



Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(Hansard)**

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

Name	Constituency	Party
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

Tuesday, October 22, 1996

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Guaranteed Annual Income

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Raymond Blue, D. Ansell, S. Bector and others requesting that the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) to consider withdrawing Bill 36 and replacing it with improved legislation which provides for a guaranteed annual income that allows people to have adequate food, clothing, housing, child care and health care that this annual income increases as prices increase and that this new legislation also provides for the creation of real jobs with the goal of creating full employment so that individuals on social assistance can find safe, meaningful work of their own choosing that allows them to meet their needs and the needs of their families.

Manitoba Telephone System

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of M. Senff, Len Krentzer, C.M. Robson and others requesting that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Al McKenzie, Heather Fisher, John Oltrop and others requesting that the Premier withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Anton Didwek, Maggie Quinton, Lena Boychuk and others requesting that the Premier withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Irene Bender, George Bender, Pearl Kreutzer and others requesting that the Premier withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Guaranteed Annual Income

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT in 1976 Canada signed the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which recognized the right of everyone to make a living by work which is freely chosen, recognized the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing, recognized the right of everyone to enjoy a high standard of physical and mental health, and provided for the widest possible protection and assistance to the family; and

THAT poor children and adults in Canada continue to die at a higher rate and earlier age than people with adequate incomes; and

THAT Bill 36, The Social Allowances Amendment Act, will create even greater poverty among the poor in Manitoba by eliminating government responsibility to ensure that everyone who lacks adequate food, clothing, housing and health care has these needs met; and

THAT the bill proposes to punish people by cutting them off from social assistance or reducing their benefits if they fail to meet employment expectations; and

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY

that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Family Services to consider withdrawing Bill 36 and replacing it with improved legislation which provides for a guaranteed annual income that allows people to have adequate food, clothing, housing, child care and health care and that this annual income increases as prices increase and that this new legislation also provides for the creation of real jobs with the goal of creating full employment so that individuals on social assistance can find safe, meaningful work of their own choosing that allows them to meet their needs and the needs of their families.

* (1335)

Manitoba Telephone System

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs and keeping profits in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$450 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes. The Clerk will read.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs and keeping profits in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$450 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Economic Development Sixth Report

Mr. Peter Dyck (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Development): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the Sixth Report of the Committee on Economic Development.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Economic Development presents the following as its Sixth Report.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your committee met on Friday, October 18, 1996, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider the annual reports of the North Portage Development Corporation for the years ended March 31, 1992, and March 31, 1994; the financial statements for the North Portage Development Corporation for the year ended March 31, 1995; the financial statements for The Forks Renewal Corporation for the years ended March 31, 1994 and 1995; and the consolidated financial statements for the North Portage Development Corporation, operating as The Forks-North Portage Partnership, for the year ended March 31, 1996.

At that meeting, your committee elected Mr. McAlpine as its Vice-Chairperson.

Mr. Ernie Keller, chairman of the board, Mr. Kent Smith, president and chief executive officer, and Mr. Gary Steiman, board member, provided such information as was requested by members of the committee with respect to the reports and financial statements for The Forks-North Portage Partnership.

Your committee reports that it has considered the annual reports for the North Portage Development Corporation for the years ended March 31, 1992, and March 31, 1994; the financial statements for the North Portage Development Corporation for the year ended March 31, 1995; the financial statements for The Forks Renewal Corporation for the years ended March 31, 1994 and 1995; and the consolidated financial statements for the North Portage Development Corporation, operating as The Forks-North Portage Partnership, for the year ended March 31, 1996.

Mr. Dyck: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Riel (Mr. Newman), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Law Amendments Fifth Report

Mr. David Newman (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the Fifth Report of the Committee on Law Amendments.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its Fifth Report.

Your committee met on Monday, October 21, 1996, at 10 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Assembly to consider bills referred.

At that meeting your committee elected Mr. Penner as its Vice-Chairperson.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 60—The Law Society Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société du Barreau

John Neufeld - Law Society of Manitoba

Bill 66—The Boxing and Wrestling Commission Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Commission de la boxe et de la lutte

Bob Holliday - World Wrestling Federation

Your committee has considered:

Bill 25—The Jury Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les jurés

Bill 62—The Jobs Fund Repeal Act; Loi abrogeant la Loi sur le Fonds de soutien à l'emploi

Bill 66—The Boxing and Wrestling Commission Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Commission de la boxe et de la lutte

and has agreed to report the same without amendment.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 22—*The Credit Unions and Caisses Populaires Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les caisses populaires et les credit unions*

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendment:

MOTION:

THAT section 9 of the Bill be amended

(a) in clause (a), by striking out “or” and “by-laws”; and

(b) in clause (b), by striking out “and” and “by-laws”.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 28—*The Winnipeg Stock Exchange Act; Loi sur la Bourse de Winnipeg*

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendment:

MOTION:

THAT clause 11(1)(c) be amended in the English version by adding “in” after “only”.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 29—*The Winnipeg Commodity Exchange Act; Loi sur la Bourse des marchandises de Winnipeg*

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendments:

MOTION:

THAT section 1 be amended in the French version by striking out the definition “*« marchandise »*” et “*« contrat à terme »*” and substituting the following:

«*marchandise*» et «*contrat à terme de marchandises*» S'entendent au sens de la Loi sur les contrats à terme. (“commodity”, “commodity futures contract”)

MOTION:

THAT section 5 be amended in the English version by striking out “object” and substituting “objects”.

MOTION:

THAT clause 7(1)(b) be amended in the French version by striking out “maximun” and substituting “maximum”.

MOTION:

THAT subsection 9(6) be struck out and the following substituted:

Officer cannot be director or member

9(6) No officer of the corporation, except the chair and any vice-chair of the board of directors, shall be a member of the Corporation and no officer of the Corporation, except the chair and any vice-chair of the board of directors and the president, shall be a director of the corporation.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 45—*The Consumer Protection Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur*

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendments:

MOTION:

THAT the proposed section 61, as set out in section 2 of the Bill, be renumbered as subsection 61(1) and the following be added as subsection 61(2):

Requirements re oral agreement

61(2) If an agreement for a retail sale or retail hire purchase to which this Part applies is not in writing, the vendor shall provide to the buyer, at the time that the agreement is entered into, a written statement of the cancellation rights that conforms with the requirements prescribed by the Minister.

MOTION:

THAT the proposed subsection 62(1), as set out in section 2 of the Bill, be amended by striking out “, excluding Sundays and holidays,”.

MOTION:

THAT the proposed subsection 62(3), as set out in section 2 of the Bill, be amended by adding "any" before "goods" and before "services".

MOTION:

That Legislative Counsel be authorized to change all section numbers and internal references necessary to carry out the amendments adopted by this committee.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 46—The Securities Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les valeurs mobilières

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendment:

MOTION:

THAT the proposed subclause 149(r)(iii), as set out in section 5 of the Bill, be amended in the English version by adding "of fees payable to the commission" after "exchanges".

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 60—The Law Society Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société du Barreau

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendments:

MOTION:

THAT clause 9(b) of the Bill be struck out.

MOTION:

THAT Legislative Counsel be authorized to change all section numbers and internal references necessary to carry out the amendments adopted by this committee.

Your committee voted to delete clause 8 of Bill 60.

Your committee also voted to delete clause 10 of Bill 60.

Mr. Newman: I move, seconded by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (1340)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report of the Manitoba Women's Advisory Council.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Health Sciences Centre
Capital Projects—Operating Facilities**

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is to the First Minister.

During the election campaign in March of 1995, the Premier promised major capital investments in the province of Manitoba, including major and significant investments in the Health Sciences Centre, as part of a health capital project. The Premier specifically promised funds for the William Avenue project which would include the adult and pediatric surgical operating rooms and intensive care units at those hospitals. In 1995, an accreditation survey released after the election campaign stated that the operating rooms were in horrible shape and that new operating rooms were absolutely necessary and that construction must proceed in terms of the ongoing accreditation of those programs and facilities so vital to Manitobans.

I would like to ask the Premier, when is he going to keep his election promise and proceed with the capital commitments to the operating rooms that he made during the election campaign?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, as has been said on numerous occasions subsequent to the 1995 election, in looking at our budget for the succeeding two years, two years in which we will be experiencing a reduction in transfer payments from Ottawa of about \$230 million annually spread over a two-year period, we

had to evaluate all of our government's activities and particularly commitments in the area of capital expenditures. That course coincided with the commencement of the regional health authority system of governance of our hospital system which did require us to take a look at priorities on a regional basis and to see whether or not commitments that were being made on an individual institution-by-institution basis would fit in with a greater plan looking at health care on a much more holistic basis, on a regional basis, and so we are in that process now.

The capital that was in place, the capital intentions that were in place prior to the freeze on capital spending are being evaluated, and I expect that the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) will have some indications—just as we have already indicated that one of the priorities that is clearly evident on a province-wide basis is the Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation capital works—that has been announced—because it clearly is in keeping with any plan of future development province-wide. There will be other aspects that will undoubtedly include activities with respect to some of our major institutions, whether that be the Health Sciences Centre or Brandon General Hospital or other places. But after, and only after, we do this re-evaluation and priority-setting in concert with the regional health authorities will we be able to come out with any further information. I hope that will not take too long.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, the Premier knows that during the election campaign, in his election promises of March of 1995, he stated—and I guess we should have been very careful when he made any statements in the campaign—that all the cuts that the federal government had proposed or incorporated in the promises, and we have costed them out, but of course, he has a different story here today on the Health Sciences Centre capital, the telephones, you name it, a different story.

In light of the fact that we tabled the memo last May in this Chamber, talking about the operating rooms and the significant impact that those deteriorating operating rooms were having on the quality and quantity of health care here in the province of Manitoba, the Premier said in June that the announcements on capital would be made within a month when the government made its comprehensive announcements on the urban capital projects. Well, the Minister of Health made his

comprehensive announcement, so-called, establishing the superboards and the roles of the urban hospitals on August 20 of 1996, and he talked about the sophisticated future of the Health Sciences Centre and the need for operating procedures, surgical procedures and transplant operations.

Does the Premier really believe that having fruit flies, leaking ceilings and deteriorating conditions at the Health Sciences Centre is the kind of sophisticated future that the Health Sciences will have? Why does he not proceed with his election promise that he has made time and time again?

* (1345)

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I guess when you argue all sides of an issue all the time, the time comes when you get caught playing that game, and the honourable member, the Leader of the Opposition, just got caught again.

He and his colleagues advocate one day for the maximum use of community hospitals and the capacity that exists in our operating rooms in our community hospitals. Having won that argument, as evidenced in our announcement of August 20, he decides, well, maybe I can win again because maybe everybody will forget what was announced on August 20 and I can come out in October and argue in favour of greater capacity than ever at Health Sciences Centre. Well, maybe the honourable member needs to realize and have it brought home to him that you cannot have it all ways.

The people of Manitoba, through their consultations with the government of Manitoba, made it crystal clear that, let us use the resources that we already have that are in good shape and make sure that they are properly utilized before we get carried away building all kinds of new capacity. We now have a much better idea of what we need at Health Sciences Centre and at St. Boniface Hospital and all the various facilities than we had prior to the announcement on August 20, and work will go forward from there.

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, we actually believe the government is capable of walking and chewing gum at the same time; it can plan for the community hospitals and for the major surgical wards. This either/or after the election campaign—[interjection]

Well, maybe the Premier wants to stand up and answer why he keeps breaking his promise time and time again. His word means nothing to the people of this province. He can heckle all he wants. His word means nothing.

In light of the fact that there are fruit flies in the operating room; there is a report from the Health Sciences Centre; the Premier made an election promise to deal with the Health Sciences Centre; surgery was cancelled at least three days last week; open-heart surgery was cancelled three days last week, I would like to ask the Premier, what is he going to tell the accreditation team that is going to visit Winnipeg, after their 1995 report, next month, in terms of his promise to build those operating rooms for all Manitobans as he had promised?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, aside from the fact that the question of the Leader of the Opposition has been asked and answered—he did refer in his preamble to his second question to coronary artery bypass surgery—I point out to the honourable member that for Health Sciences Centre in 1995-96, 941,000 additional dollars were approved for that particular program, and in '96-97, this additional funding was incorporated into the global budget of that facility.

The result of the increased funding over the years for these programs at Health Sciences Centre, for example, in '93-94 there were 163 coronary artery bypass surgeries; in '94-95, there were 196 and in '95-96 there were 256—each year up, up, up. So funding is certainly being made available, and I mentioned yesterday that the surgeries overall at the two teaching hospitals for coronary artery bypass surgery were up from 523 to 729 to a minimum of 1,000 this year—very, very significant increases for Manitobans.

Holiday Haven Nursing Home Investigation

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, from time to time all MLAs hear tragic stories about situations that occur in nursing homes. Most of these can be attributed to individual nursing home difficulties at one time or the other, but I have spoken with close to a dozen individuals and had an opportunity to see documentation about very serious problems occurring at Holiday Haven private nursing home.

Is the minister aware of any investigation going on in his department concerning Holiday Haven, and has he received a letter specifically alleging that there was a case of management abuse of a patient and that, as recently as two weeks ago, the fire department phoned that nursing home about problems with a potential fire hazard? Is the minister aware of any investigation in his department?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, on an ongoing basis, the personal care home requirements of Manitobans are monitored, and when issues arise that call into question the standards or the ability for personal care homes to abide by the standards that are set, those are issues that are always on the desk of the Department of Health.

Madam Speaker, it was not that long ago that a review was conducted into the operations of personal care homes throughout Manitoba to have a look at the requirements that are there. We have a combination in the province of some older buildings and some brand new ones that are all supposed to meet certain standards. It is the responsibility of the department to ensure that our standards are being met, and if there are infractions they are looked into by the department and corrective action is taken.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, is the minister aware that Holiday Haven Nursing Home has a large number of falls of residents, broken bones and a high rate of skin breakdown?

Mr. McCrae: Well, if there is information additional to that information that is in the possession of the department, we would welcome if the honourable member has something new or some fresh information that we do not already have. We would be very happy to have that information so that we can make sure that the residents in our personal care homes receive the care to which they are entitled under our system and to ensure that no facility falls below those standards that are expected of personal care homes in Manitoba.

* (1350)

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, is the minister aware that both the Public Trustee, Deer Lodge hospital and other institutions are concerned about patient care at Holiday Haven?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, the honourable member has asked these questions now three times in a row, and I have said that my department makes it its business to ensure an ongoing monitoring of personal care home operations throughout the province. If there are further specifics with regard to this particular personal care home, we would be very pleased to inquire into them and look further into the allegations.

Investigation—Employee Protection

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): A new question.

Madam Speaker, will the minister today commit that he will launch a full-scale investigation of Holiday Haven, one that includes legal protection for employees of not only the Department of Health but of Holiday Haven Nursing Home when they tell their stories, and will he guarantee that these people who tell their stories will not face any kind of retribution from the department or management?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I would appreciate knowing if the honourable member has information that the department is not in possession of. I would suggest that it would be his responsibility as well as any other Manitoban's responsibility to bring those issues to the attention of the authorities.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, the minister did not guarantee that—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Kildonan was recognized for a supplementary question.

Mr. Chomiak: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

When I forward documents to the minister and when the minister has the opportunity to review documents in his department's possession, will he guarantee that employees of the Department of Health and employees who work there, who speak to this full-scale investigation that ought to be launched, will have no retribution or no job action taken against them if they tell their stories?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, without engaging in theatrics as the honourable member has done today, something he does not do all the time but he does resort

to it from time to time, there are safeguards in place for people in our province. Our province has a system of personal care homes that works under certain requirements and certain standards and if those standards are breached, there are ways to investigate those things. I will extend every protection that is in my power to extend to people who want simply to do what I want and what the honourable member wants, which is to provide the best possible care for people in the care of personal care homes in Manitoba.

Investigation—Interim Management

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, since the department, as recently as December 1989, stepped in to operate a nursing home, will the minister consider the possibility of his department stepping in and operating Holiday Haven Home at least until an investigation is complete into the incidents that have occurred at that home and ought to be investigated?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I understand that there are significant powers in the legislation that we have on the statute books of Manitoba to allow the government the powers to do what needs to be done to provide protection to people and to ensure that their care does not fall below certain standards, but while the honourable member is making demands that government exercise the power that it has, why does he, on the other hand, Madam Speaker, argue against every single power bestowed upon the government in Bill 49?

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Consultations

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, in recent days we have seen the degree to which this government will go in terms of MTS and ignoring conflicts of interest with the MTS financial advisory group, 161 Bay Street, Toronto, Ontario, but in response to a question yesterday we also heard the Premier suggest that "the government listened to many, many different people and undertook analyses of a whole variety of different perspectives on the issue. The policy decision was made as a result of a composite of all of the information available to us."

I would like to ask if the First Minister could explain why his government received the document from the MTS

financial advisory group on April 30, 1996, and announced the decision to sell MTS, two days later, on May 2.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I have talked in the past about, for instance, advice that was received or information that was received from the Crown Corporations Council in which they attributed to Manitoba Telephone System a high-risk category, in fact the highest risk circumstances of any of our Crown corporations because of the \$800 million of debt that it was carrying, the highest debt-equity ratio of any telecommunications company in Canada, along with the fact that over 70 percent of its revenues were in competition with the private sector. I talked about the fact that we had made many other analyses and I refer—there was an article in the Free Press during the period of time, in the months leading up to that final decision, that the issue was that there was all sorts of strong rationale for privatizing the telephone system.

The issue was whether or not in doing so we could get a reasonable price for the people of Manitoba. What the brokers' analysis showed was that we could get a reasonable price for the public of Manitoba, the people of Manitoba, and therefore the decision was straightforward. That is why we made it.

* (1355)

Mr. Ashton: Well, Madam Speaker, I am still trying to get some clarification of the Premier's statement about the many, many people they talked to.

I want to ask the Premier if he can also explain why we have received a response to our Freedom of Information request in terms of what studies MTS has, in terms of privatization, why the response from MTS states that MTS has not had any studies done on privatization and is not using any studies for the privatization of MTS. How does he explain why even MTS was not involved in the privatization decision?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, Manitoba Telephone System is a corporation that operates to provide telecommunications services to the people of Manitoba on as broad a basis as possible, as efficiently as possible, as cost-effectively as possible. The decision as to whether or not they ought to be doing so in private

ownership or public ownership is not that of the corporation to make; it is that of the government that represents the ownership of the corporation. It is the ownership, not the management, that would make that decision, and that is a decision that we as a government have taken.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson, with a final supplementary question.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, as a final supplementary, I want to get some clarification again of the Premier's words. Now he is saying—and I want to ask the Premier to clarify this. Is he saying that MTS should not have been involved in the decision of privatization, but he has no problem with them now running a \$400,000 advertising campaign on privatization? Which is it again? Which version of the Premier's word are we supposed to believe on the issue of MTS? Are we supposed to believe his original promise not to sell or are we supposed to believe his words now trying to explain how they made the decision to sell MTS in two days?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I want to repeat, not that I fear that members of the public will believe anything that he says, because he has proven to lack credibility on so many occasions, but again—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: On a point of order, Madam Speaker, if the Premier is to be concerned about anyone believing words, it should be his words, and I would like to ask him to withdraw his comments about myself and perhaps start for once telling the truth to the people of Manitoba.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on the same point of order, I listened carefully to what the member for Thompson indicated in his point of order, and then I mused for a moment about it to determine whether or not he in fact contravened his own point of order by standing up. I think he asked the Premier to withdraw for something that he just referred to the Premier as. So I do not think he has a point of order at all; in fact, he tends to abuse Question Period on a regular basis by standing up on points of order.

Madam Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable member for Thompson, I would remind both the honourable First Minister and the member for Thompson that no one benefits from name-calling and from accusation and innuendo. I would remind all honourable members to pick and choose their words carefully.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable First Minister, to quickly complete his response.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, as I have said many times for the benefit of the member for Thompson, and others, and I said at the news conference at which we announced the privatization of the Manitoba Telephone System, the fact of the matter is that in April of 1995, when asked whether or not we planned to sell the Manitoba Telephone System, I said, no, I did not see any reason why. Subsequent to that, when we received reports, for instance, that indicated that over 70 percent of its revenues were in competition with the private sector, that with an—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister, to complete his response.

Mr. Filmon: —\$800-million debt and the highest debt eq guaranteed by the people of Manitoba and a debt-equity ratio that was the highest of any telco in Canada, Madam Speaker, there was obviously a reason why we ought to take a look at that option and we did and concluded in the end that it was in the best interests of the people of Manitoba to be able to commercialize Manitoba Telephone System and to ensure that it would have an even stronger future than it does today.

* (1400)

Manitoba Telephone System MG Communications Role

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for MTS.

I would like to table a document for the House that lists the directors of a telecommunications company called MG Communications. MTS owns 20 percent of this

company and has a senior level manager, the director of marketing, listed as a director. I do not raise this issue as an accusation of impropriety on the part of either the government or MTS but rather would like to give the minister the opportunity to clear the air. To his credit he has always stated that he takes any charge of conflict of interest very seriously and with the pending privatization of MTS, I believe Manitobans deserve an answer to my questions.

Can the minister explain why MTS invested in a long-distance reseller and installed its director of marketing as a company director after the conflict-of-interest problems it had with the bankrupted NetLink communications?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): Madam Speaker, excuse me, I think the member has identified what really is going on in the telecommunications industry today. There are niche markets, there are opportunities that need to be addressed by strategic alliance. MTS has taken the maximum ownership in this particular company, some 20 percent, to allow them to have rates across the U.S. border that will allow business to come and be done in Manitoba. It is an opportunity to expand the business opportunity for MTS in a strategic alliance with a particular company. Any other elements about conflict of interest, I will take as notice and respond back to the member.

Mr. Gaudry: I thank the minister for his answer.

Will the minister confirm or deny that MTS entered into a long-term contract with MG Communications to provide long-distance time for Manitoba call centres, and will these contracts form part of the KPMG prospectus?

Mr. Findlay: Madam Speaker, I think I have already answered that in the first answer, indicating that, yes, they entered into a strategic alliance with a 20 percent ownership to allow long-distance business to happen in Manitoba so there is net use of the system in Manitoba and jobs created in Manitoba as opposed to in the U.S.

Faneuil Corporation Telephone Bill

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Will the minister confirm that on May 24, 1996, Faneuil was behind \$750,000 in its phone bill to MTS, and will the minister

guarantee today that Faneuil is continuing to pay its bill to MTS on time?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister responsible for the administration of The Manitoba Telephone Act): I can confirm that my understanding at this stage is that they are completely paid on every account with MTS.

Fishing Industry Illegal Exports

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Yesterday in this House, the Minister of Natural Resources—and my question is for the Minister of Natural Resources—he confirmed that he and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) met with Ken Sigurdson and others as stated in the affidavit tabled by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale).

Can the minister confirm that between he and the Minister of Agriculture, four meetings occurred with this group and that he gave this group permission to export their fish outside the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, categorically I deny that statement.

Mr. Struthers: Madam Speaker, is the minister contending that those who made the statements in the affidavits are lying, and will he testify in court to that effect?

Mr. Driedger: When required, I will make my necessary statements.

Mr. Struthers: Can the minister tell the House whether it is the normal practice for the Minister of Natural Resources to advise people to break Sections 3, 9 and 13 of his own Fisheries Act and virtually all of Part 3 of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation Act?

Mr. Driedger: Totally irresponsible statements with not one shred of truth in them.

Fishing Industry Sisipuk Lake—Illegal Exports

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Yesterday the Minister of Natural Resources released a statement saying that he

never told Kim Sigurdson and others to fish illegally. No one has ever alleged that he did. In fact, those involved—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Crescentwood, to pose his question now.

Mr. Sale: In fact, those involved never alleged that. What they said was that Pascall Bighetty had a valid licence to fish Sisipuk Lake. What the individuals claimed and still claim is that the ministers involved agreed to let them fish and process fish unhindered for export, contrary to the Freshwater Fish Marketing Act.

My question to the Minister of Natural Resources is, what was the substance of the discussions he had with Mr. Sigurdson, Mr. Bighetty and others regarding the taking and export of fish from Sisipuk Lake?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Natural Resources): Madam Speaker, in my meeting with these people in my office at that time the discussion took place on the basis of their wanting to take and catch fish and process them. Basically, the request was whether they could fish in Lake Sisipuk and move the fish to the fish plant in the Interlake. At that time I said I have no objection if they got permission from the Pukatawagan Band who are basically the people responsible for that Sisipuk Lake. If they got permission from them, I would allow them to catch fish and transport them to be processed at the Interlake fish plant out there.

The discussion also further to that went on about whether they could export, and that is not within my—I never gave any commitment or authorization because I could not. That is under the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation. It is federal legislation, and I told them at that time that there was no way that they could take and export that.

Mr. Sale: If nothing that was being contemplated was illegal, can the minister indicate why he thinks it was necessary for there to be four different meetings with two different cabinet ministers if all that was being discussed was already legal and acceptable?

Mr. Driedger: There never were four meetings related to this subject. I met with Mr. Kim Sigurdson at a

previous time when he was concerned about what was happening at Island Lake and the exclusion from Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation at that time. I supported that request between the four bands that were out there, which ultimately got approval from the federal minister. It also had been requested for the Pukatawagan area. That request was denied by the federal minister. But we never had four meetings related to this issue.

Mr. Sale: A new question, Madam Speaker. I want to quote from a letter which Mr. Enns, Mr. Driedger and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) have. It is from Pascall Bighetty. I am quoting now: I have been recently asked to defend Mr. Robert Gaudry and Mr. Omer Coutu. Both have been charged with offences under The Natural Resources Act. They have pleaded not guilty to these charges for a variety of reasons and contend that they were given permission by both of you to fish within their legal quotas and export their catch. Minister Enns had meetings twice in his office last summer where he assured Mr. Sigurdson, Mr. Aitken, Mr. Gaudry and myself that the Natural Resources officials would not interrupt or impede this venture.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Would the honourable member please pose his question.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, I want to pose my question quoting from the letter. The letter indicates that Minister Driedger is quoted as saying—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I recognize it is your first question, but we do have guidelines relative to time limits and the member has well exceeded the time limit permissible. Would the honourable member please pose his question now.

* (1410)

Mr. Sale: Would the minister tell the House why in this letter he is quoted as saying, "If it's O.K. with Harry it's O.K. with me."

What was okay with Harry, Madam Speaker?

Mr. Driedger: Madam Speaker, in my last answer I clarified exactly the position of what happened at that meeting and the commitment made, and anything beyond that is not true.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, according to our rules, I should have tabled this document since I quoted from it, and I would like to do so.

Madam Speaker: I thank the honourable member for Crescentwood.

Woodstone Technologies Provincial Auditor's Report Release

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Rural Development, and my questions concern Woodstone Technologies, which yesterday filed a bankruptcy and insolvency claim at the Court of Queen's Bench.

As the government well knows, we have always supported Grow Bonds. However, we share concerns over Woodstone management which led the Finance minister to order an audit of the company last March, and we understand that the Minister of Rural Development has now had the Provincial Auditor's Report in his office for over two weeks.

Will the Minister of Rural Development release the Auditor's Report to the public before creditors vote upon the company's offer, so they will have full benefit of the audit information?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Madam Speaker, first of all, I thank the member for the question. Certainly, there is no question about the fact that Woodstone Technologies are having their fair share of difficulty with regard to restructuring their finances. Indeed, there was a proposal made before the courts yesterday to restructure the indebtedness of the company in the hope that not only will the company be able to continue but, indeed, the jobs there will be preserved for the long term for the residents of Portage and area.

It is also true that we did request the Provincial Auditor to take a look at Woodstone and to give us his recommendations. This is not the first time that we did this. Back in 1994 my staff asked the Provincial Auditor to come in and do the very same thing to assure us that the processes that were undertaken were as they should be. At the present time, I understand that staff and the Provincial Auditor are going through the Auditor's

Report, and when I receive it on my desk I will be more than happy to table it.

Debt Write-off Proposal

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Speaker, I wish to table the proposal by Woodstone.

Has the province agreed to the company's proposal to write off Woodstone's debt to Grow Bonds in exchange for preferred shares in the company, which is in this proposal?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Madam Speaker, with regard to my last response, I should just correct that last statement I made. The Auditor's statement will be tabled by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson), not by myself.

Secondly, with respect to the proposal, there are 21 days in which this proposal will be considered by the creditors.

At this point in time, we have just received the proposal, as of yesterday, and certainly we will be paying attention to it. No position has been taken at this time.

Investment Protection

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Speaker, does the minister have confidence in the current management due to the past track record of Woodstone and will further protect public investment, and can he maintain that the province's investment in preferred shares will not result in further loss if he so chooses to go that way?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Madam Speaker, I should say, first of all, that the province's guarantee to the investors in Grow Bonds is still there, and that should not be in any way perceived as the province not living up to its commitment with regard to the guarantee. That is in place and it will be honoured, but let me assure the member that it is in all of our best interests to see that Woodstone Technologies continues. They have a technology that I am told has a considerable value to it.

Madam Speaker, we want to ensure that that company is managed in an effective way so that the losses are no

longer incurred and that the jobs that are present in that company in Portage will stay in Portage for the benefit of the community and the people who work in that plant.

Railway Industry Bay Line

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): I would like to respond to a question taken as notice yesterday by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Driedger) from the member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson) regarding Churchill, the Bay Line and the current process that CN is involved with in terms of setting up a regional rail system in the North.

I want to tell the member that the Manitoba government's position has been very strongly in favour of finding an economic and commercial solution to the further operation of the rail lines in northern Manitoba and the Port of Churchill. We have been involved in various initiatives in that context in terms of the task force, in terms of supporting Gateway North Transportation and their proposal to CN.

I am very confident at this stage that CN is in the negotiation process with interested parties that will lead to that long-term economic viability for the lines in the North and the use of the port. It will lead to more and more economic activity in the North, more and more north-south trade, so I can tell the member this is a very important point in time if the negotiations are going on, but I and my department have a high level of confidence we will see a very successful solution.

Farm Lands Ownership Act Justification

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture has stated many times that he wants to see our hog production double in this province. In the past, Manitobans have met the demand to increase hog production and they will if the demand is there.

We understand that this government is trying to attract hog operations from Holland to bring their operations into Manitoba. I want to ask the Minister of Agriculture if he can tell this House if the purpose of Bill 68 is to open Manitoba borders to allow foreigners to buy up land

in Manitoba to set up their hog operations in this province.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, the modest amendments being proposed in Bill 68, The Farmlands Ownership Act, you know, ones that we can discuss at committee, are meant and designed solely to make farmlands available equally to all Canadians. They take the Manitoba restriction out.

I consider a Canadian from Ontario, Alberta or British Columbia being every bit as much of a Canadian as I am from Manitoba, and that is the limit to the amendments being proposed.

Foreign Ownership

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Can the Minister of Agriculture tell this House whether Bill 68 will open the door for people from other provinces and foreigners to buy land and then have the opportunity to have access to the elk that this government has captured and said that they would protect for Manitoba farmers?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Madam Speaker, I want to assure the honourable member, and again it is my hope the government House leader will—that we will have Bill 68 referred to committee shortly so we can discuss the details of the bill more appropriately at committee stage, but there is no more to the amendments to the farmlands ownership bill that are contained therein.

Issues that she raises with respect to hog production from the Netherlands or elk purchases are exercises in fantasy. We welcome inquiries from around the world to look at the exciting things that are happening in agriculture in Manitoba but certainly it is not being spurred on by any modest amendments on Bill 68.

* (1420)

Ms. Wowchuk: Can the minister tell us why he will not leave in place the legislation that protects land for Manitobans, rather than opening up the doors and driving up the price of land and restricting Manitobans from expanding, as we have seen when the government has made exemptions and allowed foreigners to buy land in this province?

It has driven up the price of land and restricted our Manitoba farmers from purchasing the land.

Mr. Enns: Madam Speaker, as my colleague the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) suggests, he is yet to see a single acre leave Manitoba and nor have I. I want to assure all members of the House our land is strong and safe, and it shall stay here.

None of the restrictions with respect to foreign ownership are changed in the act, only those interested to come and farm in Manitoba and meet the conditions with respect to landed immigrant status, and they have to be vetted through this board, the Farm Lands Ownership Board. None of those are being changed, I wish to assure her.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Madam Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

During Question Period on October 10, 1996, I took under advisement a point of order raised by the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak). His point of order was that the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), in answering a question, was not specifically answering a question and was provoking debate.

I took the matter under advisement in order to review Hansard. The question posed was, will the minister release the list of people who are supposed to be on those boards and give a guarantee that in future the boards will be elected? In his reply the minister listed a number of organizations which had raised concerns about the proposed regional health boards.

I am ruling that the minister was not dealing with the matter raised, and I would encourage ministers to comply with Beauchesne Citation 417, when answering questions to be brief and to deal with the matter raised.

However, in respect to the other part of the point of order raised by the honourable member for Kildonan, I do not find that the minister was provoking debate.

* * *

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Kiwanis Courts

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): I want to inform the members that a couple of weeks ago Metropolitan Kiwanis Courts, a facility in the constituency of Sturgeon Creek, had the official opening. I had the pleasure, along with the Minister of Housing (Mr. Reimer) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), to attend this event. The Kiwanis Courts is a senior complex located in the constituency of Sturgeon Creek at 2300 Ness. The Kiwanis Courts has been providing secure and affordable nonprofit housing for those in their retirement years for over 30 years.

Building on this unparalleled tradition of service and with an eye towards the future, the complex was completely renovated and upgraded. The reconstruction of this building will ensure that it continues to serve those in their retirement years for many years to come.

The building is already fully rented, and there is currently a waiting list for future occupants. I think this shows the fine reputation that the staff of the Kiwanis Courts have helped to build. It is also an acknowledgment of the comfort and security that the residents receive at Kiwanis Courts.

Many of you are aware of the challenges I faced with it in trying to get this facility reconstructed in order that seniors could benefit. I know that members across the way were doing their very best to try and stop any progress and improvements that I was trying to make for the seniors in Sturgeon Creek. I know that the members opposite will particularly be disappointed to learn that all things are well and good in Sturgeon Creek.

I would like to go on record on behalf of the residents of Sturgeon Creek and thank the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) and all my colleagues in the government in supporting me in providing these well-deserved seniors with a tremendous facility. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Minnesota Seniors Federation

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, on Wednesday, October 16, the president of the Manitoba Society of Seniors, Mary Pankiw, and I attended the 21st

annual convention of the Minnesota Seniors Federation in Freeport, Minnesota. Over 300 seniors renewed friendships, debated resolutions and heard from representatives of the U.S. senatorial candidates. The Minnesota Seniors Federation will be concentrating on three areas of concern over the next year, health care reform, prescription drug costs and social security, issues that are of deep concern to Manitoba and Canadian seniors as well.

Mary Pankiw and I found the Minnesota seniors to be warm, friendly and very interested in our health care issues. They travelled to Winnipeg in 1995 and again this summer to publicize the need for prescription drug reform in Minnesota. This year, they also participated in the home care strike. The Minnesota seniors were extremely pleased when we told them that the home care system was largely public, due in no small part to their participation in the home care strike.

I know all Manitoba legislators wish the Minnesota Seniors Federation good luck in their continuing fight for a safe, healthy and secure future for Minnesota seniors and will recognize that their fight is our fight. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I wonder if I might ask all those members having private meetings to do so either in the loges or outside the Chamber.

Kathleen Brown—Royal Victorian Order

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize in the House today a very special event that happened in London, England, this morning, which I feel deserves our recognition.

This morning, Mrs. Kathleen Brown, Chief of Protocol for the Province of Manitoba, and someone who is known and respected by all members of this House, was awarded the honour of the Royal Victorian Order by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth in a special ceremony at Buckingham Palace. This is the 100th anniversary of the Royal Victorian Order established in 1896 by Queen Victoria and it is an award conferred for extraordinary important or personal service to the sovereign or members of the royal family. Mrs. Brown is the first Manitoban to ever receive the award and she was also the only Canadian

named to the Queen's Birthday Honours List announced in June.

On behalf of all members of this House and indeed the people of Manitoba, I would like to congratulate Mrs. Brown on receiving this very prestigious award.

Minister of Justice

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, we witnessed in recent weeks the tragic spectacle of a government which will not take responsibility for its mistakes. When that happens, the parliamentary system is diminished and the respect of citizens for a fundamental democratic forum is lost. So there is a great deal at stake in the Premier's refusal to request the resignation of the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey).

We know that the Minister of Justice knew in May that there was no space in Manitoba's jails for people sentenced to intermittent jail sentences. The minister's error was in not informing all parties to the justice system: Crown attorneys, defence lawyers and, most importantly, the judges who must pass those sentences. Some defence lawyers knew; most Crown attorneys and judges did not. We had, therefore, in Manitoba unequal justice and that is a most serious matter. If an accused person cannot be guaranteed equal justice, then there is no justice.

The minister and the Premier have tried to evade responsibility. They blame it on the Headingley riots, but this cannot excuse the minister's error. It does not explain the existence of unequal justice. They have argued the minister made mention of the difficulties of accommodation during Estimates, but reading Hansard is not required of judges or Crown prosecutors and it cannot be reasonably expected that they would have known of the changes from this. Hansard is not the official gazette, nor does it carry the weight of a ministerial written notification. The minister's argument does not exonerate her from being responsible for unequal justice in the courts of this province.

Finally, Madam Speaker, the minister has tried to pass off responsibility for her error to her civil servants, naming them by position. This is unacceptable. Civil servants are bound by confidentiality oaths; they cannot respond publicly to the minister's accusations. Not only

has the minister betrayed their trust, but she and the Premier have in so doing undermined the fundamental role of the civil service, and that is to be able to speak truth to power. Can any civil servant in Manitoba now be secure that the minister will not use him or her to evade what is in parliamentary practice ministerial responsibility?

Madam Speaker, I will conclude with the words of Monique Begin, when she wrote to the Krever inquiry. Justice is offended, she said, if people at the top of government in bureaucratic structures are not held responsible for their actions but employees at less senior levels of the hierarchy are. Moreover, public ethics requires that those at the top be accountable.

I believe the Minister of Justice—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has long expired.

* (1430)

Immigration Agreement

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I just wanted to take a couple of minutes to extend congratulations both to the federal minister and the provincial minister with respect to the immigration bilateral agreement that has been achieved. Over the years, it has always been a very important issue for the provincial caucus because we have recognized and acknowledged the importance of the bilateral agreement or at least to achieve that bilateral agreement.

Manitoba, indeed, will benefit tremendously by achieving this particular agreement and hopefully what we will see is a government that is aggressive in terms of trying to match the needs of the province of Manitoba with the many different immigrants throughout the world that want to be able to contribute to Canada, in particular to the province of Manitoba, and provide opportunities for those people while at the same time allowing the social fabric and the economic fabric of Manitoba to do that much better as a direct result of this particular agreement.

So I applaud all those individuals that have participated in ensuring that this agreement was achieved

today. I have not read over the details. I know I have some very strong opinions in terms of the numbers that I would have liked to have seen. Personally, I had liked the idea of 1 percent for the province of Manitoba based on our population, and hopefully, Madam Speaker, we were successful in achieving what is in Manitoba's best interest. Thank you.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to inform the House that the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs will meet tonight at 7 p.m. to consider Bills 36 and 49. The public representations having been concluded on both those bills, we will now be dealing with clause-by-clause consideration.

An Honourable Member: And maybe 54.

Mr. Ernst: Well, Madam Speaker, those bills for sure and if there may be a subsequent bill, I will announce it later in the House.

I would also like to announce that the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will meet tomorrow night, Wednesday at 7 p.m. to further consider Bills 32, 33 and 47, Bill 12 having been concluded, I understand.

Madam Speaker: The Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs will meet this evening, Tuesday, October 22, at 7 p.m. to consider Bills 36 and 49; tomorrow, Wednesday, October 23, 7 p.m., the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will meet to consider Bills 32, 33 and 47.

Mr. Ernst: Would you call the Opposition Day motions, please.

OPPOSITION DAY MOTIONS

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Mrs. Wowchuk), that

BE IT RESOLVED that this Assembly indicate its support for the maintenance of the Canadian Wheat Board as a single-desk selling agency, and reject the

Western Grain Marketing Panel's recommendations which would weaken the Canadian Wheat Board;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly urge the Manitoba government to join with the Saskatchewan government to intervene in opposition to Alberta's court challenge of the Canadian Wheat Board's monopoly.

Motion presented.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to be able to move this motion today, and I want to indicate that I feel it is a really good opportunity for all members of this Legislature to talk about an issue that has been the subject of some discussion and, dare I say, some controversy in Manitoba. I look forward not only to the vote later on in this motion, but also the contribution from all members of this House, whether they be from rural Manitoba or whether they be from other areas of the province, because I think we all recognize to begin with the importance of the Canadian Wheat Board. It is the largest employer in Manitoba or the largest company in terms of volume. It has had a very significant role for Canadian farmers and currently we benefit greatly from the marketing of the Canadian Wheat Board. Our market share is far greater than it would be, I believe, under any other system, approaching 22 percent, and I think it is important for us as we stand to begin discussion on this resolution to recognize that fact, just how important the Canadian Wheat Board is.

I also want to explain the intent of this resolution. We want each and every member of this Legislature to take a stand. I note that many members on the government side have been—[interjection] well, it depends on where they take a stand. There are a number of members who are on the record very clearly as being opposed to the current Wheat Board structure, who want to see the single-desk approach eliminated. There are a number of members on the record in their own communities, in the press, the local media, indicating very clearly that is where they stand.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

I know there are many people out there making that argument. There are certainly some farmers and a

number of people who perhaps are not necessarily farmers but are truckers, who have been actively trying to break the law, have been involved in a number of lawsuits, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the intent is to break the Wheat Board. Let there be no doubt about it. If we were to follow the course of action that is being followed by this group of farmers—and I would suggest, a small group of farmers and, more particularly, a small group of truckers who are not active farmers—we would see the destruction of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Now I want to focus in on some of the relevant points of the resolution because there are a number of positions that governments are taking. The Alberta government is very clearly opposed to the current Wheat Board structure. The Alberta court challenge, I believe, would lead to the end of the Wheat Board as we know it, and I think it is important to recognize that the Saskatchewan government is taking a very strong position on that. The Saskatchewan government is going to be involved in interventions, court action, that it is going to look at the current situation with the Wheat Board, and I say that we look, as is outlined in the resolution, to our government to do the same thing.

Last week I had the opportunity to tour much of rural Manitoba with my colleagues the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) and the member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers). We were out listening to people on a number of issues—Manitoba Telephone System—but I can tell you another issue we were listening to people on was the Wheat Board. Everywhere we went and talked to people in the coffee shops of rural Manitoba, it is very much an issue that is on people's minds. What I find interesting is the historical perspectives of some of the people who can talk about what happened prior to the Wheat Board being in place and being in this dominant position. You know, they are saying that all these opponents of the Wheat Board currently are trying to truck grain into the United States; they basically want to roll back the clock, and they reminded people about what an inequitable system that was. I know the member for Swan River talked very eloquently, within her own family, renunciations of what happened before the Wheat Board provided the kind of service it does to Canadian farmers.

That is what I find interesting, because if I can pull out the sort of confused message that we get from the Conservatives across the way, the first thing they do is

they try and duck a clear position on this issue. If they had a clear position, they would be there involved in the court case either supporting the Alberta or supporting the Saskatchewan position. We want them to support the Saskatchewan intervention.

But they try and duck that. When they get out into their own communities, I notice a number of members—and I think the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura) is one of them who has been very clear on the record—who then start stating their position. If you read between the sort of the official nonposition and then compare it to the position they state in their communities, there can be no doubt in my mind that this government does not support the Wheat Board as it currently exists, particularly the single-desk position.

* (1440)

The biggest red herring you will hear is the talk of change because, of course, there have been changes to the Wheat Board. There have been significant changes throughout the Wheat Board's history. Significant changes. There will always be changes. But, at some point in time, you cannot use change as a way to get out of taking a position of principle, a position that you have to take when it comes to some key decisions. Whether you want to argue this, that or the other, at some point in time, you are either for or you are against the single-desk type of structure. You are either for or against the court position taken by Alberta. You support either the Alberta or the Saskatchewan position.

You cannot have it both ways. Yes, there are changes, but the bottom line is, do you support the Wheat Board basically with a fundamental position and strength that it has as a single-desk agency? That is what we want to hear from all members of the Legislature. I can say that our caucus has been very quick. We outlined in this motion, we want to see support for the Saskatchewan intervention. We oppose the Alberta court challenge. We do not think the Alberta court challenge represents the best interests of western grain producers. Not only that, I would suggest that many people in Alberta would question their position, but we very clearly believe that, apart from a minority of producers, the vast majority of people in this province want to see the Wheat Board maintain its current monopoly position.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what concerns me the most when we are dealing with marketing agencies—and I follow very

intently some of the previous discussions we have seen in terms of hogs, Manitoba pork, the whole debate. I have watched very much the debate on the Wheat Board. In the end, at some point in time, for a marketing board to have the ability to act as a true marketing board, you have to have the central element of the single-desk. There may be some minor exceptions to that, but, once you start going to the heart of getting away from single-desk, you do not essentially have a marketing board in the sense that we know that we have a marketing board.

We are in a world, by the way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, where a lot of things that could be changed cannot be unchanged anymore due to free trade and NAFTA, and that is why decisions nowadays are that much more important. It used to be that, if you did not like what a government did, you could vote it out. Nowadays there are greater consequences. I know this is a concern that has to be expressed in terms of marketing boards, because once you lose something like the Wheat Board under the free trade and NAFTA, you cannot necessarily get it back, and that is something that has to be noted on the record.

I think too, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that one thing is very clear. I talked about the position in this House of different parties, and that the federal position essentially is no position at all. I think they have managed to take people on one side of the issue and on the other side of the issue and satisfy no one. Typical Liberals, I suppose, one might be tempted to respond, and I look forward to the Liberal position in this House on this. I hope they will speak out because the federal position—I believe what people are saying out in rural Manitoba was: it opens the crack up going into this election. They do not want to be seen as opposing the Wheat Board, but they are opening the doors. I, at least, give credit to some of the Conservative members for stating their position. This is very clear that they support the Alberta position, and I think that is something that I give them credit for.

I want to just conclude by saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is definitely an issue out there. It is an issue not just amongst farmers, but many rural Manitobans who understand that agriculture issues are key to the development of their communities. I talked to many retired farmers who are just as concerned about what is going to happen in terms of the Wheat Board as they

would be as if they were active farmers. That is why we brought this motion forward to the Manitoba Legislature.

Some may say, well, is this not a federal issue? I do not believe it is. I believe this is one of the critical two or three issues facing Manitoba, and I say all of Manitoba, including rural Manitoba, but those of us in any area of the province. I think that it is important that we as legislators take a stand, and I look forward not only to the speeches on the record today from all members of this House on the vote, because I believe we have an opportunity, if this Legislature supports this resolution, to make a very clear position in support of the intervention in opposition to the destruction we would see of the single-desk marketing principle, that underlying principle of the Wheat Board.

We have the opportunity to take a stand, and I would urge each and every member of the House to support this resolution and send a clear message to the federal government that we support the Canadian Wheat Board, and we support it with the single-desk principle being untouched, one of the basic principles of the foundation of the Wheat Board.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased that we have this opportunity to debate this issue this afternoon in the Manitoba Legislature. It is an issue that regrettably will continue to be debated and discussed probably with some increased vigour as farmers across the land put their machines away for the season and finish up their fall work and have that bit of extra time to discuss with neighbours about the issue that is extremely important to their ongoing well-being, the well-being of our province, the well-being of our country because, as I am fond of saying, although in our highly urbanized society where surprisingly 3 or 4 percent of our population is actively engaged in food production, we make an inordinate contribution to the overall economic well-being of our province and of our country.

In the province of Manitoba, it hovers around the 20 or 22 percent that this 3 or 4 percent of Manitobans who are actively engaged in food production contribute to the well-being of our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, how often do we hear from members of the opposition, certainly from interested

members in the public that before a government or before a minister makes a hard and fundamental decision on an important issue that the responsible jurisdiction, in this case the federal government, the federal minister should back off, should study the matter, study the matter with competent people to provide them all with the necessary information on the subject matter and then to take the results of those recommendations to a significant degree of public discussion, public debate throughout the jurisdiction, throughout the part of the country where this is an important issue? In this case the Canadian Wheat Board has of course the jurisdiction restricted to western Canada. That means Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and to a lesser extent British Columbia.

Now, with all due respect, and giving full credit to the federal minister, the Liberal federal minister, the Honourable Mr. Ralph Goodale, he did just that. He recognized well over a year ago that there were growing difficulties and discontent that was beginning to manifest itself, admittedly with a relatively small group of producers that were challenging the way we have traditionally, certainly since 1946 with some changes, marketed and governed the distribution and sale of cereal crops, principally wheat, in western Canada.

So in response to that, he did not act hastily. He did not act inadvisedly. No, he did what I have just described a little while ago. He looked about and found himself, what he believed in his judgment, and I happen to concur with him, a competent group of experienced Canadians to sit on a committee, sit on a farm panel to examine the issues that confront the Canadian Wheat Board and what is demanded in a rapidly changing marketplace, the kind of marketing structures that are required as we move into the year 2000.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the federal minister had full authority to do all these things. He appointed qualified people from Alberta, from Saskatchewan, from Manitoba. I can tell honourable members that the Manitoba delegation on that, sometimes described as a blue ribbon panel, was one of our better and aggressive farmers, Owen McAuley, from the western part of our province, a solid grain producer and cattle producer, I might add, who has often been called upon to provide advice, not just to provincial governments but to federal governments. He was a main architect to some of the initial safety programs like the GRIP program that were

formulated five or six years ago, was working on behalf of the federal government at that time. He has worked on behalf of the provincial government in various advisory capacity roles. He was our Manitoba representative on that blue ribbon committee. I cite that only to give you an indication that these were not some faceless bureaucrats or civil servants that Mr. Goodale found to do his bidding. These were people who seriously looked at the wheat question, at the grain board and at the Wheat Board.

* (1450)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what did they do? They did not just ship themselves down in Ottawa or in any other capital city of the West and deliberate amongst themselves. They actively moved within the communities. They held meetings. They held meetings in Brandon. They held meetings in Portage. I think there were about five or six meetings in Manitoba. They had more meetings, as you would expect, in Saskatchewan, in Alberta. They consulted directly with farmers involved on this question. All of this took the better part of a year. They then sat back and digested everything that they had heard on the landscape and, in due time, produced a report. We refer to it as the panel on the Canadian Wheat Board study report. Those recommendations, certainly as you would expect, did not meet all the expectations of the various positions people for grain farmers have with respect to the Canadian Wheat Board, but they did make some very fundamental suggestions.

For those who believe that I am one of them, the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) wants this clearly put on the record, I also want to put on the record that really what the member for Thompson and the New Democratic Party's position and the National Farmers Union party's position is with respect to the Wheat Board. It was stated just by the member for Thompson quite eloquently. You know, it is time to take a stand. Just take that stand, and let the rest of the world pass you by, because this is a changing world. He said they do want to just take that stand and not budge and not acknowledge what is happening in the world and the world will pass them by. These experts on the panel, they knew the Canadian Wheat Board had to change to survive. I reject the resolution as being put before this Chamber calling for us essentially to ignore that basic fact.

One more little piece of information. It is quite likely that the Alberta court challenge currently before the Wheat Board would have been withdrawn if the federal government would have had the willingness to accept the advice from their own panel of experts. I received that bit of information directly from the Honourable Walter Paszkowski, the Minister of Agriculture for Alberta. Taking all of that into account, I am confident that the position that the Manitoba government is taking on this issue is the appropriate one, is the correct one. We believe there is a future, an ongoing future and a viability to the Canadian Wheat Board, but it must change, and we accept, for the most part, the changes as recommended by the panel report. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is my privilege to stand in the House today in support of the resolution that we are debating in support of the continuation of the single-desk selling under the Canadian Wheat Board. I would hope that members opposite will come to the vote this afternoon, later on, in support of our position as well when they have had a chance and an opportunity to hear the debate on all sides of this issue.

I will agree with one of the comments that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) made when he said that even though there are only 3 to 4 percent of the people in Manitoba actively engaged in food production in the province, it has had a far greater impact on the history of the province of Manitoba and continues to have a far greater impact currently in the province of Manitoba than 3 or 4 percent would lead one to believe.

The issues that face the province of Manitoba in agriculture continue to be in all the surveys that are done of people in the province, continue to be a high priority and a high concern for the residents in the province of Manitoba, which I think is remarkable, given the fact that our population is becoming more and more concentrated in the Capital Region.

Upwards of between two-thirds and three-quarters of the people in the province of Manitoba now live in the Capital Region. While there is a farm actually located inside the city limits of the city of Winnipeg, that is an anomaly, and the Capital Region is becoming more and more urbanized rather than a combination of urban and rural. If we were not discussing the Canadian Wheat

Board, I would like to go on at length about the problems with the urbanization of the Capital Region.

However, I do want to agree with the Minister of Agriculture that agriculture plays an enormously important part in the livelihood of many Manitobans, and the Canadian Wheat Board, more specifically, plays an incredibly important part in that agricultural component of our province's economy.

The Canadian Wheat Board, headquartered in Manitoba, in Winnipeg, is the only firm, the only firm headquartered in Winnipeg to make the Financial Post top 500. The glass is either half empty or half full in that. I mean, you could say, it is too bad that Investors or Great-West Life or other financial institutions have not made the Financial Post top 500, but it is, I think, very indicative that our one claim to fame in this context, in the Financial Post top 500 corporations, is the Canadian Wheat Board.

The Canadian Wheat Board employs directly 500 people in the city of Winnipeg. It is not a small economic factor in the city of Winnipeg. Just the operations of the Canadian Wheat Board itself have a major role to play in the economic life of the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba.

So when we are discussing the future of the Canadian Wheat Board we are not talking about something that is only a federal responsibility. We are not talking about something that only relates to 3 or 4 percent of the population of the province of Manitoba who are directly engaged in food production. We are talking about a major player in the province of Manitoba. We are talking about, as I have stated in this House in the past, when people outside the province of Manitoba, when people outside Canada are asked what they know about Winnipeg or Manitoba, if they know anything at all about Winnipeg or Manitoba they used to know about the Winnipeg Jets, they know about the Royal Winnipeg Ballet. Many of them know about the Museum of Man and Nature—it is not the Museum of Man and Nature anymore, but what was called the Museum of Man and Nature. Many people will know about the Western Canada Aviation Museum.

There are areas that people know about in the city of Winnipeg, but one very important factor in the city of

Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba is the Canadian Wheat Board. Not only is it in the Financial Post top 500 corporations, but it is also our link to many parts of the world. It is our link in Manitoba because it is headquartered here. It is also important to the other grain-producing provinces. The Canadian Wheat Board is just not a Manitoba or a Winnipeg entity; it is something that has a great deal of importance to the entire economy of the prairie region. We all know that the prairie region needs all the help it can get from viable economic institutions such as the Canadian Wheat Board.

When we are losing out in many cases to British Columbia, to Alberta, to Ontario, to the States, much of our former economic greatness, we have major problems coming up in our ability to be seen as a transportation hub, which is something that used to happen, but with the cuts to jobs to CN and CP, with the closing of—the emasculation of the Weston yards, with the cuts to rail transportation, jobs going to Montreal, jobs going to Alberta, we have a problem in our transportation hub.

* (1500)

We have problems in our financial institutions. We used to be seen as a headquarters of many of the insurance companies, et cetera, and we are losing those head office jobs. Head office jobs are leaving the province of Manitoba, and it is not only the loss of those jobs that is a problem, it is a loss of the influence that those jobs give. The fact that you have a head office headquartered in Winnipeg, in Manitoba, is very important, and right now, basically what we have is the Canadian Wheat Board. So it is important economically to the province of Manitoba; it is important economically to the city of Winnipeg; but, more importantly, the Canadian Wheat Board is an essential component of our prairie provinces' economic and, I would suggest, social fibre.

If we lose the Canadian Wheat Board, and I will agree with the motion that, if the recommendations of the Goodale commission were to be implemented, it would not mean change for the Canadian Wheat Board, as the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) has stated. It would not mean just change; it would mean, within a very short period of time, the destruction of the Canadian Wheat Board. I think that is the crux of the matter here. The crux of the difference between our position, the position

that is put forward here, and the position of the Minister of Agriculture, and perhaps some of his other colleagues, is that you can make the changes to the Canadian Wheat Board that were recommended in the Goodale commission without, in effect, destroying the Wheat Board.

Our position is you cannot make those kinds of sweeping changes. It ultimately comes down to the crux of single-desk selling. Our position is, yes, there are changes that need to be made at the Wheat Board, but one change, I would suggest to the members opposite, that must not be implemented is the elimination of the single-desk selling. The Canadian Wheat Board must retain its capability for single-desk selling, or it will, in effect, be no longer the Canadian Wheat Board. The province of Manitoba, the city of Winnipeg, the prairie region itself and even, I might suggest, the country of Canada would be the poorer without the Canadian Wheat Board's ability to maintain the single-desk selling. That is the crux of this matter. That is the reason we are in opposition to the Alberta government appeal; that is the reason that the Farmers for Justice are, in effect, farmers for just us. We must maintain the Canadian Wheat Board single-desk selling ability, or we will have lost a major component to our economic and social viability. Thank you.

Hon. Brian Pallister (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Deputy Speaker, my grandfather was Harry Pallister. He was a farmer and he was a fellow who went around to all the neighbourhood kitchens and talked to the farmers in my area, which is Edwin, Manitoba. He proposed to them that they get together and bring their grain to the elevator, the local elevator that they would establish. They established that elevator because he had one pool. My grandfather was given the honour of hauling the first wagonload of grain by horse and wagon to that elevator, the first wagonload of wheat.

My dad was a farmer. My dad was instrumental in the founding of a local trucking association, the co-op trucking association, which made available hard assets that farmers individually might not have been able to afford but collectively they were able to do that.

My brother, Jim Pallister, actually a fourth-generation farmer, set up a local marketing club that benefited the farmers of our area tremendously. He has been

instrumental with scholarship support in sending over a dozen 4-H members to post-secondary training, and he is a member of the Western Canadian Wheat Growers' and the Farmers for Justice.

What do these gentlemen have in common? Each of them was interested in social justice. Each of them was interested in more than themselves. They were interested in their neighbours and their neighbours' well-being, and all of them were willing to stand and challenge the status quo. In the rabid defence for institutional regimentation the members opposite lose sight of something very important. When they attack people who are willing to oppose a status quo position they lose sight of the individuals and they discredit the motivations of those individuals.

This is co-op week. Co-ops were started in 1844 in Rochdale, England, with 28 weavers establishing themselves. Now the co-op movement has grown so that in this country there are more than 12 million Canadian co-op memberships coast to coast, 10,000 co-operatives established in this country. The members opposite, when they attack individuals, reveal an ignorance of the history of their country, of this region, of this province, and of the farmers of this province.

Co-ops were founded as our pools, as our caisses populaires and credit unions, as was the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, which some of the members opposite may be familiar with, on the Rochdale principles. The foundation upon which each of these successful organizations stands is the Rochdale principle No. 1, voluntary membership. The Canadian Wheat Board is not a co-op. The Canadian Wheat Board does not exist on the basis of the Rochdale principles, since it was given a legislative monopoly by the federal government. Due to the war effort patriotic farmers supported it at that time. By the way, for members opposite, the war has been over for some time.

The reality is that the Canadian Wheat Board is not a co-op. Membership is not voluntary and the members should know and should make the distinction between those two things. The very foundation of the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation was the principle of voluntary membership, so when they speak in defence of institutions they should be sure to make the distinction between a co-op, a true co-operative, and what it is they defend.

The defence of minority views in our society is something that many of us have risen in support of. The members opposite currently are in a minority position and so they should listen, I believe, carefully, as carefully as I listened to their views.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I hate to interrupt the honourable member, but those members who want to put their voices to the record will have plenty of opportunity. We have a good afternoon to do that. At this time, I would appreciate it if we would all listen to what the honourable member has to say and maybe he will listen to what you have to say when it is your turn.

The honourable minister, to continue.

Mr. Pallister: Our society rests on a foundation which is one that recognizes that minority views are important and should be heard. So it is that we listen in this House on a regular basis to the views of the members opposite who are in a minority. I respect that and I respect their right to express their views.

The reality is, however, when they rise in defence of the Canadian Wheat Board as a monopoly institution then they are agreeing to the suppression of minority views, and that is a contradiction in itself. When society allows for the suppression of minority views there must be a compelling case made that those views should be suppressed to the greater benefit of all in society. Such a compelling case must be made and has not been made. Such a compelling case needs to be made if the members are to support their position that the Canadian Wheat Board should remain as a coercive monopoly in its structure.

The New Democratic Party says that in this province farmers should be jailed if they have a minority view. They say that it is unacceptable to hold such a view. That is not reconciliation, that is intransigence, it should not be accepted as an intelligent position, and it is not by members on this side of the House. The reality is the New Democratic Party view in Manitoba is a minority view in the sense that over 90 percent of western Canadian farmers support some changes to the Canadian Wheat Board, whereas the members opposite support none.

* (1510)

Furthermore, I think it is important to recognize that the position of the members opposite is not one that is held by farmers. I have lived among farmers, I am proud to have been raised by a farm family, I have spoken to many farmers in this province, I have worked with farmers most of my life, and I can tell you that farmers are fair-minded people. That was reinforced the other night when I got a call at home from a gentleman, in the member for Interlake's (Mr. Clif Evans) riding, from Ashern. He phoned me at home late at night—and I do not mind that, I like that—and he said that he was very concerned. He said he felt that the federal Liberal government's handling of this issue was arrogant and embarrassing. He said he felt it was especially arrogant to commission a \$2-million panel to study and hear the views of people concerned with the issue and then ignore their recommendations.

He also said, he also suggested that this issue was divisive, and he was very concerned that the proposals that the federal government had made in terms of resolving it would exacerbate the circumstances around it, the division around it, to the detriment of all Manitobans. He said he felt that it was important for me to know that he was a strong Wheat Board supporter and so were his friends, but he felt it was not fair or just that farmers should be fined or jailed as a consequence of not agreeing with him.

He suggested something, and I share this with the members opposite as a position that he put forward, something for them to consider. He said that in his area there were a lot of co-op supporters. He said that he was under the understanding that membership had its privileges, but he also said that meaningful membership requires a commitment. So he suggested that those who do not agree with using the Canadian Wheat Board or would like to use it occasionally should not have that right. He suggested to me that they should either join or get out, one or the other, and that they should make a five-year commitment if they wish to support the Canadian Wheat Board.

He likened the benefits to be derived by associating with the Canadian Wheat Board, which are indisputable benefits, he likened those benefits to a rowing team. He said if you are on a rowing team you cannot just ride, you cannot just sit there and get the benefit of everybody

else's work, you have to pull on the oars. You cannot steer a different way or you are going to have a negative effect on the team, and you sure as heck should not be rowing against everybody else while you are in the same boat.

He suggested that the farmers who do not want to be part of the Canadian Wheat Board should not be, and they should go their own way. He said it without malice; he said it in a fair-minded way. He said he did not wish them bad luck, he hoped they did just fine, but that if they wanted all the benefits, they had to make the commitment commensurate with supporting the Canadian Wheat Board, and that is what he put forward as a proposal. I raise it today in the House in the spirit of nonpartisanship as something that the members opposite may like to give some thoughts to.

I think the key issue is with any changes to the Canadian Wheat Board, there has to be an assured supply of grain. This particular gentleman suggested to me, he felt that if farmers had to make the commitment one way or the other, in his estimation 95 percent of the flow, minimum, would be guaranteed. The flow of wheat would be guaranteed to continue the way it was going to the Canadian Wheat Board. He felt that the principle of volunteerism as it exists with co-ops and with the various other organizations that are founded on voluntary membership would actually be a source of additional strength to the Canadian Wheat Board in our society.

In closing, I would just like to say that whichever panel, the panel's recommendations or the recommendations from this gentlemen from Ashern, whichever suggestion you would like to consider for members of this House, I think it is far preferable and superior to the alternative that is being proposed by the members opposite, which puts us on a divisive path of inflexible rigidity, which is a betrayal to our own history, which is a betrayal to the tolerance, the understanding and the accommodation of minority views that we have exemplified in our province and our country for many years and which would simply see us constructing more jail cells for farmers. Thank you.

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Government Services just insulted everybody who has a rural and farm background in this province.

My grandfather was Stan Paul. He was a farmer in the Swan Valley region. His first job was working on the threshing teams that used to criss-cross the Swan River Valley and take the crop off every fall. He worked his way up to being a foreman of one of those threshing units. Then, once the technology changed and things moved on, my grandfather, Stan Paul, understood, as many Manitoban farmers do, that things change. He understood that the way we farm changes. What he also understood, what this member who spoke previous to me and this minister and this government cannot understand or maybe does not want to understand, is that there are certain principles that do not change. What they have to decide is whether they are going to stand up for the principle of fairness in agriculture or whether they are going to stand up for the cheap way to make a few quick bucks for a few quick elitists in the farm world today, and that is the decision that you have to make.

To stand in this House, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and try to get people to believe that just because he has a farm background, the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister), that nobody else understands this issue, is just an absolute slap in the face for all of us who have put so much time and effort into building the rural part of this province and not just the rural part of our province, because we know that the urban part of Manitoba depends basically on rural Manitoba and the success of farming in Manitoba. So let not the members across stand and righteously claim that somehow they have a monopoly on what is right for rural Manitoba because many on this side also have our roots firmly rooted in rural Manitoba.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I hate to interrupt the member.

An Honourable Member: You are losing control, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No, I will not lose control, Mr. Minister. At this time, the honourable member for Dauphin has the floor. Some of us have had the opportunity to put our words on the record; others are waiting. At this time, I would like to hear the honourable

member for Dauphin. The honourable member for Dauphin, to continue.

Mr. Struthers: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to say that I am awfully proud of the work that my grandfather did in the area of agriculture, and I am awfully proud that he passed those principles upon which he stood down to my mother's generation, who also understands the importance of rural living and the importance of agriculture in Manitoba. I would like to think that I picked up on a little bit of what my grandfather seeded way back then, before the Wheat Board was put in place in 1935. I will tell you, when my grandfather used to hitch up the team of horses and haul his wheat to the grain buyer in Swan River, he did not know in the morning, when he left his farm, what that price was going to be by the time he got to the elevator in the afternoon. He was so much at the whim of the grain buyer at the time that the price could fall right through the floor when the grain buyer knew that he could not turn around with his load of wheat and take it back. The grain buyer knew that my grandfather had to dump that wheat there, no matter what the price was.

What this government and what the Liberal government in Ottawa is proposing is that we go back to those days, we get rid of the single-desk selling advantage of the Canadian Wheat Board. The members across the way can laugh, and they can attack my family and a lot of other rural families the way they have been on this issue. They can turn this into personal issues all they like, like they have been doing, but they do not have one shred of evidence to say what I am saying is wrong. They rely on cliches such as freedom, cliches such as choice, the freedom to choose, the freedom for a very few farmers in locations in this province close enough to an American market, big enough to supply an American market, maybe; those are the few that they think should have the choice. Those are the ones that they think should have the freedom to choose where they market their grain.

Then, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the Canadian Wheat Board is lost and the single-desk selling advantage of the Wheat Board is gone, it will be those same farmers who think they should get right back into the Wheat Board and depress farther the price of grain. That is where we are headed with this decision. That is where we are headed in Manitoba agriculture right now. I think that deep down, when you scratch very deep into this

Conservative government, they know what I am saying is right. They will not admit to it. Most of them will not stand in this House and say, I am a dual marketer because they know that all this rhetoric they have been throwing at us about all the polls that have been taken, they know that they are blowing hot air on it. They understand that farmers want single-desk selling to be kept as is. That is the one part of the Canadian Wheat Board that farmers do not want to change.

Other things, farmers say, sure, we can put up with a change here and a change there, but if you change the single-desk selling advantage of the Wheat Board you have killed the Wheat Board period. Do not pawn it off as some kind of a marketing club for farmers. Do not tell us that the Canadian Wheat Board is going to have its advantage when we get rid of single-desk selling. You are trying to fool people and it is not the honest way of doing things.

Some of the members across the way do have enough courage to say where they stand on this issue. The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), they have both stated that they are in favour of dual marketing. After the plebiscite in Alberta on hogs, the minister himself, the minister said that his position on the Wheat Board was the same as his stand on the Manitoba hog marketing board. So what is it? Why will this government not just be honest, stand up to the farmers in Manitoba and say, we believe in dual marketing? You are not going to do that because you do not want to face the wrath of farmers who disagree with you fundamentally.

* (1520)

It would be the honest thing to do and I would hope that this government decides which way it is going on this issue. Both the Keystone Agricultural Producers and the National Farmers Union, I know how touchy the government is when somebody mentions the National Farmers Union, but both Keystone Agricultural Producers and the National Farmers Union say that you are doing the wrong thing by losing the advantage of single-desk selling, and they point to studies. They do not pull cliches out of the air. They point to studies, the studies say that producers would lose money without the Canadian Wheat Board. The studies that they produce say that farmers would have lost more than \$50 a tonne

on barley and about \$27 a tonne on wheat if they had gone to the open market as opposed to single-desk selling. Name me one fact that you have that says that dual marketing is better than single-desk selling. Do not just reach up in the air and pull out all kinds of old, worn-out Tory cliches and toss them across to us, and do not put them out to the farmers of Manitoba. Give them some facts, give them some figures, give them some statistics that back up your case. I challenge you to do that, knowing full well that you cannot do that.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to point out, too, that in the three prairie provinces a committee of agricultural economists who studied the Wheat Board concluded that the Wheat Board contributed \$34.50 per tonne more to producers than they would have received in an open market system. Again, there is something that the government just has not been able to refute. I want to put forward probably the real reason why this current government is a dual marketing favoured government. It fits their ideology. It fits exactly into the way they see the problems shaping up over the next number of years where a very few farmers may benefit at the expense of the very many. If my grandfather were alive today, his stomach would turn just to hear what this government is doing in the field of agriculture. My grandfather would be deeply offended by the speech that the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister) just foisted upon this Legislature and the slap in the face that many people in this province have just got after years and years of struggle and toil in planting the seeds that has made this province great. Thank you.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand and put a few words on the record about the circumstances that agriculture faces. I guess I speak from the position of having been a Minister of Agriculture, being involved in the agricultural industry and hearing peoples' views on a consistent basis. I think it is like any other issue. There is not a black and there is not a white.

This is a world of change. You cannot deny change. Things are moving and, if we are going to succeed economically, it is going to require that we adapt to that change on an ongoing basis. The member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) has put some comments on the record. Probably I will refer to them directly but it is not always about, you can make a circumstance fit your ideology. I

think it applies to the members opposite. It probably applies to us too.

I think back to the circumstances agriculture was in in the mid-'80s, late '80s, in terms of, farmers were receiving \$2 a bushel for wheat when their costs were \$4 a bushel. Government had to step in in a very big way to help the farm community in western Canada to survive circumstances beyond any of their control, beyond the Wheat Board's control, in terms of how the world price of wheat was set. We came through that process by working together to evolve in a changed way how farmers were supported.

Clearly those days of government being able to step in and support farmers when that kind of urgency happens again are very, very limited. We stepped in at a time when it was necessary but if it happens in 1998 or the year 2000 because of actions taken by Europe, the United States, the farmers will not be able to depend on government in Canada as much in the future as they have in the past simply because of economic circumstances that exist.

The member opposite mentioned conditions of 1935. Well, this is 1996. Things are different now. Farmers are more sophisticated. The degree of technology that they have at their disposal in terms of being able to know what is going on in the world is significantly improved. The way the Wheat Board operates has significantly changed in the last 25 years.

I have dealt with the Wheat Board for a long time, and I have watched them function and not change until they get pushed to the wall, and then they do do some changes. I think back, and will just mention some of the things that have happened, and these are all positive elements on how they do business on behalf of farmers.

Back in the late 1960s the people that fed grain, hog and cattle farmers, were saying that they are not getting a fair price for feed grain. So a dual market was set up in western Canada called a nonboard feed market and a board feed market. So we have had a dual market within western Canada for 25 years. I remember before that happened the same hue and cry of, the sky is falling, came from members opposite and the NFU. I would like the members opposite to point to one instance where that did not work in terms of better arbitrage of the price of

feed grains and the price of pork and beef in the North American market. It worked.

You have to evolve in the change in a progressive and reasonable and rational way, and the process that is being gone through right now is, how does the farm community maximize its return from the marketplace in a wide variety of things they produce? The Wheat Board has the sole responsibility for selling wheat and export barley, not domestic barley, but export barley.

The farmer may grow sugar beets, canola, flax, peas, lentils, fava beans, hogs, beef, and he does not need a monopoly to sell those commodities. So I am insulted when the member opposite says that farmers cannot compete. Absolutely they can. It is imperative that they have the flexibility to compete.

Now, the federal government looked at the issue and said, we have got a challenge here, how do we adapt? The panel of several experts from across western Canada, with widely divergent points of view in terms of their history, went through a significant process of consultation—some \$2 million worth has been mentioned here today—and came up with a series of recommendations of some degree of progressive change. They did not recommend getting rid of the monopoly on selling wheat. They did not recommend that. They did not recommend the dual market in wheat. So the members opposite had better be careful of how they try to project gloom and doom when it really does not exist.

I will tell you that the strong supporters of the Wheat Board also want greater accountability, a little increased flexibility, a little adaptation to allow our producers to maximize their net return, and it will happen in a lot of different ways and a lot of different steps.

Many of the recommendations of that panel are okay with the majority of producers, but I want the members opposite to understand very clearly: It is not black and it is not white; it is a series of grays, it is a series of evolving changes.

An Honourable Member: It is kind of like a Holstein.

Mr. Findlay: Well, Holsteins are black and white, unfortunately, as my urban member mentions Holsteins.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the members opposite—Alberta has taken a strong position on one side of the issue, a very strong position that they do not believe the Wheat Board can exist. Saskatchewan has taken another position that says, well, nothing can change, we have to lock our heads in the 1970s and stay there. We are taking a much more progressive position in that—

An Honourable Member: As you would expect.

* (1530)

Mr. Findlay: As we have always done. We are at a state of changing circumstances with regard to what we produce and where it is marketed and where it is exported to.

Just look at the Wheat Board, the challenges they have had. We used to sell almost exclusively to Russia and the market is totally gone. Before that, almost exclusively to Britain; that market is gone. Today it is Pacific Rim; it is U.S. That is dramatic change, and the Wheat Board had done a good job of evolving in that process.

So it is not about getting rid of the Wheat Board or locking ourselves into a hopeless situation of no change. It is a process of constructive change, and the panel made a lot of recommendations in that context. We cannot let our ideology get in the way, as the members opposite do. They quote the NFU, they quote Saskatchewan. That is not a progressive way to deal with the circumstances, because you cannot deny that the farmers of Manitoba are the furthest from salt water of any exporting part of the world, and if we are going to have a growing economy in Manitoba, we want the majority, as much as possible of our commodities produced on the farm to have further value added before they are exported.

So the Wheat Board has to evolve so it can allow that to happen without putting in the way many restrictions that used to exist in the past. I think we need to talk about how we evolve to maximize the income of farmers, the ability of the Wheat Board to function and the ability of value-added industries to be developed in Manitoba to create jobs in Manitoba.

Agriculture is a producer of raw product, and if there is any problem agriculture has had over the last 20 or 30 years, we exported too much in the raw form. We must

do more of that value-added process, and I think that was recognized in the panel and the discussions they had with the various people.

How do we evolve to promote jobs in Manitoba and western Canada? With the WGTA disappearing, you talk to farmers today. Ask them what they see on their grain receipt. They see a big freight bill that astounds them and those costs passed right back to the farmer. Now he has to be able to adapt to get the best price, whether it is contracting with the Wheat Board or contracting through the Wheat Board with a niche market somewhere. Let us say, some buyer wants 16 percent No.1 wheat. Well, how does that buyer get 16 percent No.1 wheat? He cannot pick it up at Thunder Bay or at Vancouver or Montreal because it is a blend there. The funny thing is the farmer goes to the elevator and he sells wheat 12 percent protein, 14 or 16, it is all dumped in the same bin. You cannot go to a niche market that wants high protein with that process. You have to be able to contract directly from the buyer and the producer through the Wheat Board or through an agent of the Wheat Board to allow that connection to happen, to serve that niche market.

We cannot ignore those opportunities, because there are certain markets in the world that want that. Maybe it is a certain variety of wheat, maybe it is a certain protein content, maybe it is a certain lysine content, those opportunities exist and we can do that. We do it with canola, we can do it with french fries, we can do it with hogs, but we need to change and evolve so that other opportunities for farmers happen.

My mission is always to maximize the return for the farmer at the farm gate, allow him to use every mechanism possible to do that, and I personally believe the Wheat Board can be a strong ally in that process but it must adapt and change with things that are going on.

The panel has started to open the door to more change. As I said earlier, many changes have happened. Whether it is dual marketing in domestic feed grains, whether it is contracting direct to the producer or whether it is reducing the amount of restrictive quotas that farmers had to deal with, we made those changes. We need to allow them to continue to make changes that will allow the industry to grow and the economic return to Manitoba, not only on the farm but off the farm, to expand and grow

in the province of Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): I am pleased to stand today and speak to the resolution that the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has brought before us and to speak in support of this resolution.

I want to go back for a few moments though, back to the comments that were made by the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Findlay), who was the former Minister of Agriculture in this province, and one of the things that caught me about the comments that he was making here were comments that I have heard time and time again in this House, and that is with respect to the lack of knowledge—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Could I ask those honourable members wanting to carry on their conversations to do so in the loge.

An Honourable Member: I cannot hear.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The honourable member for Turtle Mountain is having a hard time hearing, and I know he wants to hear every word.

The honourable member for Transcona, to continue.

Mr. Reid: I want to go back for a few moments to the comments that the Minister of Highways and Transportation made. I find it interesting that he too was the former Minister of Agriculture for this province.

When the minister said that we are a great distance away from saltwater, well, it seems to be the case that we have a minister of this province responsible for transportation in this province who should understand that we have in the province of Manitoba the closest point to saltwater probably of any agricultural area of this country, and that we are—[interjection] The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) himself says, there are no producers in the province that want to utilize that port facility. Obviously he has not been talking to the same agricultural people that I have had the opportunity to talk to for the last six and a half years of being in this House, both in the province of Saskatchewan and the province of Manitoba. We both know that there is a catchment area out there that is, and a portion of it comes into the

province of Manitoba as well, so we have producers in this province and in the province of Saskatchewan that are within some 700 miles of saltwater, so let not the Minister of Highways say that we are an extreme distance away from saltwater. We have a port in this province that it is very clear that this Minister of Highways does not want utilized. He is not intent on utilizing that particular port. Otherwise, he would have recognized that we are 700 miles away from saltwater.

Point of Order

Mr. Findlay: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member opposite charged me of not supporting Churchill. If he would just check the record, there have been no stronger proponents of the broader development of Churchill in northern Manitoba than this government, this minister and the former Minister of Highways, and that process I want to tell the member is moving very quickly towards a positive resolution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Minister of Highways did not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

The honourable member for Transcona, to continue.

* * *

Mr. Reid: While the minister may use the words that he is a supporter of Churchill, it is obvious by his comments here today that he says that we are a significant distance away from saltwater, further than any other point in the country and that he clearly does not recognize that we have a Port of Churchill which is saltwater and that we in this government and the federal government have been underutilizing the Port of Churchill and have not kept their commitments both during the election campaign provincially and federally to export and to increase the level of exports through the Port of Churchill. You have not kept your word on utilization of that port, and now the future of that port is in jeopardy and may stand at risk of closing permanently.

In addition to that, we could talk at length about what is happening with the rail lines in northern Manitoba which service the producers of this province that could be shipping grain products through the Port of Churchill.

I want to go back to some of the comments that were made by the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister), when he talked about his family members being involved in co-operative movements. Now, I do not profess and will not even pretend for a moment to have a full or complete understanding of agricultural issues and the circumstances which all of the producers in this province face, but I can tell the member opposite that when he talked about co-operatives and his father or his grandfather being involved in co-operatives and that the first co-operatives started in England back in the 1800s, what is the Canadian Wheat Board if it is not a co-operative?

An Honourable Member: It is not a co-operative. No, it is not. Listen. It is a government-imposed monopoly. You go to jail if you do not use it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. At this time the honourable member for Transcona has the floor. I can understand that it can be a very controversial issue between all honourable members, but I would appreciate it if we would show a little respect and allow the honourable member for Transcona to continue. The honourable member to continue.

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Well, the members opposite may be somewhat sensitive, but my interpretation of the way the Wheat Board functions is in the best interests of all of the members that participate. Now the members opposite want to be involved, as they seem to be professing here today, to be representatives and spokespersons for the Farmers for Justice committee that they have in place in this province, those who want to break the laws that are currently in place. I listen to the comments of ministers and members opposite. You say that because the laws are in place and because you do not agree with them, you do not have to abide by them.

An Honourable Member: That is ridiculous.

* (1540)

Mr. Reid: Well, that is what you said by your comments here today. And the way to do it is the normal process that we have in this place. You abide by the laws of this country until such time as those laws are changed. You do not skirt around the laws; you obey the laws, and you work to change them through the processes that we have

through our democratic institutions in this country. You do not break those laws until you are able to change those laws, and then if you change them to your way of thinking, then so be it. That is the will of the majority of this country. But in the meantime, you respect those laws.

What you are proposing to do here today is to have producers in the province that are close to the American markets have the ability to break away from the laws of this country to act as their own independent agents, breaking the laws of this country.

So maybe what we need to do is we need to go back to the proposal that was made by Mr. Harapiak when he was a member of this Legislature, when he said we need to have a control group in this province. He said at that time, let us draw a line right down the Trans-Canada Highway right through the province of Manitoba, and on the southern side of that line we will have a control group. We will eliminate all of the programs and supports that are in place for the producers, and we will let them see if they can stand alone on their two feet. Then north of that line what we will do is we will have the other side of the equation, and we will continue through governments to provide and assist the producers of this province. Maybe that is what we need to do if you want to see if your producers can stand alone on their two feet.

Let us have the control group out there, and let us see if your farmers are willing to go that route, because I suspect that what they want to do is they want to make sure that they are able to meet the needs of their family and that they do not want to let the few that are close to the American border break away from the system and totally destroy the system for the rest of the producers of this province, something which I think you fail to understand. The system was set up to represent not just the minority interests nor the majority interests but to represent all of the farmers.

The member opposite from Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) said we have to listen to the will of the minority of this province. Yes we do, but should we let the will of the minority overrule the wishes of the majority of the producers of this province? By what you are asking here today, by the comments that you are saying here today is that the majority should bend to the wishes of the

minority and let those people break the laws of the country and continue to take their product across the border to the United States. That is what you are saying.

I think what we need to do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to hear from the members opposite very clearly whether they are dual-marketers or not. I would like to hear from the members opposite when they stand up to speak after I am finished with my comments here today. Let them state very clearly for the record if they are, that they are dual marketers and that they do not believe in the Canadian Wheat Board system. I think what they are doing is doing a disservice to our province, the producers of this province, and the over 500 people who are employed at the Wheat Board facilities here in the city of Winnipeg and the other 10,000-plus jobs that are associated with the production of grain products in Manitoba and that those people and those jobs will be put at risk, as will their families. I think you are doing a disservice to yourselves, to your communities and all of the producers of this province by taking the position of being dual marketers.

With those few comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am willing to listen to the members opposite and the comments they may wish to add to the record.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is with great interest that I sit here and listen to the rhetoric that has emanated in this Chamber for the last half hour or three-quarters of an hour or so, and it is absolutely imperative to realize and accept the fact that there are some people who have stood up and spoke about the market system and the so-called Canadian Wheat Board in the last few minutes—it is absolutely imperative to realize that these people know absolutely not what they speak of. For instance, what we are discussing is not the Canadian Wheat Board. It is the western Canadian Wheat Board. It includes wheat and some barley. It markets wheat and some barley in western Canada. Southern Ontario and Quebec market their wheat under an agency that is designated to marketing wheat in Ontario only and in Quebec only. So Ontario is not subjected to the same rules that western Canadians are subjected to. It is a fallacy to even assume that the Canadian Wheat Board is a Canadian agency. It markets wheat and some barley only for western Canadian farmers—Manitoba, Saskatchewan and some parts of British Columbia.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I hate to interrupt the honourable member, but I am having great difficulty. I do not know where the chatter is coming from. Could I ask the members who are carrying on these conversations to do so in the loge or in the hall? The honourable member for Emerson has the floor, and I think there are a number of members who want to hear what he has to say.

The honourable member for Emerson, to continue.

Mr. Penner: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I hope that amount of time will not be deducted from my time. I know that the honourable members opposite will be interested in what I have to say to the point where they will give me some additional time, I would suspect.

I want to talk a little bit about the history of the establishment of an organized market system in western Canada and why it was done. I think it is important for this Chamber to reflect on that to properly assess where we are at today and why the federal Minister of Agriculture has done what he has done in the establishment of a blue ribbon panel to assess and, secondly, the decision that he has come up with in light of the political ramifications that he is facing. You have to accept the fact that in 1917 this country was in the throes of the First World War and it was gravely concerned—and I have all the debates here. Anybody who wants to read them can have access to them; it is great history. We were in the throes of war. We were, at that time, very concerned about our ability to secure supplies domestically and, secondly, to generate enough funds by exporting grain at the right time for the war effort. That is what the debates were all about. Thirdly, we were attempting to access—and how does history repeat itself?—a much greater degree of the American market, clearly stated—and you can read it—by the then politicians. It was a government effort to secure a greater degree of the American market, so they decided to close the trade on the Winnipeg Commodity Exchange, to close it, close trading, and take over the function under the then so-called Canadian Grain Supervisors Board and give them the authority to buy grain, and to be the only seller of grain, and it included wheat, barley, oats, some rye, not all rye, and flax.

It is interesting to note, when you read that history and the election campaigns and some of the discussions in the

election campaign between 1919 and 1935, that was the interim period between the war, all the discussions about how markets should continue. The controlled market was suspended and given back to the commodity exchange, and the exchange did a fairly good business and marketed grain well to the point that farmers were demanding the withdrawal of the controlled market. Then in 1935 it appeared that we would be entering another war period, and there were discussions at that time on how to control, again, the supply. Government wanted control of the supply of grains. They wanted to ensure that No. 1, they could ship grain to which country they wanted to, in other words the European effort, and ensure that the mother country would have enough supply of grain. They wanted to ensure that the American milling market would be supplied and simply to ensure that the farmers would get a price.

But the reason the single-desk authority was established again was not because farmers were not getting enough money, and I will quote to you: Although the Wartime Prices and Trade Board had been appointed in September 1939 to monitor price increases, the situation had begun to get out of hand by midsummer of 1941 as the wholesale price index moved up by 27 percent since 1939. They then established a single-desk authority to ensure that the prices would not rise too dramatically.

* (1550)

The honourable member opposite for Swan River laughs at this, but I say to you, read the history. It is there, the Wheat Board, as it was then called. It was given the name of the Canadian Wheat Board, and it was established to monitor, control supplies and to set prices in conjunction with the then again war effort. It was, in both instances, an effort to ensure the domestic supply and to ensure that government had control of the commodity. I do not fault them for that. I am not sure whether we, as a government, or whether a Canadian government today would not act similarly if domestic supplies were in jeopardy. So I am not faulting them for it, but I think we need to realize how and when and why the Wheat Board was established. I think history would show that we are into the same sort of debates again as to whether they should still retain the authority to be the monopoly, the government-vested monopoly, and they still be able to control.

I think that is why Mr. Goodale, quite frankly, established the blue ribbon panel and asked them to go out and discuss with the farm community, the industry, the whole parameters of the marketing concepts and the price-setting mechanisms, not based on a war effort or a security of supply or lack of markets, but because we have changed the method under which the whole pricing system was structured in the past. That was secured and knowledgeable freight rates which are gone now because the Crow benefit is gone, and the huge increases that farmers are paying now, are required to pay now.

Look at any grain cheque today, and a third of the cheque is gone. It is deducted for handling, for elevation charges, for sales commissions, for freight rates—it is all deducted. We are now even required to make deductions for research for new varieties.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hope that with indulgence I can ask for a bit of extra time, because I think it is important that we realize what we are debating today. I think it is important to note that farmers and members debating this issue in this House understand the decisions that need to be made in the future. If we think that the Wheat Board will remain as it is today or was in the past, we just need to read the history, and we need to reflect on the huge changes that have happened in the past. We will see very similar changes in the future.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): I am pleased to be able to join some of the debate and really interested in hearing some of the comments that have been made from the government members opposite. I must say there are some very good points made, a tremendous history lesson on the Wheat Board, comments from the member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) with respect to farmers in his area and in my area. Yes, I appreciate that. That is excellent that he has the time to talk to people from outside of his constituency and discuss issues such as the Wheat Board and other issues with people of this province.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

What I am hearing is a desire from members opposite, a desire not to support a concept that has been in place for many, many years. I wonder, besides the reasons that

they give, why would you not want to support something—for whatever the reasons may be that members opposite, producers themselves, et cetera, have a problem with—when it has been working? Why fix something that is not totally broke? [interjection] And yes, I agree, make it strong. I agree, make the Wheat Board stronger, work with the people who are part of it to make the Wheat Board stronger, to be able to sell and get the best prices of grain for our farmers.

Why try and just go against everything that has been? That is what I am hearing from some members opposite. They do not want to just say, most of it is okay, but to tear it all apart. Let us just do away with it, that is what I am hearing. That is the sense I am hearing. That is the concept that I am hearing opposite. I go through my notes, and I read and I talk to people also. As my colleague the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid)—I must remind my colleague from Transcona, when he said he was not up on agricultural issues, that most of Transcona now was then all under grain. So we have to be able to support something. I feel and my communities feel that it should not be dismantled. It should not be destroyed. It should not be something that somebody one or two or three should go against totally.

I think the producers in my area, and I am sure the vast majority, support the Wheat Board in its concept and what it is for. I would say another smaller minority of that majority say and agree with that there should be some changes upon the whole scope of the Wheat Board, not just little bits and pieces here, little parts of Manitoba here, little parts of Saskatchewan there and little parts of Alberta, but the general support for the Wheat Board in my constituency and from what I have seen and heard and talked to—I mean, what we saw just some weeks ago, a rally at the Wheat Board—

An Honourable Member: Over a thousand people.

Mr. Clif Evans: Over a thousand people. How many of those thousand producers were against the Wheat Board?

An Honourable Member: Well, there were a few there.

Mr. Clif Evans: There were a few there.

An Honourable Member: Just a small group.

Mr. Clif Evans: A group, yes. Now, is that group and was that group there to say, look, we support the Wheat Board, we support the 40-odd, 50 years that it has been in operation? Do we support the fact that we are doing better with the Wheat Board in place with improvements? Or are they saying, I do not want to have anything to do with the Wheat Board, it is not doing me any justice, it is not getting any prices for me?

Now, I am sure that less—I am guessing—than 5, 6 percent are against the Wheat Board. That is, in my mind—and the way we have been discussing this issue, in my mind, changes of any kind should work on a majority rule. We get elected on a majority. In all our discussions, whether it be in caucus, whether it be the Wheat Board, whether it be grain, the hog marketing, it is a majority.

* (1600)

Now, the members opposite, if they are so intent on a dual-marketing system, well, then, let us find out from the producers of this province. Let us find out from the producers of Saskatchewan, let us find out from the producers of Alberta just exactly what they want by putting it down—yes or no.

But it seems, and I think if we could get the support, full out-and-out support from members opposite, from the government of the day to say, yes, we support the Wheat Board—but we are not hearing that. We are hearing every possible reasons why there should be no Wheat Board. We are getting history lessons; we are getting discussions about the past.

An Honourable Member: It always helps to know the history, Clifford.

Mr. Clif Evans: Yes, it does, and a history lesson I might provide the honourable member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), when I moved to the Riverton area and found and got involved with the community to find out exactly what was there, commercial fishing, agriculture. I have learned a lot about the fishing industry, as I have about the farming industry, not being a producer or agricultural-minded person myself, but I spent two and a half years in Killamey listening to producers and farmers, friends with most of them. What got me about the fishing industry, and I want to relate it, is the fact that when discussing the

industry in and around Riverton and throughout that area, people talked to me about a monopoly, a monopoly of private fish buyers who controlled these fishermen, who absolutely controlled these fishermen as they came off the lake. They controlled their motors, they controlled their boats, they controlled their nets. When that fisherman came in from two or three days of fishing, he did not know what the price was.

An Honourable Member: Just like the farmers used to be without the Wheat Board.

Mr. Clif Evans: Just like the farmers used to be, so I can relate to that. I do not necessarily want to see that occur, and I do not think it would occur. I do not think that would occur, but what I am saying is, with a single-marketing system, whether at times it be right up there, other times whether it be low, the fact that we do not want to see that a producer or a fisherman not know what he can get for his catch or for his product. If we go away from this totally and break up the Wheat Board, then there will be those avenues that some may be forced to go on and some may not benefit. But if there is a guarantee of prices, then I cannot understand why anybody would want not to support something knowing how much they are going to get, knowing what they can do, knowing what the costs to produce are and dealing with that so they know what they are going to get at the bottom line.

Do we just go into something just blindfolded and hope that we come out at the top? That does not work.

An Honourable Member: It must have been when you bought an NDP membership.

Mr. Clif Evans: The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), as usual, you know, and I told him before—and you are not taking me off the topic—if he does not like what I am saying, No. 1, he does not have to listen; and, No. 2, if he had taken me to South America with him, perhaps we would have had a better confrontation there.

I just want to say that some of the comments that I have heard today make an awful lot of sense. They make a lot of sense—both sides—and I am supporting, Madam Speaker, and to members opposite, I am supporting what the people in my community and the people of this province and the people of Saskatchewan are saying. They are saying maintain the Wheat Board. Do what is

best to try and improve it, but maintain it and do not dismantle it. Do not do away with it. Keep it, but support it. Say, we support it. Say we support it is the bottom line. They do not want to say that they fully support the Wheat Board. Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us this afternoon, Mr. Bill Gilmore, member of Parliament for Comox-Alberni, Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this afternoon.

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, on a matter of House business, as discussed earlier, the committee meeting tonight at 7 p.m. will now have Bill 54 referred to it as well, The Municipal and Various Acts Amendment Act.

Madam Speaker: The standing committee meeting at 7 p.m. this evening, Bill 54 is to be added to that committee for consideration.

Committee Changes

Mr. George Hicketts (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs be amended as follows: Burrows (Mr. Martindale) for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen); Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) for October 22, 1996, for 7 p.m. Thank you.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs (for 7 p.m. this evening) be amended as follows: the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) for the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine); the member

for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) for the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson).

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to rise today and participate in the debate on a subject which has caused a considerable amount of division throughout western Canada and I guess—I want to make it clear on the record—has caused some individuals some extreme difficulties. I would be unfair to my constituents and to myself if I did not say, it is unfortunate that I do have a constituent that finds himself behind bars in a situation which I think probably could have been dealt with differently, but an example is being made of an individual which I would have hoped could have been done through other ways.

I certainly do not condone the breaking of the laws of this country. I think they certainly have to be fully penalized, but I think that there have been some discrepancies when we see an individual who from one particular part of the province of Manitoba is a free person and, in my perception, has done no less or no more than an individual from my riding who finds himself behind bars because of exporting of grain to the United States. I do not want to get into that because of the situation, but it is unfortunate, I say extremely unfortunate, that the issue got to that point. I say that genuinely because the individual is not a malicious person. He is not an individual who is a threat to society, but, again, I certainly do not condone the breaking of the law which this individual has done.

I want to, as well, put on the record that with the change of the freight rate subsidy which was paid to all western Canada, with the loss of that freight rate support to the farmers of western Canada, it has totally changed the dynamic and what is in fact in place.

Just to let the members of the opposition know, last year when the freight rate changed, the costs of shipping, of cleaning and of handling grain—today when you haul a load of wheat to the elevator, you give approximately one-third of it to the system. That is up substantially from what it was a year ago. I would ask the members opposite who are, in principle, strong supporters of

systems that control wages and provide a quantity of work to the workforce or availability through a labour market system. That is what they believe in controlling. They believe in the same thing in labour, they believe in the same thing in agriculture commodities. They believe in government control of provision of services to a system. That is their philosophy. It happens to differ from mine.

So I ask the members opposite if, as of the 1st of July last year, they were enjoying—let us use \$6 an hour for example, of which it was costing them 25 cents an hour to get to their job, automatically found that they were getting \$6 an hour, but they now had to get to that job, some reduction of freight of 50 percent or greater to do that. [interjection]

* (1610)

Well, the member for Swan River (Mrs. Wowchuk) says, what is the point? Well, the point is that I, as a wheat producer in southwestern Manitoba, to get my wheat to the market now, have to give up a considerable amount more of that to get it there, the same as she would have to do if she was working for a job down the road in Manitoba. But at the same time, 20 miles down the road, she could get \$8 an hour for her time for approximately the same amount of money that she traditionally got herself to that job.

That is what is happening out in rural Manitoba; there is an opportunity to sell grain at a higher price to a different market for less cost. That is what people are trying to get to, Madam Speaker, and that is where this all breaks down. You cannot deny people the opportunity to try to maximize their return. This could have all been put to rest if—and I am a supporter of the Canadian Wheat Board. I do not want anybody to think that I am not. I am a supporter of the Canadian Wheat Board, but what could have happened to put this to rest would have been to put the initial price up within 10 percent of what the market was in the United States. It would have ended the debate. The Wheat Board could have absolutely stood and said that everybody would have been happy with it because it was providing the money to the producers like right now. But it did not. It did not. The initial price did not meet anywhere near what the producers expected they should get. That is what happened, and that is what has caused a lot of this to happen. That is why a person is in jail because he could get more money for his barley in the United States.

Let us look at a short piece of history. When Charlie Mayer deregulated the barley and let the barley go into the open market system, the price went up. You cannot tell producers that the price is not going to go up. The price did go up. Here is another situation that took place. The courts of the land said that Charlie Mayer passed an Order-in-Council which allowed that to happen. It had to be done by legislation. What did Ralph Goodale do? He passed an Order-in-Council saying it could not happen. Is that any stronger an Order-in-Council than the one Charlie Mayer passed? I think not, Madam Speaker. It is exactly using the same instrument, using it in an opposite purpose.

So we have a lot of problems out there in the whole issue of grain marketing. What is important to put on the record is that the western Canadian farmers spoke through the panel that was established by Ralph Goodale to tell him what they wanted. It is the left wing, the right wing and the centre that all came together with a recommendation. This party is on record as supporting those recommendations because what I believe the panel thought, if they did not give those kinds of flexibilities, which is the key word here, then in fact the Canadian Wheat Board would be threatened. It would, in fact, disappear because of the continued challenges of those people who think that it is not doing an adequate job. Madam Speaker, that is what the panel recommended. That is why I support it because I believe it will save the Canadian Wheat Board.

However, if we do not see some positive change over the next few years, there is a new generation of farmers out there that have different conditions than they had 60 years ago when the Wheat Board was established. They have all the information on a minute-by-minute basis in the equipment that they have on their farms. They know what the markets are doing. Some of them are probably more sophisticated than the Canadian Wheat Board system itself in determining what the price should be. So it is not as if farmers have not equipped themselves to determine what is going on.

Yes, there is a certain group of farmers who would just as soon leave all the marketing to the Canadian Wheat Board, and I think that should be available to them. But there is a group of farmers out there who are saying: I can no longer operate within this system; I need more flexibility to fix my price.

Of course, let us look at what has happened in these last few months. We went through the highest-priced period of wheat in the history of the province of this country. Can you tell me why, if the numbers that I have been given are correct, we came through that period of time with a greater carry-over of wheat than we had the year before when wheat was a lower price? Explain that to me, Madam Speaker. The supporters of this wonderful marketing agency that they are telling me about, why do we have a greater number of bushel carry-over when the market is the highest it has ever been when in fact the year before we had less carry-over? The market was telling the board and telling producers to sell into that market at the highest price, but we did not maximize our opportunities. So there is room for some criticism.

Well, Madam Speaker, I appreciate that time does go very quickly on a debate like this. I just want to conclude my remarks by saying there is a discrepancy and an anomaly with the NDP opposite. I would take it that they support the Island Lake fishermen in selling outside the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation.

Now, why should it be right that they can do that if it holds true that the Wheat Board will disappear with marketing outside of the Wheat Board with wheat? Will it not be that the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation will disappear? Because that is the argument the member for Swan River tells us. In other words, the NDP are opposed to Island Lake being able to sell their pickerel to Minneapolis outside the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation and creating some 50 jobs in that community.

Why have we no longer got any flour mills in western Canada if it is right? Why have we got three canola crushing plants in Manitoba, and how many canola crushing plants in western Canada? It is not marketed by the Wheat Board. That creates a lot of employment.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Emerson, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Penner: The honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey) just asked the question why we have three canola plants in this province. The honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) has

indicated they were closing down. She said, and they are closing down. I want to ask the honourable member opposite where she gets her information from that we are going to close down, because that is a serious accusation, a very serious accusation. I think she should stand in this House and explain what that means, whether she knows something we do not know.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Emerson does not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over—pardon me?

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, on the same point of order.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I had already ruled on the point of order. I was just completing my ruling on the point of order by the honourable member for Emerson. I indicated that the honourable member did not have a point of order.

Point of Order

Ms. Wowchuk: On a new point of order, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: On a new point of order.

Ms. Wowchuk: The member for Emerson has just said that I have made certain comments. I did not make comments on the record. I would ask him to withdraw those comments because that is a false statement.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Swan River stood on the exact same point of order that I had risen on before and does not have a point of order.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism, who has 30 seconds remaining to complete his remarks.

Mr. Downey: I will conclude my remarks by saying that it is obvious that as long as you have an export marketing agency whose sole purpose is to export grains, that is what will happen, and the system will be in place. What we do need is flexibility to give farmers the option,

to give people the option to process that product here as has happened with canola, that is happening with oats, that is happening in the livestock sector.

Rest assured, we need the Canadian Wheat Board, but I can tell you this, that the farmers of this country will continue to demand choice. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I am pleased to join with my colleagues in support of this resolution and start by commenting how disappointed I am in members opposite in terms of their wishy-washy position on the Canadian Wheat Board.

I remember when we could have debates in this Chamber and we always knew where the Conservative Party of Manitoba stood. I think the Free Press was accurate. I would suggest to members opposite that it should bother them—[interjection] No, I do not work for Great-West Life, and I am not on a leave of absence from Great-West Life.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Labour, on a point of order.

* (1620)

Point of Order

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): My comments were not anything to do with Great-West Life. My comments were on the Free Press article that the member for Concordia was referring to, that the New Democrats are a party of special interests.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Labour does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Doer: I know the Minister of Labour is not naive enough to not believe that the advertisers do not have something to say with what goes on in the Free Press, but “special interests” I see as an interesting coined term, the Gingrich kind of rhetoric we see from members opposite, the kind of New Republican Darwinian language of the right. It goes with people that do not have the moral backbone to defend babies that got cut by 29 percent by mean-minded and extreme-minded members opposite

who preach their spiritual values in the morning and then cut babies back in their nutritional values in the afternoon by some 29 percent.

Yes, we are standing up for the interests of Manitobans, all Manitobans, including those who are voiceless and powerless in our society, and we are proud to do so. We do not apologize to members opposite in their mean-spirited legislative agenda that we see before the people of this province, an agenda that I would suggest members opposite for years and decades before would have been quite appalled to hear about.

I want to talk about the wishy-washy nature of the Conservative Party. You want to really—as the Free Press said, and the Minister of Labour is wont to quote the Free Press, as the Free Press stated a few weeks ago, the Filmon government is not half pregnant on this issue by on the one hand saying we support the Canadian Wheat Board and the jobs here in Manitoba and the advantages it produces, these are not our words of course but the Free Press' words, and the advantages it represents for producers. On the other hand, it wants to take down the orderly marketing system of the Canadian Wheat Board and dramatically reduce its marketing capacity and its single-desk capacity.

Daryl Kraft and others have stated that if we were to implement the panel's recommendations it would have a dramatic impact on the role of the Canadian Wheat Board and would eventually lead to the elimination of the Canadian Wheat Board. So what we are calling on this Legislature to do today in this resolution is to stand tall and stand firm for the Canadian Wheat Board and its role to have a single-desk marketing system here in the province.

We do not want wishy-washy talk from members opposite—we like the Wheat Board but we want to take away its marketing capacity—and I would suggest to members opposite if they really want to eliminate the marketing capacity of the Canadian Wheat Board they should tell it like it is. They did that on hog marketing. They broke their word, but at least they are now after the election being consistent. If that is what you want to—they were not consistent before the election, when they promised to make sure, that they promised to maintain the hog marketing system. Everybody, of course, can use the word “improve” to be interchangeable with the

substance of the decision. It is a cute little political trick that the members opposite are using, but, you know, farmers are pretty straight-shooting kinds of individuals. They are pretty honest individuals, and they understand a wishy-washy position when they see one, or hear one, or listen to one, or read one—

An Honourable Member: That is why you are over there.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Doer: Perhaps, if the member had the courage of his convictions, he would have taken his position on hog marketing and his position on the orderly marketing under the Wheat Board to the constituents in the last provincial election.

But they could not do that because the further away you go from the Canadian-U.S. border, the more strength there is and support there is for the Canadian Wheat Board and its long-term benefit to western Canadian producers, Manitoba producers, and to the community of Manitoba and Winnipeg with the number of jobs that are here. So you are trying to say, we believe in improvement, but we believe in the panel recommendations. It is a wishy-washy position, and that is why this resolution is before this legislative forum. [interjection]

You are one of the last producers left in Manitoba supporting Goodale's panel recommendations, and that is why we suspect—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Doer: So, Madam Speaker, if I can get back without the interruptions of members opposite, the wishy-washy members opposite, this resolution tries to delineate the decision that this province has to make.

Point No. 1: Nobody in this Chamber has any difficulty with more producers and farmers having greater control of the Wheat Board marketing agency, nobody is disputing that. The real issue is, do we support the recommendations on barley, and do we support the recommendations of the panel on portions of wheat being removed from the Canadian Wheat Board? We do not; you do.

Madam Speaker, those are in the panel's recommendations—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Doer: If I may continue—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Enns: On a point of order, the issue is too important to allow false information to be put on the record. I do not say it is being put on the record wilfully, but it is false nonetheless. The panel's recommendation with respect to wheat: Maintain the single-selling-desk integrity of that major grain that the Wheat Board offers. That is the position that we support. They support, they recommend a dual marketing on the barley question, of which the member is correct.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Agriculture does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Doer: I know the Minister of Agriculture, within this wishy-washy position that his government maintains, is having a hard time communicating what he thinks his position is today on the Wheat Board. I dare say, maybe the Minister of Agriculture wants to stand up when he speaks and tell us what his staff was telling him in the briefing notes that were contained—and the newspaper articles about the long-term impact of his own personal view on this matter and the recommendations that he is taking to his government.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, and the minister knows that there is a change in the status of wheat under the Wheat Board, under the panel recommendations. We know it; he knows it, and there is also a change in the status, as recommended, on barley. Secondly, we want this government to take a strong stand against the Alberta court case. Why are they sitting on the fence? [interjection] Well, I guess you like to sit on the fence, but there is a position

to be maintained where you will intervene on environmental cases in the province of Alberta. You will intervene on gun registration cases with the federal government, but you will sit on the fence about a major economic issue here in the province of Manitoba. Why are you sitting on the fence? If you have a position, get on the skating rink, get in the game.

We have Alberta taking two court cases forward to take a position to effectively eliminate the Canadian Wheat Board as a marketing agency for our agricultural products in terms of barley and wheat, and we have the Province of Saskatchewan taking a strong stand against that court case, and where do we see the Filmonites, the Filmon team? Where do we see this group of individuals? They are doing a full fetal position. They cannot get involved; they cannot get engaged; they cannot take a stand. They do not have anything to say. They stand up in the House and correct something, or not correct something, but they are the provincial government of the day. God help us! They are the government of the day, and they cannot get off the fence and defend Manitoba's interests.

Madam Speaker, this is what this resolution says. This resolution says, get a backbone, go to that court case, take a position, do not sit there and, you know, go in the gopher hole as members opposite are doing, or do not go in the closet as members opposite are doing, or do not put a pillow over your head and do not pretend something is not happening. Do not go into a full fetal position or do not sit on a picket fence. Take a stand—[interjection] Well, I remember when you were the head of KAP, you would have taken a stand, and I am disappointed that you have moved on to this wishy-washy position. [interjection] Well, maybe you would. Maybe that member would go to the court case and take a position to the court case. I dare say, you probably would.

What we want this Premier to do is not go to the Canadian Wheat Board and tell those 500 employees and the thousands of others that work in that related sector, well, we support your job, but in the afternoon he goes to meet with other farmers and says, we do not support the existence of the Canadian Wheat Board in terms of the single-desk selling. That is all the Tories are doing.

It is almost like the Winnipeg Jets. We will save the team for \$10 million. We will cancel the operating loss agreement. Vote for us, you can have it all different

ways. Well, that kind of dishonesty has to stop. We have to have direct answers from governments and take positions because this has long-term economic ramifications for the people of this province.

So this resolution basically says, take a stand, get off the fence, support our position to reject the recommendations to erode the single-desk marketing system of the Canadian Wheat Board, and also get into the ring, get into the court case, defend Manitoba's interests. Alberta has gone one way; they have obviously got strong leadership in Alberta. Saskatchewan has obviously got strong leadership. What we have in Manitoba—no leadership, and what this resolution is calling for is strong leadership. It is time that we led from in front, rather than behind, and that is what this resolution is calling for. Thank you very, very much, Madam Speaker.

* (1630)

Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris): Madam Speaker, thank you for allowing me to place a few comments on the record in this debate this afternoon.

I guess the one thing where I would like to start off is the Winnipeg Free Press of Monday, September 23, talks about the grain debate. That is certainly what is happening at the present time with the debate on the issue and from extreme positions, as well as from positions that are middle of the road. It talks about the fact that more than \$6 billion in grain sales annually are through the Wheat Board so that every farmer does have a stake in the changes that the federal government is about to make to the Canadian Wheat Board, and I stress that—that the federal government is about to make to the Canadian Wheat Board.

Just to add to what my colleague from Emerson (Mr. Penner) talked about, a little bit about a history of the board. It is quite interesting because the evolution of the board took place over a period of time. In 1917 and 1918, during the First World War, Ottawa created the Board of Grain Supervisors, which took over the complete control of the purchase and sale of wheat for export. Now, when marketing of the 1918 crop was finished, so was this Board of Grain Supervisors.

So, in 1919, the following year, the first Canadian Wheat Board was established as part of Ottawa's plan to

assist the transition from war to peace, and this board, which sold wheat into export markets at world prices, was then disbanded in 1920 because it had achieved its purpose.

Despite the end of the first board, the concept of price pooling gathered strength with the creation of provincial wheat pools in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. So, at that point in time, the pooling process or the co-operative process took hold in those three provinces. So in these pools, these pool elevator co-operatives, they all ran into trouble on the international grain markets when the wheat prices collapsed in 1929 and the Great Depression began. So all three of the prairie pools really found it very tough to keep operating

Therefore, in 1931 Ottawa was then forced to come to the rescue for the three prairie pools, and they offered a limited guarantee to banks against losses for the crop year. I think that is probably where the support, the government backing for the Canadian Wheat Board, started at that point in time, in terms of guaranteeing that whatever was being offered to producers would, in fact, be the price that they would receive.

In 1935, Madam Speaker, Parliament created the Canadian Wheat Board as a volunteer marketing agency—as a volunteer marketing agency. In 1943, during the Second World War, wheat deliveries to the Canadian Wheat Board were made compulsory, and, I believe, as my honourable colleague from Emerson (Mr. Penner) indicated, that in terms of the war effort, it was the federal government wanting to control the supply of grain and wanting to control where that supply of grain was to go because, obviously, we needed food for all of our troops over in the war.

In 1949 the Wheat Board's jurisdiction was included to not only cover wheat but also to cover oats and barley, and that was a major change in 1949. Then in 1989 the board lost its control over oats marketing in Canada. In 1993, for a brief period, farmers were given the option to sell their barley elsewhere, and after about 40 days the courts ruled against the removal of barley from the Canadian Wheat Board's jurisdiction. That is a bit of the history of the Wheat Board, Madam Speaker, as it has evolved over a period of time from 1918 to the present time.

Now, we were talking about an organization that has not really been the same organization right through. It has changed and evolved as the years have gone by. I guess, at this point in time, I would like to make it very, very clear that, as a member of this Legislature and a member representing Morris, I do support the Wheat Board. I always have, and I always will. The Wheat Board is going to be here for a long time to come, except, Madam Speaker, I am not sure what the Wheat Board is going to look like. Is it going to look the same as it was in 1943, or is it going to look much different than that in the years to come?

But let us take a look at some of the things that have happened with the Wheat Board. I suggest to all members here that the Wheat Board has changed considerably even since the 1950s, because if the members here can remember that in the 1950s we had this terrific glut of wheat on the prairies. Farmers could not sell their wheat. Whom were they hollering at? They were hollering at the Wheat Board. They were hollering at the federal government. They even marched on Ottawa, demanding from the then Minister of Agriculture, C.D. Howe, that farmers would get \$2 a bushel for the wheat. They could not move their wheat. Wheat stayed in the bins. Many, many bins were full of wheat carried over from year to year.

So we go on, and we say that in terms of canola during the early 1970s, I can recall when the producers of the western provinces went through the debate as to whether canola should be continued to be marketed under the Canadian Wheat Board or marketed outside the Wheat Board. That plebiscite was held, and the farmers voted to have it outside the Canadian Wheat Board. That was a decision that farmers made themselves. The Wheat Board again went through a change, had to adjust to the fact that it was not in charge of marketing canola. Then another crop, flax—flax is another crop that for many years under the Wheat Board, under the quota system, farmers were able to take their flax acres, they could transfer those quota acres over to the wheat acres, haul wheat on those acres, and then, as the quotas opened up for wheat and get their wheat out, they could then transfer those acres back to flax. Then the Wheat Board deemed it necessary to have more control over the flax acres because, with respect to transferring these acres over to wheat, they really did not know how much wheat was going to come in at any given time. They had to get a

better handle on that so they did not have a glut of wheat at the coasts waiting for ships. So what they said was that every producer must assign their actual acres of flax to flax and only that. If you grew 100 acres of flax, you are only eligible to haul flax on those 100 acres. You could not expand those acres as you could before. So, Madam Speaker, now the Wheat Board will accept flax without any quota at all. You can virtually haul out your entire crop right at harvest time if you wish and if there is space. That is just another demonstration of a Wheat Board that is constantly going through an evolution of changes, adapting itself to the conditions around it at the time.

The other area refers to the now payment for a 2 CW red spring high protein wheat, and that evolved as a change as well. When we happened to be down at a tour at Thunder Bay as members of Manitoba Pool Elevators delegates, we noticed that the storage of grain was marked as a 2 CW high protein red spring. You say, well, how come you can segregate this here at Thunder Bay, and at the elevator system, we could not segregate it? It was not a grade. So we set about to make resolutions through Manitoba Pool Elevators here in Manitoba. Gradually, Saskatchewan came on board, and then the Canadian Wheat Board and the Canadian Grain Commission decided to offer us a 2 CW red spring wheat, 14.5 percent protein. That premium now went to the producers. So we are always in the constant throes of change.

The other area I would like to talk about is some of the challenges facing the Canadian Wheat Board and some of the questions I have to ask personally as to whether there could be resolve and answers to them. If we are to have value-added processing in Manitoba, vis-a-vis in the livestock, the pasta or the flour industry, then the question I have is how to take a 1 CW red spring 15 percent wheat, load two cars in Domain and ship them to Elie to a flour mill, through the Canadian Wheat Board, how much freight, as a producer in Domain, will I be charged to ship that grain? I think that is an issue that the Canadian Wheat Board really has to address in terms of being able to satisfy the market economy in Manitoba. So how they reflect that domestic freight regime in Manitoba is going to be a major question.

The member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) mentioned the fact that we are only 700 miles from the Churchill port,

and we all support the fact that that port has a great future. The only question is, when the Wheat Board buys grain from producers, are they going to be able to reflect the cost of that freight from the farm gate to Churchill, or are they going to be forced to f.o.b. it out to Vancouver or Montreal? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

* (1640)

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to speak on this motion that we have put forward today, and I must say that I am quite disappointed in the government's position and on their decision not to support this motion and to reject the recommendations put forward by the marketing panel. The government members talk about the committee that was put forward, the panel that was put forward and the \$2 million that was spent, and just because the government spent \$2 million, they seem to think that we are supposed to accept these recommendations. The truth of the matter is that this report does not reflect the views of the producers of this country, and it does not reflect the views of Manitoba producers. I had the opportunity to attend a few of these meetings. I have heard from producers soon, as have members of this government, and producers do not feel that this report reflects what they said at those committee hearings. In my opinion, the committee that was put together had their agenda set before they went there and did not reflect on what the producers were saying. These government members should recognize and should listen to producers because, across the province, well over 90 percent of the producers are saying that they do not accept these recommendations, that they do not want to see them implemented.

The member from Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) was talking about the NF position. Well, I have to remind him that this is also the KAP position. KAP has said that it rejects the recommendations from this marketing panel. So, Madam Speaker, I am not quite sure whom this government is listening to. They do not want to listen to the NF and they do not want to listen to KAP and they do not want to listen to the Manitoba Pool delegates who reject these recommendations.

So I have some serious concerns as to whose agenda this government is on and whom they are listening to, because they are certainly not listening to the producers. If they did listen to the producers, they would be rejecting

these recommendations because producers are very concerned with the implications of these recommendations if they are put forward. In fact, the minister's own briefing notes that were reported in the paper indicate that by implementing the recommendations that have been put forward, for example, if unlicensed wheat varieties are exempted from the Wheat Board and feed barley is removed and farmers are allowed to try and sell 25 percent of their crop into spot markets, there will be serious concerns. The minister's own notes told him, and producers across the province have said, that feed barley sold in the open market will find its way back into the malting barley market, eroding the Wheat Board premiums in this market.

If we move towards selling 25 percent of the wheat on an open market, there will be difficulties in designing a system that provides accurate cash pricing and accounts for logistics of moving the product to cash customers.

Madam Speaker, there are serious concerns here. I do not think that these members recognize or understand what this report is saying, or they do not want to, because they have a different agenda and their agenda is to move toward a dual marketing system, just as we have seen them move to a dual marketing system of hogs, against the wishes of producers—in fact, lowered the prices of hogs. The returns are not as good for hog producers as they were.

This government is not listening to producers and is not reflecting the wishes of producers. We talked about the history of the Wheat Board, and why was the Wheat Board brought in? The Wheat Board began because of a momentum of farmers who sought to operate their own country elevators and terminals and establish their own wheat co-operatives and pools. It was what farmers wanted; it is still what farmers want. Farmers want the single-desk selling of wheat to be maintained so that we can share.

The member from Arthur talked about his constituents who can cross the border and get a higher price. Well, how long does the member for Arthur think that this is going to happen that people will go across the border? Do you think that the Americans are not going to retaliate and close those borders to us? But, Madam Speaker, the bigger concern I have with that comment is, what has happened to the co-operative spirit that we have in this

province that we work for equality? That is what we have in this province under pooling, which we had under Manitoba Pork and which we have under the Wheat Board. People are treated equally. Under the proposals that this government is supporting, if the Wheat Board is dismantled and we go to an open market system, farmers will be under the mercy of the grain companies as they were before the Wheat Board.

My ancestors and my father and other relatives and neighbours have told us the story where there were those farmers who had bills and had taxes to pay had to sell their grain early in the fall, and they were at the mercy of the grain buyers and got a very low price. Those farmers who happened to have larger operations and had better resources could wait until later on in the year and got a much better return for their product. By establishing the pooling system under the Wheat Board, we have gotten away from that, and, quite frankly, I think that we should be looking at bringing more grains under the Wheat Board. We should be looking at bringing oilseeds under the Wheat Board.

The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) earlier indicated that I was saying that crushing plants were closed. What I would like to say is crushing plants are under a lot of pressure with high grain prices right now in Manitoba. If canola was under the Wheat Board, and they could use their preferential selling practices that they have, we could have a better case here for the canola crushing plants in Manitoba. There could be a preferential pricing. It could happen, and it would still fit under the pooling. It would be under pooling, and I would very much like to see canola under the Wheat Board. I would very much like that, and many producers would like to see that as well. So what this government is doing is paying their dues to somebody. They are not listening to the producers of Manitoba because the producers, very clearly, well over 90 percent of them—in fact in Arthur-Virden where we were last week, and in Roblin where we were, producers said they are not in support of what this government is doing. They recognize that this agenda is wrong, but for some reason this government has decided that because they have a majority, they can afford to sit on the fence and not take a definite position.

Madam Speaker, this resolution is asking the government to take a position. We are asking the government to reject the recommendations of the Western Grain

Marketing Panel which will destroy the single-desk selling capacity of the Wheat Board. That is what we are asking this government to do, but this government prefers to sit on the fence and not take a position at all. We are asking this government to join with Saskatchewan and fight the Alberta government that is working to, again, also destroy the Wheat Board. We know that is the agenda of the Alberta government, but this government will not take a stand on this. So I have to say that I am very disappointed with the comments that I have heard from this government. I must say that the comments on the history of the board are good, but that is not what we are talking about. We are not talking about the history of the board, we are talking about the future of the board.

The government members talk about change. The Wheat Board has been changing everyday to meet the needs of the people. The Wheat Board is not afraid of change, but you do not have to work to destroy single-desk selling. By removing single-desk selling, you are destroying one of the pillars of the Wheat Board and this is wrong, Madam Speaker. The Wheat Board has changed very well. Just recently when there was a need to change because of flour mills, the pricing of durum wheat to flour mills, the Wheat Board worked with the milling association and they resolved that problem.

* (1650)

An Honourable Member: No, they have not.

Ms. Wowchuk: They have resolved the problem. Yes, they have. The members should get their facts straight because that issue has been resolved, and if they do not believe it is resolved, maybe they should sit down with the Wheat Board and discuss it. Talk to the Millers Association because it has been resolved.

This government is wrong in their position. They should listen to producers. They should reject the recommendations that have been put forward by the marketing panel, because those recommendations will destroy the Wheat Board and the single-desk selling concept which producers in this province want. Madam Speaker, if they would listen to producers and get more grains under, they would work along with producers and the Wheat Board to make the necessary changes to make it a better system but not destroy the single-desk selling concept.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach), my good friend, to let me add a few words to this debate this afternoon. I might not be his friend after I am finished, but regardless—[interjection] All of these are my friends.

I would like to stand and indicate my party's support for this motion, at least that part of the motion that calls on this provincial government to get off the fence and join the Saskatchewan government in opposition to the Alberta government's court challenge of the Canadian Wheat Board. But I have problems with the first part of the motion since I do not believe the panel's recommendations are a danger to the Wheat Board, although they might be politically dangerous to the NDP.

I join with the opposition's commitment to the Canadian Wheat Board. I believe that the Canadian Wheat Board is an important economic engine for western Canadian grain farmers. Madam Speaker, everything that can be done to protect this important institution should be done, but I find it rather incredible to suggest that the Western Grain Marketing Panel's recommendation in any way weakens the marketing of grain in Canada. The system has worked for many years, but if we want to continue it to be effective some changes have to be made. I might be prejudiced, but I trust a good Liberal government to make the changes. The panel's report was produced in consultation with farmers, unlike this provincial government's attack on the single-desk hog marketing system.

I have to be careful, Madam Speaker, because my good friend also from Lakeside will probably report on me.

Farmers were asked what needed to be done to make the grain marketing board more responsive, and they gave their response to the panel. The panel reviewed this evidence and made their recommendations. What more can we ask? These recommendations will not please everyone, but that was not the point of the Western Grain Marketing Panel. What they wanted to do was find out what the farmers thought was wrong with the current system and make recommendations to correct these

problems. That is why I am puzzled by the first part of the motion since I believe we should listen to what producers have to say. That is what the opposition was saying when, like myself, we both opposed the demolition of this single-desk marketing, or was that just political grandstanding?

The opposition often tries to please both sides, but without really representing the interest of the people involved, farmers. Does the opposition reject the recommendations that would require a vote from farmers before any movement is made towards independent marketing of barley? I believe that farmers are smart to make their own decisions. The federal government is also smart enough—do not forget it is Liberal—to listen to farmers. I only wish the opposition was smart enough to listen to farmers also. This Opposition Day motion is reflective of that sort of attitude. The first part of the motion is aimed at attacking the federal government. The second part attacks the provincial government. I guess that is what happens when you are in opposition as a provincial party and as a federal party. They want to pick and choose what they like and do not like. They do not want to face reality.

The federal Liberal government made a commitment to talk with farmers and listen to their concerns about the Wheat Board. That is what happened. Now the NDP wants a split. They should concentrate on attacking the provincial government during Opposition Day, not the federal government's best attempt to find a solution that all farmers can live with, Madam Speaker. Thank you very much.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Madam Speaker, I know I have only a few minutes to place my remarks on the record, but I want you to be assured that this is an issue that is of significant importance in the western part of this province and in the constituency that I represent. In the days that have followed the panel's recommendations there has been a great deal of discussion about the position that was taken by the panel and the fact that it was indeed a credible position and strengthened, if you like, the entire marketing system of grain in the Prairies for all farmers who sell their grain on the markets of our country.

Madam Speaker, it affects not only the farmers of Manitoba, but it indeed filters into every city in the

western provinces, because that money that is used in the grain trade not only impacts on the economy of the rural communities but certainly on the city of Winnipeg as well. I believe that any time we can strengthen and modify the system in which we market our products that is only to the advantage of everybody in our province. Now, we can hide our head in the sand, as the NDP have done, and say let us stay with the status quo because they are masters. The members of the NF would have you believe that the only system that is credible in this province is either the single-desk marketing system or the system that has prevailed for a long time. Well, the reality is that we live in a very changing society, a very changing country and a very changing global economy, and we have to address the changes with strategies that are going to give us an advantage in the marketplace. Since the elimination of the Western Grain Transportation subsidy, we have seen the rural areas move aggressively forward in adding value to the products that are grown on the Prairies. I use just a few examples of what is going on in our province here, whether it is with the Canadian Aga industrial park, or the agricultural park that is being created at Ste. Agathe, where we are taking product that is grown in Manitoba and adding value to it for our markets.

I dare say that if canola itself were under the Wheat Board solely, then we would not see the establishment of canola crushing plants in our province. We would see canola going off in its raw form to be processed elsewhere, as has been happening with our cereal grains. I have a small milling company in my constituency, who would love to do nothing better than to mill their own wheat and their own products. But in order to do that, they have to go to the elevator, take their grain to the elevator, then buy it back from the elevator in order to be able to mill it. Last year, when there was not a quota on that particular grade of wheat, their bins were full of grain, yet they could not mill a bushel. Why? Because of the system that is in place in Canada with respect to the Wheat Board. So I ask the question, do the NDP feel that this old system should remain forever?

Our position is that, no, it needs to evolve, it needs to change, and I believe that the recommendations of the panel were right on. They were indeed looking at the value of the Canadian Wheat Board and saying, yes, it should stay in place, but at the same time, there is a need to expand our markets, to expand our horizon, to

establish strategies that will put us in a competitive position with other countries and other jurisdictions that sell the same products that we do. Until we come to reality with that, we are not going to have an expansion of our rural economy as we should have. So I invite the NDP to take off the blinkers and take another look at what indeed is being proposed and the value of that. Madam Speaker, I thank you.

* (1700)

Madam Speaker: Order, please. According to our Rule 22.(12), "... thirty minutes before the ordinary time of daily adjournment, the Speaker shall interrupt the proceedings and forthwith put every question necessary to dispose of the motion."

Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is the Opposition Day motion moved by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

Voice Vote

Madam Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Formal Vote

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Yeas and Nays, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

Division

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

Yeas

Ashton, Barrett, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Gaudry,

Hickes, Jennissen, Kowalski, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Mihychuk, Reid, Sale, Santos, Struthers, Wowchuk.

Nays

Cummings, Derkach, Downey, Driedger, Dyck, Enns, Ernst, Filmon, Findlay, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Laurendeau, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Newman, Pallister, Penner, Pitura, Praznik, Radcliffe, Reimer, Render, Rocan, Stefanson, Sveinson, Toews, Tweed, Vodrey.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 25, Nays 30.

Madam Speaker: The motion is accordingly defeated.

Mr. Ernst: Madam Speaker, shortly we will be calling four bills for third reading, and I wonder if there is a willingness of the House not to see the clock at 5:30 in case the third reading and Royal Assent stage takes a few minutes longer than anticipated.

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House for the Speaker not to see the clock at 5:30 p.m. if required?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Ernst: We then call, Madam Speaker, Bills 2, 3, 43, and 56 for third reading.

THIRD READINGS

Bill 2—The Municipal Assessment Amendment and Assessment Validation Act

Madam Speaker: Bill 2, on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), The Municipal Assessment Amendment and Assessment Validation Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale et validant certaines évaluations.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Bill 2, The Municipal Assessment Amendment and Assessment Validation Act; (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation

municipale et validant certaines évaluations), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

* (1710)

Bill 3—The Surface Rights Amendment Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that Bill 3, The Surface Rights Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les droits de surface), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 43—The Municipal Assessment Amendment, City of Winnipeg Amendment and Assessment Validation Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that Bill 43, The Municipal Assessment Amendment, City of Winnipeg Amendment and Assessment Validation Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale et la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg et validant certaines évaluations), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): We just wanted to take this opportunity just to express some concern with respect to Bill 43. My gut feeling on this particular piece of legislation, Madam Speaker, it is only a question of time before we are going to come back or bring in legislation to try to reverse the action that we are taking today. I think, as a whole, the city of Winnipeg property taxpayers are feeling very frustrated in terms of the way in which properties are being assessed, that is demonstrated through the number of appeals and so forth, that I do not believe this is a forward step for the property taxpayers in the city of Winnipeg.

I have had some discussions with members of the public that have indicated to me that the City of Winnipeg does have the capacity and should be being

held more accountable, and particularly within the civil service, in trying to make these assessments more on a regular basis. I have even had some suggest that it could be done virtually on a yearly basis if it was being done properly. We are really concerned in terms of the government's caving in, what appears to be caving in, in terms of trying to accommodate the city, not necessarily thinking of the property taxpayer.

I can recall, when we modernized the legislation a few years back, where we tried to shorten the amount of years between assessment and now are going the other way. Even though it is one year, it does concern me and my colleagues greatly, and we look forward to a government rectifying the problem in the not-too-distant future in trying to get us moving in the other direction, where we get more up-to-date assessments leading to less frustration and less appeals from members of the public. With those few words, Madam Speaker, we are prepared to allow the bill to go to a vote.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is third reading, Bill 43, The Municipal Assessment Amendment, City of Winnipeg Amendment and Assessment Validation Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale et la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg et validant certaines évaluations). Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 56—The Manitoba Investment Pool Authority Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that Bill 56, The Manitoba Investment Pool Authority Act (Loi sur l'Office manitobain de mise en commun des placements), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, momentarily, the Lieutenant Governor and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) will be here in order to give Royal Assent to the bills that we have just passed.

ROYAL ASSENT

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Garry Clark): His Honour the Lieutenant Governor.

His Honour Yves Dumont, Lieutenant Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the throne, Madam Speaker addressed His Honour the Lieutenant Governor in the following words:

* (1720)

Madam Speaker: May it please Your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly, at its present session, passed four bills which, in the name of the Assembly, I would like to present to Your Honour and to which bills I respectfully request Your Honour's assent.

Bill 2—The Municipal Assessment Amendment and Assessment Validation Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale et validant certaines évaluations

Bill 3—The Surface Rights Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les droits de surface

Bill 43—The Municipal Assessment Amendment, City of Winnipeg Amendment and Assessment Validation Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale et la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg et validant certaines évaluations

Bill 56—The Manitoba Investment Pool Authority Act; Loi sur l'Office manitobain de mise en commun des placements

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): In Her Majesty's name, His Honour the Lieutenant Governor doth assent to these bills.

His Honour was then pleased to retire.

Madam Speaker: What is the will of the House?

Some Honourable Members: 5:30.

Madam Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it 5:30? [agreed]

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, October 22, 1996

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