverage beginning in the new crop year. So that program began in 2000. The purpose of the program was noted to be that this program was put in place so that we could get away from ad hoc programs.

Mr. Speaker, I also want to say that in the municipalities that have declared a disaster there are also programs that would be there for producers. The member opposite talked about the cost of moving livestock, and certainly there is some coverage to help with the movement of livestock. There is support for losses of uninsured stored grains. So there are supports in the area where there is erosion of farmland. I heard someone opposite talk about the big washouts that there were on farmlands, and again, some of those losses are covered under the disaster assistance program jointly by the Province. If the losses are high enough, the federal government pays a portion of it.

Mr. Speaker, as we talk about these programs, again I want to say that I recognize how difficult things are before we start to plan for different programs. The member opposite talked about the need to review the \$50-per-acre coverage and I welcome that suggestion, but that is something that happens as we are reviewing policy for the new year. We do not make these kinds of changes in the middle of a crop year in a program that is signed on. It is a program that is cost-shared between the federal and provincial governments. We have to work through this together, but I have indicated that we will consider that.

We want to see and producers want to be able to earn their money from the marketplace. They want to be able to seed a crop, but it is too early to say that the programs that are there are not going to work because we are not past the seeding deadlines. We

are not past reseeding dates. Although it looks very difficult as if you may not be able to do it, we still have to follow the rules that are in place as far as seeding deadlines go.

There is also the need for municipalities to recognize the disaster in their areas and put forward the motions. When I was in western Manitoba, I had that discussion, as did the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Smith), as did the Premier (Mr. Doer), as did the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Lemieux). Several of us have been out meeting with producers. The Minister of Health (Mr. Sale) was out on Friday as well. So we have been meeting with producers, and we have been meeting with municipal leaders. We have been advising them that they should be putting in place their resolution that will have their area declared a disaster. I would encourage the municipalities on the eastern side of the province, too, to put those resolutions in place. In fact, we had those discussions with them about how important it is that we have everybody working together, that there is municipal leadership on this issue as well.

So, Mr. Speaker, I again want to say that I recognize what a difficult situation it is and that this is exactly what I said to producers when I was out there. We would continue to assess the situation and look at how we might be able to support in this area. But one of the steps is to make sure that municipalities also recognize that there is a disaster and put their resolutions in place so that some of the issues that can be covered off by disaster assistance can indeed be covered off.

I want to also assure the members that I will be raising this issue with the federal minister so that he would recognize the serious challenges that our producers are facing. We will continue to look at what the options are and where we might be able to work with the producers, but we want to work within the existing programs that are there, whether they be the Crop Insurance programs, the CAIS programs, the disaster assistance program. There are programs that are there and we will continue to work on those. The member opposite just made a comment about CAIS. I want to also let members know that there is a review of the program going out, and, although the member may not agree with the program, there is significant money that is paid through the program.

Mr. Speaker, we have to continue to assess this situation here and continue to work on it. The best

thing that can happen to any of us is to have some sunshine and nice warm weather so that we could see some of this moisture drying up. Then farmers could get back to what they do best, and that is grow a crop and produce very high-quality food in this province. Thank you.

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to rise to put a few words on this issue that was introduced by the member from Lakeside. As we all know, we are only all too familiar unfortunately with the excessive moisture that we have seen here in the province of Manitoba over the past 10 days. It is excessive moisture in a very unique way in that it has come really with torrential downpours so it has caused great havoc with all of our agriculture producers, whether they be grains, cereal crops, specialty crops, or livestock. Every aspect of our rural base, our rural, agricultural, economic base, has been impacted by these most unfortunate situations.

The storms that hit hit a track some 80-kilometres wide, extending from the U.S. border as far north as Parkland. I would like to just say that I would like to thank the minister of transportation for allowing me to travel with the honourable member from Carman to look at rivers and the Strathclair area to see what was happening there firsthand. It was very educational, but it served its purpose in reminding us just how devastating this is going to be for our agriculture producers here in Manitoba. Even today, as we have this matter of urgent public importance initiative that is brought forward by the member from Lakeside, it is raining.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are once again inundated with rain. We know that there are major issues around seeding. We know that a lot of the areas in the province were experiencing delayed seeding because of the moisture and that slowed the early stages. We know that when you look at seeding, you look at some of the input costs. We know that there are a lot of ag producers that have input costs that go to last fall, sunflower for example. A lot of the input costs are already put onto the ground from last fall. So they have just mounted the incredible costs that they are going to have to bear as they move forward with the incredible moisture.

I know that the minister from Agriculture has stated that, well, it is not too late to start seeding, Mr. Deputy Chair. One hopes that maybe her crystal ball

is better than most because with the amount of moisture that we see, you know I think there are serious issues about whether we are going to make that deadline. All of these things strictly point forward and point directly at the NDP government, which raises the question: If you are not able to seed, or if you have already seeded and you have got your input costs coming through to our ag producers, what then is the NDP government going to do?

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we know that it was the previous Progressive Conservative government that, without going through any programs, strictly when they saw there were problems in southwest Manitoba, they went out and put \$50 an acre into the producers' pockets. Not through programs, they specifically knew that the federal government may or may not participate, but that was not the issue. The issue was standing up and standing four square behind our rural ag producers. That is what the previous government did.

* (15:20)

Now this current government acknowledges that they have a \$50-per-acre moisture payment, but the problem is it is just simply not enough money. That was back in '99. Some six years later, those input costs, fertilizer costs have exponentially increased so that \$50 an acre hardly covers the cost. What producers are looking for is not a windfall. Clearly, what they would prefer is that what they planted grows healthy, grows in robust form, so that it can be harvested and have a high yield with a high quality so that they then can go to the market and make their money the way that they choose to do so. But in the meantime, we find that our producers are being left, and I hate to use this term, high and dry, because that is where we would want to be, high and dry, but they are in a quandary because the current NDP government has not come to their support.

I know that the issue with livestock, that the heavy rains have left mud holes where there were none before in pasturelands. A rancher that said his cattle had been left in the mud up to their bellies and that the animals are tearing up the pasture, has simply said, "How am I to feed them?" The question, Mr. Deputy Chair, that that one rancher raises is endemic of all of our ag producers throughout Manitoba. There are certain questions and very serious issues that they want answers to.

I know that when I went to tour the area around Strathclair, the municipalities in those areas had declared their areas a disaster zone. We simply are asking the NDP government to stand and agree that those are disaster zones, agree provincially to support the municipal leaders. We did not hear that from this Premier (Mr. Doer). In fact, I think what was quite shocking is that rather than just saying that they were prepared to listen, to go out and meet with some of these municipal leaders, what the Premier tried to do is convince us that there was a program with money in it already, Mr. Deputy Chair. Well, the problem is, that money was allocated for a previous program and so, again, what we find is the NDP government, not only are they not standing shoulder to shoulder with our rural entrepreneurs, but, in fact, they are trying to mislead them to say do not worry there is money in the program. In fact, it is misleading because it is not for floods that we have just seen recently.

So you look at some of the infrastructure, some of the culverts that are being tossed around, the way that some of the roads have had to be cut so that water will flow. Mr. Deputy Chair, I know that infrastructure costs are going to be tremendous for these municipalities, and I would hope that this government would not let them down. Certainly, they have not spoken about supporting them. I hope that they will not let them down, because even small things like water in ditches, you know, that is going to erode banks from roads. So, over the course of time, we are going to see municipalities having to bear more and more financial costs, simply because of these torrential downpours.

Again, I would ask that this government do the right thing and stand shoulder to shoulder with our rural entrepreneurs and ensure that any funding from an infrastructure standpoint, Mr. Speaker, that this government is there solidly and solidly behind them.

The other issue, Mr. Speaker, is that I do want to say that we on this side of the House have numerous members who are all through this province. They see first-hand exactly where the problems are. I do acknowledge that the minister was out. I know that she was in the honourable member from Emerson's constituency. I think it is unfortunate that he was not alerted in advance of that meeting but, regardless, I know the minister was out there. I would ask, on behalf of those Manitobans that I have spoken to, on behalf of the Manitobans that I know

members on this side of the House have had a chance to speak with, the leadership of the communities, the municipalities, that they have asked this government to ensure that they are not abandoned in times of crisis.

So I would ask the NDP government to make a firm commitment, a firm financial commitment, to ensure that every Manitoban in rural Manitoba is supported because they deserve it, and this NDP government should show the leadership that they show when there are times of hardship and stand behind them. Thank you very much.

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade): Mr. Speaker, I, as well as the member from Ste. Rose and others, know this is a very important issue. Certainly, as we had the opportunity starting some time ago with the Premier (Mr. Doer) being out in the area, out in the area of Rivers and out through the area of Strathclair and through Cardale and Newdale and throughout that entire area, recognized the serious impact that we had from a substantial amount of rainfall that kept coming down in a very short period of time.

That entire area certainly suffered some heavy damage with water damage, and members have relayed certainly some of that information that has been there. It is a widespread area, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look at the large kilometre area that we are dealing with. It goes right from the American border all the way up. Members have mentioned up to Riding Mountain and it, in fact, goes further in some cases than that. It follows certainly heavily along the No. 10 highway from Brandon right up to Dauphin, in fact, and goes all the way over to the Saskatchewan border throughout other areas in the province as well that are starting to report some damage from the heavy rains.

The Premier (Mr. Doer) was out there on Friday, I believe it was June 3, to meet and speak with locally elected officials out throughout that area and had said we will commit, certainly through DFA and our resources through EMO, to assist local municipalities and communities out in that area in a very substantial way very quickly.

On the Tuesday following, I know that the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) wanted to get out and see the infrastructure damage that was done to the roads and speak with elected officials out

there to reassure them that our assistance would be there in assisting them. I know some of the heavy washouts and water damage in having to cut municipal roads was a priority to save some of the other infrastructure and the infrastructure damage that was out there. He did take the Official Opposition Leader and I know the member from Carman and others out at that time.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I know the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) went out following two days later to meet with the producers, some officials and elected officials out in the area to discuss the damage and the possibility for initiating crop insurance and other arrangements that are out there along with the DFA funding. Certainly I was out on Friday, and I know the Minister of Health (Mr. Sale) as well was out to Rivers on Friday to assess and look at the damage. When I met on Friday, certainly what I heard loud and clear from the municipal elected officials that are out in the area was that they were extremely happy with the response that we have had both from the Premier (Mr. Doer), from the Minister of Agriculture, the Minister of Highways, the Minister of Health and myself, as well as the staff from EMO.

I know the process is well known by AMM, and it is well known by many of the folks that are out there. Certainly it was again reinforced and reinitiated when I was out there with some 20 to 30 elected officials from the area, that we certainly want to move very quickly on any coverage that we may have under the DFA program and assistance that they may need or assistance they may have. It was heartening to hear the response from the elected officials out there recognizing the people we have had on the ground from day one, the people we have had on the ground out there working with the elected officials from the area and speaking about their concerns that they had. I know we again reinforced any possible help, or any information that we could relay to them we would get to them in a very quick form, Mr. Speaker.

What I did recognize when I was out through the area was some substantial culvert damage and road washouts. We know that there are a couple of bridges out within that area, certainly around Daley in the Rivers area and then up through the Strathclair area, Oak River and throughout that entire region. I know there is some water still sitting on low-lying

areas in the fields. I know there have been washouts of some of the infrastructure that is out there, and certainly we know that they know the process for reporting that.

* (15:30)

There are a number of resolutions that are coming in requesting disaster financial assistance, and that process should be followed. It is something that they will have a period of time to do that, up to 30 days to do that, Mr. Speaker. Those will come in as we get the ability as the ground in the area dries out for people to get out and assess it. The EMO through the Disaster Financial Assistance had the opportunity to take with the Premier (Mr. Doer) and Chuck Sanderson on Friday, June 3, federal officials out there as well that recognized the damage in the early stages. We realize the percentage of costs that are afforded through the Disaster Financial Assistance program from the federal government, and they well recognized the impact and know that the assessments will have to be done meaningfully as quickly as we possibly can.

The Manitoba Crop Insurance Corporation certainly has advised the EMO that they believe that there are benefits available for certain agricultural losses that are out there. The excessive moisture insurance, for instance, and the recede benefits program that will be assessed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and, certainly, it will be done in a very quick way.

The R.M.s did react very quickly and I know that the members opposite, certainly, the Leader of the Opposition, continue to confuse disaster zones, which is certainly in the American legislation that is out there, with the ability for people to declare disaster financial assistance. That is simply not true. They do know that they have to pass resolution within their municipalities that they have had some claims for disaster financial assistance, but the confusion comes from the members opposite in declaring a local state of emergency, which gives them extraordinary powers, and that has nothing, really, to do with disaster financial assistance or their ability to apply for that disaster financial assistance or their ability to apply for insurance or crop insurance, Mr. Speaker.

The municipalities do have that ability if, in fact, it exceeds their ability to look after what the resources they have within a municipality, the

situation, if they have that, has been done on different occasions in Manitoba. In fact, if you go past the municipality declaring a state of emergency, you can have a provincial declaration for a state of emergency. It is nowhere near that, Mr. Speaker. I know the municipalities understand and know full-well that compensation will be provided. It will be there. The Province of Manitoba will be there to assist them and they know that and they heard that loud and clear from the Premier (Mr. Doer). They have heard that loud and clear from the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Lemieux). They have heard that from the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) and they have certainly heard that from myself and the staff from EMO.

The declaring a state of emergency, certainly, is not something to take lightly. It is not something that you do unless it has exceeded the resources of a local jurisdiction or municipality. They have had resources from the Province of Manitoba. Any requests that they would like from the Province of Manitoba, they have been well advised that the Province will be there in a substantial way to assist them. As we look at the continuation of the assessment over the next period of time, Mr. Speaker, certainly, some of the areas in eastern Manitoba now that are supersaturated with water and some of the heavy flow and runoff conditions will be monitored in the next short period of time.

But, Mr. Speaker, I would certainly like to commend the elected officials and AMM and officials out within the areas that have been affected. They have handled and worked very well with Emergency Measures Organization. Disaster financial assistance assessments will be done over the next period of time as we are able to get out and consider the damage that has been done, the assessments that are brought in from a wide-ranging, wide-scale area in the province of Manitoba. I would like to congratulate the Emergency Measures Organization staff for the fantastic work that they continue to do in assisting our municipalities here in the province that have been affected.

Thank you very much for those few short words that I had the ability to put on the record today.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to put a few comments on the record in this forum as a most urgent matter of public importance, because what is becoming

increasingly apparent in rural Manitoba right now is that as a result of some very slow-moving weather systems, we have increasingly, day on day, started to have greater and greater problems. There were some, certainly, very current and very urgent situations that arose, but I categorically deny what the member from Brandon West just said about confusion around declaring a state of emergency or state of disaster, whatever term he wants to put around it.

The fact is that what people in rural Manitoba, I believe, are the most concerned about was whether or not there would be some emergency response where, in fact, the emergency situations were arising and disaster assistance that would flow from that, but did they recognize, and were they prepared to provide the leadership and comment on the leadership, from the leadership to the people of this province, about what they might be prepared to do or what kind of leadership they would be prepared to provide to deal with what is unfolding and what I can only describe as what has the potential to be a most devastating situation for rural Manitoba.

Now we have had high water in this province before. A predecessor, one of my colleagues in natural resources, the Member for Steinbach at that time, said he was fighting forest fires in his hip waders when there were floods in the south and fires in north. That is a little uncomfortable, as we can imagine, Mr. Speaker, but the fact is that what we are seeing this spring is building upon what we saw last summer, which is there were some crops in parts of the province that were never removed from the field.

So these farmers have a twofold problem this spring. They cannot get in a claim from last year's crop because they have not gotten it off the field or destroyed it yet. Secondly, they cannot even start on this year's crop because last year's crop is still there. The land is too wet for them to deal with, land that they would normally, over the course of a season and a half, and generally speaking, we expect these lands to become dry at some point during that period, and they are able to deal with the problem.

You know, lest the government think that we are, on this side, raising this only for purposes of making ourselves feel good or producing notes that we can send back to our constituents, let me emphasize that this is a situation that is very unusual. I think those of us who have been in this Chamber for a little while would acknowledge that

government would not have had cause to be prepared for this, but they have a situation. They are leadership, they are responsible for dealing with it and we want to point out to them that they have to take that responsibility and run with it.

Number one, in providing leadership, you tell the people who are being affected that you are prepared to do the best you can on their behalf. You do not just lay back in the weeds and say, well, all the usual programs are available. That is true, and they know that, but we have a situation that is arising that is, again, a variant on those situations. The situation I just described, for example, those farmers are in a position of where they might get unseeded benefits from this year before they get paid for the crop they lost last year. That is very unusual, Mr. Speaker. Can you imagine? They have just come through a winter with significantly reduced income, certainly no income on the fields that they were not able to destroy, and now are facing a situation where it is unlikely that they will have a crop again this year.

Beyond that, Mr. Speaker, we also have the BSE situation where all of the cow herds in the province are larger than normal. There is a lot of pasture land out there that is now becoming inundated and unable to use. You might say, well, the cows can go to the high ground, but there definitely are operations out there that will not have a lot of high ground to put those cattle on and certainly not the numbers of cattle they are dealing with today.

Thirdly, this is an unusual situation in as much as it is a little bit spotty. The southwest corner of the province, the south side of the province, the southeast corner and north of Winnipeg and the Interlake are very bad. There are parts of my constituency which are overly wet on what would be the west side of Lake Manitoba. But, Mr. Speaker, there are spots where it is wet, but not to the devastation that parts of this province are seeing.

So the government has to put forward its thoughts on what it will do in dealing with this situation. We know from experience that if you simply extend the crop seeding deadline, and you continue to have cold weather, you will not have crop maturity. That is a high-risk situation and, frankly, we have been there. This year is, again compounding the difficulty of that kind of a decision. We know the input costs and this is the part that is so

hard for, I would expect, our urban colleagues to appreciate, input costs have skyrocketed.

* (15:40)

Think of the cost of the gas you put in your car. That is the cost of energy. It relates to the cost of fertilizer. It relates to the cost of the fuel that we put in our tractors. It relates to all of what is the one significant most expensive input: fertilizer. It also relates to the cost of many other weed control chemicals that could be impacted by this. In the end, input costs have risen across the board and regardless of the reason, regardless of the specific impact, we know the net impact is very high, very significant and, again, requires leadership from the government providing incentive, opportunity and, I would suggest, hope for some of these operations.

The Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), to her credit, has gone out and had a look around, but you know what, she did not engage the local MLAs in trying to solve that problem. I think the MLAs who were in that area probably have a better grasp on what the major problems are than she will get by just flying in for a few hours or a couple of hours. Certainly, she will get the advice of the reeves, the councillors in the area and the farmers in the area, but leadership means gathering together that expertise, that information and putting together a response plan to what is becoming a very, very large problem out there.

We need to provide, I would suggest, an opportunity to review the situation, as I have just said, and hold it up against the current file or the current programs that are in place, vent it against that and decide whether or not we are doing the best we can because Manitoba is very dependent on agriculture. We know that in every community across this province, including the capital city right where we stand today, every community in this province is ultimately impacted by what goes on in the agricultural industry. It will have a cumulative effect and that cumulative effect will lead towards reduction in tax resources coming into this province.

So I ask the government today to put forward their best foot on this program, accept the expertise, accept the information and the advice of the people across the province so that we can respond appropriately.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): Mr. Speaker, as we debate this matter of urgent and public importance today, I think it is important to put on the record how there is about only one thing that is predictable in Manitoba in terms of the weather and it is how unpredictable it is.

Today, as I left my home community of Thompson, we had bright sunny skies, a beautiful weekend, a beautiful day ahead of us. As I came in and saw the increasing cloud over southern Manitoba, I must admit the various aspects of my responsibilities came home to me because certainly as I looked out my window in Thompson this morning, I regretted that I could not be participating in one of my responsibilities as minister of fisheries, perhaps checking out the fish stock personally, something I vowed to do as minister. Then I recognized increasingly as I came south, the reality that these weather systems have had a strangle out over much of southern Manitoba and are continuing to put a lot of pressure on our communities.

Mr. Speaker, let us not forget that it is barely a year and a half from the time that we had a record drought in this province. I remember after my appointment as Minister of Water Stewardship, there was a banner headline in the *Winnipeg Free Press* that talked about a record drought. We had record low levels of lakes, rivers and streams. I must admit a lot of Manitobans after seeing us now get out of that drought are probably wondering how we can turn the tap off because the rain continues. The rain continues in record amounts and there have been particular events in Westman that are quite remarkable in terms of the amount of rain that has come down. I think that is important to put on the record.

I do also want to acknowledge by the way to, I think the member from River Heights made a comment about this earlier, but certainly there had been predictions related to climate change. In fact, one of the elements of climate change will be a greater lack of predictability in terms of weather, more extreme weather events, not necessarily a shift in overall precipitation patterns but very much a different type of event. We have seen that and I think it is something that we should point to.

I do want to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, that I do disagree with the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard). This province has done a significant

amount of work in terms of flood protection over the last number of years since 1997, going back to the previous government, and work that we have continued and expanded upon. We have seen floodproofing in this province of \$120 million, \$110 million of which is in the Red River Valley, directly related to the lessons that were learned from the 1997 major flood. But we have seen the other areas of the province that have seen that kind of floodproofing and, of course, this year, we are going to see further developments with the very important beginning of construction of the floodway expansion.

So there has been a major investment, in terms of floodproofing and certainly that has to continue to be the approach of government. We do live in a province where flooding is a reality, but where you can make a difference in terms of prevention, Mr. Speaker, you proceed.

I also want to put on the record, too, that I have had the opportunity as a minister to be both Minister responsible for Emergency Measures and Minister responsible for Conservation, of course, now Minister responsible for Water Stewardship so I have seen the impact of these types of events from both sides.

I do want to echo the words of the Minister responsible for Emergency Measures, and I think putting on the record that there seems to be some confusion early on, Mr. Speaker, certainly with some of the questions that were raised in the House, about the response in terms of disaster assistance and the use of terminology that really does not apply. I want to make it very clear that we as a government have taken very seriously the responsibilities in terms of emergency measures, and that involves two elements which are immediately dealing with the specific circumstances that are involved. That involves all departments of government, involves municipal governments, involves individuals. We have done that with a particular challenge, as you have seen the last number of weeks.

But it is also important to note, Mr. Speaker, that we also take very seriously the aspect of compensation, under the disaster assistance financial agreement. I want to put forward this is a federal-provincial agreement. There are certain parameters there, but one of the key things we have done is dramatically improved the turnaround, and, in fact, we moved to a very significant style of assessing

damage so that we could get cheques out more rapidly and, in fact, I was very pleased as minister that we were able to change that and that approach will continue.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, it does not require an emergency resolution or a declaration of an emergency. I think members opposite were confusing that fact. I think support put on the record that municipalities and individuals are eligible once a program is declared. It does not require a motion from the municipalities, and I think that is important to note. I think it is also important to note that the reference they were making to the need for a declaration of a disaster zone really refers to the abilities of the province, in exceptional circumstances, as occurred in 1997, where the then-government of the day for all of the appropriate reasons used that declaration.

Mr. Speaker, that was necessary to deal with giving the appropriate powers, in this case to evacuate people for reasons of safety. And I think that is important to recognize that those are essentially the equivalent, if you like, to the kind of measures you might see under the War Measures Act. They allow very extraordinary powers, and they are used in extraordinary situations, and the fact that you do not have a declaration under that act does not mean that there will not be appropriate response. It does not mean there will not be appropriate accommodation. The key issue here is you respond to the disaster immediately. You minimize the damage. You deal with the concerns that people have and the second thing is you look at the things that I think are really important, which is providing, in this particular case, the kind of compensation that would be necessary.

I do not think there has been any doubt of the fact that this government, as was the case with previous governments, will provide that kind of disaster assistance. It is also important to note, Mr. Speaker, why the 90% share, under the funding formula in terms of major disaster events, is so important from the federal government, because, again we see in this kind of event, just how much you cannot predict the weather. You cannot predict disasters and how important it is to have a federal government that is there. They were there in 1997. They were there over and above the disaster assistance program, and I hope that they will not forget Manitoba this time around and the many unique circumstances that are there.

* (15:50)

I also think it is important to put on the record, Mr. Speaker, that we as a government have moved, not only in terms of disaster assistance, but in terms of agriculture programming. I think it is unfortunate, and I am glad that the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) cleared up the record in terms of moisture crop payments. Those are other elements of disaster assistance that deal with agricultural programs, and I am very proud that our Minister of Agriculture moved ahead in terms of it.

That is one of the clear lessons of '97, and '98, and '99, the kinds of disasters we saw, and that is the particular impact on our agricultural sector. You see again this year where much of the impact has been either on municipalities in terms of washed-out roads and other infrastructure, or on our farm communities, Mr. Speaker, where you are seeing a potential for lost input costs. That indeed is a tremendous challenge with the overland flooding that was here.

We will watch, Mr. Speaker, very closely with the newer weather events. We started with Westman. We have seen some particular challenges now in Eastman as well, the Interlake. We are watching very closely today the situation in the Red River Valley. I want to indicate that we may, indeed, have to look at the operation of the floodway; we will be assessing that later on today. But I want to make it very clear that as Minister of Water Stewardship, on behalf of my department, that we take very seriously the responsibilities we have.

I want to say that I really believe this is one type of issue that we should take the politics out of to the greatest extent possible. We should all focus on the most important thing, which is helping the people that have been impacted, helping the municipalities that have been impacted, and making sure that we in the future look at ways in which perhaps we can improve our flood protection or disaster assistance. That is something that we have done as a government the last number of years. It is something that I certainly hope will be the focus here, the focus on the people who are impacted, the communities that are impacted, not the politics.

I want to give my assurance that our department and our government are focussed on the people, not the politics. Over the next number of days, we will continue to work with the people affected by the very

difficult circumstances that we have seen over the last several weeks.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, just to put a few comments on the record on the disaster that many farmers in my constituency are facing this spring. This is two springs in a row now that we are facing a very similar situation, much of the area, as the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) noted when she was there on Friday and indicated that seldom ever had she seen the likes of this. Well, she was there last year, as well and saw the similar damages that were occurring. When you have thousands of acres in one of the most productive areas of the province that cannot be accessed with any kind of machinery, that, in my view, should determine a disaster.

The minister, in my view, should have done what four ministers of the Filmon administration did when the Swan River had a very similar event. I will never forget the day I walked on to the Minister of Agriculture's mother and dad's farm when that farm was ripped right in half, right down the middle. We drove back to town after observing the damage. We walked into the back room. We needed the decision. We said, yes, we will go one step beyond what the mandate of the federal-provincial agreement was at that time. We will repair that damage.

The minister met with probably 20 farmers right on 201 highway adjacent to all the land that was not seeded. They were asking for two things: increased compensation and the access to air sprayers that they could stop the growth of the weeds that are now a foot or better high in many of these unseeded fields, quack grass and you name it, all kinds of weeds growing in there. Then they showed her a field that had been seeded down by air and the canola seeds lying on top of the ground and germinating, putting their roots down in the ground. It was working, but the problem was that these weeds that are growing there will not be able to be sprayed by ground. That is simply impossible, and the farmers asked, "Can we have a special permit that would allow us to spray Roundup by air on these fields in spring?"

I asked her department whether that special consideration would be made. That was last Wednesday when I phoned and asked. I still have not got a response from her department. Now that is decision making? We made the decision within an hour of visiting the damage. She has not been able to

make the decision within a week of the damage occurring, and the only request was that these people need immediately an application of herbicide that will kill the weeds. She cannot even make that decision. Mr. Speaker, I find that interesting.

When we talked about what the needs were from a financial perspective, these people told us that their fuel prices had doubled, their fertilizer cost had doubled, and virtually everything they used to apply in the normal agricultural practice of seeded had doubled in price since 1999. You remember that in 1999, when this kind of disaster occurred in western Manitoba, that the farmers could not get in to seed their crops.

Then, what is called the Filmon administration, a group of ministers went out there and met with people. There was a public meeting, first of all. There were some 3000 people attended that public meeting, and the commitment was made that this government, this Progressive Conservative government, will see to it that your needs are met.

That group of ministers met only a week after that in Brandon, came out of that meeting and made the announcement that there would be a \$50 an acre, no-seeded acreage paid to all the farmers that had not seeded their crops. By August, the cheques were in the mail. Well, the sad part about it is that, by September, an election was called. In November we had a new government. That government has not been able to make decisions since they were elected.

Now, the minister today talked about the CAIS program. She talked about the CAIS program they initiated under crop insurance and told people, "You are going to have to pay a premium if you want no-seeded coverage." Now, it is a standard part of the crop insurance program, which most farmers, quite frankly, appreciate, but it was the previous Progressive Conservative government that showed them how to do it. Now she shakes her head. Well, it is \$50, exactly the same amount that was given to farmers without being in crop insurance even, not having paid the dues, but they got the \$50.

There was also a program initiated that year that helped farmers reseed their forage crops. There was a forage crop reseeding program, and that was put in place that same year. That Progressive Conservative government knew how to make decisions, knew when to make them. They knew what disaster was all

about. Now I say to the minister she has bravely got up in the House and taken credit for putting those initial programs in place. Those were not programs. Those were initiatives we took over and above the programs that were at that time put in place.

She does not seem to want to understand that, because I do not believe they are serious about how difficult the situation is for two fronts. Number one, she comes out there to my constituency without giving me even the courtesy of a call saying, "Jack, I am coming out to your constituency." Why would she not do that? Was she just playing politics? It would appear to me that she was.

She met with a group of people in Arnaud, my riding. Did I get the courtesy of a call from the minister's office saying "There is going to be a public meeting with the minister in your riding"? No, of course not. She was playing hardball politics in my riding, and I find that absolutely distasteful. I welcomed the minister on Highway 201 with a group of farmers around me. I welcomed her to my riding, but only because I found out about it by accident, and I think that is distasteful, quite frankly.

I want to talk a bit about the cattle industry in that southeastern part of the province as well. There are large numbers of cattle out there because this minister has not been able to negotiate the opening of the border. She and her Premier (Mr. Doer) keep fighting about water with the Americans that we want to get to open the borders. Well, I say to you the pastures are flooded. The problem is that the disease that is setting in. Foot rot and all those kinds of things that are affecting the cattle out in that area are going to have to be dealt with. Who is going to pay the cost? The farmers in there are going to have to pay the cost.

* (16:00)

You also have to recognize the huge cost farms incurred last fall, putting fertilizer down that they would not have to do that this spring, putting chemicals such as Treflan, all those kinds of things you do to the ground. There is no money. She says, "Well, you can have access to the CAIS program." Well, the CAIS program does not pay out any money till a year after the damage has occurred, sometimes a year and six months before the farmers get any real money in their hands.

She needs to make a decision, Mr. Speaker. This Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), her Premier (Mr. Doer) and her cabinet need to make a decision that would put real money into the hands of people so they can feed their families and take care of their cattle and, indeed, take care of the land, make sure that the weeds are taken care of, that there will not be another disaster next year.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to rise and speak on this. I am a representative of a rural constituency, the Interlake, which has also been severely impacted by the inclement weather, not only just recently, but the last three years, quite frankly, Sir, it has been flood to drought to flood again and, by all means, our producers are certainly in dire straits and at their wits' end as to what to do.

I might add that I am very disappointed in members opposite. As usual, they rise to the occasion. Whenever there is a disaster or problems that arise in our province, rather than attempting to be part of the solution, they want to add to the problem. They continuously politicize the situation and try and gain cheap political points at the expense of cohesion and co-operation within this Chamber. We see that with the leader himself, the Member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Murray) who, quite frankly, does not fully understand the definition of an emergency or a disaster. We can see the Conservative-Reform-Alliance Party mentality in him. I think they are more akin to thinking south of the border than they are right here in Manitoba, but that does not surprise me.

And then, to follow, the speech by the member of Emerson is always quite an experience. He usually puts this surreal perspective on the table. To hear him chastising our Minister of Agriculture for acting very quickly after we were elected and putting in place excess moisture insurance, to try and spin that out as, somehow, being backward in our thinking or, as the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) says, that it was actually their idea, is beyond the pale. They said, "Well, I remember the Member for Lakeside, Harry Enns, sitting here saying, 'Oh, we would have done it. If we had gotten re-elected, that was the next thing on our agenda.'"

Well, frankly, Sir, they had almost a decade in power in this office, and rather than responding with good programming, rather than thinking ahead and

planning for inevitable scenarios such as we are facing today, no, they would roll out with these gut-reaction, ad hoc programs, stumble out there and respond in a very inappropriate and poorly planned manner.

Well, we do things a little differently on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker. Excess moisture insurance is now a reality, thanks to the Member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) and the Cabinet of our government and that, in conjunction with reseed benefit programs with crop insurance programs, all of those factors combined, will see our producers still in business at the end of the day. Yes, it is trying times, but well-thought-out programming, common sense and maintaining control is the essence of getting through crises. I just wish for once members opposite, rather than trying to garner cheap political capital, score a few hits if they can on our Cabinet members, I wish for once they would pull together and be a part of the solution and not a part of the problem as they have been ever since I came into office here.

So, with those thoughts, Mr. Speaker, I know that other people no doubt want to speak on this, I just want to close by saying that we are there. Last week when the rainfall fell in western Manitoba, our Premier (Mr. Doer) was there the next day, and he said that we were going to be there to help the people, that our emergency measures staff were told in no uncertain terms that we would step up to the plate. Following his trip, very quickly we had the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Lemieux), the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), the Minister for Government Services (Mr. Lemieux), not to mention invitations to members opposite, even though we know we are going to hit, anyway, still we turn the other cheek. *[interjection]* The Liberal leader was invited and did not even go.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Nevakshonoff: Well, there you go. So we put politics aside over here, Mr. Speaker. We welcomed them to come with us. I think that scenario is well covered off. The Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), took great exception that every time the minister comes out to his riding that he does not get a personal invitation. Well, we are trying to deal with a crisis here. We do not have time to play political footsy with everybody along the way. We have serious situations to deal with. To sit here and listen

to him go on about how his feelings were hurt and how insulted he was and how he was held in disdain was really very, very inappropriate and a classic example of politicizing this situation. On that note, I will take my seat and let other members put their thoughts on the record. Thank you.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): I, too, am privileged today to speak to a matter of urgent and public importance. I was just listening to the words from the Member for Interlake, and I find it quite amusing that he went on ad nauseam about making this political, when he spent his whole whatever, five minutes of total opportunity, to talk about the importance of this issue and how this government could be doing, or is supposedly doing anything in this regard and just continually slammed anybody and everybody in the House for their interest in trying to get to the bottom of this and trying to get this government to do something and trying to get to the politics of this.

Again, this is about families. This is about individuals. This is about communities that are suffering, Mr. Speaker. As the MLA for Minnedosa, I have spent two years as a representative for that area. I must say it has probably been the two hardest years of my life, in that I have had to listen to families tell me their issues with regard to not being able to pay their bills, to let their children participate in activities, for their wives to leave the family farm to look for employment off the farm.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to spend a few minutes talking about these personal situations and comment very briefly on how this minister of emergency measures has indicated that things were done in a quick manner, and that he would speak on his ability to address the issues and let us know what he has been doing. An example, I guess, to start the story would be on the issue of the provincial Disaster Financial Assistance program, how, in April municipalities within the area had prepared a resolution, had forwarded it into the government and that would have been in mid-April. They indicated at that time that they needed this government to take heed, to pay attention to the issue at hand, to understand that they were in a crisis situation and that this government needed to hear and to take action.

Mr. Speaker, by the end of May, there was still no action. This municipality had not heard from this

government. In discussion with the municipality within my area on June 6, EMO had just arrived and indicated to them that the first round of assistance would be their sorting out the paperwork. So after the second round of chaos and disappointment for this community, they were just receiving the support from this government that they would help in the area of disaster assistance. I am just so discouraged by this minister and this government and their inability to take action, to care about the families and the municipalities who are struggling with these very serious issues.

* (16:10)

A farmer in the area, Harry Airey, and he is an individual who lives very close to—his farm is right adjacent to the area where the flooding had occurred and where a road access had been destroyed. That was on the news. It was his area that was destroyed. At five in the morning, he heard this loud noise and went outside and saw a whole culvert that was probably 40 feet in length and 6-to-8-feet in height pulled right out of the road and destroyed the road in its entirety and moved the culvert 100 metres down stream.

Mr. Speaker, this is a farmer. This is an individual who is a cattle producer, and if he has not had enough hurt and disillusionment by this government over the last two years, this was icing on the cake. He now has to travel a good 20 kilometres to get to his cattle which, before, he could walk across the pasture to get to his farm.

Mr. Speaker, this is incomprehensible, that this minister, that government, can continue to say that they are listening to the producers. This individual is getting more than he can handle. As the reeve for the Rural Municipality of Daly has indicated, there are not any farms around here that have not been affected.

Mr. Speaker, this is just a devastation, and for the members opposite, or the government side, to be saying that we do not understand what disaster assistance is, well, let me tell the government side that this is a serious issue affecting families and they are playing politics with their lives. They are playing politics with the individuals who need a government that will take action and show that they care. They do not need drive-by Agriculture ministers. They need a government that is going to take action.

Mr. Speaker, I spoke to a teacher, Karen Dunbar, at a ball tournament this weekend. She had indicated to me, and she is also a cattle producer and lives in the area, and indicated that she has seen, over the past two years, children who are talking about activities and talking about trips. They are talking about family outings and talking about what their families are doing. You know, these kids are very, very disappointed in not being able to share in the activities that are happening. You know, with this crisis now happening, with the second flooding occurring in the area, there is more of a vacant, lost look in these kids' eyes. I cannot imagine how this government can continue to ignore the issues that are facing them.

Farmers that are generally very upbeat and very conscientious, and all producers care about their land and are very self-sustaining and very proud, many of them are saying, "You know, let the rain continue. Let things continue and we will look at it next year." Many farmers are looking at winter weed options only. They are trying their best, Mr. Speaker, and when we have a government that does not care, I am very disappointed.

Again, speaking about the disaster assistance and taking so long in just addressing the first round of assistance, I hope the government takes heed and does address this and does take notice that things need to be done. People are suffering in western Manitoba and southern Manitoba and we need this government to understand and appreciate that political rhetoric, non-understanding, non-caring, is just not going to cut it, Mr. Speaker, and we need this government to understand, as my leader had indicated earlier, that we need this government to have a firm financial commitment to every family in Manitoba and to ensure that families in rural Manitoba who are facing extreme hardship are being heard and being listened to and are being dealt with.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I would like to put some words on the record in regard to this matter of urgent public importance today in regard to the flooding that is taking place from the excessive rainfalls that have happened over the last 13 days in all of Manitoba, but particularly in the area that I represent in Arthur-Virden in the southwest part of the province.

Mr. Speaker, these people have already had a feeling of exasperation because of the BSE issues

that have not been dealt with over the last two years, because of the PMU closures that, even though they were compensated as individuals in some cases, they are still having a huge community impact.

They are also reeling from the fact that there has been a tremendous amount of crop put in the ground this spring in that particular corner of the province and a lot of lost farm inputs, fertilizer and chemical that were either put in the ground last fall in preparation for this spring or that were actually put in the ground this spring when the conditions were exceptional for seeding, Mr. Speaker, in some cases, and now, looking at an extreme loss.

There are also thousands of acres of washed-out alfalfa in my area, in the Arthur-Virden and southwest areas, not just Arthur-Virden, but in a number of the areas of western Manitoba. I know from the words on the record today of the members from Emerson and Lakeside that a lot of the areas they represent are washed out as well.

This feeling of exasperation comes from the fact that many seeding dates are finished. The Argentine Canola, as an example, was on Friday, the 10th of June. Others are coming up shortly, but even with the conditions that we are at, they will not get on the ground in most of these areas over the next week because those seeding dates that are even later, they cannot get on the ground to even fly seed on with an airplane because there is too much water on it for the seed to actually even get to the ground in many cases. Therefore, it cannot be harrowed in, and it would not be in a position to germinate properly anyway.

These are the frustrations that have been voiced to me over the last 13 days in many cases. Of course, the first few days, there was a hope that that first six to ten inches of rain would be all they would get, and of course, that did not happen. It continued to rain, does continue to rain, and is supposed to rain more in the next few days.

Mr. Cris Aglugub, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

I guess one of the things that I would like to say is that the members, under Mr. Chuck Sanderson's direction from EMO, certainly have done a job with the rural municipalities in trying to get them to record the disasters that they have had, whether it is in regard to washed-out culverts, roads. I know in

Arthur, when I was speaking to them late in the week, that they have 40 occasions, 40 situations of either washed-out roads, culverts or shoulders that need repair because of the flooding, with water going over those roads. That is one municipality alone, never mind the exacerbation caused by the extreme rainfall in those areas, the flooded farmland.

I have 11 municipalities in my area, and Arthur, Edward, Brenda, Winchester have declared themselves disaster areas. Woodworth and Albert are in the process of having meetings to discuss those issues as well, particularly in regard to Woodworth. There has been a tremendous amount of rainfall in the east side of that municipality in regard to the area up toward Rivers and Strathclair that have been receiving even more rainfall than some of the southwest region, and that has been devastating for them.

Many pastures are under water, drowned out, as I meant to say. They are in a precarious position in regard to cattle standing in water. They just cannot find dry ground. This is not good for the livestock that are out there on the ground today as well.

I believe that the situation calls for extraordinary measures from this government. I believe that they should look at programs in regard to the lost inputs that are there today. They also need to look at expanding the \$50 unseeded acreage coverage through crop insurance that has not been changed since 1999 when the members from the Conservative Party actually paid it out before the election was called.

In regard to picking up on a good idea, it was a tremendous idea, but the NDP have dropped the ball because, of course, it has not done anything with it in the last six years. Talk about a cost of living or a cost of expanding, looking at the costs of inputs that have doubled in those last five to six years. This government has not taken that into consideration with the look, but I am pleased to hear the minister from Brandon West, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Smith), in charge of EMO today, say that they will consider that.

It is a situation that reminds me of when I went to Ottawa with the Minister of Agriculture in regard to the '99 flood, where, "Well, we will raise that with the federal government," and we all know where that went. We were not able to get any support

from the federal government in regard to that disaster assistance from the '99 flooding, unlike the extraordinary measures that the province took under a PC government in '97 with the flood in the Red River Valley.

Those are the issues that I wanted to put before us in the few minutes that we have in debating this, and I thank my colleagues for the opportunity to do that today. Thank you.

* (16:20)

Mr. Gerrard: I will be brief to give as much time as possible for those who still wish to speak.

This is clearly a very important issue, that there is a lot of hurt in farm country because of the wet weather and the rain. What needs to be done is to look at both short-term and long-term measures to look at this situation. We have had significant wet weather in the past, but, because of the situation with climate change, it is predicted that we may have more of this sort of a problem in the future. So it becomes critical, as I have said before, to look at longer-term as well as short-term planning and management of water in the province of Manitoba.

From a short-term perspective, there have been some suggestions put forward. These need to be looked at carefully in the context of existing farm programs in terms of what will be most helpful or useful. Clearly, right now, we are still in an assessment period, but that should be done as quickly as possible to see how bad the problems are and what can be done most efficaciously. From a long-term perspective, we clearly need much better attention to water management, water storage and drainage to reduce the problems that we have had and to allow our agricultural producers to be in a better position to deal with the risks associated with increased rain and wet weather as we have had this year and as we had in '99 and as we have had in various places in Manitoba in different years.

With those few remarks, I think that, given the shortness of the time available, I will stop and reemphasize only the importance of this matter.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just welcome the opportunity to say a few words today in regard to the torrential downpours that we have seen throughout the province in the last 10

days. Certainly, I want to speak about my constituency of Morris, which is no stranger to flooding almost every year.

Certainly, with the area we have the Red River, draining into that we have the Rat River, the Roseau River and we also have the La Salle River and all of these rivers are overflowing with the amount of rainfall that we have had. Certainly, that has affected the people that live along the river and it certainly has affected one of the most fertile farming areas in the province, the Red River Valley, and also along the Assiniboine River which, is also in the constituency of Morris.

Certainly, last year we saw some terrible wet seasons that caused farmers some inability to get the crops off their farmland. Again this year, we see some that have done some seeding and some have not even begun and simply have just given up, realizing that they are not going to meet the deadlines and they are not going to get their crops in the ground. That is going to cause terrible hardships for some of the farm families in the area, because now the second year in a row of poor season and a lot of wet soggy conditions.

The area around, in my constituency of Morris, at the best of times is an area that does not drain because it is very flat land and even with a little bit of rainfall that water, and in the Red River gumbo soil it does not drain off very quickly and the land is always wet and the farmers complain regularly that they cannot get on the land to work the land and in the fall if it is wet, they cannot get the crops off.

Certainly, some people will have the opportunity to apply for crop insurance. Others I know and have spoken to have not opted to buy crop insurance because, in their experience, it has been difficult to actually qualify for crop insurance if their averages do not qualify and, certainly, those people are going to be very negatively affected.

I have to also say that, when farmers are negatively affected and farm families cannot get their crops off, it does affect all of the businesses in the area is that everyone. It is a trickle-down effect. When the farm economy is suffering, then the small towns in Manitoba suffer. As we have seen with the BSE crisis, that does eventually trickle down into the urban communities as well.

I want to say that when the Minister of Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton) stood today and spoke he said he wanted to put politics aside and he wanted to put people first. I think that putting people first in a disastrous situation like we have in this province is very important.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

We need to help the people who are going to be negatively affected by this disaster which has been through no fault of their own. Certainly not only farmers, but rural Manitoba in general, throughout this whole torrential downpour of rain is going to be affected. I think that we do need to put people first and hopefully this government is going to do that. Thanks very much.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): I know time is short and I will keep my comments brief, Mr. Speaker. Over the past week, weekend and today, the situation in the east side of the city of Winnipeg or the Eastman area has deteriorated considerably to a point which I would have to say we are very close to being in a crisis, certainly in the R.M. of Springfield.

The estimate is that right now there is about 35 percent of the farmland that has actually been seeded from what I am understanding. I had a phone call late last week from Springfield Hutterite Colony. Josh called me, and this is actually a first in my political career, he said to me they have 6000 acres; 3000 acres seeded and literally, it is rotting in the ground. He has 3000 acres not seeded, and they cannot even get close. He said he actually wished that the roads and bridges would just wash out so he could not even drive out and see how bad it is. He said what is happening now is there is so much water on that what is coming, it is running off, but there is up to three inches of water on all the fields. He is absolutely devastated. What is in is in bad shape and the rest, they cannot even get onto the property.

I spent this morning and I traveled my community. In Oakbank, I met with some of the farmers, and they are absolutely devastated. They have no idea where to go and, in fact, are looking to the minister and encouraged me to bring to the minister's attention and to this government's attention if they could please, please consider upping the payment for land that has not been seeded. They are dying out there. It is just horrendous out there.

I went and I looked at some of the land. There are all the tracks in the ground from last year's

harvest where they barely could get the crop out. Some areas they could not even get it out it was so wet, but where there are these tracks in the fields, they are full of water. There is not a chance, not a chance that you can get into a lot of these fields, and it will not be for some time.

I went into Dugald and I spoke with some of the businesses and they are suffering. I spent a bit of time in Anola and spoke with some of the businesses there. They say it is just terrible. The farm community is not, obviously, in the fields. Those that have pesticides, those that supply the seed are sitting with bins and with tanks full of product and nothing is moving, basically, all the way around.

I spoke with young farmer, Howard Berdine [*phonetic*], and he said to me it has never been this bad. It is of crisis proportion. He asked me if I would please bring to this Chamber the message, and to the minister: Minister, would you please think of raising the \$50 limit on land that was not seeded? Would you please consider giving more money because right now, as it stands, they cannot get in? At some point in time, they are going to have to put weed control in.

* (16:30)

I drove past one field. I say this to the minister. I know she was in Springfield late last week, and there is the one field that is full of dandelions. They cannot get in to spray, so they are going to have to have some kind of mechanism to go in and spray. At \$50 an acre that just does not make sense. Those individuals who have rented the land cannot get onto the land, owe \$25 an acre as it is in rent, get \$25 for what? For having planted nothing.

They are beside themselves. They are devastated. We are calling on the minister. We are calling on this government. Please do the right thing. Do not abandon our farmers. Do not leave them out there in the rain. Please do something and up the amount of money that we give to them. This is, again, of crisis proportion never seen before in Springfield like this. Thank you.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I just want to add a few words on the record in agreement and certainly in support of the colleagues on this side of the House who have raised this issue. Certainly, the constituents in my area are very, very concerned about what will happen this year to their

crops. It comes upon a couple of years of very bad occurrences in the farming industry, of course, with BSE and with other difficulties in the crop area.

I know in speaking with farmers this weekend in my area, they have a lot of concerns about not being able to get onto the field to put in their seeds or not very confident about the kind of crop that will come out in the fall if they have already gotten onto the fields. Also, the livestock industry particularly is concerned in my area. A large number of the farmers in my area are livestock producers, and they rely on the access to their fields to spread the manure, to spread the fertilizer on those fields to ensure that their livestock operations can continue. So that has been raised as a concern certainly in the constituency in my area in the Blumenort-New Bothwell-Pansy area. I have had the calls where people are worried that they will not be able to do that.

There have been a number of suggestions, and I certainly want to add my support to the idea of having a greater unseeded acreage program so that the input costs that have increased since 1999 can be taken into consideration. I think that we need to have consideration in terms of what those livestock producers will do if they are not able to get onto the fields and spread some of the effluent there from their production. That is important; it is needed, Mr. Speaker. We know that the farming industry has suffered through a lot of different occurrences over the last couple of years, from BSE to bad weather, and they simply are looking for this government to come forward and step forward in the time of their greatest need, in a time when it is most important.

This government has spent money on a lot of different issues, on a number of different issues. We know that one of the most important industries we have is agriculture, and if there was ever a time, Mr. Speaker, to show that they have support for the agriculture industry, it is now. It is today when the rain is falling when those farmers are hurting, not just from international issues but now from domestic weather issues. They need to show that support. We need to ensure that those farmers, those young farmers are there in the future so that they can continue to be the backbone of our province.

So, with those few words, Mr. Speaker, I know that there are other colleagues who want to add their support as well to this endeavour, and I look forward to hearing them.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I, too, want to put a few comments on the record and simply indicate that, as already stated, within our area there are numerous farmers who are devastated by this rain as well and the wet weather that we have had. It is not only this year; it is the second year in running. I guess to compound the problem is that we have the BSE issue, as well, and this impacts greatly on the producers out there. So they are really hit with a double whammy. They should be starting to in fact do their hay at this time, but they cannot get into that either. Their herds are growing because they cannot get rid of their livestock.

So, consequently, the impact on the community and on the constituency is devastating, but it also goes further than that. It is also the businesses within the community that are being impacted by the fact that the cash flow is not there. So of course, where you have got those who have been able to buy some of their input, be that fertilizer, chemical or even fuel, they are finding it increasingly difficult to pay for their input costs. So consequently, this impacts on others within the communities, the dealers.

Just coming back to this whole area of crop insurance, and I realize that it is there and it is there for a purpose and certainly is utilized by the producers out there. However, what has also happened, as the KAP would indicate, they have done surveys with the producers out there that, in fact, since 1999, the input costs have doubled. So, consequently, it is a stress that has been put out there.

I just wanted to draw this to the attention of all members of the Assembly here, and I would certainly hope that the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) will take this into consideration as she deliberates on this very serious issue. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Any other speakers? Seeing none, I am going to call Orders of the Day.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please go to report stage amendments?

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS**Bill 33—The Planning Act**

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I have two which are on the Order Paper, but I would ask for leave to have two other report stage amendments distributed now because I will be introducing them, with leave, very shortly.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave to introduce two additional amendments to Bill 33, The Planning Act? Does the honourable member have leave, to be distributed to the members?
[Agreed]

Mr. Gerrard: So I will start then with the two on the Order Paper while the others are being distributed.

Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster,

THAT Bill 33 be amended in Clause 107(1)

(a) in the part of clause (b) before subclause (i), by striking out "both" and substituting "more"; and

(b) by adding the following after subclause (b)(ii):

(iii) requiring that, if manure from the operation is applied to land, it must be incorporated into the soil by injection;

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for River Heights, seconded by the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux),

THAT Bill 33 be amended—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense? Dispense.

Mr. Gerrard: This amendment would allow the municipalities to have a say on whether or not manure is to be injected onto the land. A number of them do now and they have requested this ability. I think it is a reasonable one and so I am putting forward this amendment.

Mr. Speaker: Any speakers to the amendment?

An Honourable Member: Question.

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

The question before the House is the first amendment moved by the honourable Member for River Heights to Bill 33, The Planning Act.

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

An Honourable Member: Agreed

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

An Honourable Member: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

* * *

Mr. Gerrard: This second amendment, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster,

THAT Bill 33 be amended in Clause 116(2)

(a) in the part of clause (c) before subclause (i), by striking out "both" and substituting "more"; and

(b) by adding the following after subclause (c)(ii):

(iii) requiring that, if manure from the operation is applied to land, it must be incorporated into the soil by injection.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for River Heights, seconded by the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux),

THAT Bill 33—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, this amendment is complementary to the first one and would cover, if passed, all large and small operations. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Any speakers on the amendment? Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for River Heights to Bill 33, The Planning Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment has been defeated.

* * *

* (16:40)

Mr. Gerrard: This is the third amendment, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster,

THAT Bill 33 be amended by renumbering Clause 112 as Clause 112(1) and adding the following as Clauses 112(2) and (3):

Application must be available for inspection

112(2) After complying with subsection (1), the board, council or planning commission must

(a) without delay, make the application and all supporting material available for inspection and

copying at the office of the applicable planning district or municipality; and

(b) keep the application and supporting material available until a final order respecting the application is made under section 116.

Applicant must give notice of application

112(3) Without delay after filing the application, the applicant must

(a) publish a notice of the application in one issue of a newspaper with a general circulation in the planning district or municipality or, when there is no newspaper with a general circulation in the area, post the notice in the office of the planning district or municipality and at least two other public places in the district or municipality; and

(b) post a copy of the notice on the affected property in accordance with section 170.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for River Heights, seconded by the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux),

THAT—dispense?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the goal of this amendment is to ensure that when an application is put forward for review by the Technical Review Committee, that it becomes publicly available and individuals who would like to can submit comment on that which would go then to the Technical Review Committee.

Mr. Speaker: Any speakers to the amendment? Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for River Heights to Bill 33, The Planning Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment has been defeated.

* * *

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster,

THAT Bill 33 be amended by adding the following after Clause 113(4):

Period for public comments

113(4.1) After receiving the minister's referral, the Technical Review Committee must, before preparing the report, allow a period of three weeks for interested persons to comment about the application. During that period, any person may comment about the application by sending the comment in writing to the office at which the application is available for inspection.

Comments must be forwarded to T.R.C.

113(4.2) Promptly after receiving a comment under subsection (4.1), the board, council or planning commission must forward the comment to the Technical Review Committee.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for River Heights, seconded by the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux),

THAT—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, this amendment would provide that there could be public comments which could be forwarded and included in the review by the Technical Review Committee. I think this is a

sensible application because there are many very knowledgeable people in the agricultural area who could contribute if the possibility is there.

Mr. Speaker: Any speakers to the amendment? Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for River Heights to Bill 33, The Planning Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment has been defeated.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Now, we will move on to the amendments proposed by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): It is my pleasure to put forth the first amendment in regard to The Planning Act, Bill 33. I move, seconded by the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner),

THAT Bill 33 be amended in Clause 47(1) by striking out "As soon as practicable" and substituting "Within 14 days".

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, seconded by the honourable Member for Emerson—dispense?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings),

THAT Bill 33 be amended—

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden—*[interjection]* We have a speaker.

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade): Just quickly, Mr. Speaker, we believe this would be too restrictive for municipalities. Council may give second reading to the development plan by-law at the same council meeting during which it holds its hearing. Any necessary alterations must be prepared and the minutes of the meeting must be finalized before forwarding the by-law, so it would be too restrictive.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is amendment moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden to Bill 33, The Planning Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment has been defeated.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The next amendment.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings),

THAT Bill 33 be amended by replacing Clause 51(3) with the following:

Decision and notice of decision within 60 days

51(3) After receiving copies of the development plan by-law and any objections to it, and if it has been referred to the Municipal Board, the Municipal Board's recommendations, the minister must, within 60 days

(a) decide whether to approve it, with or without alterations or conditions, or reject it; and

(b) provide the board or council with written notice of his or her decision.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, seconded by the honourable Member for Ste. Rose,

THAT Bill 33 be—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, this is clearly just an amendment to provide clarity in regard to the written response from the minister and he must provide these details. We have given him 60 days to do it, and it just clarifies and makes very clear what is required in any objection that comes from the municipal board.

Mr. Smith: Mr. Speaker, we do consider this time frame to be far too restrictive. The Province may need time to carry out its own due diligence on the implications of any recommendation of the municipal board. Section 51(2) anticipates the possibility of the minister consulting with the council on an alteration. It may not therefore be possible to render the final decision within 60 days.

Mr. Speaker: Any other speakers to the amendment? Seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment has been defeated.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: We will now move on to the next amendment.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach),

THAT Bill 33 be amended by replacing Clause 89(2) with the following:

Destroyed or damaged non-conforming building 89(2) For certainty, if a building that does not conform with a zoning by-law is damaged or destroyed, it may be reconstructed provided the reconstruction does not increase the non-conformity.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, seconded by the honourable Member for Russell,

THAT Bill 33 be—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I bring this amendment forward clearly to if a building is destroyed by fire or other areas, that it clearly states that the reconstruction of that particular building has to be done in the same location and cannot be larger than it previously was. It clearly states that it must be within the same zoning region, and it is just for clarification. I am certain that the minister sees how clear it is and so I will just leave it at that.

Mr. Smith: Mr. Speaker, this amendment erodes a long-standing principle that municipalities can use some discretion in allowing non-conforming uses to be rebuilt while still moving toward conformity. Municipalities have specifically requested that we maintain the ability for them to allow the reconstruction through the variance process.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment has been defeated.

* * *

* (16:50)

Mr. Speaker: The next amendment.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck),

THAT Bill 33 be amended by adding the following after Clause 113(1):

Chair from Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

113(1.1) Each Technical Review Committee appointed under subsection (1) must be chaired by an employee of the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, seconded by the honourable Member for Pembina,

THAT Bill 33 be amended by—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, this is the most important amendment called for by pretty well all the farm groups in Manitoba. In regard to it, it was also promised by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) in the run-up to the debate on this particular bill, but of course they did not come through with it, so I have brought it forward to support the farm groups in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, it clearly just looks at providing some experience and expertise by having their own Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives person on each of the technical review committees to bring forward the expertise that is required in making some decisions to the municipal councils on these issues.

Mr. Smith: Mr. Speaker, the make-up and operation of the Technical Review Committee is a policy decision that would not be appropriate to include this in the legislation.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden.

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment has been defeated.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: We will move on to the next amendment.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik),

THAT Bill 33 be amended by replacing Clause 116(2) with the following:

Conditions on livestock operations

116(2) A condition may be imposed on the approval of an application under this Division only if it is relevant and reasonable to

- (a) implement a recommendation made by the relevant Technical Review Committee;
- (b) reduce odours from the livestock operation by requiring covers on manure storage facilities or shelter belts be established, or both; or
- (c) control traffic or the timing of construction of any proposed building, or both.

Development agreement

116(2.1) For the purpose of clause (1)(c), the owner of the affected property may be required to enter into a development agreement dealing with the affected property and any contiguous land owned or leased by the owner.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, seconded by the honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Maguire: I would urge the government to move this amendment, Mr. Speaker, because of the clarity that it provides in allowing municipalities direction in what they can do on the conditions of livestock operations. I have included "the control traffic or timing of construction of any proposed building" because, of course, that is certainly within their means and, of course, you have to have a development agreement to move forward.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden.

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment has been defeated.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: We will now move on to the next amendment.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner),

THAT Bill 33 be amended by adding the following after Clause 116(4):

Written reasons for rejection

116(5) If an application is rejected under clause (1)(a), the board, council or planning commission must ensure that the reasons for the rejection are summarized and included with the copy of its order sent under section 117.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, seconded by the honourable Member for Emerson,

THAT Bill—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, this is a clear example of credibility with the council. Organizations across Manitoba have asked that if a development plan has been rejected by council, there be a written reason for that, and that may be more than one. There might be five or six council members with different opinions, and you can list them all. That is not an issue.

The process that the government has gone through in Bill 33 requires planning commissions to give written reports. It requires the conditional-use hearings to have a written report. It requires the Technical Review Committee to provide a written report to council. Yet it does not require council to provide a written report to the proponents of a development as to why it was amended or cancelled, not allowed, Mr. Speaker.

I believe that the concerns of the agricultural industry across Manitoba clearly just wanted the council to provide a written response to that, keeping in mind that before they even became proponents of a request for the allowance of a project in an area that the proponents have likely looked at the already established zoning by-laws of the municipality and conferred and acknowledge that they have accepted all of those and have not been offside with the by-laws of the municipality to start with. Thank you.

Mr. Smith: Mr. Speaker, we cannot support that amendment. There has been no opportunity to consult with municipalities or AMM on this amendment. AMM's representative stated in response to questions at committee that their organization was not in favour of such an amendment. There are concerns that require written reasons for decisions that may expose municipalities to court challenges.

Courts have generally recognized that similar to legislation or parliament, a municipal council need not provide reasons for their decisions. Reasons cannot be determined by a vote. The reason one councillor votes in favour may be different from the reasons of other councillors. Mr. Speaker, we cannot support this amendment.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden.

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment has been defeated.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Now we will go to the next amendment.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), that The Planning Act be amended,

THAT Bill 33 be amended by adding the following after Clause 193(2):

Consultations required

193(3) In order for a regulation under this section to be valid,

(a) at least 60 days before it is made the minister must make a draft of it available to the public; and

(b) the minister must consult on its content with representatives of the agricultural community and the affected boards and councils.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, seconded by the honourable Member for Lakeside—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, this just allows the public to know what regulations the government is making throughout this bill by public notice. Thank you.

Mr. Smith: Mr. Speaker, the regulations that are relevant are already in place, including the provincial land use policies, the northern Manitoba planning by-laws regulation and the subdivision regulation. Regulations to establish our ultra-planning distance will only occur at the request of municipalities and only after the prescribed public consultation. As a matter of policy, we would always consult with the appropriate stakeholders and proposed amendments.

It is also inappropriate to single out representatives of the agricultural community for consultations as a majority of regulations are not relevant to that group.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question for the House is amendment moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden.

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment has been defeated.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Now I am going to call—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Now I am going to call the amendment for Bill 48, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act.

Order.

House Business

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Is there leave not to see the clock until 5:15, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to not see the clock until 5:15? *[Agreed]*

* (17:00)

Bill 48—The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Now I will call the amendment to Bill 48, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), that the proposed amendment

be made to Bill 48, The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act,

THAT Bill 48 be amended by adding the following after Clause 1:

Advisory committee on COLA

1.1(1) Within two months after this Act comes into force, the minister responsible for the administration of **The Teachers' Pensions Act** must establish an advisory committee that consists of

(a) two members nominated by the Manitoba Teachers' Society;

(b) two members nominated by the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba Inc.;

(c) two members appointed by the minister; and

(d) one independent member, with pension and investment expertise, nominated by the other members of the committee.

Role of committee

1.1(2) The role of the committee is to make recommendations to the minister as to the steps that should be taken to ensure the long-term capacity of the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund to provide reasonable cost of living adjustments to the pension for retired teachers.

Committee to report by January 30, 2006

1.1(3) The committee must report its recommendations to the minister on or before January 30, 2006.

Report to be tabled in Assembly

1.1(4) The minister must table a copy of the committee's report in the Assembly within 10 days after receiving it if the Assembly is sitting or, if it is not, within 10 days after the next sitting begins.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for Charleswood, seconded by the honourable Member for Russell—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mrs. Driedger: What this amendment does is it brings together all the effective parties to deal with the issue of the retired teachers' COLA. There has been a lot of concern expressed by the retired teachers that the particular legislation, as it is

currently in the amendment before us, does not deal with the pension issue on an ongoing basis for teachers. What this amendment will do is strike a committee that will advise the minister on a number of options that the minister can deal with, addressing the long-term sustainability of COLA.

In fairness to all groups, voices have been given to the Manitoba Teachers' Society, the retired teachers, two members appointed by the minister, and the independent member who would have pension and investment expertise. That person would be nominated by the other members of the committee. Out of that advisory committee, the chairman can be chosen by that particular group. That group would be given a very specific mandate, and that would be to look at a number of options that might be available to them, including what might be happening in other provinces in terms of how other provinces are addressing the pension issues that many of them face across the country.

The intent of the committee would be to not only look at some options here in Manitoba, but also to look at what might come from looking at what other provinces are doing, and that a good discussion and perhaps even an actuarial review could be undertaken in terms of what can be done to ensure the long-term capacity of the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund.

We certainly heard from the teachers that the retired teachers that presented at the committee felt the current amendment is not addressing the concerns they have put forward to the government, and there certainly were a lot of concerns. There was a lot of emotion expressed by a number of the retired teachers, and a good number were presenting at the committee. There certainly is some huge concern as to how this is affecting all of them on a personal level.

What they feel is that Bill 48, and rightly so, does hardly anything to address their pension issues on an ongoing basis. I do not think we can wait much longer in terms of having this issue addressed. That is why this amendment has been put in with time frames that will allow a report to be prepared and presented to the minister on or before January 30. Certainly, with the members that we have recommended be on this advisory committee, they are all people that would certainly, I think, have a strong vested interest in ensuring that we can have

some good information put forward, researched, and some long-term recommendations put forward.

Mr. Speaker, the one thing that I would ask the minister is his due consideration of this particular amendment because I think it would serve everybody well if the Minister of Education and the NDP government would accept this amendment so that we can move forward in a proactive way in this province to address what is going to become a very, very serious issue if it is not dealt with in a timely fashion. We are already behind the time in addressing the issue, and it sounds like we have some wrongs to right. I would really urge the minister to accept this amendment so that we can more justifiably address the gaps in the teachers' pensions, particularly the COLA. Thank you.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth): Mr. Speaker, this amendment would essentially be redundant in that there is already a teachers' Pension Task Force that deals with all issues pertaining to teachers' pensions and also with respect to the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba. They have unprecedented access to my office and meet quarterly. We also have appointed a retired teacher to the TRAF board. This particular amendment would be redundant.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, with the delays that occurred in presenting the bill initially, we believe that it is warranted to put this amendment forward and make sure the process proceeds expeditiously. So we in the Liberal Party will support this amendment.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for Charleswood to Bill 48.

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Formal Vote

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Official Opposition House Leader): Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

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

Order. The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) to Bill 48.

Division

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

Yeas

Cullen, Cummings, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Faurschou, Gerrard, Goertzen, Hawranik, Lamoureux, Loewen, Maguire, Mitchelson, Murray, Penner, Reimer, Rocan, Rowat, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu.

Nays

Aglugub, Allan, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Brick, Chomiak, Dewar, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Reid, Robinson, Rondeau, Sale, Santos, Schellenberg, Selinger, Smith, Struthers, Swan, Wowchuk.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 22, Nays 31.

Mr. Speaker: The amendment has been defeated.

House Business

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, there is one more amendment, by leave, to 48, and then there is some

work that I understand will not take too much longer on 22, if there is leave not to see the clock to 5:30.

An Honourable Member: It should be 51, not 48.

Mr. Mackintosh: Oh, is it 51? Sorry, 51.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to not see the clock till 5:30? *[Agreed]*

* (17:20)

Bill 51—The Labour-Sponsored Investment Funds Act (Various Acts Amended)

Mr. Speaker: We have an amendment to Bill 51, by leave?

An Honourable Member: By leave.

Mr. Speaker: By leave. We have an amendment that will be moved by the honourable Member for River Heights.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I will wait until it is distributed.

Mr. Speaker: If we can just wait until the members have the amendment, and then I will call it forward, just so that members have a chance to see it.

Okay. We will now call the amendment to Bill 51.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster,

THAT Bill 51 be amended

*(a) in the proposed clause 4(1)(c) of **The Crocus Investment Fund Act**, as set out in Clause 6(1)(c),*

(i) by striking out "½ of the" and substituting "two", and

(ii) by striking out "four" and substituting "six"; and

*(b) in the part of the proposed clause 4.1(2) of **The Labour-Sponsored Venture Capital Corporations Act** before clause (a), as set out in Clause 15, by adding ", other than the Crocus Investment Fund," after "venture capital corporation".*

Mr. Speaker: Moved by the honourable Member for River Heights, seconded by the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux),

THAT Bill 51 be amended—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the goal of this amendment is quite straightforward. It would reduce the representation of the Manitoba Federation of Labour directors down to two, and it would increase the number of directors elected by the shareholders, the unitholders of the Crocus Fund, to six, which would give the unitholders' or the shareholders' elected delegates the majority.

Contrary to what we have we have heard from the government, the federal legislation is actually permissive in allowing the province to set the board structure in this fashion so that this would not be a problem in terms of the federal legislation.

Second, part (b) would make this specific to Crocus. In fact, we do not need this change with ENSIS because they already have an arrangement so that there would be only two representatives from their labour sponsor and the remainder from other sources. So this amendment would be specific to Crocus and it would put the majority decision on the board in the hands of those elected by the shareholders.

Now, with the way things have moved over the last few days, this whole bill is becoming irrelevant with the demise of Crocus, but I think that to put this forward now at this time is still a reasonable thing, because what we would like to do is to ensure that the shareholders and the elected delegates from the shareholders, the unitholders, really have as much of an influence as they possibly could because they are the ones who have invested more than \$177 million in the fund.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): I must say that, while I do not disagree with the member's amendment, I would again state for the record that this bill is so fundamentally flawed I question why, in fact, it is here. It does provide two things that the Auditor General has recommended. The rest is window dressing.

With regard to this clause, specifically as relates to Crocus, it seems to be pretty much meaningless, anyway, because there is no desire on behalf of the existing board at Crocus to call an annual general meeting to allow the unitholders to vote. So one would have to ask, you know, what is that point?

We have seen before that this government would refuse to basically force the fund to do anything in a responsible manner. Just for the record, I do believe the ENSIS fund has its sponsoring organization appoint four members. It is just that they do the wise thing and appoint two outside directors to the board. Again, as I have raised many times in committee and in the House, it is not so much a matter of who appoints the board, it is that the board has a mix of the correct qualifications on it and an understanding of its fiduciary responsibility to all shareholders, that it carries out its purpose fully.

I would much prefer that issues like this get dealt with by the committee that the government is setting up this summer. There are many more flaws in this bill that make the bill itself totally reckless for this government to bring in at this time. For one thing, I would note, still within the bill, the way the government has chosen to deal with the liquid cash reserves. They are actually penalizing funds that are successful in order to stand up and say that perhaps they are controlling the fund that has not been successful. So, again, typical of the NDP government. They have no idea of who to reward for misbehaving.

Having said that, I will go back to my first statement, which is that, you know, this certainly is a reasonable amendment and one which this side of the House has no specific objection to, on the understanding that, of course, ENSIS would be given adequate time to amend its by-laws to incorporate this, as well. And I would leave that up to the government to ensure that that is given.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved, by leave, by the honourable Member for River Heights to Bill 51.

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment has been defeated.

* * *

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Well, Mr. Speaker, with some regret, I understand we are going to need some more time to deal with 22, which is next. I understand there is an arrangement made, though. I think things will move quickly. If we could not see the clock till quarter to six?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to—for the Speaker not to see the clock till a quarter to six? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]* There is agreement.

Bill 22—The Water Protection Act

Mr. Speaker: Bill 22, The Water Protection Act, the first amendment to clause 33.1, as amended, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach).

What is the will of the House? Stand?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: It has been denied. Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Minister of Water Stewardship to clause 33.1.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment? *[Agreed]* The amendment has been passed.

* * *

* (17:30)

Mr. Speaker: Now we will move to the next amendment.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): Mr. Speaker, similar to a previous amendment that was moved, I am going to seek leave to move four amendments, which will be seconded by the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), and will replace, with the Member for Emerson's agreement, the first four amendments. I would like to ask for leave of the House to move the amendment.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): I understand, Mr. Speaker, that under the rules I will be required to withdraw the first four amendments that I had previously proposed, and I would do that if I were allowed to make a comment.

The reason we have agreed to making some of the changes in those amendments that I had put forward is to accommodate at least some semblance of ensuring that all the issues that I believe are current and not mentioned currently in the preamble of the bill are going to be brought forward in some manner or not. I believe it is important to recognize the contribution that the urban community brings to the water quality or the degradation of the water quality. Therefore, I think the amendments that the minister is going to bring forward are not as clear as the ones that I had brought forward. I concede to bringing them forward.

Mr. Speaker: Order. For the instruction of all honourable members, when withdrawing amendments, it is not to be debated. It is just to withdraw the amendments, and that is what I asked the honourable member. The honourable member did ask leave if he could do a little postamble to his withdrawal.

The honourable Minister of Water Stewardship, with his first amendment.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded—

Mr. Speaker: Order. *[interjection]* Yes, I thought I did.

Is there leave for the honourable member to withdraw his—

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: It has been granted.

Is there leave to proceed with four amendments proposed by the honourable Minister of Water Stewardship? *[Agreed]* Give us a second to distribute the amendments.

The honourable Minister of Water Stewardship, to move his first amendment to Bill 22.

Mr. Ashton: I move, seconded by the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner),

THAT Bill 22 be amended in the preamble by adding the following after the fourth paragraph:

AND WHEREAS Manitobans recognize that many human activities, including the use and consumption of water for all purposes, the production of waste and wastewater effluent, and industrial, agricultural and recreational activities, may impair the quality and quantity of our water resources, and that stewardship of these invaluable resources is a responsibility shared by all;

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Water Stewardship, seconded by the honourable Member for Emerson,

THAT Bill—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Minister of Water Stewardship.

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

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Second amendment.

Mr. Ashton: I move, seconded by the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner),

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 1(1) by replacing the definition "nutrient" with the following:

"**nutrient**" means any substance that provides nourishment and promotes growth of aquatic organisms when transmitted to water.
(«nutrient»)

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Water Stewardship, seconded by the honourable Member for Emerson,

THAT Bill 22—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Minister of Water Stewardship to Bill 22.

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

* * *

Mr. Speaker: We will now call the next amendment.

Mr. Ashton: I move, seconded by the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner),

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 11(1)(b)(vi), by adding ", including measures to ensure persons in the watershed have access to clean potable water" after "water".

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Water Stewardship, seconded by the honourable Member for Emerson,

THAT Bill 22 be—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment to Bill 22.

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

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The next amendment to be moved by the honourable Minister of Water Stewardship.

Mr. Ashton: I move, seconded by the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner),

THAT Bill 22 be amended in Clause 11(1)(d) by adding ", recognizing the need to implement the plan with the assistance of individuals, groups, and organizations" after "evaluated".

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Water Stewardship, seconded by the honourable Member for Emerson—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Minister of Water Stewardship.

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

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Now we will move to clause 33(1.1), proposed by the honourable Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), to Bill 22, The Water Protection Act.

Mr. Penner: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach)—

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is standing in the name of the honourable Member for Minto (Mr. Swan).

What is the will of the House? To stand?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. It has been denied.

Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment, clause 33(1.1) to Bill 22.

Is the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment has been defeated.

* * *

*(17:40)

Mr. Speaker: Next amendment to clause 34(4), standing in the name of the honourable Member for Minto (Mr. Swan).

What is the will of the House? Stand?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No. It has been denied.

Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment to clause 34(4).

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment has been defeated.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The next amendment to clause 35(7), standing in the name of the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach).

What is the will of the House? Stand?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? It has been denied.

Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment to clause 35(7).

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment? *[Agreed]* The amendment has carried.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Amendment to clause 35(8), standing in the name of the honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar).

What is the will of the House? Stand?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? It has been denied.

Is the House ready for the question?

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment to clause 35(8).

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Nays have it. The amendment has been defeated.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The hour being past 5:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

Bill 48–The Teachers' Pensions Amendment
Act

Driedger	3557
Bjornson	3558
Gerrard	3558

Bill 51–The Labour-Sponsored Investment
Funds Act (Various Acts Amended)

Gerrard	3559
Loewen	3560

Bill 22–The Water Protection Act

Ashton	3561
Penner	3561