

TIME: 2:30 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Mr. Speaker

MR. SPEAKER, Honourable Peter Fox (Kildonan): Before we proceed I should like to direct the attention of the honourable members to the gallery where we have 25 students, Grade 11 and 12 standing of the Waskada College. These students are under the direction of Mr. Kirkup. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Arthur.

We also have approximately 70 students, Grade 10 to 12 standing of the Portage Collegiate. These students are under the direction of Mr. Ron Hessler. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie.

On behalf of the honourable members we welcome you here this afternoon.

Presenting Petitions; Reading and Receiving Petitions; Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees; Ministerial Statements and Tabling of Reports; Notices of Motion; Introduction of Bills.

ORAL QUESTIONS

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MR. SIDNEY SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister in the absence of the Finance Minister. I am wondering if in view of the unemployment figures issued yesterday and the statements that the First Minister on behalf of the government has made before with respect to the question of unemployment, whether there has been a proposal forwarded to the Federal Government for participation in the present job creation program that Manitoba has now advanced, or whether there has been any suggestion by way of a communication to the Federal Government that there is need for a nation-wide job creation program in addition to those announced in the Budget by the Finance Minister to be presented at this time.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HONOURABLE EDWARD SCHREYER, Premier (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, that is a timely point. If the Honourable Member for River Heights peruses the statements made by our Minister of Finance at Ottawa in very recent weeks, he will find just that kind of proposal calling for Federal Government action to take up some of the slack in employment or unemployment levels in Canada. So that has been underlined and emphasized by our Minister of Finance in recent weeks.

I cannot swear to it but I believe that our provincial job office has forwarded to the appropriate department of the Government of Canada the specifics of our proposed and imminent Job Creation Program.

MR. SPIVAK: I wonder if the First Minister is in a position to indicate whether the program for Manitoba that is proposed in this Legislature would have been expanded or could have been expanded if there was federal participation and whether a request specifically for federal participation at any phase of that program has, in fact, been made.

MR. SCHREYER: Well, Mr. Speaker, in addition to what I have just said, my colleague the Minister of Labour advises that he has also written to the Federal Minister Mr. Cullen along these same lines. Naturally any input by the Government of Canada does then make it possible for expansion of this special effort and activity, and we do not give up hope, but I at this time, must say that there is no tangible evidence, to this point in time, that the Government of Canada is prepared to do anything. Perhaps by October that may change. I say October because there seems to be some vague indications emanating from Ottawa that they are looking to a special Budget in October should circumstances warrant it.

MR. SPIVAK: Yes. I wonder if the First Minister can indicate whether the Provincial Government has proposed to the Federal Government a shelf of public projects to be considered as applicable to be drawn from both with federal and provincial participation as a means to be able to combat specifically the problems of the cyclical periods of unemployment that we appear to be in now and will be in for some time.

MR. SCHREYER: Mr. Speaker, I could indicate further that some — although by no means all — of the special programming that we have announced last week under the general heading of “job creation” is in the normal course cost-shareable with the Government of Canada under one or another of the standing programs. And my colleague, the Minister of Mines advises, that is correct.

Insofar as developing an inventory, so to speak, of plans and designs which can be moved forward in the contingency of high or higher unemployment, that is precisely what we have been doing for several years and precisely what has been criticized by some honourable gentlemen opposite in the context of the Inner City when we talk in terms of responding to the City of Winnipeg's unanimous resolution calling for indication of intent with respect to construction in the Inner City to help bring about some renewal. Beyond that, if my honourable friend is suggesting, however, that we as a

province should start to develop a list of plans which could then be shelved by the Government of Canada, I think he would agree that that is, in a sense, suggesting that we do some of the work that is properly belonging to another level of government.

MR. SPIVAK: I wonder then if the First Minister does not consider, or his government does not consider advisable, to have some agreement arrived at with the Federal Government to have projects that are, in fact, available to be brought into play when required and whether there should not be at this time serious discussion with the Federal Government because of what appears to be the continuing persistent problem of unemployment that is with us now and will be with us for some time.

MR. SCHREYER: Well, Mr. Speaker, that is indeed what is done. We have made proposals to the Government of Canada under special discussion circumstances; we also have made proposals quite lengthy and detailed in number with respect to many discussions under the Western Northlands negotiations. There are many items which are on the shelf, so to speak, awaiting federal approval and concurrence under Western Northland; there are a number of projects there. We have also urged previous meetings of Western premiers that consideration be given to the drawing up of details and specifics with respect to the future construction of a second Trans Canada Highway. We have also made proposals with respect to increasing the stock of public housing and northern housing but we cannot, in the final analysis, make those decisions for another level of government.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Portage La Prairie.

MR. GORDON E. JOHNSTON: Well, Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Agriculture, I would direct this question to the First Minister. In view of the fact that there may be at least a drought year, if not a moderately dry year this year, is there any move afoot emanating either from this government or the Federal Government to have a meeting of the Ministers of Agriculture for the three Western Provinces to meet with the Federal Minister of Agriculture to plan a co-ordinated plan for dealing with a drought situation?

MR. SCHREYER: I cannot answer specifically whether a specific date has been set for such a meeting but I can inform the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie that there has been, indeed as of many weeks ago, continuing contact at the officials level: the Department of Agriculture of Manitoba and Canada and also as between representatives of the Water Resources Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources and officials of PFRA and they did get down to considerable specific detail. I think that answers my honourable friend's question.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

MR. STEVE PATRICK: Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct my question to, I believe the Minister of Labour perhaps can answer this question. In view of the employees at Greb Shoes receiving a notice of layoffs, can the Minister indicate to the House if he had any discussion with the executive at Greb Shoes to determine how many employees will be affected and what is their consequences at that plant, will there be a cut down or eventual phase out?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister for Labour.

HONOURABLE RUSSELL PAULLEY (Transcona): I did receive, Mr. Speaker, a communication from Greb Shoes indicating to me and I believe it was in August, that they contemplate a rather drastic reduction in the number of employees. It could be earlier than August, Mr. Speaker, I'm only trying to re-read the letter from memory. I investigated into the requirements under our legislation and I think the number concerned would not require a long notice of termination at this time. The assurance was given to me that the company will make every effort to reduce the number of those affected in employment. The same services are and will be made available to Greb Shoes as the department makes to other corporations where there is a large reduction in personnel, namely with the co-operation of Canada Manpower and the union concerned, if there be a union, together with the Manitoba Department of Labour, we set up a replacement rehabilitation committee to see what we can do to ease the burden.

MR. PATRICK: A supplementary. Can the Minister indicate to the House what number of the employees will be affected? Is it in the area of 250 to 300 and can the Minister give some indication if he had any recent discussion with the executive and perhaps give some indication to the House the reasons for this massive layoff. Is there a consolidation or is the company leaving the province or what is the reason?

MR. PAULLEY: Mr. Speaker, I think first of all I should answer my honourable friend by saying that I have not had any personal discussions with the management of Greb Shoes. I am under the impression that the number was somewhere around about 75 but I have no hesitation, Mr. Speaker, of meeting with my honourable friend or producing a communication for his consideration or the consideration of anyone. It was not a confidential letter in the normal sense of the word. The only thing I can give my honourable friend reassurance that we will do everything we can to minimize the effect of the reduction. As to the question whether or not they contemplate leaving Manitoba, I'm sorry I cannot give a precise answer to that part of his question.

MR. PATRICK: Another supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister perhaps give some consideration to either the Minister of Labour or the Minister of Industry and Commerce to meet with

management and determine just what is taking place?

MR. PAULLEY: I may say in answer to that, Mr. Speaker, I have already instructed members of the Department of Labour to meet and carry on discussions with management to ascertain the facts of the situation.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. HARRY J. ENNS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct a question to the Minister of Renewable Resources and would ask him if he can confirm or deny that at a meeting held on or about the 24th of February of this year with the Norway House Joint Community Authority, that he, on behalf of the Provincial Government, agreed to share on a 50-50 basis funding with the Federal authority to carry on the projects entered into by the Norway House Joint Community Authority?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister for Renewable Resources.

HONOURABLE HARVEY BOSTROM (Rupertsland): Mr. Speaker, I did attend a meeting on or about such a date but I made no such commitment.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm that on the basis of that meeting the Federal Government had, in fact, begun to advance money to the Norway House authority and then stopped so doing because of failure of the Provincial Government to carry on with its understanding on the 50-50 basis.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Speaker, I can't answer for the Federal Government, they can do whatever they like. I understand they did make some commitment to grant some funds and in fact did advance some funds. But by copy of a letter which I received from them, they in fact said they were not going to advance any further funds for such a project.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, a final supplementary question. As the Minister is aware that this is a somewhat unique situation where, perhaps for the first time, the Indian Band and the Metis Association and the Town Council have formed together to form the Norway House authority and my question to the Minister is: Is this government supporting that Norway House authority in any way that appeared to have been agreed to at a previous meeting in consultation with the federal authority?

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Speaker, they were making their request to the Department of Northern Affairs at that meeting. As the MLA for the area I indicated my general support for their proposal and the concept they were proposing, but I understand, on discussion with the Minister of Northern Affairs, that he does not have sufficient funds in his budget, budgeted for this year, to support such a concept. The Community Council at Norway House, I understand, with the funds that are advanced to that council by way of grants from Northern Affairs, was able to provide certain funds towards supporting such a project and I understand they have supported it to date.

MR. ENNS: A final supplementary question for clarification. I want to get this clear. The Honourable Minister, whether he was MLA for the region or not, but he was there as a Cabinet Minister and he had come to some agreement to sharing of funds on a 50-50 basis. My question to the Minister is, is the Provincial Government now not funding the Norway House authority project under any circumstances? Is that the information that the Minister is giving me?

MR. BOSTROM: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated, as the MLA for the area, I had indicated to them that I was, in general, in agreement with the concept they were proposing. I have had many meetings with the Norway House people and council since and they full well know my feelings on this and my general support for the concept. But, Mr. Speaker, they were making their proposal to the Department of Northern Affairs and they received an answer from the Department of Northern Affairs. They were asking for quite an elaborate budget for an executive director who was supposed to be located in the City of Winnipeg and for establishment of an office in the City of Winnipeg and so on, and the Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs replied to them that he was not able, with his budget, to support such a proposal. Now if my honourable friend wants to indicate that we should be supporting such a proposal then let him make it.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for La Verendrye.

MR. BOB BANMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct my question to the Minister in charge of the Clean Environment and would ask the Minister if he could inform the House whether the moving of the radioactive contamination materials at the burial site in East Braintree is being carried on at the present time?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister for Mines.

MR. SIDNEY GREEN (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure; I answered a question on this last year. I will take the question as notice.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. HARRY SHAFRANSKY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, question please.

MR. SHAFRANSKY: . . . you can see how popular I am.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please, questions only.

MR. SHAFRANSKY: Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Manitoba Development Corporation. Is it correct that all the questions asked recently by the Honourable Member for River Heights about Transair have arisen from the fact that some rugged individuals went broke and came begging to the government for money and because the MDC did not want any more such losers as those forced upon it by the previous government such as CFI, Friendly Family Farms and the M.S. Lord Selkirk.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister for Mines.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I answered the questions that were put to me by the Member for River Heights. And I believe that the answers apply to the question that has been put to me by the Member for Radisson, to be courteous to him as well.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MR. SPIVAK: . . . to the First Minister. I wonder if he can indicate whether some rugged individuals came to the province of Manitoba begging for money to support a regional airline.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. SCHREYER: I believe, Mr. Speaker, the answer to that question is contained in the answer that was given I believe to the very same member some weeks ago by the Minister reporting for the MDC. Just in case there is any doubt about it, there was an application for a loan. It was not seen fit to approve the application for the reason principally of lack of adequacy or viability of the existing root structure, which, by the way, has been confirmed by virtue of the fact that one of the principal conditions laid down by PWA in the proposed transaction is the contingent approval by the Canadian Transportation Commission of certain root additions and changes.

MR. SPIVAK: Yes, I wonder if the First Minister can indicate whether there has been a recent communication by the Premier of Alberta, or a representative on his behalf, with respect to the purchase by PWA of Transair specifically with respect to the statements that have been made by him in the Legislature yesterday, with respect to the reasons and justification for PWA's purchase of Transair.

MR. SCHREYER: Mr. Speaker, the purchase of Transair by PWA is, as I understand it, approved in principle subject to some very important caveats which can only be dealt with by the Canadian Transportation Commission and by the Federal Ministry of Transport. One of them is the transfer of certain routes in western Canada from Air Canada to the proposed new PWA-Transair operation. Presumably if that is not approved then the transaction does not go forward.

MR. SPIVAK: Well I wonder if there has been any communication to the First Minister by the Alberta Government or by its Premier indicating that one of the considerations with respect to PWA's purchase of Transair is the acquisition of the routes that travel to the far north with respect to consolidation of PWA's delivery system, including the far north, particularly the Yukon Territory and particularly the area that will be under development with respect to the whole oil exploration that will be taking place in the next period of time.

MR. SCHREYER: Well, Mr. Speaker, that goes without saying that the proposed transaction is contingent upon, obviously, the transfer of all of the existing routes now operated by Transair and those that are held but not operated, plus additional routes which are now held by Air Canada, which would necessarily be required to be transferred as a condition precedent. That being the case, there is the answer.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

MR. PATRICK: My question, Mr. Speaker, is to the Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs. The administrator of the Churchill Recreation Town Centre indicated that the complex will have to close because of operating financial difficulties. Can the Minister indicate to the House if the administrator or the Town Advisory Council have been in touch with the government or the Minister of Municipal Affairs to see if any kind of arrangements could be made out and see if the financial difficulties can be resolved to keep the complex operating, or a portion of the complex operating?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HONOURABLE BILLIE URUSKI (St. George): Mr. Speaker, I can indicate to the honourable member that the Council of Churchill and this government have been in communication over the last — at least to my recollection, since last fall. Primarily and the primary problem faced in Churchill is the reneging of the Federal Government in paying its fair share of the taxation as per the assessment roles in the LGD of Churchill, and that has resulted in the year 1976 for the shortfall based on the assessment in Churchill of at least \$300,000.00.

MR. PATRICK: A supplementary, Mr. Speaker. The Minister indicates that consultations have been taking place since last August. I believe that it was just yesterday that the administrator announced the complex will close. Can the Minister indicate is there any progress being made in the area to resolve the problems?

MR. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, we have been in communication with the Federal Government on this matter and we are hopeful that the Federal Government will live up to its commitment that they made to the Province of Manitoba in 1971, that they should be treated as any other taxpayer in the LGD of

Churchill, and if they, upon making that statement, are prepared to live up to that statement, then we certainly are looking at ways in addition to that, ways of resolving the entire problem in Churchill.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Speaker, applicable to the same question asked by the Honourable Member for Assiniboia involving the same complex in Churchill, I wonder if the Minister has been able to determine whether or not the complex can, in fact, afford to pay their Hydro bill let alone any other taxes which, I understand, are astronomical.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. SCHREYER: Mr. Speaker, since this is merely yet another example of wilful distortion, let me make it clear . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. SCHREYER: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable First Minister.

MR. SCHREYER: Mr. Speaker, the principal mode of heating in Churchill is not hydro. The hydro bill has to do with lights, has to do with some electric motors, therefore, by far the greater cost of operation at Churchill has to do with energy modes that are not hydro-electric in nature.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, just to further solicit clarification from the First Minister. I was not making any comment . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Question please.

MR. ENNS: . . . on what form of energy . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Question.

MR. ENNS: . . . I simply asked the question: what is the hydro bill for that complex? What is the hydro bill for that complex and can the community afford to pay it?

MR. SCHREYER: Mr. Speaker, I can specifically get the hydro-electric bill. I am just pointing out to my honourable friend, I am pointing out to him in advance that the principal energy mode used is, I believe, propane gas and oil. It is not hydro-electric energy. Therefore, my honourable friends, as is their usual wont, are being quite scurrilous about this.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon West.

MR. EDWARD MCGILL: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Honourable the First Minister. Further to his responses respecting the tentative agreement for the purchase of Transair by PWA and the caveats that are attached thereto, is one of the caveats a protection for the application of Transair now in process which would provide direct jet connections between Brandon east and Brandon west, that is to Western Canada and Eastern Canada? By explanation, I believe that application is now in the hands of the CTC and does the Minister now know if that route would be protected under this purchase?

MR. SCHREYER: I am not certain of that, Mr. Speaker. It is my impression, however, that it is not and that PWA have given some indication to the federal authorities that their principal interest is with respect to routes including additional routes in Western Canada and not routes relating to any originating point in Western Canada, eastward to Ontario. So that with respect to Brandon west, from Brandon to points west, the answer is yes; with respect to Brandon and any route application eastward to Toronto, say, it's my impression that the answer is no.

MR. MCGILL: Mr. Speaker, to the First Minister. Has the Government of Manitoba asked for any assurances or any protection for a connection from the Westman area to the east?

MR. SCHREYER: Mr. Speaker, that particular aspect has not been discussed, however, my honourable friend is at liberty to make representations to the Federal Ministry of Transport and I am certain that the Minister of Industry and Commerce reporting on these matters will be able to be more definitive about it.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. SHAFRANSKY: Yes, Mr. Speaker. A question to the First Minister. Can he indicate whether in fact the Transair company was originally started by the former Minister of the Crown by the name of Mr. Turner who had formed the company by purchasing Viscount planes at a price of \$1.00 and therefore leading to this massive empire that was established today?

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition state his point of order.

MR. STERLING R. LYON (Souris-Killarney): The point of order merely, Mr. Speaker, is that the Honourable Member for Radisson is historically inaccurate in what he states about a former member of this House.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Accuracy or inaccuracy is not necessarily a point of order.

MR. LYON: Well, then it's a matter of privilege, Mr. Speaker, that even you should be aware.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

A MEMBER: He's damn right. Bloody right.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. I had hoped I was dealing with gentlemen. Let me again ask for the co-operation of those who are. The Honourable Member for Radisson.

Order please. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition state his matter of privilege.

MR. LYON: I was about to do that until I was interrupted. Mr. Speaker, on the point of privilege, the member was making an historically inaccurate reference to a former, now deceased member of this House. Mr Ron Turner did not start Transair and I merely stand, for the sake of the record, to impress that point upon the House, the public record. I am not a member of the Liberal Party. I am sure members of the Liberal Party will understand and affirm what I am saying. If we are to have ridiculous comments by the Member for Radisson better we should have them accurate.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I appreciate the honourable member's point in respect to the matter of privilege but it doesn't happen to be a matter of privilege because it does not affect the House's procedure. The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. SHAFRANSKY: Mr. Speaker, on the point of order, if I was incorrect, if I was wrong in making the reference that this was a former Minister of the Crown, I wish to apologize but indicate that there is only one rugged individual on the other side that I would like to point out and that is the Member for River Heights. The rest of them are just . . . I don't know.

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member didn't have a point of order. The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MR. SPIVAK: Mr. Speaker, I'm not sure whether I am rising on a point of order or on a point of privilege or a question. But, with all due respect, Mr. Speaker, and I will put the question to the First Minister, it is not related to the matters before. I think to a certain extent, this is becoming the "silly hour" rather than a question period and I say that not, Sir, to you but to the Members of this House. I think that there is a degree of control and restraint that we all have to exercise.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the First Minister. It relates to the statements made yesterday to the Manitoba Indian Brotherhood with respect to Polar Gas. I believe that he has given somewhat of a commitment that he will undertake to see to it that the government tries to ensure that native people will be employed in the construction of Polar Gas to what extent it would come through Manitoba. I wonder if he can confirm that first, and then I have a supplementary to go with it.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. SCHREYER: Well, Mr. Speaker, that goes without saying. That kind of indication of attitude and intent was expressed before. I did undertake to communicate with the senior people of Polar Gas, to ascertain what specific plans, if any, they have with respect to the formation of an information team that would include people from any of the communities that would have proximate relevance to the proposed route of pipeline, and also to urge upon the senior people of Polar Gas, if they have not already done so, to indicate by way of these information teams, approximate numbers of personnel and manpower skills that would be needed, and to invite Polar Gas to indicate the nature of their plans for training programs that would juxtapose to all this. That, Mr. Speaker, has been already discussed and there will be a written follow-up in a matter of a few days.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MR. SPIVAK: I wonder if the First Minister would indicate whether the government would consider the advisability of setting up a task force within one of the departments, specifically to deal with the potential and the basic solution, to ensure that there in fact will be as great a native population in the job formation that takes place.

MR. SCHREYER: Well, Mr. Speaker, we intend to have an internal capability to work on this. It may be augmented or buttressed by additional personnel. In the final analysis, the regulatory and licence granting level of government in this respect is the Government of Canada. We do not intend in any way to intrude upon their jurisdiction or responsibilities.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct a question to the Honourable the First Minister, in his capacity as Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, and I ask him, is the Minister now in a position to indicate to us when Manitoba Hydro will be able to utilize the Churchill River diversion to its fully designed capacity of approximately 30,000 cubic feet per second?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. SCHREYER: We do not expect, Mr. Speaker, that there will be any or any significant deviation from the plan, and that sometime later this summer or early autumn, that it should be at or approaching the 30,000 second feet velocity.

MR. ENNS: Just a supplementary, Mr. Speaker. Is the Minister in position to confirm the present flows through the CRD route — my understanding is that it is on or about 10,000 cubic feet per second.

MR. SCHREYER: Yes I can, Mr. Speaker. My information would be literally only days old. It is approximately 16,000 CFS at Thompson, which means — and I gather my honourable friend is interested in approximate information — it would mean about 15,000, 14,500 c.f.s. at Nelson House.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for La Verendrye.

MR. BANMAN: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I direct a further question to the Minister in charge of the Environmental Management, further to the question I posed to him a little earlier. I wonder if he would

also take as notice, and inform the House whether there are any employees from his department who are involved with the physical moving, which I understand is taking place today of that radioactive contaminated material from that East Braintree site, and I wonder if he would confirm that that particular material is being moved to a contained contamination site near Pinawa.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister for Mines.

MR. GREEN: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'll be happy to do that.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

MR. SCHREYER: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to advise honourable members, and the House Leader of the Liberal Party, the Leader of the Opposition, in particular, of the intention to propose a motion of condolence with respect to the passing of the former Premier of the Province, Stuart Garson, tomorrow.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ADJOURNED DEBATES ON SECOND READING

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Mines. .

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I would like to proceed to debate on Bill No. 56.

BILL (NO.56) — THE FARM LANDS PROTECTION ACT

MR. SPEAKER: Bill No. 56. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. LYON: In Bill No. 56, we come to grips with a centuries old international problem of how one jurisdiction may control the alienation of its land to non-resident foreigners. The problem is not new and the legislative remedies to combat it are well known, the main ones being forfeiture of the land or alternatively, outright or partial prohibition of such purchases. Indeed, Sir, a review of such curative legislation and practices indicate that some of the side effects, in terms of economic costs and penalties, can occasionally be worse than the disease.

Thus, Mr. Speaker, we must begin, in any consideration of this bill, by acknowledging the extreme difficulties of legislating in this field. Circumvention of such legislation is almost impossible to control totally. To my mind, Mr. Speaker, one of the more important elements of the Minister's speech on introducing the bill, was his apparent willingness to accept amendments to the bill. And Mr. Speaker, substantive amendments, wide-ranging amendments, it will need if it is to begin to carry out the goals which the Minister professed to be its aims, in his opening remarks, such things as preservation of the family farm, more local residential control of land as opposed to absentee landlord ownership, etc.

To consider this bill, Mr. Speaker, one must first of all divide it into two parts. Firstly, the restrictions against non-resident alien ownership; and secondly, the restrictions against non-farmer resident Canadian and Manitoba ownership.

I say by way of slight elucidation with respect to the first grouping, we are here talking about restrictions against non-resident alien owners, who do not intend to become residents of Manitoba, who intend to own land in Manitoba and who will remain in their own countries as foreign landowners. There is no intention implicit in this legislation or indeed, what the people of Manitoba wish with respect to this kind of legislation, to restrict the proper immigration of aliens or foreign nationals into Canada, who then get into the farming business, as most of our forebearers did, and remain here as landowners, and ultimately as Canadian citizens.

So I propose first, Mr. Speaker, to deal with non-resident foreign ownership, which, until the Throne Speech, we all assumed would be the major thrust of this legislation. And I say at the outset, that we in this party, while holding many doubts as to the effectiveness of the bill as drafted, support the principle of placing restrictions on non-resident alien purchases. We share the concern of many farmers that unrestricted foreign purchases could prejudicially affect the future of landholdings in Manitoba with undesirable social and economic side effects. We therefore, intend to support this bill at second reading to permit it to go to committee, where public representation can be made and where the Minister will have the opportunity to cure a number of glaring defects in the bill as it appears before us, and the glaring defects are numerous.

On the second thrust of the bill, the restrictions against purchases of farmland by non-farmer resident Canadians, we have much more difficulty, Mr. Speaker, in conferring support. These provisions are almost gratuitous, and smack of the kind of envy and meddle, and such old and creaky shibboleths as licensing of farmers, and all of that nonsense from the Forties and the Fifties and the Sixties, which at one time attracted itself to my honourable friends and apparently still does. These qualities regrettably manifest themselves in much of the legislation that is sponsored by this and other socialist governments, here, and in other jurisdictions.

No case, Mr. Speaker, has thus far been made by the Minister for the need to control the right of

resident-canadians, indeed a fellow Manitoban, in their personal or their corporate capacities, to own farm land in Manitoba. The term "absentee landlord" is applied with equal opprobrium by the Minister, to aliens and to residents alike, while disregarding the fundamental distinction between the two. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that a retired farmer from my constituency of Souris-Killarney, living now in Winnipeg or living in Brandon or living in Souris and renting his land to a local young farmer, hardly deserves to be treated with the same implied socialistic disdain and contempt as alien owners. These are not alien owners. But under the definitions contained in the Act my honourable friends would consider them in the same category as alien owners.

If it is, Mr. Speaker, the intention to discourage speculation by non-farmers in farmland, then a better tool can be found, a much better tool, in taxation statutes such as land speculation taxes as we see in Ontario or in other front-end loading of the purchase price which effectively discriminates against, in a taxation sense, discriminates against that kind of speculative purchase, if that indeed is the intention.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, of the 4.22 percent of the farmland as indicated by the Minister in his statistics which he presented to us, of that 4.22 percent of farmland designated as owned by residents of Winnipeg one can safely assume that a reasonable proportion of such land came to be owned through family estates, of farm-raised sons and daughters who have done nothing more and nothing less or nothing culpable whatsoever, but have merely followed the North American trend of the movement of rural residents to urban areas for job opportunities. That's part of the demographic fact of life in Manitoba.

Indeed this natural devolution of property through bequests is acknowledged in the bill itself and will properly fall outside of the scope of the legislation. Why then does my honourable friend the Minister raise the question of absentee ownership and point to 8 percent of which a large component, 4.2 percent, is people living in Winnipeg who may well have acquired the land by the same means he, in his legislation, says is perfectly satisfactory. But for his own purposes he tries to bunch together absentee landlords and apply to them the same kind of niggling contempt that he would apply to a foreign land owner, and it's a much different situation.

Mr. Speaker, similarly a portion of the 2 percent of the farmland in Manitoba that is owned by Canadians non-resident in Manitoba, no doubt has arisen through family estates and the socioeconomic facts of the high mobility of Canadians seeking employment or other opportunities in other provinces. Some of them are even wont, Mr. Speaker, to seek more reasonable tax regimes in other provinces, as we have come to expect in Manitoba in the last eight years.

So it is wrong I suggest, Mr. Speaker, to apply the term "absentee landlord" in a pejorative sense, as the Minister attempted to, to Canadians who own a total of 6.22 percent of the land of which Winnipeggers own 4.22 percent of our farmland in Manitoba. A large number of residents of Winnipeg, such as the Minister of Agriculture, the First Minister of this House, indeed, Mr. Speaker, such as myself were born and raised outside of Winnipeg, and like thousands of other Manitobans we now live in Winnipeg. A good proportion of the people of Winnipeg come from outside of Winnipeg. I had never thought until the Minister's statement, that that natural fact of demography in Manitoba should place those persons in question, in a second-rate sort of a citizen category when it comes to owning farmland in Manitoba' and yet his bill does that very thing.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the significant statistic is that in the 107 years since this province has been a part of Confederation, in the 107 years of the free market that we have had in land, in farmland in this province, 91 percent of all farmland is owned by local residents in rural communities . . .

A MEMBER: Right.

MR. LYON: . . . using the Minister's own statistics. That has been the natural and the evolutionary trend of land ownership from an original state back even before Confederation where most of the land in these parts was owned by the Crown or by the Hudson's Bay Company or by the Canadian Pacific Railway or whatever. And while granting that the restriction on purchase to 640 acres for an individual — that is a resident individual, resident Canadian — is on the surface reasonable by most standards. We do register our concern that such restrictions will interfere unduly with the manner in which farmers and others order their affairs and with changing lifestyles of citizens. Why is it that because of this bill, a man who has a son, a man who lives in Winnipeg who is not a farmer, but has a son who is taking agriculture, for instance, at the university, or taking a diploma course at the university and he wants to establish that son on a farm and he is restricted under this particular bill, because he is not a farmer, to purchasing 640 acres. Now he may want to be a rancher and he is going to need, as my honourable friend from Lakeside can tell you, something considerably more than 640 acres if he is going into the ranching business.

And if he does, Mr. Speaker, he has not the opportunity to buy the land which he has had up until the time this legislation came into effect. That's what I mean about interference in lifestyle, and the kind of unnecessary interference that is imported into this legislation for what purpose, I don't know. So I suggest that that kind of imprudent and unnecessary interference in private plans, private family arrangements, with fellow Manitobans — we are not talking about German industrialists; we are not

talking about Italians trying to escape the Left Wing influence in Italy; we are not talking about Frenchmen who are trying to get their money away from the kissing cousins of my honourable friends in France, no, we are not talking about them, we are talking about fellow Manitobans who are going to be restricted under this legislation to according that kind of a lifestyle, according that kind of an occupation to a member of their family or to making that kind of an investment under this legislation, and for what purpose we really don't know.

Mr. Speaker, this kind of interference could lead to an undesirable form of social over-management by government — another injection of which I suggest, our people in Manitoba do not need at this time of patent over-government in this province. Social over-management of our lives has been to some considerable extent the hallmark of this government and it will continue if this government continues in office. But let's point it up for what it is and let's acknowledge it and identify it when we see it in legislation, and let's in the public interest, do something to stop this kind of a creeping cancer that is coming into the lives of individual Manitobans for no good reason.

If we can serve the public interest by restricting foreign land purchases in Manitoba, then for heaven's sake let's get on with the business and do it. But why do we have to inject these further requirements that restrict the rights of our fellow citizens? For what purpose? For what purpose? For more government control.

A MEMBER: Right.

MR. LYON: Well, we don't happen to believe in more government control. I repeat, Mr. Speaker, that there is a consensus that Manitobans should control alien land purchases. There is a consensus on that, there's no question about it. But I seriously doubt if there is any consensus that citizens of Manitoba should be so restricted if the land is kept in agricultural production. That's not part of our history. That's not part of our tradition. —(Interjection)— My honourable friend knows so little about farming and so little about landholding, I must say, in Manitoba. I say that about the Minister of Municipal Affairs who parades himself as a turkey farmer or whatever, I say that because he was a member of an administration which supported a state farm system in this province until the people forced him to stop it. And he knows, Mr. Speaker, as well as I do, that given another lease on life in another election, they will get back into their state farm system just as quickly as they got out of it and that's what the people of Manitoba are concerned about.

Mr. Speaker, we hope and trust that the Minister of Agriculture and his colleagues can be persuaded that either the withdrawal, and that would be the preferable choice or substantive amendments of these provisions limiting the rights of Manitobans and Canadians will be made in the public interest in this legislation.

My honourable friend from St. Johns chuckles, he's probably never been further north than Selkirk Avenue.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Johns state his point of privilege.

MR. SAUL CHERNIACK: Mr. Speaker, unlike the person who is still speaking from the seat, I will accept your ruling graciously.

Mr. Speaker, my matter of privilege is that the Honourable the Leader of the Opposition who is ready to speak of others who parade themselves in a certain way, who was speaking of their occupation, is now prepared to note for the record, my reaction, which was actually a laugh at his colleague on the left who attempted to light a cigarette in desperation, having to listen to the Leader of the Opposition. It had nothing . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The honourable member doesn't have a matter of privilege. The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: There was absolutely no frustration in listening to my leader's very poignant and correct remarks on a bill that I feel very strongly about. I was just . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying before the non-matter of privilege, which became a non-matter of privilege when mentioned on this side of the House but not on that side of the House, we trust that the Minister and his colleagues can be persuaded that either the withdrawal or substantive amendment of these provisions will be in the public interest.

But, before turning to particulars of the bill, let me make one or two general comments about the origin and impact of this type of legislation on all Manitobans. Since this province entered Confederation, Mr. Speaker, in 1870 there have been, to my knowledge, no restriction on the right of a farmer to sell his land to the highest bidder.

There has been, in the true sense of the word, a free market in farmland for well over a century. Therefore, let everyone understand, as I am sure they do, and understand clearly, that this bill will abridge that right, a right which has been a valuable tradition and part of the inherited freedom within this province. The abridgement, because of the apprehension that unrestricted alien purchases could — and I stress the verb "could" — to foreign control of an unacceptable proportion of our cultivated land, if present practices in the market were to be continued.

It is an apprehended fear, Mr. Speaker, because even the Minister's statistics do not bear out that

there has been a wholesale transfer of land having occurred at this time. Indeed, using the Minister's figures, only about 1.66 percent of Manitoba's cultivated farmland is now owned by foreigners. This is not to say that it is not wise and prudent to pass legislation now, before the problem reaches serious proportions. But the threat of foreign control of farmland remains a real threat. Purchases of high quality land in prime farm areas of Manitoba, by West German, by Italian, by French, and other interests, have taken place in recent years brought about, as I mentioned before, in part, by the instability, political and economic, in their home countries.

One could, if one wished, at this time, Mr. Speaker, comment upon the pristine irony of the situation whereby, because of political instability brought about by left wing and further left than that, Marxist and communist influences in Europe, a socialist government in Manitoba is forced to bring in legislation directed against the very doctrines at the altar of which they sometimes pray.

Mr. Speaker, Canada is viewed as being a safer repository for long term land investment than many other countries. Several provinces have already reacted to this trend, Alberta being the most recent, with restrictions on foreign land purchases only to 20 acres; Ontario, with its land transfer and speculation taxes — a different approach; Saskatchewan with its more restrictive Act based on assessment and on non-residents of Saskatchewan — very very restrictive; British Columbia, Prince Edward Island and Nova Scotia, in their concern for preservation of recreational and farmland as well.

And now, Mr. Speaker, Manitoba proposes to guard itself against this threat. An abridgement of the free rights of farmers and other land owners is now proposed in the public interest and provided our people are prepared to accept this abridgement, then so be it.

But let no one misunderstand that this ability to sell to anyone will be impaired by this legislation. Not only will land be unavailable for sale, saving the allowable acreages, to non-resident foreigners, but also to Canadians, Mr. Speaker, to Manitobans, whether in their personal or corporate capacity, who are not deemed to be farmers within the definition of the bill.

Let us now proceed then, Mr. Speaker, with a more specific look at the proposed bill. The following observations and suggestions are tendered for consideration by the government.

First of all, the actual restrictions on land ownership in the bill as drafted are as follows:

Corporations, as that term is defined in the bill, are allowed to purchase 160 acres.

Non-resident individuals, that is alien individuals, are allowed to purchase 160 acres.

Resident but non-farmer individuals, Manitobans, other Canadians, are allowed, in their personal capacity, to purchase 640 acres.

Resident farmer individuals in Manitoba, no restrictions on what they may purchase.

And this one, Mr. Speaker, is the most baffling of all.

Corporations, included from the definition section, but corporations controlled by farmers, whether resident or foreign, or alien, no restrictions on them at all.

Provided it is a farm corporation, Mr. Speaker, and this is on advice that we have had from a number of counsel, provided in the present definition of the Act, there seems to be a situation whereby the bill would actually permit alien farm-owned corporations to purchase unrestricted amounts of land in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, secondly, Canadian non-farming individuals, that is fellow residents of Manitoba, and Canadian corporations are treated inconsistently in that a non-farming individual can acquire 640 acres while non-farming corporations, under the definition contained in the Act, can buy only 160 acres.

A third point, Mr. Speaker, the definition of farmer applies only to persons but not to farm companies. And therein lies part of the problem about which we spoke earlier.

A fourth point, there appears to be a serious oversight in that foreign individuals are restricted to 160 acres, while there appears to be no restriction whatsoever on the amount of land a foreign farming corporation could buy. I repeat the point, if the restriction is there we would like to see it demonstrated. Surely if this is an oversight, surely if this is a drafting mistake, it should be corrected because otherwise it could render the Act a near nullity.

Fifthly, the exemption section of the bill which permits the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council to make regulations exempting, and I quote, "persons and classes of persons or land and classes of land from this Act or any of the provisions of this Act subject to such terms and conditions as the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council may specify." That is, in effect, power for the Cabinet by executive order to amend the substantive effect of the Act. This power, Mr. Speaker, must be left to the Legislature, not to the Cabinet, not to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. This is neither an appropriate power of delegation pursuant to good practice or to the rules of the Standing Committee on Statutory Orders and Regulations. It offends against the rule of delegation. The nature of permitted exemption in the legislation must be clearly spelled out in the Act. The job of the Cabinet, pursuant to regulations, is then to make regulations that are in consonance with the Act, not to make

regulations that purport to amend the Act. This is a new doctrine of executive responsibility which my honourable friends seem to be importing into this piece of legislation. A doctrine, I suggest, which should be stamped out and resisted when it effects the substantive parts of landholding and the substantive form of landholding in Manitoba. Otherwise, Mr. Speaker, we could well have a land law in this province, a fundamentally important land law, subject totally to the whim of the executive, either the executive formed by the NDP or any other government and that's not good. It's not proper and it's not good practice regardless of who forms that executive.

Sixthly, Mr. Speaker, no provision is made for purchase by a corporation of agricultural land for a manufacturing, industrial or plant site. Many new industries, especially those located near towns or villages must purchase farmland for plant sites in excess of 160 acres, and under the terms of this bill as drawn, unless that land is already zoned commercial, this restriction could lead to unnecessary delays in land acquisition for much needed new industries in rural Manitoba in our smaller towns and our villages and so on, and for the job opportunities that all of us want to create in the smaller communities throughout Manitoba. So clearly, Mr. Speaker, an exemption should be inserted to cover such cases.

Now, I am sure my honourable friends are going to say, "Ah, but that's looked after in the regulations." But I've just finished saying that the regulation section is improper and the exemption, if there is to be an exemption for the this purpose, should appear in the Act. In other words the Legislature should control a fundamentally important piece of legislation affecting landholding in Manitoba, not the executive.

Another point, Mr. Speaker. By including recreational land within the ambit of the bill, the Minister is setting the same criteria for that land as he sets for farmland, and the two are quite different. I think even the Minister of Agriculture would be aware of that. If it is the intention to deal with recreational land, why not a separate part of the bill which would take account of the usually smaller acreages involved and the different land use concepts that are ordinarily applied to recreational land. For example, Mr. Speaker, to permit a corporation to own 160 acres for shoreline subdivision on the edge of Lake Winnipeg is, in effect, no restriction at all and my honourable friend from Radisson I'm sure hadn't even thought of that point before. He sits there dumbfounded when I mention it to him. That is no restriction at all. —(Interjection)— When I'm finished.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, I think I can tolerate my honourable friend when I'm finished, not before.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, we all look forward to the day after the next election when the electors of Radisson will be more perspicacious than they have been in the past eight years. Mr. Speaker, for example, to permit a corporation to own these 160 acres, the point that was befuddling my honourable friend from Radisson, is no restriction at all. On the other hand . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. LYON: . . . that limitation could preclude the private development of a large resort area of golf course, riding trails, etc., etc. It depends on the kind of development that you're working into. There is no consistency, Mr. Speaker, in this approach. Similarly it discriminates as between farmers, on whom there is no restriction and non-farmer residents who are restricted as to acreages that they may purchase. And surely, Mr. Speaker, I know most of this is above my honourable friend's head but we could do without his interruptions. Surely Mr. Speaker, all Manitobans should be on the same footing in dealing with recreational land.

An eighth point, Mr. Speaker. The power conferred on the Minister to make the determination as to whether an individual with two or more occupations "is actively and substantially engaged in the operation of a farm" is dangerous in the extreme. For the Minister's own protection, and I'm sure that the House Leader could tell him this, for the Minister's own protection, he should insist on this being a quasi-judicial determination and a quasi-judicial determination being made by an appointed board. I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, one already in existence, for instance the Public Utilities Board, with proper assurance being given of a fair hearing, and with proper appeal procedures, and from which practice before an existing board no suggestion of caprice or favouritism or meddlesomeness or envy or any of the other qualities that one might expect from an individual determination, no such suggestion could The board could also be empowered, Mr. Speaker' and I would suggest this to the Minister, to report annually to the Legislature. Make it compulsory to report annually to the Legislature on its activities and maintain as well an ongoing inventory of farmland ownership and monitoring of the impact of the Act on such ownership and the economic cost thereof. Because, Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing we must all admit when we deal with this kind of fundamentally important legislation it is that we do not, the Minister, those of us on this side of the House, do not have the exact facts at hand as to how land is really held in Manitoba. We have —(Interjection)— my honourable friend can't count so how would he know? We all have ballpark figures that we accept as being within the general ballpark but we do not have definitive statistics, Mr. Speaker, on what the exact state of such ownership is in the Province of Manitoba.

Ninth, Mr. Speaker, the definition of a farmer is open to a wide variety of interpretation. This definition should be made more exact in the bill, not be regulation. This definition should be, for instance, Mr. Speaker, the determination is to be made on the basis of income as to who a farmer should be. In bad economic years, farmers with two occupations could well run afoul of the definition and, at least for that year, be precluded from buying land which is in the normal course of their operations. The need for precision and the determination of this category is crucial to the legislation.

Tenthly, Mr. Speaker. Why is the definition of a corporation so restricted? What, all of a sudden, is so reprehensible in any case about a corporation? Many farmers, in their own economic and business interests have incorporated in recent years to take advantage of taxation, succession duty and other imposts of the national or the Provincial Government. They've had to incorporate on their accountant's advice, on their lawyer's advice, to save the long hand of the Federal or the Provincial Treasurer from reaching too far into their pocket. It's in their best business sense to do that. Why, all of a sudden, is it reprehensible when people are forced to do that by one set of legislation of a government, to come along with another piece of legislation and say, "But if you do we'll get you in this Act." That represents, Mr. Speaker, a kind of unfairness and a kind of lack of even-handedness in the approach to private arrangements that private people make in their own private interest, which with the greatest of respect, are no damn business of the state at all. Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. LYON: Mr. Speaker, because a person chooses to order his affairs in such a manner, that is by way of a family incorporation or whatever, why should he be discriminated against in this Act? The section as it stands is discriminatory, Mr. Speaker, and it needs redefinition, because it causes a discrimination merely by means of the legal form in which an individual has chosen to conduct his own personal or private affairs.

An eleventh point, Mr. Speaker. The Act exempts corporations having 15 or more shareholders under Section 3. What then is to prevent a syndicate of 16 residents or foreigners from forming a company or a series of companies to circumvent the Act completely? I'm sure that the figure is a purely arbitrary figure but the rationale for that kind of an amendment has escaped us.

Twelfth and very importantly, Mr. Speaker, why are Crown Corporations exempt from the Act? Why, indeed are Crown corporations exempt from this Act? Mr. Speaker, surely the hearings of the Committee of this Legislature dealing with land use in Manitoba demonstrated beyond any question that the fear and real apprehension exists in Manitoba about land purchases conducted by this government through the instrumentality of The Manitoba Agricultural Credit Plan — real fear and apprehension. So I repeat, Mr. Speaker, why should not such Crown corporations be subject to the Act. And I say in all frankness to my honourable friends and I know they don't realize it because they don't listen to the farm community. They just don't listen to the farm community but I say this in all candor to them; the average farmer in Manitoba is as much concerned about agricultural credit plan purchases as he is about alien land purchases in Manitoba.

He can deal and many of them have told me, I think we can deal with the West Germans and the Italians but when it comes to this damn government I don't think we can.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please.

MR. LYON: So I repeat: Why should not such corporations be subject to the Act? Now insofar as Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Telephone System and other Crown corporations are concerned, the general exemptions that I mentioned earlier permitting all corporations to acquire land for industrial or plant purposes would meet their legitimate needs but why exempt the Crown from this Act? What is sanctified about the government purchasing farm units in Manitoba? Not a thing except insofar as it follows an ideological bent of my honourable friends opposite which is at a complete turning of the road from the desires of the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, another point: Will the definition of farmer as a person "engaged in farming in Manitoba" not place undue restrictions on legitimate Canadian farmers wishing to move to Manitoba from another province? Why not? If this is not the intent of the Minister he should make it clear: If not, an amendment is needed. We don't want to see within this legislation any balkanization such as Saskatchewan has attempted to undertake in its own socialistic mire. And I congratulate my honourable friends to this extent that they have not followed what I consider to be the kind of balkanizing that Saskatchewan has brought in and I may be giving them undue credit. It may well be that they were advised constitutionally that they shouldn't or couldn't but, at the same time, at least this Act is a bit broader than that inward looking kind of legislation that we have in Saskatchewan, which restricts the ownership of land in a very tough way only to residents of Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, the restrictions on land purchases in this Act relate to the size, or to the acreage of land to be acquired but not to vary and this could well result in prime agricultural land, which is the most expensive land on the market, becoming the target of the very restricted foreign purchasers that this Act is attempting to prohibit while the less productive and hence the less expensive land would be left for resident farmers. And I need cite only one example, Mr. Speaker. If a foreign investor can purchase say a quarter section of bushland for \$5,000, or a quarter section of choice cultivated land

for \$90,000, the purchase of the prime land is going to be favoured by the foreign land purchaser and you're going to be placing a premium of sorts on the foreign purchaser going in to pick up prime land and creating perhaps more attention to that market than has been the case even in the past.

Another point, Mr. Speaker, the requirement that non-farming corporations must divest themselves, within two years, of land to which they obtain title after April 1st could well have profound effects on the availability of private farm mortgage money. If a lending institution can only hold 160 acres, which is the way the bill reads at the present time, and is forced to realize on its mortgage, for instance, by way of foreclosure and obtain title but then must sell that land within two years, a very serious impediment is placed on the ordinary placement of private loans and on the security for those loans. There can be such things as fear of fire sales of mortgaged land and this in turn could well dry up the availability of this kind of private money because of the reduction the bill makes in the security value of that mortgage.

I mention as well, Mr. Speaker, and I know the House Leader will appreciate it, the retroactive effect on the security is also subject to some questioning because the contract was entered into before the intervention of the legislation. The legislation intervenes, reduces the security of the contract, and the parties are not left in the same position as that into which they were when they entered into the contract.

So I think that consideration should be given to that in the broader context of what this will do to the question of availability of private mortgage money and private finance money for the agriculture economy of Manitoba. And I mention at this point again, Mr. Speaker, agriculture, farming is the biggest business in Manitoba and we should not be taking — no matter how well intentioned — we should not be taking those actions by way of legislation which will have prejudicial effects upon drying up supplies of capital, loan money, and so on, which should ordinarily be made available to this largest segment of our industry in order to make sure that it can continue to prosper, continue to grow, continue to have those improvements — the breaking, the new farm equipment and so on — made that are necessary for a flourishing agriculture industry in Manitoba.

I know, Mr. Speaker, immediately when I mention this one of my honourable friends — probably my friend from St. Johns — will stand up and say, "There are the Conservatives protecting their friends in the lending institutions." Well, before he says it in his usual hand-wringing Uriah Heep way may I say, Mr. Speaker, to him what we're trying to protect in this bill and save the farmers of Manitoba from is some of the meddlesome interference of my honourable friends which will have a prejudicial effect upon the lifeblood, the capital that flows into the agricultural industry about which I know they are usually blissfully unaware but about which those of us who have had some association with the farm community and with farming operations know is vitally necessary to the carrying on of a successful agricultural industry in the province.

So, Mr. Speaker, not to protect the lending institutions but to protect the supply of the capital going in, of loan and mortgage money going in to the farm industry, I suggest that my honourable friends look at this provision and see whether or not it could not possibly have that effect and if it does then it is well worth amendment.

Mr. Speaker, number sixteen: The enforcement sections of the bill are too Draconian in their impact. No argument is raised about the civil remedies applied but minimum fines of \$1,000 and the alternative of six months imprisonment are not only uncalled for, they're excessive and they're not in keeping either with the spirit or the intent of this legislation. Mr. Speaker, they're not in keeping with Manitoba. I don't know where my honourable friends came up with the idea that they must have this kind of Draconian quasi-criminal approach when they come to deal with legislation of this sort. Let the offender pay his costs. Let the Court of Queen's Bench, as they say in the Act, through civil remedy take away the land, and so on and so forth, but the quasi-criminal offences that they apply to the bill are not in keeping with this kind of legislation.

And furthermore, Mr. Speaker, no distinction appears to be made in the bill between these kinds of land purchases or transactions which are deliberately made in contravention of the Act, which are fraudulently made against the Act, or some which may be merely accidental. Because of the failure of my honourable friends to come forward with good definition sections this bill, as any lawyer in the House can tell you, Mr. Speaker, is going to increase the law business in Manitoba by a rather considerable extent. And I would think that it would be in the interests of everyone in this House to make sure that we do try to clarify, as much as possible in the bill, because I don't think anyone in this House particularly wants to confer a benefit upon the legal profession but in its present state this bill is going to require a great deal of action by the legal profession to save innocent purchasers from falling afoul of provisions which are unclear and which are not stated properly within the Act itself.

Mr. Speaker, the intent of this bill to ensure that large tracts of Manitoba's valuable farm land does not come under foreign control reflects a consensus of opinion among Manitobans. There can be no question about that. Taking this legislative step before the problem has grown to dangerous proportions is a reasonable and is a prudent action.

So, as I've said, we will support the bill at second reading but as I hope I have demonstrated in

these few comments today, Mr. Speaker, this particular bill is a sorry instrument to reflect the wishes, the true wishes, of the people of Manitoba. It uses the public concern about foreign encroachment as the instance and the excuse for the introduction of a series of restrictions on the rights of other Canadians, and even other citizens of Manitoba. The need for such a restriction is not indicated either by the historic evolution of land ownership in Manitoba or by any ground swell of public concern.

But more important, Mr. Speaker, more nearly fatal for the acceptability of this bill, is that it proceeds by creating uncertainty in definition and in application because in it is reflected this government's tendency to take to itself greater control than is required to meet the objectives that we, as Manitobans, share.

Now, does the Minister of Agriculture really believe that the people of Manitoba find large-scale government ownership of farming units any less undesirable than large-scale foreign ownership? I invite him to go out and talk to the farmers in Portage la Prairie and Souris-Killarney, and Minnedosa, in Dauphin and Ste. Rose, in any other agricultural part of Manitoba. Talk to them. Listen to them. And he'll find out what they think. —(Interjection)— Yes, in Charleswood; in Charleswood as well where we have good farm operations about which my honourable friend would absolutely know nothing. But, Mr. Speaker, let the Minister of Agriculture go and talk to the farmers and he will find out that there is equal concern about this government's land purchase policy through the Agricultural Credit Corporation as there is with foreign land purchases. And if so, Mr. Speaker, if he thinks that the ownership of farming units any less undesirable than large-scale foreign ownership, if so why did he consent to the partial dismemberment, the quick volt phase, that he made in his Estimates this year of his own state-farm program just a few months before the election?

Does that Minister, Mr. Speaker, really believe that a largely undefined government control of farmland, and there is so much in this bill that is left vague or to the discretion of the Minister or of the Cabinet, that the degree of control will be exercised by government is largely undefined? Does he believe that that is acceptable to Manitobans as a solution to the danger of foreign control? The people of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, want their government to take action to protect our valuable farmland from foreign purchasers. But what they want from their government is protection. They don't want control.

And as I have said, Mr. Speaker, this tendency to take unto itself rather more power, and rather more control than is needed to serve the public interest is certainly not new to this government. The farmers of Manitoba who participated in the recent beef marketing vote expressed the opinions of Manitoba farmers very very firmly and very very succinctly with respect to their attitude not only to this government's beef marketing proposal but I suggest, Mr. Speaker, with respect to this government.

Well, Mr. Speaker, one might have hoped that rather than proceeding with this bill only now as an election looms before us, the government might well have brought forward a position paper in the last session of this House, a year ago, so as to permit a better bill to be drafted and presented to the people of Manitoba. A good bill is needed. We don't have a good bill in front of us.

But on the major stated intent of the bill, Mr. Speaker, we have something that happens very rarely in the House. We have something that we can agree on, if we could only agree to get my honourable friends to bring in the right words to wrap it up in. We have a clear consensus on the part of all sides of the House that control over foreign land purchases is desirable; it's in the public interest. We are agreed on the need to defend Manitoba farm land from foreign encroachment but the Minister has indicated that he will accept amendment to this bill in committee and we treat that as a beacon light and as a promise that something good can be made out of legislation which is very important.

We will be proposing a number of amendments, Mr. Speaker, and we anticipate that our party and the government can work usefully together, in effect, to redraft this bill at committee stage so that it may more adequately reflect the real wishes and the concerns of the people of Manitoba. And so that its effects and applications can be made clear and so that it shall result in no unnecessary encroachment on the rights of individual Manitobans and in no unnecessary additions to the already over-weaning power of government over our people.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister for Mines.

MR. GREEN: Well, Mr. Speaker, the main intent of my address will be to try to determine how my honourable friend has arrived at the conclusion that this is a socialist piece of legislation. Because its major thrust, Mr. Speaker, relates to the fact that it is a socialist piece of legislation to which he and his party have indicated that they will in principle say ay to, Mr. Speaker, that they will say ay to. And yes, Mr. Speaker, he says that they will only say ay to part of it but they will say ay to the bill in principle. And it's not surprising, Mr. Speaker, because we have had the Leader of the Opposition get up in the House and say ay to principles of socialism which he has seen, Mr. Speaker, cannot be reversed in this province and which has commended themselves to the large majority of the people of our province. So now he looks, Mr. Speaker, at this particular piece of legislation. He says to himself it's going to commend itself to the large majority of the people of the Province of Manitoba and

therefore, Mr. Speaker, we will say ay to it although identifying the legislation as socialist.

Mr. Speaker, my problem is this. I consider myself to be properly identified as a socialist. I don't, and my honourable friend knows this, go throughout the province and argue on the basis of ideology. I argue on the basis of the facts as they are and principles as they are. I do the same thing in this House. I don't present a position on the basis that it is a socialist position. I present a position on the basis of the fact that I think it's a position which either makes sense or doesn't make sense.

My honourable friends problem is that most things that make sense, he identifies as socialism. And he, Mr. Speaker, in 1969, along with the former leader of the party, Mr. Weir, and I've said this before and it ceases to be funny I suppose but it's apropos, that he created more socialists in this province by identifying everything that made good sense as socialism than any previous socialist leader of any socialist party in the Province of Manitoba.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I have this problem with my honourable friend and he has identified the problem. He says in part, as it relates to foreign ownership of land, that that is the part that they will debate in principle.

Now why, Mr. Speaker, and I have spoken to the farmers of the Province of Manitoba as well, but why are people in the Province of Manitoba opposed to foreign ownership of land? Mr. Speaker, it's not because the people of the Province of Manitoba are anti-foreigner. What they have said, and what they have said repeatedly, is that we don't want somebody who has got nothing to do with us, has no role to play in our society, owning huge tracts of land in the Province of Manitoba. That's why he is opposed to it. And we took that question, Mr. Speaker, and we went, and the honourable member wasn't there, we went from group to group, from community to community, and we asked the following question. Do you recognize any difference between a farmer in Noyes, Minnesota, — which happens to be on the border — owning a section of land in the Province of Manitoba which he doesn't reside on or farm, or a person in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, owning a section of land in the Province of Manitoba which he doesn't intend to reside on or farm? Mr. Speaker, I leave it to my friends opposite. There wasn't a single answer from any member of any farm community in the Province of Manitoba who could say that there was any difference between those two situations. —(Interjection)— Yes, the answer was patriotism. There was no economic answer, Mr. Speaker. The answer was nationalism, Mr. Speaker, but there was no —(Interjection)— yes, Mr. Speaker, there were some who gave Mr. Pickersgill's answer. But, insofar as talking about why they wanted resident aliens not to be owners of land they said because we want our farmers to farm our land.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if my honourable friend wasn't being ideological, if he wasn't proceeding with blinkers on, then he would recognize that the same reasons that apply to alien ownership of land, apply to land that is owned by Canadians who have no intention of residing on or farming it. Mr. Speaker, those are the only people . . . and my problem, Mr. Speaker, my problem with my honourable friend —(Interjection)— Well, Mr. Speaker, we're going to have many occasions on which to test "who knows the views of Manitobans better" and I welcome the test, Mr. Speaker, because, you know, I believe that Manitobans are intelligent; I believe that they listen to reason; I believe that they have understanding; and I believe that Manitobans will not understand how my honourable friend can say a man in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia should be able to own 50 sections of land in the Province of Manitoba, which he never farms, and the man in Noyes, Minnesota is not permitted to own a section of land in Manitoba which he doesn't farm. I welcome, Mr. Speaker, going on any platform, anywhere in the Province of Manitoba, with my honourable friend and talking about that subject and I am willing to rest my case with the citizens of the Province of Manitoba because I think they are intelligent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my problem with my honourable friend is that he refers to this as socialist legislation. Mr. Speaker, I tell you that I have no objection to being identified as socialist and for the life of me I cannot see any socialism in this legislation. I think that my honourable friend, if he wants to criticize this legislation, can criticize it on its merits and, by the way, Mr. Speaker, it's not without construction. His speech is not without construction. I mean, we have the same types of arguments that he has presented in drafting session with legislative draughtsmen as to what words should say and how they should be dealt with and to make sure that the words are saying what we mean and part of my honourable friend's speech that dealt with how legislation could be constructed and how it should be properly formulated, Mr. Speaker, that will be useful and it is always useful when members are making suggestions with regard to interpretation. But his position as to the substance of the bill, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you makes no sense whatsoever. There is absolutely no one who told any of our members that it would be right to restrict alien land ownership but it would be wrong to restrict land ownership completely non-resident, having nothing to do with the Province of Manitoba, because it happens to be run by a Canadian.

Now, Mr. Speaker, why do I say that this is not socialist legislation? Because it doesn't in any way involve the principles of socialism. My honourable friend, the Leader of the Opposition, who accuses us of being the doctrinaire ones, has more than demonstrated his doctrinarism in his debate on this

bill.

What is my honourable friend trying to protect? My honourable friend goes throughout this province and says he doesn't want the farmers of Manitoba to become tenant farmers in the Province of Manitoba. He is opposed to tenant farmers. Mr. Speaker, this bill is legislation against the evolution of tenant farmers. What my honourable friend is indicating in terms of doctrinairism and dogmatism and hidebound ideology, is that he says — and I don't believe believe it — that the farmer in the Province of Manitoba loves being a tenant of a private individual but he does not wish to be a tenant of the public. That he does not wish to be, Mr. Speaker, his own tenant. In other words, what my honourable friend says is that at all costs, at the cost of tenancy to a private individual, we must avoid the tenant being a tenant to himself, to the public. That is the only tenancy, Mr. Speaker, that he wishes to avoid.

He says that we are going to introduce the fact that a tenant farmer to a resident of Winnipeg is first-class but a tenant farmer to the state is second-class. Well, let it be recalled, Mr. Speaker, when the honourable members says that the agricultural community in the Province of Manitoba has refused to accept the concept of the public owning land and the residents of Manitoba being a tenant of the public, that when he says that they have refused that, let it be underlined, Mr. Speaker, that every single farmer who decided that he wished to deal with the public in the purchase and sale of his land, dealt with it voluntarily, that there was no compulsion, that the compulsion that wishes to be introduced by the Leader of the Opposition is that he will not be able to do that, that is the compulsion, and every single tenant of the public that is now residing on agricultural land owned by the people of this province — which I say is socialism and which I have absolutely no apology for — that every single one of them who has done that has done it voluntarily, of his own free will as an exercise of his freedom, freedom which the Leader of the Opposition says that he will not have and that he will take away from him.

Now, Mr. Speaker, who is being doctrinaire about a piece of legislation? Who is hidebound to a wrong-headed ideology which he will not even permit to pursue its own aims because it's contrary to some religion of his which he says that the public is not a fit landlord. I say that the public is every bit a fit landlord as a private person, a better landlord, and that a tenant and that a farmer who wishes to rent from the public shall be prohibited from doing so because the state is going to control that and not permit a farmer to rent from the public. Who is doctrinaire? Who is adhering to a hidebound, wrong-headed ideology?

Mr. Speaker, there is nothing in our farm policy at the present time which restricts freedom. There is everything which extends freedom. There is everything in the policy proposed by the Opposition which restricts freedom and nothing which extends freedom.

What is the purpose of this bill? And let's look at what is being suggested here. The purpose of this bill is to say that farmlands in the Province of Manitoba are going to be reserved essentially, essentially not exclusively, for people who want to farm in the Province of Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, this is heinous, socialist doctrine objective. Farmlands in the Province of Manitoba are going to be used not exclusively but significantly for people who want to farm in the Province of Manitoba. My honourable friend . . .

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Assiniboia.

MR. PATRICK: My question to the Minister is, I have several constituents in my constituency who are farming at the present time. They are farming larger than 620 acres but they do not occupy or . . . they do not live on the land, they live in my constituency. Will they be able to continue to farm over 620 acres of land?

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that if they are engaged in farming, they will be permitted to continue to farm that land. Mr. Speaker, the honourable members of the opposition are in trouble. The honourable members of the opposition are in trouble. They know, they know that it is easy to say that a person who is living in Winnipeg will claim to be farming land in the Province of Manitoba, and some determination will have to be made whether that indeed is so, if the legislation is to be effective at all, but that's going to have to be determined. And they will determine it. Even the Leader of the Opposition said that was right. All he said is that it should be a board, it shouldn't be a Minister. That's a constructive suggestion, Mr. Speaker, but it doesn't take away what they know to be the principle, what the Leader of the Opposition knows to be the principle, what is the purpose of this bill? Farmlands in the Province of Manitoba will be farmed by people in the Province of Manitoba.

And then it says, Mr. Speaker, that we are not going to be able to prevent every ownership of land so if it is an alien who has no intention of coming to the province and, Mr. Speaker, I disclaim this. As a person who will accept the definition of a socialist, I disclaim that this is any in any way socialism, that an alien will not be able to buy more than 120 acres or a corporation, and some of the things that my honourable friend said about corporations and how we have to deal with that are correct and I say that they are constructive suggestions with a draughtsman could make — (Interjection) — an alien, 160, thank you. And that a Canadian will be able to own a square mile of land without ever setting foot on it or farming it. A square mile of land, Mr. Speaker. You know, when you tell that to a European, that a person can own a square mile of land without ever occupying it, he is astonished because they

don't have such farms.

So here, Mr. Speaker, here is what my honourable friends want to say. They want to say that a man who has no intention to farm, never will be there — and by the way, this does not refer to presently held land, it refers to land which is going to be purchased, land which is going to be purchased. There is nothing in the Act, as I understand it, which would cause anybody to divest of his present land. So what it is saying, Mr. Speaker, to me, to Sidney Green, resident of the City of Winnipeg in the Province of Manitoba, that if you don't intend to be a farmer, if you intend to be an MLA, if you just want to have a piece of agricultural land as a toy, so that you can think of yourself as a great landowner, you are entitled to 640 acres, a section of land, a square mile of land.

Mr. Speaker, how much land does a man need? How much land — (Interjection) — Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, my honourable friend, the Member for Sturgeon Creek says "Don't be silly." You know, what we are discussing now is more profound possibly than anything we have discussed before. More profound than anything we have discussed before and that's why, Mr. Speaker, I will accept the designation, I will accept the designation of the Minister's previous legislation as being socialist legislation. Yes, I will accept that. I think it is good legislation; I think it is very useful legislation; and I think it is legislation that I will have no apology with to the people of the Province of Manitoba, in every agricultural community to deal with. I won't accept the designation of this legislation as socialist legislation because it's not socialist legislation. If one wanted to start using the ideological terms that they engage in, this is *petite bourgeoisie* legislation. It deals with individuals owning 640 acres of land which we're not objecting to but, please, Mr. Speaker, don't be saying socialism. Don't call this socialist legislation.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I told my honourable friend, the Member for Lakeside a story that Tolstoi told. And probably the greatest short story that I have ever read in my life is a story called "How much land does a man need?" written by Tolstoi. The story refers to a farmer in Russia who left his village and was seeking a place where he could find land and he travelled for many days and he came to a village where land was available in unlimited supply. It was given — just as we used to do with the homesteaders — to the people on the basis that they would farm it. But how much land was given, Mr. Speaker? Well this village had a very interesting custom. They said you can have as much land as you can square the circle for, or square from sunrise to sunset. That means, that you will start walking at sunrise and you will walk until you come back to the point from which you started and if you reach that point, you get everything that you walked around. Free. You are just required to farm it, to make use of it, to make it productive. If you do not finish, you get nothing.

Now, this fellow had a good sleep and he decided that he was going to walk off, let us say — I can't remember the story exactly — he was going to walk off a section of land, four miles. He could complete that in little over an hour and that he will not have to worry about finishing the circle and he will have as much as he needs. So he started to walk at sunrise and when he hit the end, the mile, walking in one direction, he saw an orchard a mile down the way in the same direction. He said to himself, "Am I crazy? Am I going to give up that orchard? All I have to do is walk for three hours and it will still be noon and there will still be five hours left in the day. Then I can have that orchard." So he decided to continue to surround the orchard and when he came and walked in the other direction, he saw a lake and who can give up a lake? I mean, especially in times of drought. It was a small lake; it was a dugout. He decided he was going to include that dugout, and the entire story, Mr. Speaker, deals with what goes on in this man's mind as he is deciding that he needs more and more and more land. Of course, the result is obvious. As he was gathering in all of the land that he needed which grew every time he saw something more, the day started to get shorter and shorter and at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker, as the sun was coming down, the villagers were cheering him on and, of course, by this time he was running and he was perspiring and he had to finish and indeed, Mr. Speaker, before the sun came down, he wound up on the finish line. And he dropped dead. And they dug a hole six feet deep.

So when the honourable member says that six feet is what one needs, that is true, Six feet is what one needs. Mr. Speaker, I say to my honourable friend . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please. I wonder if the Honourable Member for Lakeside . . .

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, what I have said is on the record. What I have said is on the record of this House. What I say to honourable members is that insofar as ownership of land is concerned, that there are various forms of holding land. The objectives of this bill are consistent with the objectives of the citizens of the Province of Manitoba, that what land a farmer will have in the Province of Manitoba, that the farmlands in the Province of Manitoba will be farmed by farmers and that what is necessary is that farmers realize a fairer return on their efforts, that they have the incentive to produce as much as that land will produce and that they will get a good return from their labours and that they will be farmers in the Province of Manitoba. That's what this bill said. What are the members of the opposition saying? They are saying that it should not apply to Sid Green. I want to know from the residents of Souris, what they will gain if I own 50 sections of land in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Souris-Killarney. And I will say to you that they will lose as much as if that

land is owned by a person in North Dakota, that there will be absolutely no difference, that we have gone through the entire province on this question and there was no difference demonstrated by anybody.

Mr. Speaker, if that is the thesis of the honourable members of the opposition that what they will legislate is against foreign ownership of land, then it is they, Mr. Speaker, who have decided to abandon any attempt to deal with the problem that was raised; to deal with the problem that was raised by citizens in this province and throughout this province who said that they want farmlands to be occupied and preferably owned by people who are farming it. The members of the opposition signed a declaration to that effect, Mr. Speaker.

When we were in the Agricultural Committee the committee passed a resolution saying that, "At the present time ownership of land by the farmer who owns it and works it is the best form of farm ownership." Mr. Speaker, we are not even dealing with that question. The honourable member is now trying to shift his ground. We are dealing with how to achieve what was said by the Tories in the report on the Land Use Committee, because they said that the best form of ownership is a farmer owning and farming his land.

Mr. Speaker, if they are going to deal with the non-resident clause in the way in which they suggest, then there is no alternative but that they, the Tory Party, is going to create tenant farmers in the Province of Manitoba. And Mr. Speaker, it is going to be the worst form of tenancy. It's going to be the worst form of tenancy, because the tenancy that they are going to create and which they say they are going to vote for, is a tenancy between the Member for Pembina who might be a good landlord, I don't know, and a private person rather than the tenancy that is between the public and the individual who is a member of the public. I suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the person who is occupying land under the program of this government is a much happier tenant farmer than is the tenant farmer who is occupying land that is owned privately.

Do we need proof of that? Was the Irish land fight a fight between the Irish tenants and the Government of Great Britain? It was a fight between the Irish tenants and the private landlords in Ireland. That's who it was a fight between. Mr. Speaker, that's who the fight . . . —(Interjection)—

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Order please.

MR. GREEN: I know that the honourable members are having trouble with their own position, and when they do so the only way in which they can deal with it is to try to prevent the discussion from continuing.

But, Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition got up and made a speech here in favour of tenant-farming in the Province of Manitoba in order to avoid socialism; socialism being — let us identify it as he identified it — let us identify socialism as identified by the Leader of the Opposition so we will all know what good sense it is, and I say that it is not socialism — is that farmers in the Province of Manitoba with the best form of agriculture will be farmers residing on and owning their own land. That is what he is opposed to. —(Interjection)— He's better than you?

Well, Mr. Speaker, I suggest to you that we do that in every other area. That when we give a franchise we do not give a franchise to someone on the basis that he will sell it to somebody else and he will operate it. When we give a licence, Mr. Speaker, to take fish out of the public rivers of our province, we do not say that that licence can be held by somebody in Ainnipeg, by the Member for Sturgeon Creek, and sold or held in some type of bondage to a fisherman who will then pay the Member for Sturgeon Creek something which he gets out of his fish. When we give those franchises, Mr. Speaker, we give them on the basis that that land is there for a purpose. It is there for the purpose of being productively brought into cultivation, to produce food which is wealth for society, and the best way of doing that that we have in the Province of Manitoba is to have an identification between that person and the land.

The members of the opposition say that that identification should exist in a Torrens title. They are now stepping back from that, Mr. Speaker. It is they who are stepping back. They are retreating. They say it doesn't have to exist in a Torrens title. They say that it is perfectly cultured if it is a tenancy to some landlord, but it is not culture if it is a tenancy to the public as a whole.

So let us not misunderstand the position. The Conservatives in the Province of Manitoba are going to say ay to this piece of socialist legislation, and you know that's a joke. That's a joke. They were the ones who introduced socialism of landholding in the Province of Manitoba.

There is no cottage site which they have developed which they will give Torrens title to. No cottage site that they have developed in the Provincial Parks and the Whiteshell and Falcon Lake that they will give Torrens title to. They say you will have that land on lease from the public and you will not be able to ever get ownership of it, because at any time we may say that the public is not properly utilizing that lease. It has turned out, Mr. Speaker, interestingly enough it has turned out to be a very secure form of landholding. I don't know any private cottage owner, either on lease or on permit who has ever been dispossessed or even prevented from selling his cottage to somebody else. But it's socialism according to the gentleman on the opposite side.

So, Mr. Speaker, I welcome two things from the members of the Opposition. I welcome their Leader's suggestion that they are going to vote ay to the bill and how could they do otherwise? How could they do otherwise? They are going to vote ay to the bill even though in principle it is a socialist measure, which I deny. I wish it were. I would not object to it being a socialist measure, Mr. Speaker. I have no problem whatsoever. I repeat this, no apology whatsoever for the fact that the public in this province is now the owner of 75 percent of the land in this province. That it owns farmlands, that it permits some people the option of saying that they don't want to make a capital investment in their land in the hope of getting an accrued value on it, that it permits some people and I've spoken to farmers who say that they are going to live on the income of their land, they are not going to put anything into it, that they do not wish to do as many of their forefathers have done, and that is to live poor and die rich. They prefer to live rich and occupy six feet when they die. That this is an option which has been made available to the people of the Province of Manitoba by this government which believes in freedom, which has extended the freedoms of the people of Manitoba which the honourable members on the other side want to control and restrict.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Minister will have time to continue the next time the debate comes up.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' HOUR

MR. SPEAKER: We are now on Private Members' Hour. The first item is Private Members' Resolutions. The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, Resolution 15.

RESOLUTION NO. 15

MR. AXWORTHY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Member from Assiniboia, that WHEREAS there have already been a number of major fires in Winnipeg this year; and WHEREAS many tenants of multiple resident buildings have died or have been seriously injured by fire; and

WHEREAS there is a critical need to install or improve existing fire alarm systems and fire safety equipment in apartment blocks and multiple resident dwellings and the cost of installing such equipment is often prohibitive; and

WHEREAS a comprehensive upgrading of existing housing stock is a complex and time-consuming process involving a high level of understanding of the needs of each area of the city;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House consider the advisability of establishing a fire safety fund to provide low interest loans for the installation and upgrading of fire alarm systems and fire safety equipment; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this government convene a meeting with Municipal authorities to examine how the safety by-laws can be most effectively administered, how equipment such as smoke detectors and fire retardant paints can be used, and thirdly, that the elimination or demolition of housing stock be minimized through co-operative efforts between government and owners to upgrade and improve.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

MR. AXWORTHY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The issue of fire in the City of Winnipeg has become one of particular public attention and well it might because in the last year or so we have experienced a number of tragic fires, fires that have dispossessed numbers of people, in many cases have killed people and have created a degree of insecurity on the part of many of those who live in older blocks, older apartment blocks throughout the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, we should not be surprised, in some ways, that this is happening. It is not the result of some mad arsonist necessarily running around. There's no conspiracy. It is the simple function of age but in large part the residential accommodation in the City of Winnipeg is now old. Over 70 percent of all the buildings in the Inner City of Winnipeg were built before 1920, which puts them in a category of 50 to 55 years old. Many of those buildings were built of frame construction, with very simple elementary service facilities, particularly electrical wiring and they have simply reached a stage in their life span, like all of us do, where we're wearing out and once that wearing out begins the vulnerability to fires increases. The large number of fires in apartment blocks, three or four of which have been in my own constituency in the last year, have caused a number of scattered, at times, a panic type reaction on the part of some public officials and certainly an increasing degree of concern on the part of owners of buildings and tenants in buildings, that something be done to improve this.

Now the major strategy, the major approach that has been adopted by the City of Winnipeg has been to strengthen the code enforcement by-laws, particularly the fire code enforcement but there have been four major changes over the past couple of years in the code enforcement and we have assumed, Mr. Speaker, that that would be the first line of protection to bring these buildings up to standard and there is no question that the application of proper codes will have the result of requiring many many changes in buildings. We should remember one basic fact, Mr. Speaker, that many of

these codes are retroactive and they apply to all existing buildings and so that almost all buildings having been built within the last five years are going to require some form of upgrading or other and we'll be stuck with a relatively high expense and cost for any improvements that are being made.

The consequence of this, Mr. Speaker is that many buildings, not necessarily slum housing, not buildings that have worn out but buildings that have many years use left in them are being forced out of the marketplace, are being forced out of providing accommodation simply because the requirements under the codes for upgrading and improving with the installation of fire safety equipment is just too expensive.

Now the question is, Mr. Speaker, why? Well to begin with the availability of funds for the improvement of housing, particularly multiple dwelling, and apartment dwelling in the city is almost non-existent. One of the interesting findings in a study that was done by the Mortgage Loans Association of Manitoba which was done last year, 1976, points out that the majority of private lenders in the City of Winnipeg will not give loans, particularly home improvement loans, to any building that is over 50 years of age and yet we have some close to 20,000 units of housing in that category alone.

Furthermore, we have found that the numbers of home improvement loans have fallen dramatically to the point where about ten years ago some 25,000 loans were given in the City of Winnipeg, it's now down to close to about 5,000 loans. So the reason is very obvious from the point of view of the private mortgage lenders trying to administer single small loans as opposed to big major mortgages on large office buildings or commercial complexes simply is not economical, therefore they won't lend. In fact, Mr. Speaker, there is also some evidence to indicate that there are areas in the city where no lending at all is given.

The old concept of red lining, while it is not as official as that, you can find that in the case of many private lenders they will not give any money at all for any kinds of loans or mortgages in some older parts of the city. Therefore, for an owner who is given an order for upgrading or the introduction of fire safety equipment, where do they go to get the money? Well, if it's not available through private sources, what about public sources?

Well here again, Mr. Speaker, we come to an interesting paradox, that with one exception, one small exception, whatever loan programs available from Federal and Provincial sources apply only to single family homes. The Critical Home Repair Program of the Province of Manitoba applies only to single family homes. It cannot be applied in any way, shape or form to apartment buildings and yet, Mr. Speaker, the paradox is that is right now where the greatest need is. So you have a lending program for the upgrading of older buildings except it's not available to the housing sector which is in the greatest need right now for that kind of assistance.

The only form of lending that is available for apartment owners occurs in Neighbourhood Improvement Programs, Federal-Provincial-Municipal Program, where they do make loans available to private apartment owners on condition that rents be limited or controlled in those buildings and it is being applied. But Mr. Speaker, the NIP areas in the City of Winnipeg are very small jurisdictions and areas compared to the need. We're talking about 20,000 units. The four NIP areas in the City of Winnipeg might have all told about 2,000 housing units within them. So the fact of the matter is that you've got this paradox where an owner given an enforcement order by the City of Winnipeg has simply no means of acquiring finance to do the upgrading other than going to a commercial loan at 13 or 14 percent. So many owners, as a result, simply say, "To heck with it, I won't do it." Or they find themselves in a tremendous number of quandaries as to where do they get the capital.

Now you compound that by the fact that there is also in existence a sort of rent control program which limits the cash flow of many property owners. That becomes a deterrent. There's many other costs, increased hydro costs, increased property taxes. So what is happening is that in the private apartment market, the ability to finance any upgrading or improvement has reached a point where, for many owners, they are faced with the choice of going seriously into debt for which they don't know they are going to recover the money or simply closing the building block down or hopefully trying to sell it off to somebody else.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, we're facing an increased number of demolitions and abandonments in the City of Winnipeg. Buildings are simply being boarded up or, on the other hand, simply not being improved. That the Building Commission of the City of Winnipeg is giving a number of orders and they are going to increase multiple. What we see now is just the tip of the iceberg. It's just beginning. And without any kind of assistance to upgrade it, the number of demolitions, the number of closing downs of apartment blocks will increase multifold at a time when the vacancy rate of apartments in the Inner City of Winnipeg is less than one percent. Mr. Speaker we simply cannot afford to let that happen.

Furthermore it's the only alternative — and we raised this issue before — that's been offered by the Minister of Housing, that is to say, he will build more public housing. Well that is an uneconomical inefficient alternative. Any public housing units for families now range in the capital cost of \$30,000

per unit. The monthly subsidy rate is \$150 to \$200 a month subsidy. So here we have apartment units being closed down, which are renting at \$100, \$150, \$160 which for a capital investment of one or two or three thousand dollars per unit, could be upgraded and be maintained in the housing market, as compared against spending \$30,000 capital, at \$200 a month subsidy. Now by anybody's arithmetic or mathematics, that doesn't work out to be a good deal. That doesn't mean to say, you stop building public housing. But the fact of the matter is, if you look at the figures, the amount of family housing built through the Public Housing Program, compared with the family housing taken out of the market, means we have a net loss yearly, in the number of apartments available to low income tenants in the City of Winnipeg. The Public Housing Program is not replacing, it's not even keeping up with the numbers of housing units for low income people, that are going out of the market.

Now the obvious solution to that problem, Mr. Speaker, is to try to do two things at one time. To try to ensure that there will be an upgrading of fire safety equipment in older buildings, to ensure that those owners who are prepared to upgrade their programs, will do so by providing financial assistance for them; and secondly, at the same time to ensure that there is an adequate stock of lower cost housing in the City of Winnipeg.

The only way that that can be done, is if we are prepared to offer loans at a moderate rate of interest or low interest, to those owners who wish to upgrade and introduce fire safety equipment, if they are not in a position to acquire funds any other place.

Well, Mr. Speaker, that's not such a radical departure, because the precedent has already been well set in the budget that was brought down by the Minister of Finance. The Minister of Finance, in a move that we accepted, and approved' and agree with, is prepared to offer loans for the insulation of buildings, up to \$1,000 loans, for any homeowner who wants to bring about better conservation of energy. That's a very worthy cause. I would submit, Mr. Speaker, that the improvement of fire safety standards is an equally worthy cause, and should have the same kind of provisions made for it, and that loan fund that was established under the provincial budget, simply be extended. Now conditions can be set, there's no question that you can set conditions as to what an owner would have to do to apply for such funds, what the housing units would be used for, what the rental levels would be. But the fact of the matter is, the basic problem we face in the City of Winnipeg, is there is simply no loan funds available or very little loan funds available. And if we can provide from a provincial level that kind of assistance, it would mean that the negative aspects of the code enforcement procedures of the City of Winnipeg would be overcome, and that we would be able to serve the objective of better fire safety, at the same time as we don't eliminate good housing.

So, Mr. Speaker, we are not asking in this resolution for the Provincial Government to do something that it hasn't been prepared to do before in the field of insulation. All they have to accept is the issue of fire safety is of equal importance to the issue of getting better energy conservation, and I think members opposite would be prepared to accept that argument, particularly those that represent inner city ridings where they know what the problems are, and how many buildings are being closed down or being threatened with those kinds of code enforcement issues. I can give you a case in point, Mr. Speaker, that is no more than 500 yards from this building in my own constituency a small apartment block that has about 18 units in it, an extremely well looked after apartment block, very well tended, the owners are occupiers, they have a suite in their own block themselves, they make a very modest income from that apartment block; they were submitted with a fire order some six seven months ago, which is going to require \$15,000 worth of upgrading improvements. Now that works out to less than \$1,000 per unit. Mr. Speaker, they can't get the money from a private financial institution. They don't have the cash-flow to do it, and in many cases that area is not one that is considered desirable. There is no other place for them to turn. The owners of that block are in a quandry. What do they do? Who do they turn to? Where do they get their funds? And at the same time, the tenants in the block are subject to the same kind of quandry. Where do they go, and how do they get the proper amount of support?

So, Mr. Speaker, we think that the first part of this resolution asking for fire safety loan fund, perhaps incorporated along with the insulation fund or adjacent to it. This makes eminent good sense in this time when we really are faced with serious problems related to the introduction of fire safety equipment in the maintenance of older buildings.

The second part of the resolution, Mr. Speaker, deals with a more complicated problem, and that is that the whole issue of fire prevention is not one that is going to be handled simply through code enforcement. If you look at the way in which the different municipalities, and particularly the City of Winnipeg, handles the question of fire prevention, we see that there is a great deal of confusion in that level. One example is that there are four sets of code enforcements, by-laws, four sets of inspectors, responsible to four sets of commissioners, and relating to different parts of the Provincial Government and the Federal Government. There is an extreme aging of fire equipment in the Province of Manitoba. If you look at the actual equipment available to fire departments, both in rural municipalities and the City of Winnipeg, you will find that much of it is far too old, it's not up-to-date, and there is no assistance being given to bring that up to standard.

There's a number of issues that have to relate to the new kinds of fire safety equipment that could be introduced. The Minister of Labour has introduced changes to the fire code, which again are important steps forward. But they do not include, Mr. Speaker, things like the application and implementation of smoke detectors. That is not taken care of under the code in terms of smoke detectors in individual units. The only requirement is heat detectors in corridors, and some smoke detectors in certain public areas of the building. So the whole introduction of smoke detectors, which is a major way of offsetting the dangers to persons in fires, is not really being handled in any comprehensive way in the Province of Manitoba.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, you will find that the whole question of emergency procedures — what requirements should we have in the cities and municipalities to ensure that every apartment block must provide information to its tenants about what to do in case of fire. What do we do with fire departments to ensure that if there are handicapped people or people that are immobilized, that the fire department knows exactly where they are, what their suite numbers are, and how they can be reached if there is a fire.

I'll give you a case in point, Mr. Speaker, and I want to preface it by saying a word of compliment to the Greater Winnipeg Housing Authority, that when there was a fire in a block — it was under the Winnipeg Housing Authority in my own riding — we met with the tenants, we discussed with the Winnipeg Housing Authority what should be done, and as a result we have now in that one apartment block itself, introduced really a tenant alarm system of fire protection, fire wardens on each floor, new instructions as to what to do in case of fire, testing out of the different fire protection measures, and the information given to the fire department where people who have handicaps, which suites they live in. Now that program should be done on a much wider scale throughout the city, in a variety of municipalities. But again, it's going to take some resources to do it. It's going to take some co-ordination between different agencies of the Provincial Government and the municipal authorities. It's going to take a combined effort, a major effort to bring together the variety and number of multitude of agencies that are involved in fire protection and fire prevention.

Mr. Speaker, we think that the leadership in this could be taken by the Provincial Government. They could bring together the municipal authorities, and go through these step by step, not just on fire codes, but in the area of fire safety equipment, introduction of new methods of fire protection, the question of what to do with the fire retardant paints. Even the use of the Consumer Affairs Minister should be involved in terms of looking at the variety of blankets, and other materials used in apartment blocks, which have a high degree of fire volatility to them.

There are numerous steps that could be taken to bring about greater protection, and yet, Mr. Speaker, they can't be done alone by any one single agency, they have to be done on a co-operative basis. It would seem that the province could take the leadership in this area and provide initiative to bring municipal authorities together, of the different agencies, bring together their own departments and agencies which are involved, and begin going through a step by step major program in all areas of fire protection, so that we can begin making some progress in those areas.

So, Mr. Speaker, we would hope that members of this House would support this resolution. It really would require some financial commitment from the government to provide capital for the loan fund that we represent. The other doesn't cost any money at all. It just requires taking a very major initiative to bring changes about. We think that in this way the provincial level of government can indicate its concern with the problem of fire safety and the problem of fires in apartment blocks, and indicate that as one little old government we are prepared to give full backing, and take some new initiatives to bring about a much better state of fire protection in the Province of Manitoba.

MR. SPEAKER: Will the Honourable Member for Radisson state his point of order.

MR. SHAFRANSKY: I wonder if I may have leave just to make a substitution on the Economic Development Committee, the Honourable Member for St. Vital to substitute for the Member for Radisson (myself). (Agreed)

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister for Labour.

MR. PAULLEY: Mr. Speaker, I first of all say to the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, that it is with a great deal of interest that I note his resolution dealing with the matter of fires. I have listened on a number of occasions to the honourable member, and I do not question for one moment his sincerity and approach to this very important problem. However, I do want to say to him, that I regret really that in his preparations of resolutions, indeed in his language used, he indicates to me a lack of knowledgeability of what has been going on, and his continuing to go on in an endeavour to reduce the number of tragedies which result from fire.

I do want to say that I am not going to oppose the resolution presented because it's suggesting that we consider the advisability of establishing a safety fund. We have been considering a somewhat similar approach, and have already instituted approaches along this line, that my

honourable friend apparently is not aware of, or hasn't taken the time to attempt to find out what really is going on.

And then he says in his final resolve, that this government convene a meeting with municipal authorities to examine how safety by-laws can be most effectively administered, etc. Here again, Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend shows a total ignorance of what has been going on over the last few years.

So as I say, Mr. Speaker, it would not be our intention to reject the resolution because it really is something that is ongoing, and has been ongoing, and if we handle this particular resolution as some are handled we would change the verbiage of the language to complement the Department of Labour and the Fire Commissioner's office for doing what is being requested.

My friend says, "let's hear it." I'm sure my honourable friend is aware of the fact that as of the 1st of April of this year we brought into effect the building code of Manitoba, which makes wide spread recognition of the needs of building construction, and in reference also the code makes reference to provisions for fire safety. I don't know whether my honourable friend has seen it or not, but I did send a copy — complimentary copy incidentally — to the Liberal caucus, and also of course to the Conservative caucus.

In conjunction with the building code, and also effective on the 1st of April of this year, Mr. Speaker, we adopted the National Fire Code of Canada, which makes provision for installation of fire detection devices of certain standards, which I'm sure my honourable friend would agree should be a requirement, and also provisions for the instruction and education of dwellers in apartments and other buildings. I'm sure my honourable friend to be fair — I consider him fair normally — will realize that the adoption of the building code and the fire code effective the 1st of April, was a very forward step, and as it's only now, Mr. Speaker, about six weeks ago, we are still going on with our organizational educational program. We have held seminars all across Manitoba involving the fire chiefs, the local councillors, and interested citizens, in many communities, Snow Lake, Thompson, The Pas, Brandon, Winnipeg, and many other areas, Mr. Speaker. I had the honour just about two or three weeks ago to attend a seminar in the Norquay Building to a standing-room-only audience of people concerned at the local level with the incidence of fire, and how to overcome the problems and the difficulties, that the Member for Fort Rouge has brought to our attention.

I want to fault my honourable friend, for his parochial approach though, Mr. Speaker. I realize that he does represent a constituency in the City of Winnipeg, as indeed I do, but his whole effort seems to be concentrated on narrow parochialism, but the Department of Labour and the Fire Commissioner's Office has gone beyond this in the seminars we have been holding, in the fire fighting training schools that we have been conducting, and already, Mr. Speaker, we have established I believe eight mutual aid organizations of firefighters and fire trained officers for training purposes, to achieve desire because, Mr. Speaker, while my honourable friend is talking about an input of dollars and cents, and I'm not discounting the fact that he indicates there may be some difficulty in obtaining funds from private sources, for the purpose of alterations to buildings and the provision of fire detectors. But this could be held in many other areas as well, that it should be a responsibility on the taxpayer as a whole in Manitoba.

I don't know whether my honourable friend is really aware of the fact that every person who has a fire or a homeowner's policy of insurance, is making . . . I believe at the present time somewhere around about 1 ¼ percent of the total premium is being utilized from that Homeowner's insurance policy for the purpose of establishing schools for the training of personnel in order to offset fire tragedy. So the taxpayer as a whole, through premium payments into the area of fire protection, is already making a considerable contribution.

Now, I don't know what my Honourable friend means when he talks about a reasonable rate of interest for a loan from the government. A general policy that we have, and not only this government but governments in the past, insofar as loans, agricultural loans and the likes, are if I recall correctly, about ¼ of one percent above the interest rate that the government has to pay for money it borrows. Now it may not reach the 14 percent that the honourable member was referring to being charged by some private lending organizations. But what I am trying to say, Mr. Speaker, is that already, within the last three years or so . . . I admit that it maybe should have been done sooner but heaven wasn't built in a day either. But we are moving further and further and further into the area of fire protection and provisions in fire prevention. I would suggest to my honourable friend that we should have a greater input than we have.

It is necessary, Mr. Speaker, for the placing of fire escapes on some of our higher buildings. It is unfortunate, I think, that my honourable friend, the Member for Fort Rouge, was not in this House in and around 1964 when there was an ongoing battle between the then government and the present Minister of Labour because I attempted at that particular time to impress upon the government the changing of by-laws and rules and regulations pertaining to fire to make it mandatory for every owner of a boarding house or a multiple dwelling to have installed fire escapes. I was not successful. We are more successful now, Mr. Speaker, and I am pleased to be able to say that when we adopted the

Manitoba Building Code, which is patterned after the Canada Code, with more emphasis on firefighting or heat generating equipment than the National Code and also greater fire protection, I did think that I might have had some difficulty with the slowness of the City of Winnipeg in the adoption of building by-laws that would have been insisting on the development of a new approach insofar as repairs of the older buildings. I am glad to be able to say that the City of Winnipeg informed me the other day that, while they did appreciate an extension that we granted of a month or so for them coming under the Building Code, that they don't require any further extension. They are going to incorporate in their by-laws the general basis of the Building Code and, of course, that will also apply to the Fire Code.

Speaking of the Fire Code of Manitoba, and the City of Winnipeg Fire Department, I want to compliment the Chief of Fire of the City of Winnipeg on the voluntary work being done by the firefighters of Winnipeg in their annual or continuous examination of homes as an encouragement to the homeowners and tenants to clean up possible causes of fire in respect to dwellings.

I did refer back to 1964, a debate that raged in this House and outside of this House, between one of our late members and myself on the question of fire detection. At that time, a tragic fire took place on Good Street. I don't know whether that is in the constituency of my honourable friend, the Member for Fort Rouge, but in that particular fire, there was a woman, a mother and three children, asphyxiated within fifteen minutes when they were trapped on the third and second floors of this home because they were relying on a hand-operated smoke detector by way of an alarm that was there. Mr. Speaker, at that time, the then Chief of Fire, a personal friend, Sam Dunnett, the Chief of Fire of the City of Winnipeg, said that smoke detectors are useless manually operated. They have to be of a type that are continuously in operation but he said then, far more important really than smoke detectors was the provision for fire escapes insofar as the homes are concerned. And that holds true today and there's been no change that way. The Chief says the automatic heat alarms only cost a few bucks and you just can't value a human life at any amount of dollars and cents and that is so true.

But, when we get back to the involvement of this Provincial Government in its fire fighting programs, I mentioned the mutual aid areas they have established and I appreciate the support that we have been receiving from our communities in this. For the first time in the history of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, we did make a contribution to the mutual aid areas as an incentive to carry on a program or to go ahead with the program by supplying, in Turtle Mountain mutual aid area, an air compressor complete with tanks so that part of the firefighting facilities would be there.

I don't think my honourable friend can fully appreciate the astronomical cost it would be to set up a fund that would take care of all of the problems that he visualizes. We have made provisions this year, Mr. Speaker, for a further expansion in the area of firefighters and fire prevention officers and training of four people and over the last few years, we have increased our staff — we have doubled the staff — of the Fire Commissioner's Department in an effort to overcome it.

I agree, Mr. Speaker, we haven't done everything that may be desired but I don't think that we can be faulted for not recognizing the problems with which we are confronted. And if there is a methodology by which the government can consider the establishing of a fund to assist in this important area of human endeavour, I want to assure my honourable friend and members of the House we will give it every consideration. We're not discarding the concept of the resolution, Mr. Speaker. We will accept it as a goal. It has been our goal over the past few years to cut down the incidence of fire and the tragic loss of life that has been with us for so long.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. James.

MR. GEORGE MINAKER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to make a few comments on the resolution and I would like to say from outset that I support the basic principles that are being put forward by the resolution presented by the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

I believe the basic problem that is facing, and I might add, Mr. Speaker, not just within the City of Winnipeg, or within the city core but in all of the Province of Manitoba, there is a basic problem that the landlord has at the present time in trying to improve the fire safety of his building and thus accord a proper safety for the occupants. And that is a fact that because of rising costs and because of the rent control stabilization that is now in effect and the high cost of utilities increasing and so forth, that in many cases, some of these apartment blocks or multiple dwellings are on a very marginal basis. In fact, in many cases, the landlords are claiming that they are losing money and in some cases, I believe, they have been offered to be turned over to the government if they want to take them over.

Well, if they want to achieve the proper safety for people occupying and renting such facilities, there has to be something done and I don't think the answer would be to say "no" and close your eyes to this problem. It's there. And then have these different buildings, say, closed down or somehow taken over by a government agency and continue to be operated and not put in these proper devices.

I think the government has indicated its principle with regards to emergency repairs for residential homes because we endorse their principle of having these grants and these loans available to private individuals anywhere in Manitoba that are faced with an emergency, such as, say, a furnace failing in the middle of winter and they don't have the finances or accessibility to the money

for these repairs. I know I have referred some of my constituents who got into these particular circumstances to the department and they were looked after and I appreciate the efforts the government is doing in this particular field. And I suggest, Mr. Speaker, what difference is it whether you are living in a dwelling, whether you own it or rent it, if there is an emergency condition and I would suggest that in some of our buildings that people are now living in in Winnipeg and I would suggest in other areas of Manitoba, these are emergency conditions, that they should have the proper safety and fire detection equipment and smoke detection equipment.

So I suggest, Mr. Speaker, to the Honourable Minister of Labour that the basic principle of this emergency repairs to home dwellings, privately-owned home dwellings, has been accepted by this government and really are they now differentiating between a person who owns his home or a person who occupies as a tenant because they are both human beings or they are families and they are Manitobans. So that the principle has been presented and accepted that when an emergency condition occurs that this government or the department feels is an authentic emergency, that they will in times provide a loan to these people involved.

What is my understanding of the resolution that is being suggested here is that why not look at this principle with regards to tenants or people who rent. Because I think it would be wrong that because of the financial conditions of the people who own these facilities and they might say, "Here, take them", or they close them down and we now have a problem of finding space for these people that will be put out of this building.

I think that the other thing is that we have to do something because of the rent control that is now in place, that landlords are faced with this dilemma and really the city, in this instance with its by-law, is faced with a dilemma as well; that they have passed a by-law and maybe under political pressure, or under public pressure, not fully appreciating the realistics of the by-law that there are many cases where the people just say, "Well, we can't afford to do it", when they in fact know that they should, in their heart, do it. But on the other hand, you know to financially do this, and I think the Minister knows the cost of doing some of these installations and particularly I know that there is a deadline, which the Minister is aware of, I think it's what, in February of 1978 they have to upgrade the buildings that are four stories or higher, in the City of Winnipeg. So that this thing is coming to us pretty quickly.

I think the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge's resolution is a realistic one and possibly the approach that has to be taken by the government and looked at. And I appreciate the costs that are involved and I appreciate that it won't be able to be achieved by all people through a loan through a government agency but I think the government has to look and entertain that idea and see if there is some kind of criteria that they can set up. And I say not just for the City of Winnipeg but all of the province because there are other areas where the same thing exists and the fact that the government has accepted the principle that when an emergency occurs in a residentially-owned home, such as a furnace failing or something drastic happening that if they were to continue under those conditions there would be threat to the people living in there, either for safety or for injury, or so on. Well the thing exists now in many privately owned commercial, if you want to call them, facilities in our province so that I would hope that the government would give fair consideration to this resolution and possibly come up with some of these answers to these questions that have been raised in this debate this afternoon.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. WILLIAM JENKINS: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to take part in this debate. I think it's an interesting resolution, Mr. Speaker. I think it's a problem that has been with the City of Winnipeg for many many years. It's a problem that I can recall, as the Honourable Minister of Labour has been saying, back in the Sixties when we had tragic fires at that time, not only on Good Street; there was a bad fire down on Smith Street and in other parts of the city. And, of course, as a member of the Legislature representing one of the constituencies in the inner city of the City of Winnipeg, we do have older buildings within our constituency.

I know that in 1968, 1969 the then City of Winnipeg City Council was wrestling with the problem of fires, heat and smoke detectors and it was violently opposed by the majority of the City Council at that time, the Independent Civic Election Committee. I believe the late Honourable Member for Wolseley was one of the members who was very much opposed to heat and smoke detection protection in the City of Winnipeg. I can remember campaigning in the by-election in the constituency of Wolseley at that time and how uptight the landlords were at that time to the proposal that heat and smoke detection of some description and improvement of the egress out of these buildings in case of fire. I can tell you we were as popular, in canvassing around there, as a skunk at a tea party.

So when I hear that now, because all of a sudden that there are rent controls, all of a sudden it's a problem that these people have had many many years.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, when the City of Winnipeg decided that the Winnipeg School Division, as a result of a very tragic fire in, I believe, a parochial school in the City of Chicago took place, they certainly passed legislation and gave the Winnipeg School Division, I think, a period of five or six

years in which to completely put in a life safety program. It's a program that took place when I was a member of that board and I think it is an excellent program. When we're speaking about fire detection, I think this is something that the Minister of Labour and members of his department and the Fire Commissioner's office . . . There are smoke detectors, there are heat detectors and there is junk that is being pawned off on the market today. What really makes the life safety program so effective and it's — God forbid — I think it cost the Winnipeg School Division somewhere in the vicinity of \$5 or \$6 million and that's not 1977 dollars, that's dollars ten or twelve years ago or more, to install the program. The beauty of that type of a program is that it is hooked into the central fire stations within the areas and within minutes, people can be there.

But, I think that the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, I think it is a very timely resolution and I think it is something that should be discussed in this Chamber. I think it is something that we, as members of this Chamber, should be interested in, to seeing that we get adequate types of fire protection.

I'll tell you something that disturbs me, Mr. Speaker, is when I see some of these highrise apartments going up, not just only in the City of Winnipeg because we are just on the verge of highrises, but when we go to some of the other major cities across Canada and there is no fire equipment anywhere on the North American continent that is capable of going up to some of these higher levels where people are living. They are almost like the cliff dwellers were in the Navaho Desert down in Arizona. — (Interjection)— I believe the Honourable Minister says there is no equipment that is capable of going beyond the tenth floor. I believe they had a fire here a few years ago at the Fort Garry Hotel and there were certain sections that they couldn't reach and, you know, this becomes a real problem. We've all, I guess, watched some of these . . . well, it seems to be a popular thing in Hollywood these days to have disasters. I believe one was a conflagration in one of these buildings. I don't know whether it was a highrise apartment or whether it was a . . . or even a commercial building. — (Interjection)— Well, the Honourable Minister says it is external above the tenth floor but some people suffer from a fear of heights and God knows there is no way you would get them out onto a thing where they could be rescued and saved.

You know, it is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that we have had, within the last three years, three really bad fires. One was the Hazlemere Apartments at 559 Ellice Avenue — nine fatalities. — (Interjection)— Someone says he used to live there. Well, I can assure him that I had one of my workmates, at my place of work, who perished in that fire. He lived there too. It's not in my constituency; I believe it's either in the constituency of the Honourable Member for St. Matthews or . . . I believe it's the Honourable Member for St. Matthews.

This unfortunately, I guess from what I can understand, was a fire that was intentionally set. Someone was prosecuted and sent to jail and convicted and apprehended. That's a very tragic thing. I don't know what you can do. I don't know whether fire detection . . . if someone is determined to be an arsonist, he may even destroy the fire alarm system within the building. I also understand that the Fort Garry Courts which is just down at the end of Broadway here at Main Street was another one that was intentionally set.

And then we had, of course, here just recently a very tragic fire at the Town and Country Lodge which was supposedly inspected by the members of the Winnipeg Fire Department. I don't know, I can't understand the by-law that was passed by the members of the City of Winnipeg that stated you could go up two floors and any floors above that, this was not classed as an apartment block. I don't know what they classed it as but evidently if you were above that, then it seemed . . . It would seem, Mr. Speaker, that the people who were involved in owning this building surely would have had that much common sense that if it was feasible that you go up two floors and there was another one or two floors, that certainly there should have been some type of egress out of the building from those levels.

Now, to get back to the motion that we have before us here by the honourable member, I want to say to the honourable member that I am prepared in my own mind to vote for the resolution, to consider the advisability of perhaps establishing — I beg your pardon, Mr. Speaker, I hope I'm not catching the Honourable Minister's cold — but the first resolve is that this House consider the advisability of a fire and safety fund to provide low interest loans for the installation and upgrading of fire alarm systems and fire safety equipment. We have had an interesting concept of this broached by, I think, the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge and also the Honourable Member for St. James that with our Critical Repair Home Program that we consider the advisability of perhaps making available some type of fire protection for those people who are renters. You know, this is an interesting concept, Mr. Speaker. It's one that I must admit I hadn't thought of but it is one that I would suggest that this government is prepared to look at. I'm not saying that we would buy it but it is a problem, I agree, now that we have rent controls but I didn't see these same people rushing prior to rent controls to install this equipment which, you know, if you were a responsible landlord, Mr. Speaker, and you had the lives of other people within your responsibility as an owner to make sure that that building is up to snuff, I think that you would have been not waiting for legislation such as the Fire Safety Code and the regulations brought in by the City of Winnipeg. I think that they would have

been making these changes and making these safety features part and parcel of the building maintenance and the upkeep of that building. But, like I say, it is an interesting concept. It's one that I am sure the government will look at and come to a decision one way or another.

The second resolve is that the government convene a meeting with the municipal authorities to examine how safety by-laws could be more effectively administered; how the equipment such as smoke detectors, fire retardant paints, fire walls and stuff like this; I think this is good. I think the Minister has already stated that they have been conducting meetings with municipal governments across the province. I believe that we have a provincial fire school, I think, in the City of Brandon — am I correct? I think that's right — and throughout the province.

You know, it was very interesting the other night, Mr. Speaker. I don't know, I believe it was one Wednesday evening they had a program on television. I don't know if honourable members saw it, I believe it came in on one of the cable channels. What you should do in view of a disaster, if it was fire, flood, earthquake, and whatnot, and how well people reacted. I believe they picked about four cities in the United States and people could also keep their own score at home. I kept my own score too and I must admit, Mr. Speaker, that I wasn't amongst the brilliant ones. But I guess I had lots of company because . . . We all have fire hazards around our residences and I will say this for the City of Winnipeg and I don't know if the . . . I don't think the Fire Department has any authority but I think that the annual fire inspection program that they have in going around and looking at your premises, I think is an excellent program. Perhaps it should have a bit more teeth in it. Perhaps when the Minister meets again with the municipal authorities, he could bring that to their attention.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The hour of 5:30 having arrived, the honourable member will have an opportunity to speak again the next time we get to Private Members' Hour. The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

MR. D. JAMES WALDING: Mr. Speaker, with the leave of the House, I would like to make a substitution on the Standing Committee on Economic Development, substituting the name of the Member for St. Vital for that of the Member for Radisson. (Agreed)

MR. SPEAKER: The hour being 5:30 the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:30 tomorrow afternoon. (Thursday)