



**Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature**

**of the**

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**Standing Committee**

**on**

**Economic Development**

*Chairperson  
Mr. Peter Dyck  
Constituency of Pembina*



**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Sixth Legislature**

**Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Party</b>
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA  
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

**Friday, October 18, 1996**

**TIME – 10 a.m.**

**LOCATION – Winnipeg, Manitoba**

**CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina)**

**VICE-CHAIRPERSON – Mr. Gerry McAlpine  
(Sturgeon Creek)**

**ATTENDANCE - 11 – QUORUM - 6**

*Members of the Committee present:*

Hon. Mr. Reimer

Ms. Barrett, Mr. Dyck, Ms. Friesen, Messrs.  
Laurendeau, Maloway, McAlpine, Pitura, Mrs.  
Render, Messrs. Sale, Sveinson

**APPEARING:**

Mr. Ernst Keller, Chairman of the Board, North  
Portage Development Corporation, operating as The  
Forks North Portage Partnership

Mr. Kent Smith, President and Chief Executive  
Officer, North Portage Development Corporation,  
operating as The Forks North Portage Partnership

Mr. Gary Steiman, Board Member, North Portage  
Development Corporation, operating as The Forks  
North Portage Partnership

**MATTERS UNDER DISCUSSION:**

Annual Reports of the North Portage Development  
Corporation for the years ended March 31, 1992,  
and March 31, 1994.

Financial Statements for the North Portage  
Development Corporation for March 31, 1995.

Financial Statements for The Forks Renewal  
Corporation for March 31, 1994 and 1995.

The Consolidated Financial Statements for the North  
Portage Development Corporation (operating as The  
Forks North Portage Partnership) for the year ended  
March 31, 1996.

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**Mr. Chairperson:** Good morning. Will the Standing  
Committee on Economic Development please come to  
order. Before the committee can proceed with the  
business before it, it must proceed to elect a new Vice-  
Chairman. Are there any nominations?

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert):** I move that  
Mr. McAlpine be the new Vice-Chairperson.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you. Are there any other  
nominations? Seeing none, Mr. McAlpine is elected as  
the Vice-Chairperson.

This morning the committee will be considering a  
number of items that have been referred to it concerning  
the old North Portage Development Corporation, the old  
Forks Renewal Corporation, and the new North Portage  
Development Corporation operating as The Forks North  
Portage Partnership.

It might be helpful to the committee if I just took a  
minute to explain what the different items are that are  
referred to the committee this morning. We have two  
Annual Reports of the North Portage Development  
Corporation for the years ended March 31, 1992, and  
March 31, 1994. There is no 1993 report because that  
report had been previously considered in the Municipal  
Affairs committee, and the committee had completed  
consideration of the 1993 report, but not the 1992 report.

We also have a Financial Statement for the North  
Portage Development Corporation for the year ended  
March 31, 1995, and this can be found on one side of the  
blue sheet of paper in the folder with The Forks logo on  
the front.

We also have Financial Statements for The Forks  
Renewal Corporation for March 31, 1994 and 1995,  
which is on the other side of the blue sheet found in the  
folder with The Forks logo on the front.

Finally, we have the Consolidated Financial Statements  
for the North Portage Development Corporation,  
operating as The Forks North Portage Partnership, for the  
year ended March 31, 1996, which is the white-coloured  
document.

Just before starting consideration of the items, I would like to remind committee members that these items do not get passed by the committee. What happens is that members are free to ask questions and make comments on the items that are referred, and once there are no more questions, the committee is considered to have completed examination of the items before the committee.

Does the minister responsible have an opening statement, and would he care to introduce the officials in attendance from The Forks North Portage Partnership, please?

**Hon. Jack Reimer (Minister of Urban Affairs):** Mr. Chairman, I will not be too long in my comments, and it is a pleasure for me to be here as Minister of Urban Affairs and also responsible for the North Portage Partnership.

Today the honourable members will have an opportunity to hear firsthand about the current activities and the future plans of the corporation. Corporate representatives are also here to assist in presenting this information and answering your questions.

As many of you know, the North Portage Development Corporation was established in 1983 to co-ordinate the redevelopment of North Portage Avenue. The Forks Renewal Corporation was subsequently established as a subsidiary corporation of North Portage in 1987 to co-ordinate the redevelopment of the former CN East Yards. In both cases the intent was to combine public and private sector investments into creating vibrant, mixed-use developments serving as focal points in our community.

In June of 1994 the operations of the two corporations were merged to form The Forks North Portage Partnership, governed by a 10-person board of directors. The purpose of the merger was twofold, to reduce cost by creating one central administration office and to better co-ordinate the planning and the development of these two important downtown sites in our capital city.

Like all Winnipeggers and Manitobans, I am proud of what has been accomplished with North Portage and The Forks since their inception. A lot of credit for the success of these two initiatives must go to the successive board members and the staff of the two corporations, the elected

officials from all three levels of government who over the years have supported and guided the projects and, of course, the members of the public who have taken an active interest in the future of these significant sites.

North Portage turned around a rapidly declining area of our downtown, anchored Winnipeg's two largest department stores and created a vibrant, mixed-use community in our downtown, with almost 3,000 people now employed in this North Portage site.

The Forks has become one of our province's premier tourist destination attractions, attracting millions of visitors annually and employing more than a thousand people. The Forks has emerged from its years as a railyard to serve, once again, as a meeting place, the role it originally played for Manitoba's first citizens, the aboriginal people.

The potential and the promise of the two sites is great. As shareholders, the three levels of government have been entrusted by our citizens with the task of ensuring that the sites achieve their full potential and that the public is an integral part of this process. Part of this trust involves guiding and the supporting of the implementation of the partnership's mandate including, and I quote, to achieve financial self-sufficiency within a reasonable time period.

Over the years, since its inception, the government of Manitoba has invested over \$30 million in The Forks. This is why I stress that self-sufficiency must be the attainable goal over the next short while.

The shareholder's decision to merge the operations of North Portage and The Forks has helped in this process. In addition to reducing administrative cost, I am told that North Portage operations now contribute almost a million dollars to the operation of The Forks.

The Manitoba government has also contributed to the enhancement of the site through such projects as the commemorative plaza funded under the infrastructure works and the restoration of the Low Line bridge which was just recently announced funding under the Winnipeg Development Agreement.

Our commitment to The Forks North Portage Partnership is a solid one. However, we must be

We will ensure that the future of the partnership is self-sustaining, one that will not depend on the taxpayers of Manitoba and Winnipeg. We will ensure that both the public is an integral part of the decision-making process and, above all else, we will ensure that the legacy of North Portage and The Forks is truly a lasting one for the citizens of Winnipeg and Manitoba.

At this time I would just like to introduce some of the people here from North Portage and The Forks: Ernie Keller, who is the chair; Ashleigh Everett, down at the end; Gary Steiman, right here, another board member; Kent Smith, who is the CEO; Paul Webster, the Chief Financial Officer; Marilyn Williams, back over here; and Toby Chase, back over here against the wall also.

**An Honourable Member:** They did that just to test you. You know that.

**Mr. Reimer:** Yes, I know, they are moving around.

With that, Mr. Chairman, I will turn the meeting back to you.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the minister. Does the critic from the official opposition wish to give an opening statement?

\* (1010)

**Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington):** No, Mr. Chair, we are all looking forward to the presentation and questions. So I will forgo that opportunity at this time.

**Mr. Chairperson:** We thank the member. Did the officials in attendance from The Forks North Portage Partnership wish to give a statement to the committee?

**Mr. Ernst Keller (Chairman of the Board, North Portage Development Corporation, operating as The Forks North Portage Partnership):** Yes, good morning, Mr. Chairman, Mr. Minister Reimer, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the board I would like to thank you for the opportunity to meet with you this morning. These meetings are very important for us and offer us an opportunity to communicate with you on our progress and future plans.

I have brought some of my team with me, and I would like to introduce them to you, though you have mentioned

the names, but I want to make sure they are also recognized for what they do. For instance, there is Ashleigh Everett, she is vice-chairman of the board; Mr. Gary Steiman is our chief negotiating person and he is in love with Mr. Canada. Mr. Jim Orzechowski, unfortunately, is unable to attend today's meeting, and we also have a provincial ex-official, Mr. Don Leitch. He is not here yet, but maybe he will show up.

Now, on the movers and shakers in our office, Kent Smith, our CEO, is being put through the wringer on a daily basis and he enjoys it. We have Mr. Toby Chase over there, he is our manager of planning and government affairs. With the introduction of this position, we managed to save a lot of conflict in the area of communication and it is getting better by the day. We are not perfect yet; and, of course, Mr. Paul Webster, we call him our financial officer, but he squeezes the nickel until the beaver squeals, that is how tight he is with money; and a very, very important lady in our organization is Marilyn Williams. She is manager of communication, programs and heritage which is a huge function on The Forks side.

This is the first opportunity for all of you to meet The Forks North Portage Partnership. Our board was appointed in May 1994. We immediately began merging the corporation of the North Portage and The Forks into one organization. Our space requirements were reduced in half. We consolidated our three offices into one space on the second floor of The Forks Market. All our previous office space has now been leased. Staff were reorganized and this has resulted in a new state of cost saving. We reorganized and we also reduced, staff was cut substantially.

We have undertaken improvements to our two sides to ensure they remain a first-class facility. We have a number of challenges ahead to ensure we remain a self-sufficient organization. To put it bluntly, that almost became like a religion to us, self-sufficiency. We realized our future plans must maintain this focus. We look forward to your questioning regarding our progress, and with your permission we would like to give you a brief slide show on the partnership's recent activities and our future plans.

I would just like to add, it is very important that we get the chance to show you by slides what was done and

where we are going. We want to make sure that you fully understand and then when we enter into the question period, any question at all we are ready to answer. I would just like to say that we are proud, we are coming here on a positive note all the way, financially, in all directions. So with that, I would like to ask Kent Smith if he could do the presentation.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you, Mr. Keller. Would the committee grant leave for a slide presentation? [agreed]

Please, Mr. Smith, if you would like to take over.

**Mr. Kent Smith (President and Chief Executive Officer, North Portage Development Corporation, operating as The Forks North Portage Partnership):** Thank you very much. We have a few slides to show you this morning, which, I think, as well as giving you an overview of what we have been doing in the past, also will give you some insight as to what will be happening in the future. I guess I will just wait for the lights to go down a bit.

As our chairperson has mentioned, the two sites, both The Forks and North Portage, are being developed along mixed-use approaches including commercial, educational, historical and cultural, entertainment and recreational, as well as residential uses. Much has been accomplished over the past two years, and I will cover the information as quickly as possible.

At North Portage, new owners of Portage Place continue to invest substantially in the project. This is demonstrated by the expansion of the Marks and Spencer store, McNally Robinson, as well as the recent opening of Club Monaco and the opening of the largest HMV record store on the Prairies with its main entrance on Portage Avenue. Commercial spaces on The Promenade are now fully leased. Among the newest tenants is Chios Family Restaurant, soon to be celebrating a first anniversary on the site. The University of Manitoba Continuing Education Division as doubled in size to accommodate the demand for lifelong learning. In the last six months alone, visits to Portage Place have increased by over half a million people over the year before.

In the case of The Forks, we have seen sales at The Forks Market increase by over seven times in the last six

years. We have several new tenants including Beaver Tails and Pretzola, and soon we will have a new wood-fired bagel shop to join the Market family.

A number of capital improvements have been undertaken in The Forks Market. These include upgrades to the heating and ventilation system, and that will ensure that the Market continues to be a first-class facility. And these are not cheap. This expenditure is probably going to be close to half a million dollars by the time it is all done, and we have also installed some festive lights on the north and west exteriors of the Market.

Following considerable effort to find a use for the steam plant at The Forks, it gave us great pleasure to announce a signing of a letter of intent with MTN TV. Planning is now well underway for the redevelopment of the building and will be the new home of MTN's Winnipeg operation and studios.

A public proposal call was issued last summer to find a private use for the north portion of the Pavilion building on the Market plaza, and we are now negotiating with a lease with a food-and-beverage tenant to begin operations early next year.

Recent progress in historical and cultural uses has seen extensive improvements to the Public Press Building at 290 Vaughan Street, including interior renovations and new windows. We probably now have spent well over \$1 million on this building. It is owned by the partnership, and we have leased space to a variety of tenants, including Community Financial Counselling, the Immigrant Women's centre, and our newest tenant, Taking Charge!, created just a year ago to provide job training for single parents. The partnership has approached the Winnipeg Development Agreement heritage program to share part of the cost of future improvements to this building. It is interesting to note that we now have five United Way agencies resident on our North Portage properties.

Plans for the refurbishment and renewal of the historic rail bridge were recently announced at The Forks. This will support future development on the south point by the aboriginal community and will provide a pedestrian and cycling path connecting the north and south ends of the city. We were really delighted with the editorial in

Saturday's paper, and I think people are very excited about this new project.

As well, we are continuing with landscaping on the Outdoor Astronomical Observatory at The Forks. It has been funded in part, as the minister mentioned, through the Canada-Manitoba Infrastructure program. We were also delighted that this project won the National Award for Design Excellence presented by the Canadian Society of Landscape Architects, and it is designed by a Manitoba landscape architect, Garry Hildeman.

A letter of intent has been signed with Manitoba Theatre for Young People to develop a facility at The Forks. We are looking forward to this new family attraction which we hope will be opening within a couple of years.

\* (1020)

Our festival site in Market Plaza at The Forks continues to be a premier venue for community activities. As the slide shows, this is the unity rally, but this year we also brought nine community organizations together to present the Canada Day celebrations in Winnipeg. This unprecedented event received national accolades and saw over a quarter of a million people visiting The Forks and other neighbourhoods along the rivers and downtown Winnipeg. To date this year we have held 110 community festivals and events, and we are looking forward to seasonal winter activities including families' New Year's Eve at The Forks, Winnipeg's own Times Square. Buskers or street performers offer quality family entertainment at both sites and contribute to the spontaneity that visitors so enjoy.

Last month we were delighted to receive an award of merit from the International Downtown Association for the Busk Stop Program. The award is given to exemplary and innovative activities that contribute to the economy and vitality of the downtown. We were in Dallas to receive the award, and I think it is another example where Winnipeg is shining internationally in the work that is being done by a large number of organizations in revitalizing our downtown.

The Splash Dash Water Bus expanded its frequency of service this summer and added a new docking facility at the St. Boniface Hospital complex. Another new

initiative this year was the establishment of an Ambassador Program to greet visitors to our sites and work directly with tour operators. We are delighted that the project received funding through the provincial government's CareerStart, and we managed this summer even under our tight budgetary constraints to hire seven students to help give young Manitobans an opportunity to get some experience on both our sites.

We also obviously are interested in winter activities. We have got a skating rink, toboggan slides, and of course our river trail are all popular spots at that time of year.

The Imax Theatre embarked upon some interesting new initiatives. It successfully has attracted 42,000 additional customers in the past six months over the year before. We are delighted with that performance.

There is also an impressive range of other entertainment and leisure facilities that are available at North Portage. Of course, Prairie Theatre Exchange which has recently started their new season with a substantial increase in subscription sales, movie theatres, and many recreational services for Winnipeg provided by the YM-YWCA. The North Portage neighbourhood is also a vibrant residential community with five dynamic properties. We are working right now with Fred Douglas Lodge, Kiwanis Chateau, and the YM-YWCA to explore the feasibility of special needs housing for seniors and the disabled within the Y facility. In fact this morning we got some very good news that this project is likely going to be moving to the next stage of planning.

One of the most important operational matters that the partnership continues to address is security and access. Security is expensive. Right now we are spending over \$300,000 annually to ensure our sites are safe places for Winnipeggers. The partnership introduced the bicycle patrol for evening and night surveillance at The Forks and has proven to be very positive and very effective. There is also virtually complete accessibility on both sites, and they are very popular with wheelchair visitors. At The Forks we recently completed an exterior wheelchair ramp from our plaza to the Johnston Terminal to allow for an alternative outdoor access to Johnston Terminal as well as going by way of the Travel Idea Centre.

Site maintenance is always a priority. We are proud to note that the riverbank walkway opened within a day of the high flood waters receding on June 21. This ensured that the riverwalk was available for Canada Day celebrations. The work we had to do with the high water this year and the length of time that we were under water, which was about six weeks, ended up costing a little over \$30,000.

The Forks North Portage Partnership participates in many initiatives to enhance the entire downtown as well as our two sites. Both sites are within the Downtown Winnipeg Business Improvement Zone and several programs of the BIZ are directly supported by the partnership. In fact, our contributions to specific BIZ programs exceeded \$18,000 this year. We support the BIZ Patrol, frequent visitors to our facilities. We are also pleased to sponsor out-to-lunch concerts on our sites each summer and, as well, we provide financial and planning support for the operation of the Downtown Flyer, just recently extended for another year and at reduced cost. We are working closely with Canadian Heritage, our neighbours at The Forks, and currently are pursuing a number of co-operative management opportunities with the Parks Canada staff.

The Forks North Portage Partnership is pleased to participate in the City of Winnipeg Centre Plan initiative. We are always eager to work with other stakeholders to enhance the character of the downtown. Through Centre Plan, creation of a pedestrian-friendly environment along Portage Avenue is being examined. In co-operation with the Downtown BIZ, we brought in a consultant to provide us some advice, in fact, just a couple of weeks ago on these matters.

I note that Mr. Laurendeau was present at one of those consultation meetings, which proved to be very productive, and we are hoping that we are going to very shortly get agreement on an action plan to deal with Portage Avenue. We also want to address some of the issues related to security and vacancy on the street.

We will also examine ways to increase the number of people living in the downtown. In a recent survey undertaken by the Downtown BIZ and the partnership, The Forks was ranked as a desirable place to live. Next year, a downtown housing forum will be established through Centre Plan. This should provide further insight into a possible future residential component at The Forks.

The partnership's vision for The Forks reflects a number of themes: connecting The Forks to surrounding areas both physically and through partnerships; continuing a commitment to design excellence in renewal efforts; maintaining a sensitive balance and blending of mixed uses; capturing the site's historic significance; and preserving and promoting an awareness of the natural environment.

We recognize the need to develop easy access and egress and strengthen recreational movement through the site. Cycling trails are the top pick by the public for enhancements at The Forks. Not surprisingly, a recent transportation survey shows cars as the most used mode of travel to The Forks. We cannot afford to have vehicles continue to dominate the site. Over the long term we are going to have to address the image of surface parking and as development opportunities arise parking gardens will be created to enhance the character of the site and support a pedestrian cycling environment.

At the time of the arena debate, an extensive, integrated planning process was undertaken with the city to identify access improvements of benefit to The Forks area. The partnership has submitted a proposal to the City of Winnipeg to undertake improvements in line with the integrated plan recommendations.

Points of access create a strong first impression. Right now you are looking at the only public access to The Forks. Other access points are equally inadequate. We propose extending York Avenue to Pioneer Boulevard, as you can see in this map, and extending Pioneer Boulevard as a local river road into The Exchange District. This, by the way, has very strong support from The Exchange District BIZ. Our proposal also includes improvements to the York Avenue underpass as a character gateway to The Forks. We believe that the underpass, the timber frame construction can be preserved in a nice, new way that will both enhance the site and respect the historical character of the area. The Via Rail station is another important potential gateway and the partnership has held discussions with Via officials to investigate potential development opportunities.

We will also consider a marina commercial development north of Provencher Bridge. This will draw more pedestrian traffic into the area and begin to address some of the safety concerns of Stephen Juba Park. It will

also provide a dynamic link between the Exchange District and The Forks. The project was favoured by 75 percent of Winnipeggers in public consultations carried out for the integrated plan. Pedestrian and cycling connections to the downtown and the Exchange District and St. Boniface will be emphasized in future developments including the extension of the riverwalk from the national historic site, north along the Red River to link with the marina location and Stephen Juba Park.

\* (1030)

The Forks Aboriginal Planning Committee has expressed an interest in developing a time tunnel along the historic railway bridge beginning with aboriginal images of the past at the south point and moving through time across the bridge to images of the present. The partnership is pursuing the creation of a charitable foundation to support The Forks heritage interpretive plan and heritage development.

The partnership has applied to the Winnipeg Development Agreement to undertake a planning phase to establish the foundation.

Completion of the commemorative plaza will put us on the same earth that aboriginal people walked on over 3,000 years ago. This landscape space which I referred to earlier incorporates siting devices for naked eye astronomy, performance space, beams of light, and our Forks Aboriginal Planning Committee will assist the partnership in programming the use of this new public space.

The rail cars represent another important era in the history of the site and we are exploring alternative uses of the vehicles.

Preserving the natural environment of The Forks is also important, so attention will be given to preserving the river bottom forest, especially on South Point and landscaping the site with trees and prairie tall grass. The concept of developing a market garden as an urban ecology demonstration project has emerged from early discussions with the University of Manitoba and Winnipeg School Division No. 1.

The public has responded positively to the blending of mixed uses at The Forks. The partnership will seek new

commercial opportunities in the entertainment sector. In a public survey commissioned by the partnership, a theme-style entertainment development was cited as the most appealing measure to achieve self-sufficiency at The Forks. An open-air, outdoor multiplex to accommodate festivals, concerts, winter events, baseball and other sports will be considered in the festival park area at The Forks.

Improvements to the festival park will also provide an appropriate and attractive outdoor venue for groups such as the Royal Winnipeg Ballet and the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra. We have had many discussions with the symphony regarding outdoor concerts at The Forks and in fact we are in preliminary discussions about their 50th anniversary celebrations next year. A general proposal call will be undertaken to determine both interest and potential private investment for recreation and entertainment initiatives in the mandate area.

The Forks will be a venue for celebrations associated with the Pan American Games. A major part of the future planning will be devoted to preparations for those games. We are going to be issuing a proposal call to solicit interest in developing recreation and entertainment facilities in time for these games, and we are now working with the Pan American Games Society on a feasibility study that will assist with an assessment of the viability and requirements for potential Pan Am Games legacy projects at The Forks.

Our Forks access proposal currently before the city is a critical element to handling the crowds expected during the summer of 1999. We must ensure the site can accommodate the estimated 75,000 to 100,000 visitors expected each evening over the two-week event.

The partnership will continue its commitment to design excellence in future developments at The Forks. Lighting improvements will be undertaken to add character and improve safety. The partnership will also emphasize The Forks as a child-friendly environment with some interesting shapes and colours. There must be plenty of opportunity to participate, observe and learn.

I would like to spend a minute, if I can, on our financial situation and give you a presentation of our

most recent 1995-96 results. We have included here a pie chart which gives you an idea of where we are spending our money. As you can see, there are a wide variety of expenditures, rental projects, which is largely our residential component over on the North Portage site, the Imax Theatre, parking, The Forks Market, administration, program planning. Amenities really refers to the cost of maintaining the public amenity areas at The Forks.

On the revenue side, you will see that, as well, we have a wide variety of sources of revenue, rental revenue being the largest portion of that, but also significant revenues coming from parking as well as theatre, market and lease income.

What we wanted to do in this slide is to give you a two-year picture. I think it shows you the impact of the merger of The Forks and North Portage, taking a look at revenue and expenses over the period 1993-94, '94-95 and '95-96. You can see that in two years, we have managed to get a million dollars of extra revenue out of the site. More importantly, we have been able to shave our expenses by \$700,000. I will tell you that in our '95-96 results, we have actually included 15 months worth of Imax Theatre expenses in order to bring it into correspondence with our fiscal year.

If you use 12 months of expenses, which is the case in '93-94, the expenses actually have been shaved by over a million dollars in the last two years, and I think that both those numbers are due—and I do want to give credit to our board of directors who have given us some very clear and direct guidance on working on improving both revenues and dealing with our expenses. We have seen our net income rise from a little over \$100,000 to now over \$1.8 million in two short years. It is a significant progress and I am happy to tell you that when you look at our next year's financial results, you are going to see even more progress in improving our financial situation.

Just to give you a sense of where, what the contribution of funds are to our net income, you can see the very important role that lease income, primarily on the North Portage site, parking income, again primarily on the North Portage site, play in giving us the additional revenue we need to be financially self-sufficient. I think it also points to the future for The Forks. We are going

to have to be seriously looking at more private sector development to help us achieve financial self-sufficiency.

I wanted to give you a picture of administrative costs. You can see that in the years prior to the merger, which is the red and green bars, in '91 through '94-95 that administrative costs were largely escalating, and you can see the impact of the merger in the blue bars in '95-96 and our prediction for '96-97, that they are actually going to be, the trend is obviously downward.

To position the partnership for the future it will be necessary to ensure sufficient cash reserves exist to invest in future strategic infrastructure development. I mentioned The Forks Market and the need to continue to renew that. Also the site, there is just lots of work to be done and we need the cash to be able to do that over the long term. Equivalency revenue payments which originally represented transfer of funds from our shareholders until The Forks was to be financially self-sufficient are scheduled to be fully paid out in the year 2001.

Currently the Province of Manitoba and the City of Winnipeg are providing this funding and the Government of Canada has completed contributing its share. The provincial commitment requires one final payment in 1997.

\* (1040)

Based on estimates from Land Management Services branch of the Province of Manitoba, who were responsible for negotiating all expropriation claims on our North Portage site, we anticipate that outstanding expropriation costs on unsettled claims at North Portage will exceed \$6 million. The actual values of the settlements can vary of course depending on the legal decisions rendered by the courts.

What we have done in our financial statements is set aside \$6 million now to cover those settlements in the future. The North Portage site, through its co-ordination of parking, land lease and rental revenue, continues to provide a strong financial base.

As we look ahead, our financial analysis tells us that three critical elements are required to sustain The Forks: additional revenue sources, cash contributions from

North Portage, investments in infrastructure, maintenance and improvements. This includes further financial investments in projects like lighting, the walkways, bridges. We have already expended funds in planning activities related to the Pan Am games, and we anticipate further investment in access and other facility preparations for those games.

We also may be—our future financial success is highly dependent on our ability to manage our current complement of assets and provide for future developments to enhance our revenue stream, to cover our ongoing site expenses.

In the absence of new development the partnership will experience a declining net cash flow trend beyond the year 2001. Under our proposed plan for development, the partnership's cash position remains positive and increases over time. We are now awaiting approval at the city level of this plan so we can more fully discuss it in the public. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Thank you, Mr. Smith and Mr. Keller, for a very interesting and informative report.

How did the committee wish to consider the items referred to it today? Shall all the items be considered together, or did the committee members wish to address questions separately on each individual item? Is it agreed that we consider them together? [agreed]

**Mr. Laurendeau:** Mr. Chairman, I really appreciated the report that they brought forward today and what is being shown to us. But there was something missing that was brought to our attention at a previous meeting that I still have some concerns with, and that is on the public properties. I know Toby and myself have had the discussion on the property side where we are paying taxes on some of these lands that right now are actually, as far as a number of us are concerned, a civic responsibility, and we are maintaining those lands for them. Where are we at today on that issue?

**Mr. Keller:** Mr. Chairman, we had several meetings with the city on that subject, and the reply we finally got was, if the province and the federal government come on an equal position on this issue, then they will be prepared to make a move. Otherwise, they are being discriminated of giving us tax concession. So with the end result,

which is unfortunate, but we are fighting them in the courts right now and making lawyers happy and making them look foolish, because it is a senseless process, but we have to do it.

**Mr. Laurendeau:** Through you, Mr. Chairman, so at this time we are before the courts with the issue and we are not dealing at the table with the city.

**Mr. Smith:** We have had, as our chair has discussed, a number of meetings on the issue of property tax relief for public amenities at The Forks. At the moment, there does not seem to be any willingness to deal with that on the political level, so we have decided to deal with that administratively. We have gone through the Board of Revision. We are now going to be going to the Municipal Board, and we anticipate that based on the legislation on market value assessment, we will be fairly successful in achieving some significant reductions to property taxes on our site.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Are there further questions?

**Ms. Barrett:** Thank you for a very thorough and informative presentation. I have several questions ranging. You talked about the open-air multiplex and plans for the Pan Am Games at The Forks and access and these kinds of issues. I am wondering if you can tell us what your view is of the status or what the impact would be of the Snowcap proposal, which I assume is still viable. The Snowcap has until some time this month to come forward with their final—I am interested in the viability and the impact on The Forks, in particular.

**Mr. Keller:** I am glad you raised the question. That is a very hot issue with us. We made the City of Winnipeg a proposal: Let us do the development of the access and the road system and the services with it on our side, including the York underpass, and we would guarantee a 35 percent saving. We put our team together. We managed to do that, put a package together which is less than even 35 percent, but that creates a problem. You cannot do that these days. You have got to spend the money which is there.

So we are ready to go, and that is so important to the Pan Am Games function. Let us say it is only 50,000 people a night or an afternoon, that is a lot of people to handle. So we must have the York underpass and the

other entrances done before the games, because it would be an Atlanta disaster twice over. So we cannot afford these issues.

So the package is there. We could start on that program within a month's time. It is all ready to go, and we are meeting with the city Executive Policy Committee at the end of the month, on October 30, and we hope that we will be able to shake that issue loose.

On the outdoor multiplex, which is a good possibility that it will include a baseball diamond, that will be developed and funded by the private sector. A baseball diamond—and we want to make sure that is completely understood—a baseball stadium or a baseball diamond situation anywhere, including The Forks, stand-alone will not survive. It would turn out to be a white elephant. It will only carry 35 percent of a total expenditure. Therefore, that multiplex has to be designed and built to include other cultural functions and activities for families to the tune of 200 per year in order to make that a viability. We have private investors. They are looking at the long term but, at the same time, are sure investments which we can provide them with proper planning. That project could develop to be a capital expenditure of approximately \$10 million by the time that is completed, but what it will do as a starter, with the Pan Am Games, it will then develop from then on on a continuous basis, but the Pan Am Games will be the steppingstone to this function that will be introduced. We would like to have it finished a little sooner so we can do some trial runs.

We are looking at developing a mobile stage for the site which would be completely self-contained, and there is some well recognition in place by the people in that business of theatre and music, and we see that as being a success. So there is a lot of private initiative out there because they see the potential. They see it can be done, and we are definitely not standing in the way. We met already with the symphony orchestra. They are going to have tremendous entertainment, a month at The Forks, with a barge anchored on the river and the orchestra on it. So we are planning way ahead, and we also want in these facilities which will house a youth activity centre, which will house facilities of change rooms, washrooms, concession stands and the whole works, so that especially at the Pan Am Games or other functions we do not have those line-ups and cannot serve the public in the

confusion. So it is not a matter of bragging, it is a matter of doing it right and the people, I strongly feel, who can do it right, who want to do it right with heart and soul, who are committed to it, not just with tongue in cheek and a political issue.

\* (1050)

The Forks cannot make it unless we work with dedicated people like we even have on staff. If you see them operate, they are with it, and that is why it starts to grow and it is functional. It is a very basic solution, but it is there, and the private sector are now coming on stream. We have to turn away—and you see McDonald's, they are prepared to write a \$2 million cheque. Labatt Breweries, they all want to be there with their signs up, but our program is different. We do not want to survive on liquor. We want our families to enjoy that, so it is hard to say to \$2 million, but you have to do it. We will find the sources; it is out there. The money is there.

**Ms. Barrett:** Thank you very much. When you talk about private sources, are you talking about the Snowcap proposal, or are you talking about assuming that that is not viable and that there will be another proposal? The second part of that is, where do you anticipate the physical location of this multiplex outdoor pavilion or complex to be located specifically, north of the access or south of it?

**Mr. Keller:** Mr. Chairman, there are two locations being discussed. One, on the proposed Snowcap site and the other—[interjection] So on top, that is the city's property, the proposed Snowcap site, and then below, in the light shading, that is Forks property. Now, to be realistic, the political issues on the city's property with Snowcap, there is a \$240-million dream out there, and they are still looking for funding on the feasibility studies and so on. We are not sitting back and saying, well, you know, maybe it is going to happen, so we are planning.

The problem we are having is that, if by any chance the decision comes down to go on the city property, that will probably be the end of the complex in reality. We will never get it built in time for the Pam Am Games with negotiations with the city and the process, No. 1; and, No. 2, the practicality of the complex to be a multi-entertainment facility. So the baseball diamond seating would be on top of the light shading, and then it will be

open to the south to receive a mass of people for any kind of function and gatherings, whatever it takes. So there are those issues to be decided.

On a serious note, if we want to have this ready for the Pam Am Games, we are not going to make it on the city property, and I am just trying to be realistic, knowing the process. So that is that issue.

**Mr. Smith:** If I can just maybe add to that, as I mentioned in the presentation, we are working now with the Pan American Games Society and the three levels of government, including the city, to do some detailed feasibility planning for a number of proposed facilities, including the baseball facility, and we are hoping to have that work done well before the end of the year so that the decisions can be made with all the information in hand in time to start construction next spring.

**Mr. Keller:** I am sorry, Mr. Chairman, I forgot the question. The Snowcap issue cannot be taken seriously till the end of November. We were first told the end of October, it is the end of November, and then the city will have to make a decision to see what can be done with that property. That is the issue on that.

**Mr. Gary Steiman (Board Member, North Portage Development Corporation, operating as The Forks North Portage Partnership):** Mr. Chairman, I would add, and I stand to be corrected, but the city property is a highly desirable site for the outdoor complex if it becomes available. In other words, if the Snowcap issue does not proceed and their option expires, that site is highly eligible to be the location for the outdoor multiplex. As I read in the paper, there was not much response at the Norwood Hotel meeting from people that were interested in the Snowcap proposal. I believe there was only one private-sector business beyond the promoters that were. I am not too optimistic that it is going to see the light of day. However, it has to be given full opportunity to do so before we can really zero in on the final site. But, as our chairman said, if that situation is going to be dragged too long, we will basically run out of time and we will have to work on Forks property.

**Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood):** Mr. Chairperson, I attended part of the Snowcap evening the other night, the first part of it. Kent and I sat at the same table. I do not know whether attendance kind of dwindled over the

evening or whether it improved, but I think the thing that concerns me is that at least the appearance is that they have support from some of the key players that are part of your team. In a sense they at least presented the appearance of support from major corporations and Downtown Biz people and other groups, and so it seems like there is a fairly serious problem here with integrated planning with the opportunity of the games and the opportunity to site your project in the best way as opposed to the possibility that you are going to be forced into the kind of congested and probably less appealing form of development that would force it south on to Forks property and, I think, interfere potentially with the York Avenue realignment and all those other things and also prevent an optimal or even an acceptable way of dealing with the parking problem which, to me, is the most serious problem The Forks suffers from right now, access and parking.

It is such a wonderful place, but it is increasingly simply a big, bloody parking lot, and nobody wants that. Yet it is a victim of its own incredible popularity.

So I guess my question is partly to you and partly to government, and government really is not at the table today in some sense; through Mr. Reimer it is.

This is a very serious political problem that we have got in terms of political direction, and it seems to me that there is a logjam here that has got to be cleared, and there is some leadership needed to clear it. I do not fault anybody's efforts at this point, but it does seem that the key players are being pulled in two directions, particularly with the list of, at least the theoretical list of support that was tabled by Snowcap the other night.

**Mr. Steiman:** Mr. Chairman, I would speak on behalf of our board. I want to dispel the illusion that may have been created that we are not supportive of the Snowcap project. Snowcap made the presentation to our board, and we indicated to them that we certainly were supportive of their goals. We really questioned whether they were attainable, and I think that we are safe in saying that if they do receive the kind of support that they need to go forward, we would be delighted. The baseball facility probably could be incorporated in that in some way and so on, but because we cannot wait to see what their outcome will be we have to forge ahead with a plan B or else we just will run out of time.

\* (1100)

So God knows and He will not tell us whether they will be successful but, based on the information that we have, the indication is that it is a big stretch and so we better be prepared with plan B or else we are going to be ending up with the Pan Am Games without proper facilities.

**Mr. Sale:** So is the fear that the Snowcap process would simply be dragged out and the feasibility study of which they speak—the other night Mr. Sveinson spoke as though that feasibility study were a reality and was going to be completed in time, prior to the running out of their option.

Is that your understanding, that they will have this feasibility study in place and it is funded? Because the other word we heard was, it was not funded yet. So I am not sure which is correct.

**Mr. Smith:** Our understanding is, you know, not knowing all the details of the Snowcap facility and where it sits in terms of the feasibility work, there is a deadline now that has been set at November 30 for the expiry of the option. We are hopeful that the city will make a decision one way or the other on the information that is available on that date and that we will not be in a position of extending that but, as our chair has said, that is a decision that ultimately is not in our control, it rests with the city and, if the city decides to extend that option, then it really does eliminate anything north of York from any consideration for any kind of development, certainly for the Pan American Games.

**Mr. Keller:** Mr. Chairman, I would like to go on record. We are not going to allow to have any government embarrassed on our side. If by any chance that November 30 deadline gets closer and they start dragging the issue out, we are not going to roll over and play dead, by no means. We are going to get the job done.

We have two shareholders, so there are two shareholders which give us support almost on a daily basis. That is why we can progress fast in many areas. So we would turn to our shareholders. There are two partners, and in a partnership if one does not toe the line, the two others will have to do a little butt kicking, or whatever you want to call it, but that is the way the real world is.

We are not going to jeopardize a major world event here in Winnipeg because of game play, or some people misjudging the capacity, especially financial capacity. The job has to be done. We have the opportunity that is still there; on our land; we can develop. So, one way or the other, we are going to get the job done. The sad part is that it becomes more costly and more aggravating, but I guess we have to live with it, and that is not the end of the world either. So I just want to make sure that that is clearly understood. We are not going to allow that to become a monster, Mr. Chairman.

**Ms. Barrett:** I am a little unclear in my mind about the feasibility study that you are undertaking, and I think it is a good thing for you to be undertaking it at the same time rather than waiting. Is that feasibility study in two parts, one north of York on the city grounds and one on The Forks property; or is it only, the feasibility study, assuming that the north-of-York portion is not available or there is not enough time, and so it is focused solely on The Forks property?

**Mr. Smith:** Maybe I should clarify: the feasibility study that we are working on—

**Mr. Chairperson:** Excuse me, could you just move to the mike.

**Mr. Smith:** Sorry. The feasibility study that we are working on is taking a look at all of the events and facilities that are required for the Pan American Games, one of which that has been looked at is baseball, but just as importantly we are also looking at festival site improvement. In fact, there may be some synergies, as our chair has alluded to, between the festival site and the baseball stadium. We are looking at the feasibility of all of these facilities in the context of The Forks, but The Forks area, or mandate area, includes the city-owned land lying north of York, so we are looking at the feasibility of these sites at a number of locations. So they are being looked at together. We have not isolated one location at this point in the study and said, this is where it has got to be. We are looking at all those alternatives, and we are hoping that, when this feasibility study is ready and the Pan American Games Society has undertaken to make the results of that public, there will be an objective assessment of what is feasible and where the best sites are for the facilities.

**Mr. Reimer:** I just wanted to also champion Ernie's—pardon me, Mr. Keller's—comments regarding the time being of essence. It should be pointed out that the study that has just been referred to by Mr. Smith is on a very tight time frame also because, as mentioned, time is of the essence, and we are moving closer and closer to 1999. I believe that the feasibility study has only got a six-week timetable on it, so we realize that these are things that have to come through fruition and for direction and guidance, not only for The Forks and their planning, but in the whole Pan Am Games Committee. So we have been very diligent in trying to get things on a very rigid time frame so that there is an expectation of results that can come about.

**Ms. Barrett:** I thank the committee and the minister for the clarification on the status of that part of the process, and we will be monitoring very closely, too, to see what happens.

There was some talk about residential plans, and I know there is a large residential component in the North Portage area. I would like some update or some expansion of the plans for residential, if any, properties on The Forks site.

**Mr. Smith:** Residential development at The Forks has always been part of the original concept and financial plan for the site. I think it is fair to say that there has been—it is probably one of the most controversial types of development at The Forks, and I think our board of directors is treading very carefully about looking at the future of residential development. There is also an important question to address, and that is, is there a market for this form of residential development in the city? You know, we are not growing like many other cities in Canada, as quickly as those cities, so we have to be very careful. Not only do we have to get the public onside, but we also have to be sure that it is feasible to do it.

We have done some recent survey work with the public, and we think that the public may be in favour of certain kinds of residential development. We would like to explore that in a more public way by holding a forum next year to discuss that in more detail. Our other plan is to go out for a proposal call and include residential in the call and see if there is some private-sector interest that can viably do the development. You know, nobody is

under any illusions that this is going to be a very easy or straightforward process.

**Ms. Barrett:** I think that is an accurate assessment of it. You said that you were going to, you felt that the public might be open to certain kinds of residential development, and I know the survey that showed 48 percent of the people liked the idea of living at The Forks. I am not at all sure people have a sense of what living at The Forks means or they are just responding to the very positive sense that people get when they go to The Forks, but what certain kinds of residential development are you thinking of? The second part of that is, are you, in your feasibility studies, in your discussions, talking about plans for the Pan Am Games having a residential component in that, or is that further down the road, or are you setting some physical space aside for the potential for residential development at The Forks? How is that meshing at this point?

**Mr. Smith:** Well, there is a lot of planning going underway for a wide variety of facilities, but we do have a 60-acre site. We have only developed about 10 acres of that. So, by comparison to many other cities, we are blessed with a large site and a lot of opportunities.

\* (1110)

In terms of the form of housing, I think it has been interesting that the Exchange District BIZ has just gone through a planning process, and they are very supportive of residential development at The Forks because they believe that it provides some better linkage between their site and ours. One of the sites we are looking at, which seems to have more support in the public, is the area north of Provencher along the river, and there we are looking at something that is probably low rise. Obviously, the other area that we have expended, that we are looking at, is the whole issue of environmental friendliness and making this development kind of sort of state of the art from an environmental point of view. We think that kind of housing, if it is done with some sensitive design, will enjoy some support in the public, but that is something we recognize that we cannot take it for granted. It is going to have to be worked on. We are going to have to work with the public, and we are going to have to make sure that it is financially feasible too because the last thing we want to do is do a development that then ends up costing us more money, because the

whole intent of doing this kind of development is to try to generate some revenue to ensure financial self-sufficiency in the long term.

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, that leads me to my next question. You were talking about the physical siting and the physical design and development of potential residential housing there.

Have you, in your planning are you looking at—is this going to be high-end rental, middle rental, low-end rental or a mix? Have you gotten to that point in the deliberations?

**Mr. Keller:** Mr. Chairman, Ms. Barrett, that is a hot question, because we are a public place. Who are we going to build for, the big shots or for the poor? That is really what it boils down to. So if we are just going to build for the rich, you are going to have some big apartments or fancy condos. That is one issue. So then we have less of the public against us and we lose a major portion of the public support because we are only catering to one side.

The other issue is then, if you introduce affordable housing you are also introducing social problems with it, and then who is going to hold the bag? On our side, what we are going to look at in residential development, it has got to be developed by the private sector. The private sector has to take the risk of making a project like this to be viable and take the good and the bad. That means profit and losses.

We will no longer entertain any involvement from our corporation in any housing development. I hoped I would not have to mention it, but we burned our fingers once. We are sitting with apartments on the north Portage side which cost our corporation a lot of money. So we do not want at least, if nothing else, to repeat the same mistake.

So it is a very touchy issue. If you build too elaborate you use up a lot of land, the cost of the units are too costly, then the purchaser, the buyer of apartments is not going to be there. So there is still a large vacancy in that market. The province is in that business, and I understand they have their share of problems. So we are not trying to go and compete with them and take some of their problems over to us. That is where it is in a

nutshell. But it is out there—sharing. So that is where it is. But the public likes to see something set out. Maybe down the road it could happen.

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, I think you have very clearly outlined some of the concerns that you are going to have to deal with but, again, in your planning are you, for example, seeing that area that you talked about?

Of course, it would not be in your plans anyway for the festival site or at the multiplex, I assume, for the Pan Am Games. Am I correct in assuming that you can be dealing with these issues about housing and residential component of the development in the future at the same time as you are talking about the plans for the festival site and other Pan Am Games things and you do not have to make the decision on the housing on the same time line as the plans have to be finalized for the Pan Am Games? Is that accurate?

**Mr. Keller:** Mr. Chairman, that is a well-raised question. The component will not be interfering at the present time, but we strongly feel, and I am personally a strong believer that we should not at any time think about isolating ourselves at The Forks and then the heck with the rest. That would be destructive for the future of The Forks. I strongly believe that we should communicate more with the St. Boniface side, and there is some beautiful land there for the best residential development you can have, and mixed residential, just across the river. It is very economical to do. There is a lot of vacant land. The city owns land, and then it will tie into the other festival part. So there is another opportunity. That takes discussions with the St. Boniface side, and that issue has to be promoted because we will be linking, going north—anyway we are pushing our road to the north underneath the High Line and eventually a new bridge may happen across the river there, so it will tie in. We would like to see St. Boniface tied in a lot more to The Forks than it is now. You will see, especially at the Pan Am Games, we are going to try some major things. On that issue it is right across opposite from us where the cathedral side is and into the hospital side, and we are going to use that for spectators and activities at the Pan Am Games.

**Mr. Sale:** Mr. Chairperson, I just have a couple of questions. One, an observation. Both Toronto and Vancouver managed to deal with the mixed-use question

through the use of the co-op housing program, which the federal government, unfortunately, killed a year ago or two years ago. Now, there have been a few co-ops built at market without subsidies, but it is an interesting idea, especially in the sense that there are kinds of niche populations of artists, the art community—I do not mean in the visual arts, but the whole artistic community, I guess, would be a better way to put it—as well as the entrepreneurial community around The Forks that are there. That might be an interesting avenue to explore to see whether a co-op form of housing mixed with a market condo or other style of housing might provide you with that political balance as well as with the kind of mix of people. It is just a thought, but Vancouver and Toronto both were successful in doing that in their prestige downtown redevelopment processes. It is kind of how they achieved that mix.

A question about the York Avenue extension and that future issue. I think one of the slides you showed us assumed the York Avenue extension and a connection across a rebuilt Provencher Bridge? Is that correct or not?

\* (1120)

**Mr. Keller:** Mr. Chairman, the York underpass, unfortunately we do not have any pictures, but we would reconstruct that bridge new. It would be in a timber form and maintain some of the characteristics of the 19th Century. It would be three lanes; it would then hit Pioneer Boulevard. Pioneer Boulevard would turn into a two-lane road all the way out to right there, and then there will be a major turn, in other words, to accommodate the traffic. So then, when you come underneath the York underpass with three lanes, you have the two lanes, the old system, distribute the traffic. There is a hesitation of extending York Avenue with a two-way to the bridge, and we are not in favour of that item because it will cut us off completely from the north. So we would be too isolated. The traffic experts would like to do that, but they only think about traffic, nothing else. We have to consider the easy flow of people, families, moving on the side without being worried about being overrun by higher-speed traffic; that is what it will turn out to. That was in our plan, but have a good distribution when you come underneath the York underpass and spread it into The Forks area.

**Mr. Sale:** Thank you, I am comforted by that, I guess, because I have always worried that the traffic engineers who go into terminal angst if they cannot pour a certain number of cubic yards of concrete every year, they just are not feeling fulfilled in their life. So I am glad to hear that you are not in favour of that.

This also may be a way in which you build your liaison with the St. Boniface people, because I know there is a concern on that side of the river to reduce Provencher from a major truck route to a more—it cannot be a residential through route, obviously, but not a through truck route, in other words, to force the routing of through truck traffic down Archibald or through some other mechanism to by-pass the city and not have it drive through the city using that bridge. That would suggest scaling down a new Provencher bridge, not scaling it up as the traffic engineers are hoping. So I am glad to hear that you are on the side of scaling down and not scaling up.

I have one other question about your presentation which just concerns me. The Forks is torn always between the kind of public place it is so successfully and the need to be financially viable. Nothing fills my soul with more terror than the notion of a Walt Disney and a Disneyfied entertainment complex on the site. To me the particular uniqueness that you have achieved, and it is The Fork Corporation that has achieved this, is that every family in Winnipeg, whether rich or poor, can enjoy this site, can afford to be there in a safe, high-quality setting without having to spend a great deal of money.

I think one of the great joys is to watch the mix of people who are there on any given day. It really disturbs me that we might be thinking in some sense of a theme park as opposed to thinking of how we can use the historical site, the South Point to fulfill that kind of objective of interpretation and history rather than building anything on the north side that would be a commercial entertainment, however cleverly disguised. Disney does not do things on a nonprofit, charitable basis.

**Mr. Smith:** It is a good question, and, certainly, I think if you look at The Forks, there are a couple of things you have referred to. One is that there is free access to the site for anybody and everybody, and in fact we would like to hand out—there was a nice editorial that Terrence

Moore did, I think calling The Forks the boulevard of life and, to us, we think he has captured very much the essence of the site.

I know the board, in looking at our future plans, has said that one thing is sacrosanct and that is that there will not be any user charge levied for people to come and visit the site. Having said that, I think it is fair also to say that one of the great successes of The Forks is providing a mixture of public amenities and commercial development. The question becomes, what kind of commercial development is appropriate? It is obvious that commercial development works with public amenities, and I think you are raising the issue of, you know, should it be national chains that are coming in, whether it is a Disney or a McDonald's, or should it be unique development that respects the character and history of the site?

Obviously, from our point of view, we want to continue what we have done in the past, which is to try to make it unique, make it one of a kind and allow for the continued mix of development. I think one of the problems of Stephen Juba Park is that it is all public amenity and there is no commercial development on the site to allow people to come down and use it for a variety of reasons. So we recognize it is a delicate mix, a delicate balance. We have obviously got to rely on the private sector for future development. I think the nice thing is that the private sector people we talked to understand why The Forks is successful, and I think they also will be trying to continue that success.

**Mr. Steiman:** Mr. Chairman, I would add that our surveys show that the No. 1 reason people come to The Forks is the market. We all talk about the river walks and the green space and the other amenities, but the market is the major attraction, and that is a commercial development. As our president has suggested, if you just go totally for amenities as Stephen Juba Park is, you do not accomplish the objective. My observation is that our views and our practices are in harmony with what you are suggesting.

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Chairperson:** Before I recognize Ms. Barrett, I would like to, at this time, welcome five students from Thailand and their hosts from Kelvin High School under

the direction of Kelvin teacher, Mr. Raymond Sokulski. The students are here as the first part of an exchange and will be in Winnipeg for about one month. Welcome here.

\* \* \*

**Ms. Barrett:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and, yes, welcome. Following along what my colleague, the concern he has raised, yes, the response is yes, that a mix needs to be maintained, but when you say that the No. 1 reason for people coming to The Forks is the market, I would suggest to you that the market, while it is a commercial venture, is light years away from the kind of commercialization that Disney or McDonald's would bring to The Forks. It is a small, it is a local, it is the kind of thing that Mr. Smith was talking about, and I guess I would just reiterate the concern that Mr. Sale said. If we, the corporation, is looking to maintain that mix and wanting to deal with the private sector but also the local private sector in Winnipeg and Manitoba, then I guess my question is why, in the presentation, even mention Disney or McDonald's? To us that is a large red flag and leads us to a great deal of discomfort.

\* (1130)

**Mr. Keller:** Mr. Chairman, we had to mention that. We have to expose this issue that is out there and that it is constantly a threat and we have to cope with it, but we have to make the public aware that it is out there and inform everybody that it is a dicey issue.

That does not mean that we forget about father and mother and go for McDonald's and take the \$2 million and make our statement look better. We also know that that is probably the beginning of the end of a site. Fortunately, Mr. Chairman, I must say, very fortunately, the board we have, we have a very exciting board, that nobody is there and nips, nothing passes, everything is debated to the end. So the presentation is great from all sides. [interjection] Yes, very true, and so it is a pleasure to work with people like them, you know, so it is a concern, but I would not jump off the bridge for it.

**Ms. Barrett:** As one of my colleagues said, we would have to build a bridge first. I appreciate your response and that does give me some degree of comfort that the reality is there. I think you certainly have engendered

some discussion here this morning, so I think if that is the reason for it, then that is good to not put it under the rug, but to say that this is something that is out there and we need to be aware of it.

I would like to ask a couple of questions about the South Point development in light of the recent announcements about the WDA funding and the development of the bridge. You are working with the aboriginal, I cannot remember the exact—there was an aboriginal component to the development project?

**Mr. Keller:** That is an exciting issue you raised. Actually, from Day One, we were finding ways of working with the native community in a positive way, and what I mean by a positive way is to have the community on board in a form of a partnership to go a lot further. With great satisfaction and surprise we found that they are willing to do and go a long mile to work with us to make that a success. So there are a lot of plans for that site.

Number one, we want to make sure that the native community is properly identified at the South Point with their culture and historic part, and they are planning right now some exciting venues for that.

It was the native community who came up with, then creating that bridge which we are restoring as a time tunnel and showing visitors their side of the Canadian history and culture. That excites us. It will attract a lot of tourists and visitors to our site. There is no question. So to us, it is one of the most positive things that has happened.

I will be quite frank about it; we were not prepared to write any more cheques, any meaningless cheques without seeing any return. We gambled in that area and the gamble is going to be the best thing we did for a long time. It is going to be very successful, Mr. Chairman.

**Ms. Barrett:** Is there any discussion or creative tension about the degree of development of South Point? I know the news release states that this is a peninsula where an aboriginal burial ground is located and where aboriginal culture in Manitoba will be showcased, and I am wondering if the partners in this South Point process are in agreement or if they are still in discussions.

**Mr. Smith:** I would like to first of all acknowledge the role that Mary Richard, the Chair of the Aboriginal Planning Committee and a member of our board, is playing in this process. She is certainly taking a great deal of leadership in working with a wide cross-section of the aboriginal community in talking about South Point.

Mary—one of the first things she told me when I arrived at The Forks was that she had brought all the elders from around the province down to visit South Point and when they were on the site, they did a ceremony called the Shaking Tent Ceremony, and when they did that ceremony all the elders recognized the spiritual significance of the site, and if you have ever walked over there, and it is not an easy place to walk over to, it is amazing just how much of a natural area it is right in the heart of the city. I think no one more than the aboriginal community understand the sacredness and the spiritual significance of the site, and they will be the last people, I think, to develop it incompatibly with the natural environment. So when they are now looking at this idea of a time tunnel, they are looking at recreating an environment that existed before the arrival of the white man. So this is going to be, I think, very much in keeping with the natural environment.

**Ms. Barrett:** Just one more brief question on the timing of the development of South Point. Is it envisaged that this will be completed or close to completion in time for the Pan Am Games so this is part of the whole Pan Am Process?

**Mr. Keller:** Yes. Of course, the bridge will be completed, and the native community is prepared to have the presence there for the Pan Am Games in the form of teepees, interpreters and displays in a small type of museum. So it is going to be a major attraction. We do not want to miss that. It is extra revenue for them too.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Further questions?

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** I must apologize for missing the presentations, and I hope that my questions have not already been answered, so please tell me if they have.

I am concerned about what seems to me the loss of heritage and history in the promotional aspects of The Forks material, Come Together Where the Rivers Meet.

We used to have a sense of come together where the people meet, and that sense of a mingling of people at The Forks was an aspect of promotion that seems to be losing. I drive down Pembina Highway and I see a big sign which says, come and shop at The Forks. I look at the advertising that is here and the four elements that you are using. There is not a sense of the history. We used to have the York boat in the logo. I know you have had to change the logo because of the amalgamation with North Portage, but I am concerned about the promotional aspects of The Forks and the loss of that sense of history.

So I wondered if perhaps you could comment on that, whether it was answered in the other presentations?

**Mr. Smith:** I think there is a lot of promotional activity happening both at The Forks and North Portage. But just to comment on the logo specifically, we have made a change in the logo, as you can see here, where we have actually added some people. I mean, if there is a significant change in the logo, it has been the addition of people, so I think there is a recognition that it is a people place. [interjection]

Well, no. Again, no, the York boat is still very much a part of The Forks. It has and will continue to be the logo for The Forks Market, and in all the promotional material for The Forks Market the York boat is prominently featured.

We also have been working very much more closely than in the past with The Forks national historic site. They have a number of activities that are being done to promote the heritage of that site. This summer, for the first time, thanks to some help from the provincial CareerStart program, we were able to hire some tourism ambassadors. One of the things they have done is, No. 1, go out and communicate with everybody working on The Forks site to give them a history lesson about the past of the site and be able to communicate that to people that they are running into every day.

As well, through contacting the bus tour industry, we have been meeting all the buses that arrive at The Forks during the summer and giving them information on the history of the site. There is a beautiful walking tour guide that has been prepared that really goes behind the buildings and the features and talks about the history and

the significance of the site. Those books have been handed out to all the tourists that come to the site.

So I think there is no question that we need to do more. One of the things we did talk about in the presentation was the concept of setting up a heritage foundation, because what we have seen in the past when we had a public archeology program at The Forks that funding has not been available from the public sector to continue that project, but we think that there is a great deal of interest in continuing that. Our strategy is to set up a foundation to allow for some private donations to get some of these heritage programs resurrected.

\* (1140)

**Ms. Friesen:** Yes, that is where I was going with the heritage plan that The Forks has had for the last at least four years, if not longer. The proposal for a heritage foundation has been there for, I think, at least five years. The province cut, and I do not suppose you meant to do it that way, but, Mr. Chairman, through you to the minister, I will point out that the province cut the public archeology program, which was free, which was very popular, and I thought had the opportunity to bring a lot of people to The Forks who otherwise were not going. It also gave the opportunity to link with schools in a very direct way. So I want to put on the record my sense of regret at the loss of that public archeology program and to hope that that continues to play a part in The Forks proposals for the future.

Can you tell me something? I was interested in the walking tour that you talked about, and I would like to see a copy of that if you could forward one to us. I think there is a tendency—and it has always been there, so I am not critical of anybody in particular—to rely on Parks Canada for historical interpretation. The ability to rely on Parks Canada, I think, is going to be reduced in the future. Parks Canada is changing quite significantly and is—to put it in the bluntest form—privatizing its parks.

I wonder if perhaps the chairman or the minister could tell us what the future relations are going to be with Parks Canada and how their change in management structure which has—I mean, over the last 18 months, it has been quite dramatic, and they are now into another shift. They are going back, in fact, to a different kind of program. So how is this going to affect The Forks and the kind of

programming that you have relied on Parks for in the past?

**Mr. Keller:** Mr. Chairman, that is an issue dear to our hearts. Because of that becoming a reality, we approached Parks Canada. I think it is going to work out well, that we are going to assume that work they were doing, had taken on as the corporation, for the same reason we do not want to see any flaws and that to start to deteriorate. So I think that in the next few months we will have more serious and closer discussions. We even go a step further and that also then includes taking care of the physical portion of it, because we are not quite happy the way it is going, and that includes the city and the province. That portion is also going to be seriously addressed, that it is tidy, clean and people are welcome, could sit down wherever. We had some major discussions on that issue with Parks Canada, and they are receptive to that.

**Ms. Friesen:** I wonder if we could be a bit more precise on that. Are you saying that you are discussing with Parks Canada the potential for your taking over both their programmings and the site management?

**Mr. Smith:** We are certainly in very active discussions now about, as our chair has indicated, looking at jointly maintaining the site. In many ways, if we work together and probably by putting the two corporations together, we can save some money and that money then, hopefully, is available to do other things at the park. The other thing we are looking at is because we do—and I would agree with you that we are solely relying on Parks Canada staff to do interpretation—and one of the reasons we hired the ambassadors this year directly was to do some of that work directly ourselves. I think we are in some very preliminary talks with Parks Canada staff to look at ways that we could share programming responsibilities, because I think from their point of view, obviously, the history of the site is more than just a national historic site. There is lots of history on our site. At the same time, there are events that we are holding on our site that may be more appropriate that it be held on theirs. So there are a number of ways that I think we can start to work together to solve those problems.

**Ms. Friesen:** Do you have an estimate of how much money you are spending annually on historical interpretation or shall we say public interpretation of that type?

**Mr. Keller:** I thought that we have a good handle on everything, but you caught us a little off guard, which is okay. I mean, this happens, but we will make that available. It is not a small number because of the importance to us, and we have our Finance minister here, if we have it separated, but we can make that available, there is no question.

**Ms. Friesen:** In the heritage plan that I referred to earlier, Mr. Chairman, it has been around for a long time. It was commissioned, done out of Toronto, I think, widely discussed. It was a kind of a public support group that was interested in it. I wondered, are you following it? Is there a kind of an implementation plan that has come from that? What stage are we at with it?

**Mr. Smith:** That is another very good question. We arrived, again—when we put the two corporations together we found that the heritage plan, while there has been a lot of work done on it, it has been prepared, there was never a formal presentation of the plan to the board, and one of the things we did early on was bring the heritage advisory committee to the board for a formal presentation on the heritage plan, and I think the board got a lot out of that, and a lot of the work that has been done in the heritage plan is now moving forward to get into our business plan for implementation.

One of the things we are looking at specifically are the rail cars on the site and ways that we can celebrate them more than they have been in the past, also looking at, as I mentioned, the foundation which we think has a real potential to do a large number of events that celebrate the history of the site. We are looking at the model of the Meewasin Valley Authority in Saskatoon as one that we think has some real possibilities for implementation here in Winnipeg, and everybody we talk to seems to be excited about that. There is some money that is required up front to get that off the ground and we have now put in an application to the Winnipeg Development Agreement for funding under that program.

**Ms. Friesen:** Two things I wanted to pick up on from that. I was asking about the heritage plan and, Mr. Chairman, the board is suggesting that they have finally looked at the plan, but I was asking for the implementation steps that were coming out of that, so I wondered if he might respond on that. The comparison with the Meewasin Valley project, both in terms of its

administrative structure and of the aboriginal and historical component is one that has been there since the beginning, and in a sense, well, I would say in a very direct sense, it is not compatible with the kind of commercial development at The Forks or indeed the kind of family recreation/Disney project that is being contemplated, so I wonder if I am misunderstanding what you are looking at in the Meewasin Valley Authority.

**Mr. Smith:** You may be looking at the Meewasin Valley model a little narrowly, because I think, when we look at our site, some of the celebration of the history of the site comes in the commerce and when we talk to the aboriginal community, in particular, I think of places like Four Winds Trading Company which allows aboriginal people to sell traditional crafts in the market. I think you very much celebrate the history of the site. I mean, the site was a trading place, as you know, and I think the more we can use some of modern-day commerce to reflect back on the culture and traditions of the province, not just the aboriginal community but other ethnic groups as well, I think that in itself helps celebrate the history.

I think, in terms of the model, you are right. It has been around for a long time. I think one of the things we believe that, in order to really get something significant happening, we have to get a pool of funds dedicated to implementing that plan, and we believe the foundation is the best way to start that process. Our efforts are right now focused on getting the foundation set up, and hopefully we can very quickly get a pool of funds that then can be used to implement various aspects of the plan.

There are a few things I will say, you know the astronomical bowl that is now under construction between Johnston Terminal and the Children's Museum will be celebrating the history of the site. The refurbishment of the rail bridge is going to be done in a way that also respects the railway history of the area, so I think every project we are doing we are looking at ways that we can recognize the heritage of the site.

**Ms. Friesen:** I have one last question, and it does stem in a sense from the Meewasin model and that is the linkages to Selkirk and the whole Red River corridor. I wondered what part The Forks is going to play in that. I mean one of the greatest losses we had in The Forks project was when Parks Canada pulled out of its proposal

to develop a historical interpretation centre at The Forks and went simply with the kind of sporadic programming that they have now.

The Forks was to have been the interpretive centre for the whole of the Red River section from Selkirk down to—in fact out to St. Norbert. Is there the potential for that? I know that the province has been involved in meetings with some of the stakeholders across the river, what part is The Forks going to play in that?

\* (1150)

**Mr. Keller:** Mr. Chairman, we will answer that question, both of us, because it is interesting, very interesting work. It was initiated by Parks Canada. They approached us to get involved and we prepared to get involved with that whole program. From the beginning it looked discouraging. It looked like it was not doable. I guess the attitude was not properly there, but by looking in more and more it was very strongly supported by Parks Canada. I personally, and I am sure others on the board will agree that it is doable, it is a tremendous, tremendous future development for our historic site. There is already the suggestion that the people go down by train there and come back by boat, so there are a lot of things already starting to happen.

With that whole tourist package revision for our city, our province, that should become a major attraction; we are taking it so for granted. The river journey by boat coming up—you know, we are spending all kinds of money travelling to Europe to go on the Rhine tour and doing the same thing all the time, ours is just as beautiful, more interesting even. So that is now starting to become more of a reality and exciting. Kent attended some of the meetings so with your permission he can add to it.

**Mr. Smith:** What my chair is referring to is the new initiative that has been referred to as Rivers West. It has been initiated by Parks Canada initially to look at the area between lower Fort Garry to The Forks but now has been including Selkirk. In fact there have even been some people we have met with from Gimli as well to look at the potential of an extension of the concept all the way up to Lake Winnipeg, but there are a lot of very interesting thoughts and ideas that are coming out of this.

There has been a lot of investment by all three levels of government in this corridor, in the Red River corridor,

and I think some of that investment is doing particularly well, some of it probably is not doing as well as it could be doing. By bringing everybody together, it is a fairly bold initiative to try to get everybody sitting down and working together, but if we can do it I think it is going to be to the benefit of the entire region. We and our board are committed to participating in that. We have delivered presentations in Selkirk at Lower Fort Garry, and we are part of the process. We want to see the initiative continue and whatever we can do to help, we are going to be putting in our resources to do that.

**Mr. Keller:** To add to it, the closing ceremony for the Pan Am Games arose from those discussions. The closing ceremony of the Pan Am Games you will have the athletes coming up by canoes, by boat, up the stream, or they may have to be pulled or whatever, and then land at the park side—there is a beautiful landing site there—then enter the festivity side. That came out of the earlier discussions about Lower Fort Garry. So I think that will maybe be the start of something new, and we are excited about it.

**Mr. Sale:** Mr. Chairperson, a quick comment, I have been talking about that idea for a number of years now. I think Kent has known that I have raised this before at other meetings, and I am just very, very pleased that that is beginning to be talked about seriously.

It has always seemed to me to be very strange that you run the Prairie Dog Special out of St. James when it ought to be running out of the central historic station, and that we should have river boats departing and not connecting. So I applaud those efforts, and I will share with my son, who is probably the world's third greatest train buff after Magnus Eliason and me, to know that this is on the agenda in a serious way. I hope that is possible, and I would love to talk more with Kent about some of the suggestions that others have passed on to me about how that could be integrated into the historical question.

This really focuses, though, the question I wanted to ask, which is: Your financial statement talked about the financial challenge, but, on the face of it, you are now breaking even between the two operations, so what is the actual magnitude of your financial challenge for long-term viability in current dollars? What is the problem that you face as a board?

**Mr. Keller:** Mr. Chairman, the problem, of course, is on The Forks side. The new board inherited a deficit of \$1.4 million, and that has to be put to rest. The other thing we did is that we structured our way of doing business and handling our affairs more like a private corporation. So the money is very tightly watched, and before we spend any money, that is closely debated, and we found out that we do not have to go out and sacrifice a lot of things we want to do just because of the money. The money is a major issue at all times, but it is not the issue. If the people are prepared to drive this and do a job, then it gets done. Money, you know, gets rid of a lot of pain, but it is not the answer. It is the people who go out and want to do it, and the people are out there who want to do it.

**Mr. Smith:** Maybe just to add some comments, and I think some of the questions you have been asking lead to the conclusion that we do need some dollars if The Forks is going to continue to be successful and, indeed, if The Forks and North Portage are going to continue to be successful. One of the biggest issues we have to face is not so much on the revenues and the expenses. You are quite right that I think in the last two years we have made significant progress in matching our revenues with our expenses, in fact, giving us a little bit of extra dollars.

The significant issues we have to deal with are: one, the expropriation claims which, as we have suggested, could be totalling over \$6 million, and setting aside the cash reserves to handle that is obviously something we have to do because we are on the hook for that money; secondly and, I think, just as importantly is the whole concept of reinvesting in the infrastructure and doing some of the things both on the heritage side and also just keeping the site in first-class condition. It is a large site. If we are going to continue to keep it fresh, and we estimate that we could be requiring expenditures of well over \$2 million a year if we are really going to implement some of the projects that I think the public is saying we need: bicycle paths, bridge restorations, more public spaces, and it is really for those reasons that we need to augment our revenues so that we have the funds, so we do not have to keep coming back and robbing the taxpayer to cover those expenditures.

**Mr. Steiman:** Mr. Chairman, I think when you look at our financial picture you should not lose sight of the fact that we are profitable, if I can use that word, only on an operating sense. That is before taking into account

depreciation and amortization. If we do not take that into account we are soon going to die. It is like the farmer that tried to get his horse to work without feeding him, just before he taught him or he learned he died. We have to recognize depreciation and amortization as a legitimate charge against our operations or we will not have the resources to sustain the site.

So when you take that into account and then you factor in that our equivalency revenue will disappear in a short time, that gives rise to—there are two things; one is an operating picture and the other is a cash picture. We can take a lot of I think comfort in the fact that we have made gains on the revenue and expenditure side, but we still have a way to go to be self-sufficient.

\* (1200)

**Mr. Chairperson:** The hour being 12 noon, is it the will of the committee to keep sitting or to rise?

**Mr. Sale:** I have a further question if the committee would give leave.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay, there is leave, Mr. Sale.

**Mr. Sale:** Just one further question or comment. I understand the accounting issue here. What I was seeking was a sense of the corporation's goal. What would be your net annual revenue? Would it be a break-even after depreciation or would it be a further positive position? In other words, do we need to turn another million dollars around here either through revenue or expenditures or do we need to turn two?

Let me just end my question with a comment, and that is that a year ago this community went through a wrenching debate about the depth of subsidy appropriate to a professional hockey team, which debate, obviously, we do not want to have again, but the values generated by your efforts and our combined efforts at The Forks, in my mind at least, far outweigh the benefits associated with that one particular enterprise in terms of tourism, in terms of social harmony and growth, history. The benefits of this development just cannot even begin to be quantified. Those that can be quantified alone well justify the investment and the energies that people have put into it.

So from a public policy perspective, I would urge you, and I am not speaking for my party at this point, I am

speaking for myself in a sense, I would urge you to make the case, that you have a right to expect some public support for the very real, real public value that you provide, let alone the private sector value, the safety of downtown, the vitality of the core of the city. On and on and on come the benefits from what you do.

So the argument that you should always be constrained by a pure business perspective in terms of future development, I would certainly be a willing audience for you to make a case that viability and stewardship is very important but that the public good that comes out of this place is very substantial and easily justifies some level of public subsidy.

I say for the record, I am not speaking specifically out of my party's policy. I am speaking out of my public policy sense of what is going on down there and urging you not to give up on coming to your partners with a real case of the real benefits you generate justifying some patience about the long-term development, particularly given that one of the partners at least is running a very large surplus.

**Mr. Chairperson:** I would like to allow the honourable minister to make a concluding remark as well.

**Mr. Reimer:** I just would like to reiterate, when I had my opening comments one of the statements alluded to the dedication of the boards over the years for the North Portage and The Forks operations, and I can say that working with the present board and the dedication, the enthusiasm, the direction and the vision that I have experienced in the short time that I have been Minister of Urban Affairs is something that I hold as very dear and as a very, very enlightening process.

The chairman is a person who has the energy, the vitality and the direction I do not think that anybody else can match that I have been involved with in some of the other boards that I have sat with, and I would just like to thank the board, their efforts, their commitments, their directions. It is something that we, as government, sometimes do not say thank you enough for.

On behalf of the government, thank you for your time, your effort, your commitment, and your ongoing involvement with something that is very, very dear, dedicated and precious to Manitoba and Winnipeg, and that is The

Forks and the area around it. Thank you very, very much for your presentation this morning.

**An Honourable Member:** Committee rise.

**Mr. Chairperson:** No. We need to go through some business first, very quickly. First of all, The Forks officials wish to hand out some additional information to the committee. Is there leave for this?

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

**Mr. Chairperson:** There is leave granted.

Are there any more questions on the March 31, 1992, Annual Report of the North Portage Development Corporation? Seeing none, then the committee has completed consideration of the March 31, 1992, Annual Report.

Are there any more questions on the March 31, 1994, Annual Report of the North Portage Development Corporation? Seeing none, then the committee has completed consideration of the March 31, 1994, Annual Report.

Are there any more questions on the Financial Statement for the North Portage Development Corporation for the year ended March 31, 1995? Seeing none, the committee has completed consideration of the 1995 Financial Statement for the North Portage Development Corporation.

Are there any more questions on the Financial Statement for The Forks Renewal Corporation March 31, 1994, and 1995? Seeing none, the committee has completed consideration of the Financial Statement for The Forks Corporation for March 31, 1994-1995.

Are there any more questions on the Consolidated Financial Statements for the North Portage Development Corporation operating as The Forks North Portage Partnership for the year ended March 31, 1996? Seeing none, the committee has completed consideration of this item.

That completes the business. Committee rise.

**COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 12:06 p.m.**