

Fourth Session - Thirty-Eighth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 6, 2006

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to private members' business, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us from Lavallee Centre Adult English as a Second Language 35 students under the direction of Ms. Colleen Donovan. This group is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Allan).

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

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 212—The Historic Trans-Canada Highway Act

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): I move, seconded by the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 212, The Historic Trans-Canada Highway Act, be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Hawranik: I welcome the opportunity to present this bill on behalf of the constituents of Lac du Bonnet, and, in fact, we have support not only from the Lac du Bonnet constituency but every municipality along Highway 44, as it currently is known, for this bill by way of a resolution or a letter from every municipal council that fronts along Highway 44.

The Provincial Trunk Highway 44 was the Trans-Canada Highway for a number of years. It starts from Ontario, going through all the way down Provincial Trunk Highway 44 all the way to Lockport. It is the entrance, the gateway to the Whiteshell Provincial Park, and in the Whiteshell Provincial Park, the La Vérendrye Trail which follows the routes taken by La Vérendrye, an historical, of course, explorer of Canada, as he took the route along the Winnipeg River on his way from the east to the west.

There is a bit of an issue, and I talked to the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) about it yesterday; there is an issue that he feels that perhaps it was not called the Trans-Canada Highway. He certainly is looking into that at this point. But I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that I grew up on that highway. We had a farm right on the Trans-Canada Highway, and I grew up fronting on that highway. I can tell you that I lived on it, right next to it, three and a half miles east of Whitemouth. My father-in-law, in fact, was a highways employee. He started out as a labourer many years ago. He passed away about three years ago, but he would be certainly upset with the minister if the minister told him that it was not the Trans-Canada Highway. He not only started as a labour job in the 1940s with the Department of Transportation, and that was the time that it was the Trans-Canada Highway, he moved to foreman in Whitemouth and became later the superintendent for 25 years of highways for all of eastern Manitoba. So, I think he certainly would have known that that was the Trans-Canada Highway.

Also, I did some research, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the history books of the area. I looked at the Rural Municipality of Whitemouth history book, written in the early 1970s. Just after, it was turned into Provincial Trunk Highway 40 and 44 in later years. I can tell you that the history books of the R.M. of Whitemouth called it the Trans-Canada Highway. The history book of the Rural Municipality of Brokenhead, through which 44 passes to this day, and through the R.M. of Whitemouth, but the R.M. of Brokenhead history book which was published in the early 1980s, in fact, called it the Trans-Canada Highway.

I have had a number of discussions with municipalities which front on Provincial Trunk Highway 44. I want to put on the record some of the comments made by the municipalities, and the Chamber of Commerce in Beausejour where they said: first of all, the Chamber of Commerce in Beausejour indicates that they support the private member's bill to designate Provincial Trunk Highway 44 as The Historic Trans-Canada Highway Act. They believe that it would assist in attracting tourist traffic to our area which would benefit all of our businesses, as well as the entire community. Mr.

Speaker, I table this letter by the Chamber of Commerce.

Then we go to the Rural Municipality of Springfield, indicating that at their April 5, 2005, council meetings they, in fact, indicated that the rural municipality supports the designation of Provincial Trunk Highway 44 as the Historic Trans-Canada Highway and, again, I table this letter directed to myself by the Rural Municipality of Springfield in support of this initiative.

Then I have a resolution, Mr. Speaker, from the Rural Municipality of St. Clements. I would hope that the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) would support this bill, and I think he probably would. I think he will. It is a resolution from one of his municipalities within his constituency. It indicates that it resolved that council support the proposal of Gerald Hawranik, MLA, and designated Provincial Trunk Highway 44 as the Historic Trans-Canada Highway. Again, another municipality that is in support, that, in fact, fronts on Provincial Trunk Highway 44. I table this resolution for the House as well.

Next, I turn to the Rural Municipality of Reynolds, which is, in fact, in the Transportation Minister's (Mr. Lemieux) constituency, dated May 24, 2005. They passed a resolution, a unanimous resolution indicating that council in the Rural Municipality of Reynolds supports the private member's bill proposed by myself designating Provincial Trunk Highway 44 as the Historic Trans-Canada Highway. Again, I table this resolution by the Rural Municipality of Reynolds, a municipality that is within the constituency of the Minister of Transportation.

*(10:10)

As I mentioned earlier, Mr. Speaker, I, in fact, have had resolutions and letters of support from every municipality within which Provincial Trunk Highway 44 traverses. I point to the Rural Municipality of Whitemouth, which is largely within the constituency of Lac du Bonnet, and they indicate that it was dealt with at the May 11, '05, council meeting. They are interested in pursuing any opportunities that can help promote tourism within the municipality and they are in support of the re-designation.

They passed a resolution on May 11, 2005, that the council and Rural Municipality of Whitemouth supports the private member's bill designating

Provincial Trunk Highway 44 as the Historic Trans-Canada Highway. I would like to table this resolution and this letter for the benefit of the Transportation Minister and the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) as well.

Next, I point to the Rural Municipality of Brokenhead. I have another resolution, Mr. Speaker, and it has been resolved by the Rural Municipality of Brokenhead that they support the private member's bill to designate Provincial Trunk Highway 44 as the Historic Trans-Canada Highway. Again, another important municipality through which Provincial Trunk Highway 44 goes and they, of course, support that designation. I table that for the benefit of the Assembly.

Also, and the last but not least, the town of Beausejour through with Highway 44 goes. They in fact sent a letter of support saying that they support the private member's bill, as well, presented in the House, again, for the benefit of the Minister of Transportation and the Member for Selkirk who should in fact support this private member's bill. They should support it because their municipalities through which Provincial Trunk Highway 44 travels, in fact, have passed resolutions and given letters of support for the re-designation.

So there are many good reasons why we would support this private member's bill. Municipalities recognize Provincial Trunk Highway 44 as the Historic Trans-Canada Highway. They know the history of the area. We know the history of the area. As I mentioned earlier, my father, in fact, father-in-law was the superintendent of highways for more than 25 years in the whole eastern Manitoba region. Clearly, if he was here today—he passed away as I mentioned earlier about three years ago—if he was certainly around he would be here in support in the gallery to support this Provincial Trunk Highway 44 re-designation as the Historic Trans-Canada Highway.

It formed a very important part of our national highway system. Our nation was forged by the railway linking the west coast with the east coast, but as part of Canada's emerging transportation network, PTH 44 formed part of that first national highway system in Canada. It provided a transportation corridor well before the present day Trans-Canada Highway was completed, which was completed just in 1956.

Mr. Speaker, by 1929 the Trans-Canada Highway reached Whitemouth. During the

Depression, relievers were employed—they called them relievers at the time in our history books—were in play to complete the highway and by 1936 the stretch through Whitemouth was actually surfaced with asphalt. Most of the Trans-Canada Highway was constructed using horse drawn equipment and manpower, and in 1956 the new Trans-Canada Highway—from 1936, when it was paved, to 1956 it was part of our national system by way of, it was a paved highway at that point. For 20 years it served as part of Canada's national Trans-Canada Highway, and in 1956 it was re-designated as provincial trunk highway and then renumbered in 1968 to the present designation of PTH No. 44.

It served therefore from 1929 to 1956, a total of 27 years, as part of our Trans-Canada Highway, but from 1929 to 1936, a total of seven years, it was a gravel-surfaced roadway. So it played an important part in our national transportation system in moving goods right throughout Canada from eastern Canada into western Canada. It played an important role in terms of the migration of people from our eastern seaboard where many of our European immigrants came into Canada and into western Canada.

So I would hope that members opposite would support this private member's bill.

Mr. Andrew Swan (Minto): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to get up and talk about Bill 212 today. It is a wonderful chance to get up and talk about our highways, especially as summer in Manitoba is now upon us.

Certainly I am pleased to talk about Highway 44, which is a wonderful highway through the eastern part of our province. Indeed, if I was going to call it anything, I think as an urban dweller who enjoys getting out to the country, I would call it a highway of good times. That is the case all the way from the junction with Highway 9 in Lockport all the way out to where the road peters out past West Hawk Lake.

Indeed, if you travel this highway, whichever way from east to west or west to east, there is an awful lot of interest and a lot of excitement along this route. Right at the western limit of the highway, of course, there used to be old Wet 'n' Wild Waterslide Park, which I understand has been closed down, but right there, of course, is Skinner's. Skinner's is a restaurant which is a true icon for just about anybody who grew up in Winnipeg probably going back 50 or 60 years.

Of course, you cross the floodway, you can go and see the area where the floodway spills into the Red River. Of course, the capacity of the floodway is being increased by the tremendous investments being made by our government. You can then travel along past the north side of Birds Hill Park, which is, of course, the northern escape route for some of the urban folkies who go to the Winnipeg Folk Festival. You can visit the towns of Tyndall and Garson, of course, historic towns, who, in fact, supplied much of the stone that the building that I am speaking of is constructed of.

Of course, there is the town of Beausejour where the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik) practises law. In fact, I enjoyed going out and visiting him, and he was good enough to take me out for lunch in his town. Indeed, the Member for Lac du Bonnet footed the bill, and I am still welcoming him, as I did in my first speech in this House, to come to Minto for lunch as well. I would be happy to buy him panseet or samosas or any of the other amazing delicacies you will find up and down Sargent Avenue or Ellice Avenue.

Of course, Beausejour is an interesting town to go to court because they actually have a collection of inhabitants who find court to be a very, very interesting place to go. If you are a lawyer who happens to come out from the city, you can expect to be rated by the jury, as they are known, who sit across the back of the courthouse in Beausejour.

From the town of Beausejour east, the highway goes arrow straight through the provincial forest. You do rise up on the ridge, and, in fact, you can see the grain elevators of Beausejour for some 20 or 30 kilometres as you drive this very scenic highway. But friends and I actually thought perhaps it should be named the John Denver highway because every time we would head out to my friend's cottage in Lac du Bonnet and we turned on the radio, we would always seem to hear John Denver on the radio, which was certainly a good way to stay mellow on our Manitoba highways.

As you continue on Highway 44, you go past the town of Whitemouth which, as the Member for Lac du Bonnet said, is where he grew up. Whitemouth, of course, is the gateway to the Whiteshell and also to Nopiming Provincial Park which are both wonderful playgrounds for people from all over the province. One of my daughter's favourite places to visit on Highway 44 is the Alf Hole Goose Sanctuary near the town of Rennie, certainly a terrific place. If

anybody in this Legislature has not been there, I would certainly encourage you to go there, especially during the spring and fall migrations of waterfowl. You go into Whiteshell Provincial Park and overlooking Highway 44 is, of course, a great climbing place at the lily pond. I do not know if anybody has been brave enough to climb up the rocks. My daughters and I certainly have. It is an absolutely fantastic spot.

You continue on to West Hawk Lake, of course the deepest lake in all of Manitoba, which was created by the impact of a meteorite many, many millions of years ago, a wonderful lake, but certainly ice cold even well into the summer. A good friend of mine, Geoff McIntyre married into the Ursel family, the curling Ursels, although Jeff has no more curling skills than I do, and I spent many happy days up at West Hawk Lake. Of course, the highway finally ends past West Hawk Lake at the trailhead for the Hunt Lake and Mantario trails.

It truly is a wonderful highway. I should mention that it has been a highway that for me has been somewhat bipartisan. I enjoyed driving out to Beausejour with the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen) as he and I went out to Beausejour to speak to students there as part of the Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures Task Force. Indeed, the Member for Turtle Mountain and I visited the Member for Lac du Bonnet in his law office and I believe frightened him just a little bit when we walked in his door.

Indeed, I should comment, on the bipartisan front, that I have driven wonderful Highway 44 with none other than the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. McFadyen), the Leader of the Official Opposition, as we went out camping in Nopiming Provincial Park. We did not talk of politics. We did speak of some of our good times at Silver Heights Collegiate. We spoke about Ralph Milton, the big fellow, our band trips with Jim MacKay and many other good things. So, certainly, not only is this the highway of good times, for me it has been a highway of perhaps learning from some of my political kin and having some good discussions.

*(10:20)

It is not just a good highway; it is a great highway. Indeed, it was certainly designated as Highway 1, but, unfortunately, everything that I have read suggests that, in fact, it was never actually designated the Trans-Canada Highway, which is a bit of a problem since that is the entire purpose of Bill 212.

I have heard what the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik) has had to say, but I have done some of my own research. Unlike the Leader of the Liberal Party, I will actually cite my sources for the research that I have done. I did know this fact before, but I did look it up today and just confirmed it with Wikipedia that, indeed, the Trans-Canada Highway system was not actually designated until the year 1962.

I did search a very fascinating Web site called "the history of intercontinental bus service in Manitoba." This tells us a little bit about the origin of Greyhound Bus Lines in Canada, and I will quote one of the paragraphs: "In May, 1958, Western Canadian Greyhound Lines acquired 'Moore's Trans-Canada Bus Line Limited' and its Winnipeg-Beausejour-Whitemouth-Rennie-Kenora route as a first step in linking its western Canadian operations to its eastern subsidiary in Ontario."

So I think we can agree Winnipeg-Beausejour-Whitemouth-Rennie all lie upon wonderful Highway 44. But then this goes on to say that Greyhound had later shifted this operation to the faster Winnipeg-Richer-Hadashville-Falcon Lake-Kenora route via the new Trans-Canada Highway, which indeed became the new Highway 1.

I have no doubt that the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik) is correct. This was signed as Highway 1, I am sure for some time, but unfortunately it was never actually designated as the Trans-Canada Highway from everything that I have seen. I could still be proven wrong; that could certainly happen. I, certainly, on behalf of the government, will listen to whatever the Member for Lac du Bonnet or others have to say.

I know we are all a little bit sensitive about history. I know that oftentimes the opposition members are not so interested in history. Being one of the few caucus members who is not a former teacher, I will not give the standard lecture about what the Tories wanted to do to History in our schools because I think I would like to keep on a positive tone because the Member for Lac du Bonnet has proposed something which I am sure has some interest in his community.

I look at Veterans Highway, Highway 8, which I also consider to be a highway of good times. Any highway that leads to Gimli has to be a highway of good times. There was not a bill to do that. There was some discussion and appropriate designation of that highway. I look forward to hearing from the

Member for Lac du Bonnet on how we can properly title Highway 44, because it was never the Trans-Canada Highway.

Because of what I have told you, I think I could support naming this highway something which would actually reflect its roots. I am sure my friend, the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), will likely go on to some of the other things that have been done in Lac du Bonnet. I might even support this bill as it is presently stated if it meant we would not hear anything more about the Member for Lac du Bonnet on various issues in the constituency because there has been so much that has already been provided.

There is not time, as my light is blinking, to read into the record everything that this government, which governs for all Manitobans, has done for the residents of Lac du Bonnet. But I will wrap it up there simply to encourage the member—who, as I have indicated, I enjoyed, who bought me lunch in Beausejour, and that is something—to start over, to continue working with his community, find a name which accurately depicts this wonderful and historic highway and come back and let us find something that can truly work.

As a lover of Highway 44, but also someone who respects history, it would not be hard to convince me, over another plate of perogies and kulbassa, to name it something which truly reflects and will for all future generations truly indicate the importance of this wonderful highway in the province of Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): It certainly is an honour to get up and support Bill 212 that has been put forward by the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik). Clearly, I want to speak in support of having Highway 44 renamed or recognized, if you will, as the Trans-Canada Highway, the Historic Trans-Canada Highway.

I certainly have had the opportunity to travel that highway a number of times. I think the first time was back when I worked for Acre in the pesticide-container-disposal program I had a chance to travel to the east side of the province quite a number of times. More recently, of course, with the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan), we were able to get out to Lac du Bonnet to see the Member for Lac du Bonnet there in part of our Healthy Kids, Healthy Futures Task Force. Most recently for me was a trip out to Lac du Bonnet this past January, February, I guess it was, where the Lac du Bonnet fire department was hosting the provincial firefighters curling bonspiel

there. It was another opportunity to travel Highway 44, Mr. Speaker.

Canadians have always been a nation of trail builders. We have used our waterways. We have used trails and the railway for travel. Clearly, Mr. Speaker, we know Highway 44 was part of the original provincial trunk highway. It was part of the national highway system in Canada back originally. It really served as a corridor, and we think it was a really important corridor before the Trans-Canada Highway that we know today. So we think, obviously, Highway 44 was a key link in the movement of people and goods across western Canada as it was being developed. It really was a gateway to the West from eastern Canada.

I think when we stop and we talk about recognizing any highway as part of a historic route, what it does is it reflects on the dedicated work of engineers and the builders and the people that actually slaved away and did the work on the highway itself. I think it is time that we stop and recognize some of those pioneers that really put a lot of the work together.

The other thing I think we want to do when we put a special name on certain highways, what it does is it will hopefully heighten the tourism trade for that particular area, and I know, if Provincial Trunk Highway 44 was named as the Historic Trans-Canada Highway, there would certainly be a development of tourism in the area. I think that would certainly help the economic status of those communities along Highway 44.

I think the other thing, too, is when we do put a name of significance on these individual highways, it maybe puts a little more onus on the provincial government to maintain and look after those provincial highways. We know that there certainly is a lack of investment in our provincial highways these days, so I think, in this case, if we were to rename Provincial Trunk Highway 44 as the Historic Trans-Canada, there would be ongoing investment in that particular highway.

I do thank the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik) for allowing me to speak on this particular bill. I think he does recognize that I do have the existing Trans-Canada Highway run through a considerable portion of my constituency and service the communities of Bagot, MacGregor, Austin, Sidney and Carberry. I certainly want to recognize those communities for all they do and

some of the economic spinoff that they have, being situated along the Trans-Canada Highway.

I do want to commend the emergency service personnel that are stationed in those communities because they are called out onto our highways on a fairly regular basis, because we recognize there are some serious upgrades that have to be done on, in particular, No. 1, as well as a number of highways in the south. So I hope the minister will take note and recognize some of the significant development that should be done in some of the key intersections along Highway No. 1 that hopefully will lead to less fatalities in those particular areas.

Another important trail, although not a highway, is the Trans Canada Trail, which crisscrosses across a good chunk of Turtle Mountain constituency as well. It certainly has led to some economic spinoff. The trail crosses through Spruce Woods Provincial Park, and I noticed in the *Free Press* on the weekend Spruce Woods Provincial Park was noted as an excellent day trip. I know a lot of the members have been out to Spruce Woods Provincial Park, and Spruce Woods Provincial Park does offer tremendous camping opportunities as well, so Spruce Woods park should not be looked at as just a day trip. It is an opportunity to spend some time in that particular region because it is really unique country there in regard to the Manitoba desert. I hope the members will take the opportunity to visit Spruce Woods park and spend some time in that area.

I do also want to talk a little bit about another particular highway that runs through Turtle Mountain and this particular route, and this is Highway No. 5, has been designated a parks route. If members or Manitobans are interested in the Parks Route, you can go to parksroute.com. On that particular Web site, it lays out all the sights that you can see along this particular route on No. 5 highway. Just to name you some of the communities along that highway, there is Cartwright along the south down towards the border; Glenboro, of course; and Carberry in the north of Turtle Mountain. Communities such as Wellwood, Brookdale and Baldur are also just adjacent to the Parks Route or No. 5 highway.

*(10:30)

The whole idea behind naming this particular route the Parks Route was to encourage tourism. Now, the only drawback we have for the tourism trade along the Parks Route is the fact that it is almost impossible to haul a camper up and down

Highway No. 5 because the surface of No. 5 has deteriorated to such a point that it is actually dangerous for you to haul campers up and down Highway No. 5. So I think it is important that the government recognize that this is a parks route and hence we should have tourism on this particular road, but because of the state of the road we are having a hard time getting tourists to travel the road.

So it is very unfortunate that all the work that the people of Turtle Mountain and the area of No. 5 have gone through to try and develop a parks route to enhance tourism for western Manitoba has really been to the detriment of this government, has really held the tourism trade back in Manitoba. So that is rather unfortunate, but we hope the government will continue to invest money in that area, and hopefully we can develop that particular roadway so we can have an effective parks route for tourism in western Manitoba.

The Red Coat Trail is another significant highway, if you will, that has been named in Manitoba. This particular trail, of course, has been named because of the Northwest Mounted Police back in 1874 on their movement across the Prairies. The Red Coat Trail actually stretches from Manitoba and Saskatchewan and Alberta, right out to the Rockies, so a very significant part of our history that has been named as the Red Coat Trail. This particular trail, there has been some controversy of where exactly the Red Coat Trail is, but a lot of it is followed by No. 2 highway in the south part of the province. So that particular highway has been designated the Red Coat Trail.

I just want to briefly mention another significant trail, if you will. It has been talked about and commemorated here in Manitoba, and that is the Boundary Trail Commission in the south part of the province. Again, the idea was the commission came forward, and they were going to mark the 49th parallel, the border between Canada and the United States. So this particular Boundary Trail and, again, there has been some controversy over where this particular trail should be, but in general terms it follows Highway No. 3 in the south part of Manitoba.

So clearly, there are some significant highways that have been recognized in Manitoba, and I think it is an opportunity for us to recognize the pioneers and the significant contribution to these highways and these trails have provided Manitobans, and I think it is an opportunity for us to recognize the pioneers of

travel in Manitoba. I just wanted to thank you for the opportunity to talk in support of the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik) for bringing forward this important piece of legislation and hope that all members of the House will support Bill 212. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): It gives me great pleasure to stand to talk about his particular bill. Where to start? First of all I would like to begin by just saying with regard to transportation overall, Mr. Speaker, I know there are many speakers who want to discuss this particular topic, and I will try to be brief and to the point.

The provincial government this year has put unprecedented amounts of money into Transportation, \$257 million, which is a historic amount, approximately \$29 million more than last year into Transportation, and there are many projects and many roads and bridges that will benefit as a result.

To give you a comparison, in pre-election, the budget of 1999, the previous government, Conservative government, had a budget of \$174 million with regard to capital, preservation and winter roads. Our comparative is that we currently are putting in \$257 million, which is approximately \$83 million more per year than then.

Now, having said that, we are continuing to make progress on additional dollars to Transportation. The members opposite have heard me through Estimates make comments about how they have an important role to play here. I know the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen) has mentioned about a particular highway that runs through his constituency. I would just say that the former MLA, Mr. Merv Tweed, who is now a member of Parliament, can play an important role by speaking to the federal minister of transportation and ensuring that the gas tax revenues flow to Manitoba. We will be able to do more projects as a result of that. Manitobans now are very much aware of the impacts that is having because the federal government takes approximately \$160 million to \$165 million out of Manitoba every year in gas tax and motive fuel tax and only put back approximately \$8 million. So, since 1999, that makes approximately, even if I use a Tory calculator, that makes over a billion dollars of motive fuel tax that has been taken out of Manitoba and only approximately around \$70 million put back into Manitoba. Justly unfair, so we ask the members

opposite to work with us, and we will work with them to ensure that the federal government lives up to its obligation, as we see it, and I believe they are supportive of that.

Just to address this bill in particular, I know that the MLA for Lac du Bonnet should get some credit for this, quite frankly, because he has been working very hard with the municipalities along Highway No. 44 to try to get it designated. There has been some controversy over this road over a number of years because of the official designation, as was rightly pointed out by my good friend and hardworking MLA for Minto, who did his research and determined that this particular stretch of road did have the No. 1 designation, but it did not have the Trans-Canada designation, as far as we know. That is what our research is telling us. I mentioned to the MLA for Lac du Bonnet that we would be looking into and determining whether or not it really did have the designation as the Trans-Canada Highway.

What we are told is that the PTH 44 was never designated as the Trans-Canada Highway. It was known as Route No. 1 and when the Trans-Canada Highway was constructed, the Route No. 1 designation was transferred over to the Trans-Canada Highway. The old Route No. 1 was then numbered Route No. 4. Then it was changed to PTH 44, just a bit of a snapshot of the history related to this road.

I just want to comment that there have been a number of different organizations, including the East-Man Regional Development corporation, the Eastern Manitoba Tourism Association, who have been trying to have this particular stretch of road renamed. There have been a number of people and organizations, as the two previously mentioned, who wanted it named the Yellowhead route, for example. Currently, mile zero is at The Forks. Many of these organizations would like to see that continuation over No. 44, through Beausejour, all the way through Whitemouth to West Hawk and call it the Yellowhead. The Yellowhead organization does not want that designation to go past The Forks, and they made it quite clear to anyone who would listen. So we are left with a dilemma.

This particular road is a road of historic and heritage importance, I believe. The MLA for Lac du Bonnet should be congratulated for this, for taking this initiative and working very closely with a number of different organizations, whether it is Beausejour District Chamber of Commerce, whether it is the R.M. of Brokenhead, or the communities of

Whitemouth and other communities, or the Municipality of St. Clements and others, who feel that something should be done with this particular road.

As I mentioned off the record, which I will put on the record today, to the MLA for Lac du Bonnet was that I felt that we should be able to sit down and talk and discuss and actually do a little bit more research to determine what is the real designation of this particular road. As we speak, I have officials in my department doing research to determine whether indeed it was actually just designated No. 1, or did it have the Trans-Canada designation.

* (10:40)

So we need to be accurate. The federal government and other organizations do not like to have overlapping naming. For example, when we were looking to recognize our veterans by calling certain highways memorial highways, Veterans Memorial Highway, in showing respect to the commitment they made in World War II and other wars before that, we wanted to be sure that we did not have this overlapping.

Part of this particular route 44 is called the La Vérendrye Trail, and we want to make sure that whatever we do with regard to this particular stretch of road and highway that we are accurate, first of all, in that whatever we do in the naming of it will last there forever. As the MLA for Minto and others have mentioned, we are going back into the records looking now back into the twenties, thirties, forties and fifties to determine what it was named. We want to make sure that we do it right.

So I ask and plead with the MLA for Lac du Bonnet that we have the opportunity to sit down together to discuss and do more research to determine what we can do to name this particular stretch of road. I would be supportive of sitting down with him and possibly the MLA for Selkirk, who also has Highway 44 going through his constituency, part of 44 goes through the constituency of La Vérendrye. So I would ask that that take place, that we do the proper research, we sit down and are agreeable to be able to make some announcement together.

Certainly, if there is any credit to be given, the MLA for Lac du Bonnet should absolutely receive any credit. There should be no doubt about this because he is the gentleman, he is the person who has brought this forward. He has worked very hard to

do it. All we are saying is we want to be accurate in what we do with regard to the naming.

The advice we currently have is that it is in dispute with naming of the Historic Trans-Canada Highway, and so we just want to make sure that we get it right. So, again, I would just reiterate by saying, I ask the MLA for Lac du Bonnet that since we have the legislation already in place, as was pointed out by the MLA for Minto, the legislation is currently in place when we named Veterans Memorial Highway. We did not have to have a bill or legislation to do it. The same applies to this particular bill.

So I am asking that we sit down and we reserve decision on the particular naming until we can be accurate. We sit down over the summer and in the fall we come back to be able to make sure that whatever designation is in place that we are able to do it in a proper way. I will be the first one to be applauding the MLA for Lac du Bonnet for bringing this forward. We all agree with that, or maybe the MLA for Selkirk also as well. I would ensure that the MLA for Selkirk would be very close behind in the accolades.

So this is not something I am saying that we should not pass today because we are unsure of the proper designation, Mr. Speaker. What we need to do is we need to do more research. Now I talked to the MLA for Lac du Bonnet about this just recently, saying let us be accurate about what we are doing. So the department is currently doing that, and we would ask that we sit down and work together to be able to do that. If it is credit we are talking about, then there is plenty of credit to go around, but certainly the MLA for Lac du Bonnet would receive the lion's share.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for allowing me to speak on this particular issue, and I would just ask that the MLA for Lac du Bonnet work with us and we will work with him as well. Thank you.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I certainly want to commend the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik) for having the foresight and the vision to bring this kind of legislation to the House. I think we far too often neglect to remember and to give proper recognition to those that have been here before us. I think those pioneers that came to Manitoba, that opened up this province and left it in the state that we inherited it, need to be recognized and commended.

I think that all that the Member for Lac du Bonnet is suggesting is that we put into perpetuity by naming a roadway and a route that was used by those that came from eastern Canada and those early settlers that used that route to open up the West, and Highway 44, which was not named Highway 44 at the time, certainly was that historic route. When you travel and familiarize yourself with the whole eastern part of the province of Manitoba—especially the southern part of Manitoba, the Lake of the Woods, how important Lake of the Woods was to the transportation of goods into this part of the province, the trail ways that still exist in southeast Manitoba out of Lake of the Woods area, and how the railways were designated—all, I think, become part of that historic mosaic that we need to, at some point in time, make recognition of and ensure that those memories will not be lost.

Therefore, I think the designation of Highway 44 as the Historic Trans-Canada Highway is a very appropriate naming, first of all, and secondly, very appropriate and timely that the recognition be given to those pioneers that, indeed, opened up the province of Manitoba.

I know the minister of highways is somewhat hesitant about giving that recognition in passing this bill, and so is the government side of the NDP party, are certainly indicating that they are not willing to pass this bill today. However, I think the only reason they do not want to pass this bill is simply because they are remiss in not having brought forward this kind of legislation before. I think they want to then probably redraft a bill that they want to take credit for in the fall of the year and bring before this House and take the credit for naming this bill, even though the minister stood proudly in the House today as minister of highways, as he should, and recognized the minister for having brought this issue to the floor of the House, yet did not go all the way and said, we will stand and support this bill. He did not say that, and I think that is, again, an indication that the NDP are somewhat maybe a bit hesitant about supporting this bill, because they would have liked to have brought it themselves and therefore, do not be too surprised, Mr. Speaker, that—

An Honourable Member: We are not like that.

Mr. Penner: The Minister of Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton) said, well, we are not like that.

Well, they have demonstrated too often during debates in this House on bills, amendments that we have brought forward, as we did again yesterday,

bringing six amendments forward to the transportation act that we debated in committee. Not one of those amendments were accepted, although they were exactly what the minister described in his own comments to the amendments, exactly the way the department operates now. And yet they refused to amend the bill to accommodate the procedural application of a piece of legislation that, hopefully, will be used appropriately.

However, I want to put a few comments on the record about some of our other routings and roadways in the province of Manitoba. I think the changes that have happened over the last hundred years or so in this province, I think, truly are a demonstration of those pioneers and the diversity that those pioneers brought to this province. The City of Winnipeg, I think, is clearly an indication, a prime example of how a diversified population, coming from various historic backgrounds, brought a wealth of knowledge to this city and to this province to utilize those ideas and different concepts to build a historic city. I believe this is truly the gateway to the west, the city of Winnipeg, as it has always been. The grain trade has always been headquartered here.

* (10:50)

However, I believe we are in jeopardy of losing it because of some of the philosophical ideas that this NDP government holds so strongly, and they need to relax a bit and accept that change is inevitable, that change must happen and that we must encourage change. I think Highway 75 or the Trans Canada route association or the Trans Canada routing of No. 1 highway, Highway 16 are all a demonstration of how the changes have been applied and where our goods are travelling now.

Highway 75, when you look at the routing to the south of us, it is a direct line out of the city of Winnipeg into the city of Mexico City, and I believe truly all the areas within the midwestern United States that that routing serves are clearly an indication as to where our future lies. Those are our customers for the goods that we produce in this province and in this city. They are our customers that we should keep our doors open to. They are the customers we serve, whether it is through truck-routing traffic or through railways or indeed using the waterways of the Great Lakes or the Mississippi River, and the Missouri River to some extent, to get our goods into the ports of the world, and indeed, on land directly to Mexico City and the Central American countries.

I believe we have a great opportunity, but I also know that the state of our Highway 75 in this province as it sits today is clearly an indication that this government has paid no attention to what is the reality of the needs of that industrialized community in this province of Manitoba to get their product to the marketplace.

Highway 10, south of Brandon, again another indication of how this government, this NDP government, has neglected to keep up those transportation routes to the south to allow a city such as Brandon the kind of growth potential that it has as has been demonstrated many times, the expansion of the pork processing industry in that city. I find it interesting that this government in the city of Winnipeg, largely centred in this city of Winnipeg, portrays itself an able-bodied group of people interested in expanding those opportunities. Well, their actions do not portray the reality of the day.

I think it is important to note, Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, that we need a group of progressive thinkers in this Legislature. We need a group of business-oriented thinkers in this group to recognize the opportunities to play on the potential to develop our routings, and indeed the naming of Highway 44 would be a clear indication that this government is in fact in tune with reality, recognizing our historic past, recognizing our potential and making sure that the monies that they spend on transportation are in fact directed in such a way that it will keep our export routes open and clearly indicate to the rest of the world that we are open for business and want to be open for business. I would encourage the NDP government of the day to make every effort to put a lot more money into our transportation routing to ensure the viability of the industries that depend on that routing. Thank you.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I am very pleased today to rise on Bill 212, The Historic Trans-Canada Highway Act, sponsored by the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Hawranik).

Mr. Speaker, I want to say at the outset that while this member is out trying to name highways, we are actually out building highways. The Trans-Canada Highway is being twinned under this government. Eleven years went by under the previous Tory governments, and nothing was done in that respect, but it took a builder NDP government to twin Highway No. 1, and that is being done as we speak.

This member, Mr. Speaker, likes to criticize the government for the debt. He fails to recognize the magnitude of investments that this government has made in infrastructure in the last six years, a lot of which are committed to his own riding. You would think he would take the time to give the government credit for building worthwhile projects in his riding. As a matter of fact, I can tell you that this government has put in his riding \$2.4 million for clean water and wastewater treatment projects, \$342,000 for a wastewater treatment plant in the R.M. of Alexander, half a million for a wastewater treatment project in Tyndall-Garson, another \$95,000 for a clean water project in Beausejour, another \$1.3 million for a clean water project in Lac du Bonnet, \$99,000 for a clean water project in Whitemouth.

Does he ever stand up and give the government credit for building these things? No. When he is in the constituency, he is busy taking credit for these items. When he is in the Legislature, he is busy criticizing the government for the debt, that the debt is going up. So he wants the projects. He just does not want to pay for them. Now, that is not very honest, Mr. Speaker. The member should wipe the slate clean here and in his next speech before the House give credit where credit is due.

Mr. Speaker, we have spent \$12.4 million in new schools and school upgrades since 1999, \$6.2 million for the Beausejour Early Years replacement school, \$1.1 million in upgrades to the Edward Schreyer School in Beausejour, \$175,000 for a new roof at the Lac du Bonnet Senior School, \$300,000 for capital improvements at Powerview.

Mr. Speaker, in the area of the health care in his riding, we spent \$11.3 million in the Beausejour Hospital. We put equipment upgrades in the operating rooms in Beausejour Hospital, so it can perform pediatric dental surgeries closer to home for kids and their families.

Now, Mr. Speaker, these are, in fact, not even a complete list of all the projects that we have completed in his constituency. The minister reported that this budget, the 2006 budget, had a record of \$257 million for road construction in Manitoba. That was up over \$83 million more than their last budget in 1999, and what did these members do? They bell-rang. They let the bells ring week after week after week, and we have the biggest highway budget in six years under this government.

Mr. Speaker, we have a federal Conservative government now in Ottawa who is collecting gas tax revenues and like the previous Liberal government is not sending that money back to Manitoba. In fact, if you look at successes in road programs, you only have to look to the United States, where in the 1950s the Eisenhower road system was developed and the big national interstate system. That was a federal government project. What we have here in Canada is we have the federal government collecting all the taxes but then letting the provinces foot the bill for road construction. So is it any wonder that we have a deficiency in the road system in this country versus the United States? So this is one idea that we maybe should be borrowing a little bit from them and look at a different approach.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that the members opposite use their good offices with their federal counterparts in Ottawa to try to right a new program here from the new federal government to give Manitoba and other provinces its fair share of the gas tax revenues that are not coming back to our road system. So, if the members want to criticize, they should be criticizing their own federal government. They should not be criticizing a provincial government that is doing more than they ever did in 11 years to improve the road system.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Just very briefly, we would support this effort. In fact, the Liberal support goes back to when Sharon Carstairs was—

* (11:00)

Mr. Speaker: Order.

When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Member for River Heights will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 11 a.m., we will now move on to Resolutions.

RESOLUTION

Res. 14—Improving Democratic Accountability through All-Party Legislative Screening of Provincial Appointments

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster:

WHEREAS new government appointments to various boards including those of Crown Corporations are critical to the success of the operations of

these boards and the operations of Crown Corporations; and

WHEREAS Crown Corporations are intended to serve the public interest with separation from the politics of government management; and

WHEREAS governing parties have, in the past, used the power of appointment for political patronage rather than public interest; and

WHEREAS the public interest is best served by appointing community leaders and citizens with qualifications appropriate to the mandate of Crown Corporations.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Provincial Government to consider all major provincial government appointments be fully screened by an All-Party Legislative Committee before appointments are confirmed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, after several years of presenting this resolution, I finally get to speak to it and it is good to have that opportunity. The NDP work quite hard to limit debate sometimes, but we have finally this year got enough private members' business time that we have been able to get this on the agenda.

What I want to say, Mr. Speaker, is this. We have had major problems under the NDP, and before that under the Tories, with political appointees to a whole variety of boards. It is time to have proper screening by an all-party legislative committee of appointments to major Crown corporations and to boards. This is our point, that it is important to get quality people with the appropriate qualifications and to have those qualifications appropriately screened by an all-party committee.

I would hope that in this effort we will have the support of the Conservatives and of the NDP. So with that introduction, with those comments, I will sit down and let the others speak.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, on the surface, the presentation by the Leader of the Liberal Party, the independent member, would appear to be on a sound footing, talking about the depoliticization of appointments within government. But when you consider what has occurred over recent years in parts, some of the Ottawa shenanigans where his party has just recently, as a matter of fact, scuppered a motion to install very

much this principle in the appointment of a number of significant positions within governance. Now we see the Leader of the Liberal Party standing up and talking about how he wants to make that happen here.

I would be interested to know how he believes that he can see the attitude changing, with the current government that talks about they made their appointment to the Crocus board, and then they pretend that they do not know that person, they never see that person again, they cannot even remember his name most times.

As a matter of fact, when asked to list the representatives on the Crocus board, I think the minister accidentally or intentionally left out at least one name who, in my understanding, performed a role on behalf of government in representation on the Crocus board. At the same time we see last night government trying to put through rules. It would seem almost to distance itself from the actions of the Crown corporations where the Premier (Mr. Doer) made a point of talking about how the presidents of the corporations, the Crown corporations, are indeed professional. I would agree. They operate independently under the direction of the board, but then he conveniently forgot to discuss the fact that, I think without exception, the chairs of the boards of our Crown corporations have a significant political connection, You know, when you look at the fact, the chairman of Hydro, I believe, has a pretty significant political record.

If I were to remember correctly, the chairman of Manitoba Public Insurance, while someone that I do not know as more than a passing acquaintance, has certainly had significant involvement with the party. I remember that particular appointment showing up in my office at one time on behalf of an organization and indicating very strongly how she thought the world should unfold on behalf of that organization. While that is certainly her right, I suspect that she had had contact with the then-opposition in order to put her thoughts together about what she actually thought should have been happening within the area of the responsibility that she was lobbying on behalf of. At least that certainly would have appeared to have been the backdrop.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Chairman, I mean Mr. Speaker, Mr. Deputy Speaker—I will get it right eventually. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to point out that when the vetting of these appointments would come forward, I wonder if

the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) believes that we would in fact have members of the committee who would be allowed to freely vote or would they be voting the party line. With some respect, I believe that members will probably keep the party line, which means the government of the day will still be appointing those they want in the role that they want.

But there is some significant value in having a public vetting of the qualifications of people who would be appointed to these jobs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I look at what has happened over the years, and we have seen the complete, I would suggest, complete disintegration of the responsibility of government in the most recently deceased federal government relative to appointment, the intermixing of appointments and political responsibility, party responsibility, it all became very murky and very ill-defined and people forgot what their responsibility was. They forgot that they were not there simply to provide support and background to the government of the day. They were there in fact to provide management of significant taxpayers' dollars.

I do not know whether the Member for River Heights may have actually felt the sting of some of these appointments from his years in Ottawa, but the confusion of the roles of board members, particularly board chairs, are they really arm's length or are they going to become more of a situation where they report to this legislature? That is something that I assume is not a model that the member is putting forward because, in the end, the Crown corporations will follow the appointment back and take advantage of their opportunity's appointment to make sure that they are within the general direction of the government of the day.

And so, in vetting the names and the opportunities that are being put forward for these appointments, I think the member should keep in mind that ultimately those appointments will remain in place if they are within the general direction of the government, and the majority government will still have the opportunity to make that happen whether this committee vets the appointment or not.

* (11:10)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to hear comments from across the way because it seems to me that there is some logic to taking a look at this method of vetting appointments. But the actions that

I have seen recently from the current government does not give me a warm feeling as to whether or not they would embrace a discussion of their appointments because, I must admit, that I have spent, frankly, a number of hours going round and round the issue of whether or not the current head of the Manitoba economic development committee within the Department of Industry is, in fact, a political appointment or an esteemed civil servant or a servant of the Premier (Mr. Doer) or whether he reports in the Department of Industry or whether he, in fact, might be the contact between Crocus, Workers Compensation Board, Teachers' Retirement Allowance Fund and Manitoba Public Insurance; all of those issues raised and very few answers given.

So, I look forward to hearing some debate from the government, and having received the signal that we are now within a couple of minutes of wrapping up my comments, I would suggest that whoever gets up on the side of the government should consider carefully their words in the light of what I just said about their unwillingness to share comments, and a line of authority that flows widely through their government today. Does it all flow to the Premier's office only or are the ministers out there actually accountable for the departments and the Crown agencies that report to them?

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I am once again pleased to speak to the private member's resolution sponsored by the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard).

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to indicate that our party and our government actually have gone a long way over the years to take the politics out of the governing process. I might remind the previous speaker, long before he was a member of this House, which is for 20 years now, I can tell you that the Schreyer government in the 1970s introduced the bill to allow provincial civil servants to run for office and be involved in politics. Prior to that time, you could not do that in Manitoba. You had to be quiet and not run or not be involved in political parties.

I tell you right now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that occasionally I run into people on a door-to-door basis during my travels, and it is federal civil servants who tell me that they are not allowed, federal civil servants, are not allowed to participate in any political activity. I am thinking of Revenue Canada employees as being one. So here we have a provincial government, who 30 years ago changed the legislation to allow civil servants to be active,

and 30 years later the federal government still does not have these same rules.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether I agree with these changes or moves is immaterial, but I will tell you that when this government formed office six years ago, it did not do what previous governments had done. Previous governments have had a history of getting rid of people who worked, certainly the political appointments, but civil servants as well. This government did not do that. As a matter of fact, six years later, we have Conservative appointees still sitting on some of our boards. We have actually appointed a number of Liberals, and I will get to that later. Just to apprise the member of how many of his own—the member has more of his former candidates and confederates on government boards than he has as candidates that are sitting in this House. So he is having a lot more success than even he realized.

So what we did was we did not do a wholesale change of people when we formed the government, like Sterling Lyon did back in 1977. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, returning officers, who every MLA in this House are very familiar with the role that they can play in your elections—I know a lot of members have complaints about the way elections are run, the way their returning officers handle the situation. It was this government that took away the right of the governing party to appoint returning officers, and that is another step towards depoliticizing the process.

But I might tell you, if anyone believes that all the returning officers do not have political bones in their body, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have another think coming here. The returning officers today, even though they are not appointed by the government in power and have a more non-political process for appointment and a more permanent system, even they will have some ideas about how things should be run that may, in fact, impact negatively on certain people, at least from a perception point of view.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this resolution talks about major boards. The Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) does not specify exactly which boards he thinks should be vetted. He talks about quality people. I do not think that any government has appointed unqualified people to boards, to major, major boards. Going back to the Conservative days, we may not have agreed with their appointments and we may have thought they were overtly political and

political payoffs, but I think at the end of the day no one really criticized their credentials for holding those appointments. I think that is what a sitting government must do when they make the appointments, that they have to make sure of the people that they do appoint, and I know that we have probably a thousand appointments that we make to various boards.

Some of them are free appointments. There is no remuneration at all involved in a number of these appointments, and I know that we go to great effort to make certain that the people have a background in the area, some sort of expertise in the area of what the board covers. So if that means appointing people who happen to be Liberals or Conservatives or who have a connection to the NDP, well, that is what happens. But I have not heard the members opposite making criticisms of those board appointments. Rarely in the last six years has there been any criticism of board appointments. Likewise under the previous government, I do not recall us, in opposition, making major criticisms.

So, you see, there is the self-governing checking process at work here, where the government, before it makes the appointment, tries to gauge what the reaction may be by the media, by the public and particularly by the opposition. If a government is going to make an appointment, it has to think twice about what the opposition are going to say because if we make a bad appointment, we are basically losers because the opposition will make a lot of hay out of it. So the system has worked fairly well, but, having said that, we have been and are moving towards a more apolitical process.

For example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have introduced The Elections Act reforms. As a matter of fact, we were in committee last night. The reforms are based on greater access, greater transparency and respecting citizen choice. We have removed restrictions from advanced polling so that anyone can vote in advance for any reason and increased the number of locations of advanced polls and the days on which they can be open. We have created super polls in malls so people can vote in advance at convenient locations. We have extended absentee voting to students and public employees who are outside the province. We have more dedicated polls within apartment blocks so residents do not have to leave to vote. We have smaller voting areas so people do not have to travel far to vote, particularly in northern Manitoba and rural areas.

There is greater transparency, Mr. Deputy Speaker. For example, we are requiring elected officials to disclose additional salaries they receive from political parties. We know that has been a practice by some members opposite over the last number of years, particularly their leaders who do not feel the MLA salary is big enough to live on, so that Conservative parties had to, in the case of Sterling Lyon, secretly in those days, give him an extra \$50,000 a year, adjusted for inflation. That might be some real money today. When that was discovered, there was a bit of a controversy over that.

* (11:20)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are creating an independent officer to receive and prosecute complaints about election financing, and many, many other good changes. But I did not want to wind up without giving some names here for the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) of prominent Liberals who have been appointed. For example, Phil Fontaine, a well-known Liberal, was appointed as chairperson of the East Side of Lake Winnipeg Round Table, 2000 to 2004; Ernie Gilroy, a very qualified individual, was made the chairman of the Floodway Authority; Terry Duguid, a twice-defeated candidate now, appointed as a chairperson of the Manitoba Clean Environment Commission, a very, very good appointment on our behalf; Lloyd Axworthy, a long-time Liberal. We have the chairperson of the Civil Service Superannuation Board, Gary Coopland, who has managed Conservative campaigns.

So, unlike old governments of the past, old D.L. Campbell Liberal governments of the past, Conservative governments of the past who conducted witch hunts, who fired Sterling Lyon, who fired all kinds of people, right? And then appointed his own. We did not do any of that at all. As a matter of fact, there are examples in Canada over the years where, when the Liberals take over the government, they stop the road construction at the edge of the border, right? Where the one constituency ends and the next constituency starts, the paving trucks stop and they go back to paving Liberal constituency roads. That is how things used to operate here many, many years ago. But that is not the way they operate—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): It is a pleasure to rise today to speak to this resolution, but, first of all, I want to just comment that we have—and I did not

hear this from the Liberal member of this House, I did not hear this from any of the Conservative members in this House, and that is that it is this government, under this Premier (Mr. Doer) that has doubled the amount of time allocated in this Chamber to private members' business.

You know, the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) stands up every day and he criticizes the government for some procedural matter or another, rings the bells for six or seven weeks, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but now we have doubled the amount of time. We went from two hours on Thursday mornings to now have them both Tuesday and Thursday mornings. This allows private members on both sides of the House, but in particular the opposition, the chance to bring forward their issues, and either through resolutions or, through private members' bills, through legislation. That is why we are currently getting to the one that we are having to discuss today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I was part of the rules committee which met, and we discussed how we are going to update the rules. As I said, we have doubled the amount of time allocated to private members' business. As well, we agreed to allow the independent members the opportunity to bring forward a resolution such as this which, in years past, they would not have the chance to do. But you do not hear that from the Liberal leader or the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) when he talks about accountability, when he talks about the openness of the government and our abilities to allow members to debate issues in this House. All you hear from the Member for Inkster is constant criticism. You know, the government is a dictatorship, and shutting down debate, and critical on this or that, but he never mentions that we have doubled the amount of time in this Chamber allocated to private members' business.

At the beginning of this resolution today, the Liberal leader, he got up and he said, well, you know, this is the first time I have had a chance to speak on a private member's bill, or bring forward a private member's resolution in all the years he was here, I believe. He spoke for about one minute and he sat down. He did not explain at all the rationale for this resolution. He did not explain—

An Honourable Member: He is embarrassed.

Mr. Dewar: I agree. He did not give a defence of why we should support it. No explanation, no rationale as to why our government or as a House,

members in this Chamber should support his resolution. He talked for one minute and sat down.

Now, as the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) has said, he is clearly embarrassed by the Liberal record when it comes to this particular matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I just want to talk about, as the Member for Elmwood has said, and he has been here now for 20 years and has a wonderful legacy, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this Chamber, and he was able to explain to the House about when the Sterling Lyon government came in in 1977, and how they did a witch hunt throughout the bureaucracy and fired hundreds and hundreds of people. Then, of course, the people came and they fired him after one term. So they came, and they got rid of Mr. Sterling Lyon after one term.

So, we came into government in '81. We did not do the same thing as what Lyon did, and when we returned to government in 1990, we did not do what the Filmon government did, and that is flush down hundreds and hundreds of people simply, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for partisan purposes, as they did.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you look at the Liquor Control Commission, for example, the president is a long-time member of the management team there, Mr. Lussier. He is now the president of the Liquor Control Commission. Bob Brennan is still the chair or the president of Manitoba Hydro, the largest Crown corporation in the province. We did not get rid of him. He was there under the Tories; he is there now under us. Marilyn McLaren is now the president of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. She was, as well, the vice-president for a number of years, worked her way up and now she is the chair. We did not put one of our political hacks in there.

We have a wonderful record when it comes to dealing with this matter of putting in people that have built up their careers, that have merit, not like the Conservatives did when they were in power. Look at the Lotteries Corporation, for example. I cannot think of his name, but he was deputy minister in Intergovernmental Affairs. He then went across, and now he runs the Lotteries Corporation. He was the deputy minister when the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), I believe, was rural development minister. *[interjection]*

Who was your deputy minister? That is right. Thank you. It was Winston Hodgins, and he now is the chair or the president of the Lotteries Corporation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So, again, we did

not get rid of him. *[interjection]* No, I am just saying, that our point is that we do not. Our point is that we promote people based on merit, not simply partisan purposes. As I said, we could talk a little bit, of course, about the Manitoba Telephone System but regrettably, there is no point, unfortunately.

Well, I will do it anyway because it has been now 10 years since the Filmon government stole that corporation from the citizens of Manitoba in probably the biggest scandal in the history of this province. They sold that off to their corporate buddies, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Wellington West was the lead. I believe, currently, the former Premier Filmon who said he would not sell it prior to the election. Again, 10 years ago I was here in this Chamber when they broke their word and sold that telephone system off to their corporate buddies.

We said at the time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that rates would go up, jobs would be lost, services would be affected and the head office would move. Now, we have seen three of those four come true: rates have gone up 60-odd percent, I believe, in rural Manitoba and northern Manitoba; jobs have been lost. I just received a letter. It was raised here about a year ago where the remaining jobs in Selkirk are being transferred to Winnipeg. The office that was the head office of the Manitoba Telephone System in Selkirk is now closed down completely, and it is sold off. As I said, service has also been affected, and we do not know about the headquarters. It is hard to say, but there are rumours that the headquarters is going to be moved out of this province as well.

* (11:30)

As the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) was saying, both he and I spent a fine evening together last night listening to public consultations on the changes to The Elections Finances Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We proposed to the opposition, for example, that they would join us in looking at the public financing of election campaigns, something I know the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is advocating for.

The Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) was there talking about his election campaign and how much the campaign cost him. He was trying to get his own colleagues—he was pleading with the committee, pleading with his own colleagues to support him in finding a way to help them deal with public financing of campaigns at least on the issue of compliance with the act or on other means as well.

We offered up an all-party approach, and the new Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) and the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen), first of all they shook their heads but then they were silent after that. So we do not know where they are going on that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are not sure if they are going to accept our approach of an all-party approach to dealing with election financing to find if there is a way to help all of us in public office fund the ever-increasing demands placed upon us to fund our campaigns.

Regrettably, we do not know where they are going to go, but up to now, as I have said, they have been stonewalling the issue. I know the Member for Elmwood has already raised a number of prominent Liberals, Phil Fontaine, of course Terry Duguid, Lloyd Axworthy, of course Ernie Gilroy. I have been working with Ernie on a number of issues related to the floodway expansion, and I think he is doing a fine job on that. He is fairly sensitive to the issues of the—*[interjection]* Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on this resolution from the MLA for River Heights and I understand that he spoke very briefly. I think we are still waiting for the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), which is quite interesting and gives me fodder for the next election because this is the party that rang the bells for six weeks, and then when we start debating bills they filibustered the bills but we are still waiting for them to speak on their own resolution. So I am hoping that by twelve o'clock, we will hear what the Member for Inkster has to say on the record.

I think this is a very interesting topic because on the one hand Crown corporations are often described as being at arm's length from the government, and on the other hand people could easily argue that you need to make Crown corporation at least amenable to government direction. So I thought of a number of scenarios for each party as to how this might actually work. For example, the two largest Crown corporations are Manitoba Hydro and Manitoba Public Insurance and there are government backbenchers on each of these boards. That has been the case, I understand, for a long time.

Now, it could be that the government of the day might want a Crown corporation to do something, and I think if the government appoints the board members, then the Crown corporation is probably going to be more amenable to carrying out the government's wishes. Sometimes those wishes might

take a long time to be put into practice and actually be carried out. For example, if you are going to build a hydro dam in Manitoba, it is probably going to take 10 years from the time that a decision is made until the water is flowing and electricity is flowing. If somebody decided not to do it and then 10 years later demand went up or there was an export market in the United States, it would be too late. You would be saying, oops, we made the wrong decision. So some of those decisions are very important, especially when it comes to construction of hydro dams.

Now, I suppose that most of us here have a vested interest because when we retire from this Legislature, we might want to be appointed to an agency, board or commission by our political party, except, of course, the Liberals who have the luxury of being in a third party position. So they can be idealistic and say no, they do not want to be appointed to anything, nor should any Liberal be appointed to anything, and we understand idealism. Our party in the federal Parliament is in a similar position, and that is why we are called the conscience of Parliament because we can take idealistic positions.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Martindale: No, that is true. I am sure that the Member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) would agree with me that the NDP at the federal level is called the party of conscience in Parliament. There are good reasons for that, because when you are in a third-party position, you can pick and choose your issues, especially if you do not think you are ever going to form government, which is maybe the predicament that the Liberal Party in the Manitoba Legislature is in. They could be idealistic because they do not have to worry about actually being in government to have to implement their ideas, because I think they would probably change their position overnight or, if they thought they were close to forming government, they might move to the moderate middle in order to moderate their policies or maybe be less idealistic to actually form government.

You know, this is not the first time that we have debated a resolution like this, and I am sorry I was not prepared today. I was actually visiting with my parents who are here visiting from Toronto, and I took some time off this morning, but had I been in caucus this morning before ten o'clock and realized that this resolution was being debated today, I would have run down to the Legislative Reading Room and asked to look up Sharon Carstairs' resolution, which

was almost identical when she was a member of this Legislature and she was opposed to all political appointments.

I remember her speech, and I remember heckling her, and I remember how absurd we thought this idea was. Then, lo and behold, she got appointed to the Senate. So the media said, well, what about your position of being opposed to political appointments. How could you introduce a resolution—and I see the Deputy Speaker nodding his head; he remembers this—and speak on it and say you are opposed to political appointments and then you get the plum political appointment, probably the biggest political appointment in Canada, an appointment to the Senate until the age of 75 and all the perks that come with that? And what was Sharon Carstairs' response? Well, I am paraphrasing, but I believe she said: Because it was a good appointment. So she sort of made an exception, I think a rather big exception for herself. So she said one thing in the Legislature, and she had a different rationale, a rationalization or an excuse for accepting the appointment to the Senate.

So perhaps the current members in the Liberal Party will be similar. They introduce idealistic resolutions in third-party status, but if they were ever to be government, I think they would want their people. To use examples, the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has, I think it is a private member's bill on milk pricing. Well, supposing they ever became government and they actually wanted to implement this policy, and supposing it was being controlled by a marketing agency and they had totally independent people on it who said, no, we are not going to do this because it is not in the best interest of farmers, what would the government do? How could they do it if it was in the control of the marketing board?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Martindale: Well, it is not always that easy. Let me take another example. Supposing a Conservative government was in office in the future, which, you know, is always a possibility. You never know, one election, two or three elections from now, and supposing there was a farm credit corporation, although I think we rolled it into some other organization and changed its name, but supposing they wanted to lower interest rates for farmers for farm loans or some other thing that they thought was in the best interest of farmers. But supposing they followed this idealistic resolution of the Liberal Party, and they only appointed people that were

experts, they were not political appointees, and the board said no, we are not going to do that because we do not believe in it. So you have a problem. How can an independent board with independent people who are not political appointees or not willing to follow suggestions of the government of the day, how could they implement a policy that the government wants implemented? I think that is a problem.

An Honourable Member: I would have a word with Eugene—

Mr. Martindale: Well, Eugene—if the honourable member is referring to Mr. Kostyra, he is not on an agency, board or commission, and the resolution specifically refers to Crown corporations. So this is a red herring. He is trying to derail me and he is not going to succeed.

* (11:40)

Now let me give you another example because I can compare the former Conservative government and the current NDP government, and that is the Social Services Appeal Board. When I was the critic for Family Services, I knew that only 10 percent of people succeeded on appeal under the Conservative government when the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) was the minister. Why would that be? Well, maybe it is because they were Conservative appointees, and they were a little, you know, tough on welfare, so they did not allow many appeals. Now under the NDP government with NDP appointees, the percentage of appeals has gone up. Why would that be? Well, maybe it is because we are appointing Aboriginal people and single parents and people who have been on employment income assistance in the past, and they are more sympathetic. So, you know, they are more sympathetic to allowing appeals.

Of course, I think the best example is—and I see my light is flashing—is Manitoba Hydro, where I think the government of the day would like Manitoba Hydro to implement to its policies, and I think that only make sense. Government could be hamstrung if people were not willing and able to carry out the wishes of the government of the day.

Finally, to add to the non-partisan appointees, I nominated a Liberal friend, and the friend was appointed to a major organization in Manitoba because of her expertise, because she had been the equivalent of an executive director of an organization, and even though she was a Liberal and even

though I nominated her, she was appointed and she is still there. She served two three-year terms. So we do make exceptions. Other members have alluded to other prominent Liberals who were appointed to agencies, boards or commissions, and I think that is probably a good thing.

So, thank you for the opportunity to put a few remarks on the record about this very idealistic and undoable resolution which they do not even follow in practice, and the best example being Sharon Carstairs, and we all remember how she accepted a patronage appointment after speaking against patronage appointments.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I would like to just pick up on a couple of points very briefly. First and foremost, I note that the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) made reference to the thousand appointments that are made, and then he talked about, you know, a couple token Liberals being appointed here and a couple of token Conservatives who are being appointed, and that is how he justifies maybe not supporting the resolution of this nature. Then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we hear the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) talk about an appointment that he is aware of. And there is no doubt, there are a good number of Manitobans with just impeccable credentials who deserve appointments because of who they are and their capabilities.

We acknowledge that there are many Liberals that are out there. The issue here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that we need to, as much as possible, ensure that there is a screening process that allows for this Legislature to heighten the importance of some of these positions and some of these appointments. The Member for Burrows talked about Manitoba Hydro. One of the appointments is an MLA within this Chamber; the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) is appointed to that particular board, and some might say a good appointment.

Well, what we are suggesting is that there is a justifiable need to allow for a protocol that would allow for these individuals to come before some sort of a formal process that does not deny them the opportunity to be appointed, but it highlights the importance of these different positions, and we see that as a positive thing. And the government should move towards depoliticizing where it can or, at the very least, heightening the awareness. I would welcome to see the list of the thousand-plus appointments that this government has the

opportunity to be able to make. Manitobans would benefit by that, I believe.

With those few words, I would like to see this type of resolution not only debated, but ultimately passed, and that is why the Leader of the Liberal Party and myself are keeping our remarks short on this because we want to hear what other members have to say, and hopefully it passes.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): I appreciate that the Member for Inkster says he has kept his remarks short on this resolution, and if being a Liberal is good reason. I mean, what do Liberals have to tell us, Mr. Deputy Speaker, about patronage appointments?

Now, let us not forget, by the way, and I have got a lot of respect for the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) as being members of this Legislature, but we have a former federal Cabinet minister and a former federal Liberal candidate here who both ran for a party that stood for patronage, stood for Adscam, stood for cronyism, stood for entitlement. You know, about the only thing missing from this resolution is David Dingwall's picture.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us just understand one thing here. I mean, if you ask most Canadians about the federal Liberal Party, and by the way I know a lot of Liberals, I respect a lot of Liberals. Actually, there are not as many as there used to be. Many of them do support us.

I talk to a lot of, actually, pretty well ex-Liberals by now, and if you ask them about one thing that sticks in their craw about the federal Liberal Party over the last number of years, it is that culture of entitlement and the degree to which they did not just practise patronage, they perfected the art. Mr. Deputy Speaker, former Liberal Cabinet ministers making three and four and five hundred thousand dollars heading Crown corporations. There was none of this process in this resolution here about having scrutiny. David Dingwall, what was his qualification? He was a former Liberal Cabinet minister. You know, you look at the—André Ouillet. You look at some of the appointments as ambassadors. They were not just happy appointing people to Crown corporations, the Liberals.

Gagliano. Does anybody remember Gagliano, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Alphonse Gagliano, I mean, sent off to Denmark to represent the finest about

what Canada stands for. And dare I say I cannot resist this, but you know with the fiasco now, and the Liberals are trying to renew themselves, and I just want to say that I find it interesting. How far have they gone? How much have they learned now? They are now getting donations from 11-year old twins who just happen to be the offspring of well-connected pharmaceutical executives.

You know, there is a great Web site; I would recommend the opposites look at it. Kids for—talking about . . . I love the part where it says use your mummy's credit card or use your daddy's credit card. I mean, let us face it. The Liberals have not only perfected the art of patronage, but I think for a lot of Canadians the stench of the kind of sleaze that we saw in the last 12 years is one of the reasons why the Liberals are no longer in government federally.

I find it interesting, by the way, that when you look at this kind of thing, I know it is tough being a provincial Liberal. I mean it is, because you know when both provincial Liberals have direct connections to the federal Liberal Party, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I think the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) at one time wanted to have a separate identity for the Liberal riding. I guess it was sort of, we are the Liberals, but brackets, we are not really the Liberals; you know, a kind of classic Liberal approach. Change the brand name, right?

But the Liberal democratic party, Mr. Deputy Speaker, he says. I do not know if he is looking at doing a Larry Desjardins, because that is how Larry Desjardins ended up eventually becoming a New Democrat. He understood that connection.

But the reality is that we in this province have, I think, a very good record in terms of boards and commissions, and I would point out we do have a fair amount of balance.

Now, I have worked with people such as Terry Duguid, a former Liberal candidate, twice actually, as the head of the Clean Environment Commission, I think that was, and ran provincially. I still work with Ernie Gilroy and I do not think, I do not discuss politics with Ernie Gilroy, but Ernie Gilroy is certainly a former city councillor, well known to members of the Liberal Party. We work with Lloyd Axworthy, a fine Manitoban, I think a good example of where the NDP has understood that if you want to build a province, you work with people beyond just your immediate partisan boundaries, Lloyd Axworthy, well-respected. I am really glad to have

him back here in Manitoba as head of the University of Winnipeg, but a very prominent Liberal, again, sat in this House, was a member of Parliament. I could run through, certainly my own constituency, with board appointments. We have a former Liberal candidate who was appointed by this government. Why? Because he had the experience that was needed.

* (11:50)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we did not appoint token Liberals. I mean, is Lloyd Axworthy a token Liberal? I mean, one of the most prominent Liberals of the last generation here in Manitoba. But we could work with him. It is the same thing with their Terry Duguid and Ernie Gilroy. One of the reasons I think we have been successful as a government since 1969, is unlike the Liberals in Ottawa, instead of using the sleazy style that they have used, we build bridges. If you look around at MLAs on this side of the House, you will find that many of us work with people in our communities who are not card-carrying New Democrats.

I know in the last election I received a very significant amount of support, the highest I have ever received. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to put on the record, they are not all card-carrying New Democrats. There are a lot of card-carrying New Democrats, a lot of very strong New Democrats in northern Manitoba, but I know a lot of people who support me individually, support many of us on this side of the House because they see us being a good government, and good governments do build bridges.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I read this, I said to myself, democratic accountability, Liberals and democratic accountability in the same sentence. *[interjection]* I mean, no shame, as the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) points out.

I am not going to be critical of Sharon Carstairs. I do respect her, by the way. I know there was some criticism about her taking an appointed Senate position. I want to say that I think there is a good example. The Senate is full of Liberals. It is like the night of the living political dead there. You go there and it is like a museum. You can sit down in the Senate galleries and you will see Liberals from the nineties, the eighties, the seventies. You can serve 20- and 30-odd years, 12 years of Liberal appointments. By the way, did they abolish the Senate? That is something I think should happen. No. Did they

even get around to electing it? No, because if they had done that, there would be less patronage jobs for Liberals, and they were appointing Liberal senators through the patronage system right up to their dying days as a government.

So let us not get lectures from Liberals in terms of how to run government based on merit. I do think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Liberals, federally, are going to find that their days as the natural governing party, that is their assumption, are long gone. The Liberals have done more to set back federalism in Québec because of Adscam and the sleazy way in which money was transferred directly to the Liberal Party. Now we have Stephen Harper as Prime Minister, and we have the federal Liberals and their Adscam scandal to thank. Thank goodness we elected more New Democrats in the last election to keep the Conservative government in line.

But as I look at the new federal leadership and I look at members opposite, one great thing about Liberals, Mr. Deputy Speaker, an historic fact, they promised medicare in 1919. It took an NDP government to bring it in in Saskatchewan in the sixties, and then all of sudden they discovered medicare. Liberals are not leaders. They are followers.

My suggestion to the Liberals opposite is instead of bringing in this resolution, because they have no credibility now, maybe they should follow our example. One of the reasons the New Democratic Party is in the position that we are in in this province—and, you know, there are always issues of disagreement, but a lot of people that I talk to, even who do not necessarily vote NDP, say that we have been an open government, a good government in terms of reaching out across the province to all regions.

We do not just focus in on one narrow perspective. But they also recognize we reach out to qualified individuals. I am proud to be working with people who are qualified individuals, some of whom are New Democrats and some of whom are not New Democrats, some of whom are most definitely not New Democrats.

You know what, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Unlike the Liberals in Ottawa, this NDP government is a government that represents all Manitobans. We know how to reach out, and we know that our record in terms of accountability and our record in terms of

appointments is night and day compared to the members opposite.

I want to finish by saying that I would suggest the members opposite go back to the drawing board, perhaps withdraw this resolution, maybe spend a little bit of time doing a few mea culpas in terms of their appalling federal record, and maybe in about 10 or 20 years when people have forgotten about the stench of the last federal Liberal government in terms of patronage, maybe then they might have some credibility moving this resolution.

As it is, Liberals lecturing us on democratic accountability, I do not think so. This government I think will take no lectures from members opposite and has a very good record in reaching out to all Manitobans. Just look at some of the people we have appointed to boards and commissions.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I am happy to be able to rise this morning to put a few comments with regard to this resolution.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I just listened to the Minister of Water Stewardship who unfortunately has meetings to go to, but if he did not, I would certainly like him to hear these comments because he talked about cronyism in the Liberal party. We know all about the inquiry that we just went through in the federal scene, but, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the Minister of Water Stewardship that there is not any greater cronyism than there is in the NDP and the Crocus Fund.

If we ever want to see a government that is riddled with corruption, it is this current NDP government with its hiding of facts with regard to Crocus, with regard to shielding some of their hacks when it comes to the Crocus Fund. The one who they are shielding most is the one who earns most in the government. I think that it is Mr. Eugene Kostyra, who probably fetches one of the largest salaries in this government, and he is the one who is being protected by the government because of his activities with regard to the Crocus Fund.

So, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about appointments, and this resolution talks about an all-party committee that would screen appointments to various committees, I do not know how that would ever work. But I can tell you that with the experience that we have had with this government, and if you look at the cross-section of appointments that have been made to the various committees, I think pretty

much every New Democrat who has contributed to the New Democratic Party has gotten a favour of some kind of appointment by this government.

Now, Mr. Speaker, when you look at the issues of Crocus, that one really can stand out as being sort of the typical approach that the NDP have to trying to manipulate how everything goes on in the province. They are so closely tied to the labour union that, of course, they had to have their labour buddies and all of the individuals associated with the labour movement somehow have their hands in the cookie jar. So they have gotten them either on the Workers Compensation Board or they have them on the TRAF Board, or they have them on the Crocus Board. You name any board, the Workers Compensation Board, everywhere you look, everywhere you look there is cronyism.

When the Minister of Water Stewardship points his finger at the Liberals in this House because of what happened on the federal scene, he should remember there are three fingers pointing back at him. *[interjection]* Mr. Speaker, the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) says wrong. Well, let the facts speak for themselves. *[interjection]*

The Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) says yes, they do. All I have to do is remind him about the Public Schools Finance Board and the Public Schools Finance Board's activities within Seven Oaks School Division. Now, who was the member on the Public Schools Finance Board who was responsible for this?

Well, do we know the name Ben Zaidman? Do we know the name Brian O'Leary? Well, what party do you think they are associated with? Would it be the Liberal Party? No. Would it be the Conservative Party? No. Would it be the New Democratic Party? Yes. This is the Ben Zaidman, this is the great Manitoban who decided that it was okay for a school division like Seven Oaks, whose, by the way, superintendent was who? Brian O'Leary. Oh yes, and it was all right for him to go out and buy property on a speculation basis because you might make a profit on it. Then the Minister of Education, the Member for Gimli said this is fine. This is okay. So, Mr. Speaker, they should be embarrassed. They should hide their faces in shame.

The list goes on and on and on. Do we need to talk about Agassiz School Division? Do we need to talk about the issues that occurred under Agassiz School Division and this government?

How many times has the Auditor General commented on the inappropriate actions of ministers in this government with regard to board appointments, with regard to activities? And the biggest, and the one where Manitobans lost the most money, of course, was the Crocus Fund.

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Member for Russell will have five minutes remaining.

The hour being twelve noon, we will recess and reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, June 6, 2006

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