



First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, July 13, 2000

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Flood Forecast

Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, I would like to give the House an update on the flooding that has been brought on by heavy rain in the last few weeks.

The rural municipalities of Hanover and Brokenhead and the town of Beausejour have passed resolutions requesting disaster financial assistance from the Province. This makes a total of seven local governments who have passed similar motions. In addition, Manitoba Emergency Management Organization has received 49 calls from citizens affected by heavy rain.

At this point, the Province is both preparing for any future heavy rains and assessing the impact of rain on areas that have already been impacted. A meeting was held this morning with representatives from a number of provincial departments to ensure Manitoba will respond quickly and effectively if we experience any further heavy rain. Included in this meeting were representatives from Conservation, Highways and Government Services, Health, Agriculture, as well as representatives from federal and municipal governments. Each of these departments has taken every preparation to ensure that the Province can respond to this situation as appropriate.

While we have not identified any emergencies that require provincial intervention, we are fully prepared to respond if necessary. At the present time, it is important that anybody who has experienced flooding from heavy rain contact the local government office. MEMO is continuing to gather information so our government can assess what support is appropriate for these conditions, and that information is being provided to MEMO from rural municipality and

city offices. Each local government also has information related to clean-up and recovery from heavy rain. Thank you.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Well, Mr. Speaker, I thank the Honourable Minister for this updating of the situation as it is developing in different parts of the province, but, as I said yesterday, it is time for some clear indication from this government that it will respond, more than simply holding meetings and holding hands with representatives of the affected area.

I remind this government it was in 1999 that one of the disasters of the century, if you like, hit the southwestern part of our province. It was just about now that the then-Premier, with a number of cabinet ministers, met with people in Brandon and committed \$60 million, \$70 million of support to the farmers. That was a Conservative government showing some understanding about what is still the most important industry in the province of Manitoba, agriculture, that has so many spinoff effects for a lot of the people in the city of Winnipeg, a lot of the workers in the city of Winnipeg. When agriculture flounders the province flounders.

When is this government going to start showing some leadership?

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): I ask leave to speak on the Minister's statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member have leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: I want to thank the Minister for his update and urge him to make a larger effort to find out how many citizens have in fact been involved, farm communities, rural communities and the city of Winnipeg. My contacts already suggest that number is far greater than the 49 calls that the Minister has received. I think it behooves the Minister to work a little harder to get a real comprehensive assessment of the extent of damage in this province. Thank you.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the following report: the Quarterly Financial Report for the three months ended May 31, 2000, for Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation.

* (13:35)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Flooding Agricultural Disaster Assistance

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition): Lately, we have seen on the news, on a regular basis, the devastation that is facing many Manitoba families due to the heavy rains, circumstances that no one could have anticipated, not those who are suffering right now or anyone else. Not even government could have anticipated what could have occurred. In many communities, we are seeing insult added to injury with communities and farm families that have suffered two years in a row. We have not seen proper consideration given to those farm families who were devastated last year.

I would like to ask the Premier today when he might stand up, show some leadership, take some action and ensure that the farm families who are suffering right now receive the kind of support they deserve from this government.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we certainly understand the situation with the producers of this province and the rain in Manitoba. We believe that many of the crops, if they continue to be negatively impacted by the high moisture levels and with the rain of the past couple of weeks, will be eligible for crop insurance coverage or other programs that will be available to deal with the income impacts of the weather.

We also understand that long-term solutions are absolutely essential for producers and communities in Manitoba for water management and situations such as excessive moisture. We

have started to put in long-term measures to deal with programs that were not covered by the previous government. In other words, rather than have a situation where last year unseeded acreage of land was not covered under crop insurance, this government was proud to change that coverage and to, in fact, arrange an agreement with the federal government. *[interjection]* Well, if the decision had been made, why did it not flow for June of 1999?

Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite knows the decision was not made. Not a penny flowed from crop insurance. So we are putting in place long-term solutions, solutions that were neglected by members opposite.

Mrs. Mitchelson: But there are certain natural disasters that no government can anticipate, no farm family can anticipate. I think the kind of response that we got from the Premier is not one that shows significant leadership or gives Manitobans any sense of comfort that he understands the issue and wants to do something for those families that were devastated. We will never be able to have programs in place that will cover natural disasters. What we saw last year was many families that still have not received a nickel from this administration, from this government.

I would like to ask the Premier again, in consideration of those farm families that are still devastated and having difficulty making ends meet: Will he show some leadership today and ensure that those families receive the support that they deserve?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the federal-provincial income support program of \$100 million is more than a nickel. I think the Member opposite does a great disservice to the people of this province by misrepresenting the truth.

One of the areas that we are discovering in more depth as our ministers tour southeast Manitoba, north—*[interjection]* I will be there next week—northwest of Winnipeg. We have had confirmation of the statement made by the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) when he indicated that cuts were made, decisions were made to the Department of Conservation that a significant amount of money was cut out of their budget,

and they have not had the resources to keep up with the cleanouts and maintenance of drains.

I, first of all, want to confirm that, yes, the crop insurance programs and other programs will be available; hopefully, will not be necessary. We can get some recovery with the weather, but they will be there. They are there in place. Secondly, some of the issues raised by the Member for Emerson of the drastic and radical cuts of the '90s and the lack of a drainage program, perhaps, those are some of the long-term solutions this Legislature should be looking at, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, again, that kind of—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (13:40)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, but that kind of an answer from the Premier, the First Minister of this province, is little comfort to those farm families who are experiencing a cash crunch. I know Manitoba farm families are very proud, but it is pretty hard to keep that pride when you are having difficulty making ends meet and feeding your families. So blaming the federal government or blaming the former government is not what those farm families need. They need leadership from this Premier and this government.

I want to know what this Premier and his government are going to do today to ensure that farm families, through no fault of their own, are in devastating circumstances today and are having difficulty making ends meet. What is he going to do today to address those issues and show some compassion for those farm families?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, first of all, I want to again confirm that crop insurance and other programs are and will be available to the producers of Manitoba that are affected by the present situation.

Secondly, the Department of Agriculture has put in place strategies for livestock. The Minister toured the areas yesterday, or this morning

rather. The Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Lemieux), the Minister, toured the areas the night before.

Thirdly, we have negotiated with the federal government an income program that we announced a few months ago; and fourthly, Mr. Speaker, we do believe and we concur with all members of southwest Manitoba that last year's flooding was eligible for disaster assistance.

We pursued that after the former government was not able to get a grant of the request that was submitted in June, '99. We received confirmation in February, by a federal Order-in-Council from the Defence Minister, that that in fact was eligible for disaster assistance.

The Prime Minister stated that it was not eligible, which was a mistake, and we are still pursuing that with the federal government. We believe that if there is an ice storm in Québec and Ontario, it should be dealt with under federal disaster assistance. We believe the flooding in southwest Manitoba is eligible and entitled to disaster assistance programs in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Interim Leader of the Official Opposition, with a new question.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, but again, the Premier, the First Minister of this province is missing the point.

There are farm families today that are having difficulty making ends meet. There are farm families that are experiencing a cash crunch as a result of the 1999 flooding that has not been addressed by this government. He can talk about long-term plans, and that is well and good. Those kinds of plans need to be in place, but those plans are going to do nothing for the farm families that were devastated last year, and in many situations, Mr. Speaker, are devastated again this year by circumstances that are not within their control.

We are not saying that the Government could have anticipated this, but we are saying that they need to show some compassion today, and they need to act swiftly to put in place some support so that those families, those farmers can

feed their families. We do not want programs for cows; we want programs for families.

Will this Premier act now and ensure that today there is some support for those families that are so much in need?

Mr. Doer: As the Member knows, we have pursued, since the election, a strategy to produce results on the income side which produced \$100 million to producers and to produce results on the disaster assistance side.

We believe in a federal-provincial disaster assistance program. We do not believe that we can afford to spend over \$350 million out of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, like members opposite did, Mr. Speaker, because it is unsustainable. We are trying and we will live within our means. We believe very strongly that it is a disaster. We are going to continue to work to get a solution with the federal government. It is a national disaster assistance program, and I am surprised that members opposite would not be united in our voice to Ottawa for southwestern Manitoba.

* (13:45)

Mrs. Mitchelson: Again the Premier misses the point. It is time to stop blaming others. Mr. Speaker, these are Manitoba farmers and Manitoba farm families. The last time I looked, the Manitoba government has a role to play in supporting its citizens.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Again, the last time I looked the Manitoba government had a role and responsibility, especially a leadership role to take, when Manitoba citizens are suffering, when Manitoba citizens are having difficulty making ends meet. There is no greater time than this for this Premier and his government to show some leadership, to stand up for those who are having difficulty with cash flows and ensure that they have the money in their pockets to feed their families. Will this Premier not now stop blaming and start showing some leadership and support those families in need?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, I just got back from the southeast part of the province, and I had the opportunity to meet with producers and municipal leaders in the area. I have to tell the Leader of the Opposition that producers are not asking for money right now. Producers are hoping that the weather will turn around and that they will indeed get a crop. But one of the other issues that the producers and municipal leaders have been asking us for is to start doing some long-term planning so that, indeed, when there is this kind of heavy rainfall, there will be the infrastructure to help drain it off.

But, Mr. Speaker, we all hope that the sunshine that we have right now will continue and that there will be some good crops in the southeast part of the province. That is what we are all hoping for. If there are no good crops, people will call, will be filing for crop insurance, and there have been 270 claims for crop insurance now. There is also a long-term disaster assistance program.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, that kind of an answer is a slap in the face to southwestern Manitoba. This Minister of Agriculture has yet to tour southwestern Manitoba, that has been hit two years in a row by devastation, by flooding, by lack of the ability to get any source of income to support their families. So she may have visited southeast Manitoba today to try to address the issues of the rainfall this year, but she has not addressed the issues that devastated southwestern Manitoba last year. When will this Premier stand up for the farm families who, for two years in a row in some cases, have been devastated and ensure that they have the cash flow to feed their families?

* (13:50)

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, there are three issues here. I think that we have to be very precise in our answers dealing with the three issues that are rolled together in general questions. One is southwest Manitoba. Everyone in this Chamber, I would hope, agrees that that is a disaster under the disaster assistance program in Ottawa and nationally, and our money to resolve that disaster, consistent with the federal formula, is on the table, remains on the table and

we want to settle it. Those people, those producers are entitled to that. It is part of a national program.

Secondly, we have negotiated an income program, some hundred million dollars, that required \$40 million from this government. That money has flowed, including to southwest Manitoba. It does not offset the real pain that we recognize from the disaster in 1999 which we continue to fight on behalf of those producers.

The third issue is the present situation, Mr. Speaker, and the present situation is crop insurance to deal with the present situation. There is some \$70 million in the Agriculture budget out of \$110 million in the Budget partly for disaster assistance, partly for income support programs for farm families. We believe that we should do everything possible in the national program. We also believe in living within the Budget we presented in this Legislature. I know that is an unusual idea for members opposite.

But having said that, this Legislature should be united. Québec and Ontario should not be treated one way on disaster assistance and southwest Manitoba another way, Mr. Speaker.

Canadian Farm Income Program Coverage Levels

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, no wonder farmers are discouraged by this program. Listening to their own Minister of Agriculture portray a picture that is simply not factual is very disheartening for the people of Manitoba. This Premier, when questioned about the new Canadian farm income program, said—and he indicated that it was both based on risk and cash receipts. *[interjection]* Yes, you did. Now I would like to ask the Minister—*[interjection]* He cringes. It can only be based on one, on either risk or income. The other one is more over the federal commitment and the provincial commitment under this new program.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. We

are wondering if the Member came here today with a question. I look at *Beauchesne's* Citation 409. It says questions must be brief. "A preamble need not exceed one carefully drawn sentence." The citation, I know, is heartily endorsed by the Opposition House Leader. We have heard that in the House.

Mr. Speaker, would you please direct the Member to put the question.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order?

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. *Beauchesne's* 409, the Honourable Minister is correct. But on a matter of urgent public importance such as this, it is important that the Member putting the question puts the information forward so that this government understands it, because each question that has been brought forward today has not been answered. They do not want to recognize the problems that the farm community is having today.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the Honourable Government House Leader, he does have a point of order. *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(2): "A preamble should not exceed one carefully drawn sentence."

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the Honourable Member to please put his question.

* (13:55)

Mr. Jack Penner: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I apologize to the House, if I was disruptive, for being disruptive. I did not intend to do this, because I think this issue is far too important to be disruptive.

I just want to ask the Minister, the Minister of Agriculture—she was the one who negotiated a new agreement—how come the new commitment from the federal government has been decreased from \$1.5 billion annually to \$1.1 billion under the new agreement? How come she agreed to that kind of reduction, and how come her share,

or this province's share will also be accordingly reduced? How can she explain to farmers that they will have any confidence in this minister's ability to give assistance to them, and what kind of assistance can she promise under the new program that she has negotiated?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I get a choice on which one of those many questions I get to answer.

I know the members opposite say we do not recognize how serious the situation for farmers is. Indeed, we do recognize how serious the situation is, and that is why we organized an all-party committee to go to Ottawa just after we were elected, which was something that the previous government refused to do. I am not quite sure what the Member was doing during our 50 hours of Estimates when he asks about whether this program is based on cash receipts or risks. I spelled out very clearly to him that our position was that the safety net program should be continued to be based on risk. The other eight provinces wanted it based on cash receipts, and the federal government sided with them.

The Member has quoted some numbers as to the amount of money that is available in the program and, on the reductions, the Member is wrong. There has not been a reduction in the amount of money that will be in place for Manitoba farmers.

Flooding Agricultural Disaster Assistance

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Agriculture then tell Manitoba farmers what programs will be in place, other than NISA and crop insurance, to give them some assurance of disaster assistance in times like we are experiencing today? What program has she negotiated, and how many dollars are in it, other than the crop insurance and NISA and the cash advance?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Chairman, crop insurance and NISA and advance on crop insurance are very important programs, and those programs will continue in Manitoba. We

will also have to have the new CFIP program which will be in place in Manitoba. This is the disaster assistance program. The amount of money available in that program is \$435 million across Canada.

Canadian Farm Income Program Flood Victims

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I think the Minister has just given us the assurance that I was talking about that she has, in fact, re-negotiated a much lesser program than we had in place before.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Agriculture tell farmers whether the Canadian Farm Income Program, CFIP, I think they call it now, and it looks like a bit of a fip to me; what will the—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Jack Penner: What kind of assistance can victims of this flood and last year's flood expect out of the new program as individuals? What kind of assistance are you going to offer them under this new program? Give us some details on this program.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the Member previously, the CFIP program is a Canada Farm Income Program, and this program will help those farmers who have a reduction in their income. We hope that all farmers could get their income from the marketplace, as they would like to do. However, when farmers, such as the people who are losing their income because of the flooding this year, see a decline in their income, they will have the opportunity to make application for this program and have their income covered if it falls below the 70 percent mark.

* (14:00)

Canadian Farm Income Program Negotiations

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the First Minister. During the period of time that I was privileged to speak for

Manitoba farmers and agriculture, on every occasion I went to Ottawa to negotiate on their behalf I came back with more money: more money for agricultural research and development, \$19 million, more money to improve our crop insurance program.

My question to the First Minister: How did he authorize, why did he authorize his Minister of Agriculture to come back on her first meeting from Ottawa with a lower percentage of money for Manitoba farmers from Ottawa?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, this minister (Ms. Wowchuk) came back from Ottawa after her first meeting with a new crop insurance plan that covered unseeded acres that was not covered by members opposite. This Minister of Agriculture came back from Ottawa, working with the Saskatchewan Government and with the all-party committee, and eventually came back with a \$100 million income program in terms of Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I know the former minister of Agriculture and the present Minister of Agriculture all agree with the southwestern Manitoba producer that this is in fact a disaster, and those people are entitled to disaster assistance. We supported the former minister of Agriculture. I really urge this Assembly to be united in speaking to Ottawa in a strong united voice, that those producers are entitled to disaster assistance and to do anything less is un-Canadian in terms of this government.

Mr. Enns: It may have been unfair of me to address a former union leader, leader of the party in the Government, a detailed question like that on agriculture, so I will direct my second question to the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk). Did or did she not come home from Ottawa signing an agreement that considerably will reduce our share of future transfers of money from Ottawa with a change from the cash receipts to the risk program? She in fact said so in the House.

Mr. Doer: The Member opposite may not be able to face the truth. The old saying is that you cannot handle the truth. The fact of the matter is, Mr. Speaker, that you did not have—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. May I remind all honourable members of *Beauchesne's* Citation 168: When rising to preserve order or to give a ruling the Speaker must always be heard in silence. I would once again ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, this government was able to do what the former minister and former government was unable to do and that is to renegotiate a federal-provincial crop insurance program so unseeded acres of land will now be covered under crop insurance. I know the Member opposite will praise silently our Minister of Agriculture for that success. Secondly—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Member for Lakeside, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Enns: It is a point of order when deliberate misinformation is being put on the record by none other than the First Minister. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture was in the audience in Brandon a year ago in July when I announced the unseeded acreage program that was approved by the then-directors of the Manitoba Crop Insurance. The records of the Manitoba Crop Insurance Program will say that they in fact adopted that program. It did not require any Ottawa approval. Do not give us that kind of hogwash. That is plain hogwash.

Mr. Speaker: Order. A point of order is a very serious matter. I would ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

The Honourable First Minister, on the same point of order.

Mr. Doer: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. This member and his government were in office for 11 years, and crop insurance was not changed until this government came into office. Those are the facts.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Member for Lakeside, the Member does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable First Minister, to conclude his answer.

Mr. Doer: To carry on with my answer to the question, I first of all mentioned the Crop Insurance Program. Secondly, Mr. Speaker, the Member opposite does not want to acknowledge the hundred million dollar income support program that certainly was not in place when we came into office. That change was made under the leadership of this Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk).

Thirdly, if members opposite now are paying attention, the telephone rates in rural Manitoba are going up because of rate rebalancing. The rates for the business community are going down. They had a chance to stand up for rural Manitoba, and they let the brokers control the decision to sell the phone system.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Member for Lakeside, on a point of order?

Mr. Enns: No. A final supplementary question, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I had not recognized the Member who was standing, so I will recognize the Honourable Member for Lakeside with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, some of us recall, shortly after September 21, this group won the election, federal politicians, Ottawa saying, congratulating themselves that it is going to be so much easier working with the new Manitoba Government. We can understand that. They are patsies for them. They leave money on the table, and they grandstand about help when no help was coming forward.

When will this government—a simple question. You have said over and over again that the Manitoba share of the money is on the table. Spend it, Mr. Premier. Spend it. Goodness knows the farmers could use that \$21 million right now. Spend that \$21 million right now and make that announcement.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, certainly the people from the southwest part of the province have been through great difficulties with the losses that they had last year. We cer-

tainly raised that issue with the federal government. In fact, the federal government sent out a couple of press releases indicating that they were willing to participate in supporting the people of the southwest part of the province. Unfortunately, when we went to Ottawa, the federal government had indicated that they had no intention of putting any money into the southwest part of the province despite the fact that we had money on the table.

We have made that commitment. The federal government has refused to do it. We have to remember that the responsibility for disasters is the federal government, and unfortunately Manitobans are not being treated the same way as the other disasters have been treated across the country by the federal government.

* (14:10)

Flooding Agricultural Disaster Assistance

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Well, Mr. Speaker, I note with interest that it is part of the Tory record of responsible spending that allows the Government to have the dollars today that would be available to put into this kind of a program.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Maguire: This government has also talked about a united front to go to Ottawa, and many times we have told them that if they would take half of the money from the program that they have identified for the farmers of western Manitoba and put it on the table, this side of the House would be glad to go on another all-party delegation with them to Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, this morning the Premier told CJOB that his government, and I quote, his first priority is to stabilize the agricultural situation. For some producers, it can mean their whole existence.

I am sure that these statements will offer little comfort to farmers still trying to recover from that '99 flood.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I believe you will find that the Honourable Member is now on his fifth sentence as a preamble, and *Beauchesne's* Citation 409 says: "A preamble need not exceed one carefully drawn sentence."

Five sentences is not what the rules allow for. Mr. Speaker, would you please instruct him to put his question.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. I can understand the Honourable Government House Leader standing up for his damage control. I think that is the best way to put it. But all we are doing here is attempting to put clearly on the record the statements that the First Minister (Mr. Doer) brought forward this morning, and that is what the Member was quoting from.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Government House Leader, he does have a point of order. *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(2): "A preamble should not exceed one carefully drawn sentence."

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the Honourable Member to please put his question.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Agriculture, given that they have been in power for 10 months and have not spent a scrap of money for disaster in that part of the world, tell this House when this government will overcome its state of paralysis and finally take action to deal with the ramifications of that flood?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Highways and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I would

like to indicate my apologies to the House. I was in Churchill earlier for the earliest opening of the season in history, actually for the first ship to come into Churchill.

I want to indicate, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the current emergency situation, I was in Headingley yesterday with the Member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer). We had an opportunity to meet directly with the municipality that has experienced some significant damage. It does appear, and I know from our discussion there will be some coverage required in that area. We now have seven resolutions.

I say to the Member opposite we are certainly dealing with this in the same way as '97 and '99. In fact, we have moved proactively to get out to the communities. In fact, I say to members opposite we are working very closely with the municipalities, including with Headingley and others, and we are going to put in place the assistance that people in those areas are eligible for and need.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, it is amazing what the Government will take credit for when they will take credit for the weather.

Will the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), recognizing the long overdue need for the aid for the '99 flood victims of western Manitoba, today commit to putting their share of the money, that which I was talking about in my preamble, on the table in order to get the flood recovery process started and then be prepared to deal with Ottawa to recover its share of the funding?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, you know, I think it is very important to put on the record, in terms of southwest Manitoba, the province—I say the taxpayers of the province of Manitoba, not a particular political party, have already put \$70 million on the table, more than \$20 million which is stand-alone. So, in fact, the Province of Manitoba has \$20 million that has been on the table since last year.

The federal government has consistently refused to come in with assistance over and above the damage for lost property, which is going to be approximately \$23 million. It is the

federal government that has said no. It has been the province that has had the money on the table. I say to the Member opposite I am disappointed that, once again, instead of putting the pressure on Ottawa where it lies, he tries to blame the provincial government. The Province of Manitoba's money is on the table.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Agriculture indicate to this House that the program that they put forward, \$43 million for lost farm inputs, would amount to \$6 an acre on the 3.4 million acres that were impacted by the disaster last year and that her government thinks that that is too much for them to put on the table for those farmers in southwest Manitoba?

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, I am extremely disappointed with the Member opposite because, of the \$43 million that we identified in correspondence with the federal government when they designated the area as being eligible under DFAA, \$7 million of that has already been expended by the provincial government.

I say to the Member opposite it would be a heck of a lot easier in this province if the members opposite when they were in government had not drained \$340 million out of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund in two years. We are left with the situation where we cannot, in a province the size of this province, I think, allow the federal government to get off from the responsibility it has for disasters for 90-10 funding. I say, given the circumstances in Manitoba just this past week, our position in demanding that the federal government live up to its responsibilities is a responsible position, and I am disappointed in members opposite. We need those resources for everyone in this province. The way to get it is put pressure on the federal government.

Health Care Facilities Food Services

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the Provincial Auditor revealed this week the extraordinary waste of millions of dollars of taxpayers' money in the frozen food fiasco. Day by day the continuing indecision of the present government continues to waste money and provide poor-quality service. For nine and a half months we have heard that the

Minister of Health is cooking up a fix to the problem. Some cook, some fix.

I ask the Minister of Health: When will he have a solution to the frozen food fiasco in Manitoba?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, careful reading of the Auditor's report would indicate that the course of action we chose is the correct one. The timeliness, rushed decision making, proceeding before reports were in were all cited. Moving to 100% outsourcing before reports were in and not listening to advice were all cited as reasons for the fiasco, the terrible fiasco of frozen food.

I am surprised that the Member opposite, who during the election campaign campaigned about maintaining frozen food for the next few months, would now reverse his position and say to us, oh, go against the recommendations of the Provincial Auditor, who said what is being done by having clinicians and dieticians study the process is the correct process. We would have loved to have had a process a long time ago, but clearly the Auditor's report indicates we are following the right course of action.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, after nine and a half months of cooking, the eggs are rotting—some odour. Mr. Minister, when are you going to clear the situation in Deer Lodge which we in fact said we would review quickly and act upon it? You have not.

Mr. Chomiak: I think the Member for River Heights has scrambled his position from what he said during the campaign. But, Mr. Speaker, I visited Deer Lodge. As I said at the time, we could have moved on Deer Lodge almost immediately, but that would have been the same kind of mistake that was made previously: to make decisions before it was thoroughly studied throughout the system. I met with patients from Deer Lodge and I said to the patients: Will you allow us the time to study it? They said: Proceed on that basis because we want it done right. Not like was done over the past five years when studies were not followed, when consultants' reports that were paid for were not followed, when decisions were rushed.

We put in place a committee and group to study it that will provide a proper context to review this disastrous decision that cost the taxpayers tens of millions of dollars. We are going to live up to our commitment to those people.

* (14:20)

Mr. Gerrard: My supplementary to the Premier who commented within days of the election that he would have the frozen food out of Deer Lodge within a few weeks. I ask the Premier to apologize for failing to fulfill his commitment in nine and a half months.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe the Liberal Leader, whose caucus in this Legislature and his position in the election was to support the frozen food. When we were out there speaking on behalf of the patients, the Liberals were nowhere to be seen, nowhere to be seen.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Member for River Heights, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Gerrard: My point of order, Mr. Speaker, is this: That the Premier should answer the question rather than trying to impute incorrect statements to myself and my party.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable First Minister, on the same point of order.

Mr. Doer: On the same point of order, Mr. Speaker. When people are walking around handing out demands for apologies and they have absolutely done a 360, or changed their position totally from the election to after the election, that is what adds to the cynicism of the public. Perhaps he should apologize for his wrong-headed decision and position in the last election campaign.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): On the same point of order, Mr.

Speaker. *Beauchesne's* 417: "Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate."

Mr. Speaker, if the Liberals did not live up to their promise on the frozen food fiasco, neither did the NDP on their promise of gambling.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Member for River Heights, it is not a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable First Minister, please conclude your answer.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we were very, very opposed to the frozen food, and we were extremely critical of the previous government. I am glad that the word "fiasco" has now been confirmed by all sides of the House. It took a long time, and I want to thank the Opposition House Leader for that wonderful conversion on the road to Damascus. It is a wonderful day.

We promised, Mr. Speaker, to open up the contract, and we have done that. The mortgage that was the responsibility of the taxpayers before is now in the control of the taxpayers in a more direct way. Secondly, we promised to halt the expansion of the food services to St. Boniface and Health Sciences Centre, and that has been done. We said we would not build new personal care homes with this frozen food. We have not built any new personal care homes with the frozen food. Fourth, we promised to cancel the frozen food, in consultation with the residents and the families of Deer Lodge. We are working with the residents. They have got some very good ideas of how we can replace the double-blanching vegetable fiasco of the former government with some home cooking. I know they are talking about different breakfast alternatives at Deer Lodge hospital, and we are very confident that, within a year of the election, all four commitments on the frozen food fiasco that we made in the election will be delivered on.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

**MATTER OF URGENT
PUBLIC IMPORTANCE**

Provincial Flooding

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would seek leave for us to move a motion that the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely the need for debate of the multitude of problems arising from two years of flooding and excess moisture conditions in a wide range of areas of the province, including the city of Winnipeg.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Well, the question, of course, MUPs are to be raised after grievances. I ask the Opposition House Leader this question: Was there not notice provided within the 90 minutes before we came in here?

Mr. Laurendeau: Mr. Speaker, that is why I had the conversation with the House Leader's special assistant. It is not 90 minutes. I thought it was 90 minutes as well, but I would have had to have the confirmation at 8:30 this morning. I was not aware of that. I found out at nine o'clock, after that time had expired. That is why I am seeking leave.

* (14:30)

Mr. Speaker: I must advise the House that because I have not received the required notice of 90 minutes prior to the start of the sitting day, as required by Rule 34(1), unanimous consent of the House will be required in order for the motion to be brought forward. Is there unanimous consent of the House to allow the motion to be brought forward? *[Agreed]*

Unanimous consent has been granted for the motion to be brought forward.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Mr. Speaker, I would then move, seconded by the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire),

THAT the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the need for a debate of the multitude of problems arising from the two years of flooding and the excess moisture conditions in

a wide-ranging area of the province, including the city of Winnipeg, and the need for a comprehensive plan of action for this government to tackle implications of the flooding and excess moisture conditions, including the impact on the agricultural community, businesses and individual homeowners.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Before the motion can be considered by the House, according to subrule 34(2), I will recognize the mover of the motion and one member from the other parties in the House to speak for five minutes each to explain the urgency of debating the matter today. The remarks on urgency should relate to the urgency of the immediate debate and not the subject matter of the motion.

I will now call upon the Honourable Member for Emerson to speak to the urgency of the motion.

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate being allowed to put comments on the record of the urgency of the motion.

When I toured part of the province a few days ago and I talked to many of the farmers who were affected by the severe flooding, I found that water was up to a foot and a half deep crossing some of the roads that we tried to get into some of the farm places. I saw cows standing up to their bellies in water, and I saw the hay bales, their feed supplies, floating downstream in up to three and four feet of water. I saw the hay supplies that were drifting downstream, and I saw the soggy fields of the potato fields in the southeast area.

I saw last year the need for the assistance to ensure that farms and farm families would have money in the near term to ensure that their kids would have food on the table and that there would be subsistence provided to those families that they might in fact be able to operate while this disaster is forcing many of them to flee their homes and give up their incomes. One has to only experience this kind of a disaster oneself to realize how large an economic impact this kind of a disaster has.

I would urge this House to strongly adopt the motion, that we in fact show the kind of support to these farm families and the immediacy of the requirement to bring some assistance to those farm families. That is the reason why I ask that the urgency of this matter be, in fact, considered by yourself in determining whether we should or should not debate this motion.

I believe that there are many businesspeople in communities such as La Broquerie, indeed, communities such as Hartney and many other small communities, including the city of Brandon, that will feel the severe economic impact of what we are seeing today. Seven inches of rain in a few days can cause a tremendous amount of upheaval in small communities.

I believe that the ministers today and yesterday have gone out themselves to witness the devastation that is going on, and I believe that the importance of immediately dealing with this matter in this Chamber cannot be overstated. So, therefore, I ask you, Mr. Speaker, whether you will truly consider that this is indeed an urgent matter and should be debated immediately in this House so that both sides of the House can voice their opinions on this matter.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Highways and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate, first of all, that we certainly take seriously this matter. In fact, as the Member opposite indicated, I had the opportunity to visit one of the affected areas yesterday along with the Member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), who is the opposition critic. I know my colleague the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) has also taken that initiative. In fact, we will both be continuing to do that. I plan on visiting a number of the affected areas again tomorrow. I wanted to indicate that, because we have had the opportunity to talk first-hand with affected areas, and I want to indicate to members opposite that currently there has been some significant localized damage.

We have received resolutions now from seven municipalities for disaster financial assistance. I want to indicate that those municipalities have indicated to us—when I say us, certainly EMO—some of the preliminary information in

regard to the disasters. But I can indicate we have been very proactive on that. In fact, it is a matter of some urgency.

I want to indicate to members opposite that, following this first stage, as members know, it is the process in terms of disaster financial assistance, we are currently working with municipalities to get the specific reports on damage. We have received some preliminary information, and it varies quite significantly across the different areas that have been affected. I want to note for the record, Mr. Speaker, that Lac du Bonnet, Beausejour, Hanover, Macdonald, Springfield, Stuartburn, and Brokenhead are the R.M.s that have submitted resolutions. We believe, including the seven, there may be as many as sixteen R.M.s, and I can indicate our staff at EMO is working very closely with the municipalities.

* (14:40)

We are certainly prepared to discuss the matter in the House. We are particularly watching for current weather conditions. As members opposite can appreciate, as was indicated to us in Headingley yesterday, one of the reasons we have had this particular circumstance has been a combination of accumulated moisture combined with some very specific weather events. In Headingley, they indicated, I think, in the space of one hour, there were five inches of rain in that area. Given the flatness of the terrain and the moisture levels and the soil, it has obviously had a significant impact.

I do want to indicate, in addition to being willing to discuss this matter in the House, we are certainly prepared to continue to share information and work with members of the Opposition. I appreciated the opportunity to go out yesterday with the Member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer). I can indicate that if members opposite, and I made this offer yesterday, wish to have more detailed specific briefings on the specific circumstances in any of the R.M.s, or all of the R.M.s, that information can and will be made available.

For that reason, we will certainly support the debate. We do take this matter very seriously, and I can indicate in the same spirit that we are

supporting the debate. We certainly will work with members on all sides of the House to do what is most important here, Mr. Speaker, and that is to get out there and provide assistance to those who have received damage under this. Early indications are that we will indeed be in a position of providing assistance under DFAA because there has been some significant property damage, both public and private, and in fact, we are working, as I said, on an hourly basis, working in very close contact with the first line of contact on emergencies, the R.M.s.

So, with those few words, we are certainly prepared on our side to debate this matter in the House and to continue to work for whatever we can do, Mr. Speaker. I certainly speak as minister for disaster assistance here, and I know my colleague, the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), we have been out there seeing what programs, in this particular case DFAA, would be applicable under my own department. And I can indicate a number of municipalities will most likely have some fairly significant assistance coming, just based on preliminary information. That is subject, obviously, to the following information from municipalities, but given the amount of damage that has occurred in some municipalities, that would be the early indication. I will give further reports to the House as we receive that information.

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable members for their remarks on the urgency of the motion brought forward. In lieu of the requirement for filing notice of the motion, the House has granted unanimous consent. The second condition that must be satisfied in order for the debate to proceed is that debate on the matter is urgent and that there are no other reasonable opportunities to debate the matter.

I would note that questions on the subject matter could be raised during consideration of the concurrence motion at the conclusion of departmental Estimates. In addition, members could raise a grievance or bring forward an Opposition Day motion. However, in spite of these procedural shortcomings, I note that there is a willingness to debate this matter today. *Beauchesne's* Citation 387, as well as past rulings of Manitoba Speakers, takes this into ac-

count. I will then put the question to the House: Shall the debate proceed? [*Agreed*]

Given that matters of urgent public importance are to be considered after grievances, I will call members' statements and grievances before recognizing members to speak on the MUPI.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Mennonite History

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to briefly reflect on the story of the Mennonites' settlement in Manitoba and the 125th anniversary celebration of Mennonite settlement that is scheduled for this weekend. The Mennonite story in Manitoba begins when the Russian imperial government began to revoke the many social and religious freedoms enjoyed by the Mennonites. Interpreting this as a threat to their beliefs, old colony Russian Mennonites began to seek new lands that would respect their desire for religious freedom.

With the promise of certain privileges, the Canadian government welcomed Mennonite settlers. In August of 1874, the first group of Mennonite pioneers arrived in Winnipeg and prepared themselves for settlement on the west reserve near Emerson. With their agricultural experience, pioneer spirit and strong sense of community, Mennonites were able to endure harsh winters in primitive shelters and to overcome the hardships of a new environment in a new world.

On Sunday, July 16, at Fort Dufferin, the Mennonite community plans to celebrate the 125th anniversary of Mennonite beginnings in the west reserve with an afternoon of singing, meditation and dramas. This celebration gives Mennonites an opportunity to not only celebrate the history of their culture but also to recognize the strength of Manitoba's pluralistic society. A true plural society, it is said, becomes a definite and highly conscious art, and in Manitoba, where it is difficult not to meet someone with a unique language, culture or history, we have begun to master that art.

From their Anabaptist beginnings in Switzerland, Holland and Germany, the Mennonite story continues to be written. I look forward to this weekend's celebration of Manitoba's chapter. Lastly, we thank Canada for allowing us to be part of this great country. Thank you.

Agricultural Disaster Assistance

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): It is high time, I believe, that the Government take some action on behalf of the province's agricultural community. For the last half year, we have repeatedly called on them to keep their commitments to agriculture and to provide meaningful assistance to the producers of the western part of the province who have suffered through flooding last year, and they have done nothing in this regard.

We are now well into the next farming season and another disaster is upon us. States of emergency have been declared in five municipalities, and farms throughout the southeast are feeling the disastrous results of the last few weeks of heavy rainfall. Excessive water levels have claimed basements, barns, fields. Once again, many Manitoba farmers are facing the twin enemies of natural disasters and low commodity prices.

The Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) needs to start taking this very seriously. The NDP Government has a responsibility to Manitoba farmers, and it is time they acted like it. I can only hope that they do not let our agriculture community down two years in a row.

Mr. Speaker, I believe this matter needs to be truly considered by this government and that some heart needs to be put into the decision-making process of this government. Clearly, so far, this government has not demonstrated any feeling at all for those people who suffered last year from flooding. I believe that it is high time that what the Premier (Mr. Doer) said today on CJOB needs to be reinforced by taking the money that he said off the table and putting it in the hands of the farmers he has talked about. Constantly, they have talked about this money being on the table and in place for the disaster that occurred last year and blaming the federal

government. It is high time now that the Premier started writing the cheques to the producers of their portion of this province's portion of that money and that that money then go to the farmers, thereby demonstrating a heart for the people who have suffered.

Henri Bergeron

Ms. Linda Asper (Riel): Monsieur le président, j'aimerais souligner le décès de M. Henri Bergeron, un communicateur francophone par excellence, ce lundi le 10 juillet. Il est mort au Pavillon Saint-Luc à Montréal des suites d'un cancer. Ses funérailles ont eu lieu à Montréal ce matin même.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce the death of Mr. Henri Bergeron, an excellent francophone communicator, this Monday, July 10. He died at the Pavillon Saint-Luc in Montréal, of cancer. His funeral took place this morning in Montréal.

[English]

Mr. Henri Bergeron was an important and prominent Franco-Manitoban. He still has family here in Manitoba, and to them we would like to offer our sympathies.

M. Henri Bergeron est né dans le petit village de Saint-Lupicin au Manitoba dans la région de la montagne Pembina. Il a fait ses études au Collège de Saint-Boniface pour ensuite devenir journaliste. Il est devenu le premier annonceur de la première station de radio de langue française dans l'Ouest canadien, CKSB Saint-Boniface.

En 1949, il déménageait au Québec, comme animateur et directeur des émissions à Hull. C'est Henri Bergeron qui fut en 1952 le premier animateur de télévision au Canada. Au cours des 33 années suivantes, il a passé 18 ans, entre autres, à animer l'émission "Les beaux dimanches."

À sa retraite, M. Bergeron s'est consacré à la formation dans le domaine des communications et à l'écriture. Il a consacré sa vie aux

communications et à sa langue. Il mérite qu'on reconnaisse sa contribution aux communications en français dans notre pays.

Les parents de Norwood dans la circonscription de Saint-Boniface ont bien voulu reconnaître l'importance de M. Henri Bergeron en nommant une école dans leur quartier l'École Henri-Bergeron. Merci, Monsieur le président.

[Translation]

Mr. Henri Bergeron was born in the little town of St. Lupicin in Manitoba in the Pembina Hills region. He studied at Collège de Saint-Boniface and then became a journalist. He became the first announcer of the first French language radio station in the Canadian west, CKSB St. Boniface.

In 1949, he moved to Québec as a host and director of programming in Hull. It was Henri Bergeron who, in 1952, was the first television host in Canada. Over the following 33 years, he spent 18 years, among other things, hosting the program "Les beaux dimanches."

Upon his retirement, he devoted himself to training in the communications area and to writing. He dedicated his life to communication and to his language. He deserves recognition for his contribution to communications in French in our country. The parents of Norwood in the St. Boniface constituency wished to recognize the importance of Mr. Bergeron by naming a school in their neighbourhood l'École Henri-Bergeron. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Gertrude Jasper

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): It gives me great pleasure to rise today to pay special tribute to a special person, to one of my constituents who recently was inducted into the Manitoba Agriculture Hall of Fame. Ms. Gertrude Jasper of Hartney was inducted into the Hall of Fame this past Tuesday, July 11, 2000. Ms. Jasper, who is celebrating her 98th birthday this year, is a well-deserving individual and one who demonstrates a hard work ethic.

While raising three children and farming with her husband in the southwestern corner of

Manitoba, Ms. Jasper always found time to bring the issues of the farming lifestyle to light. Ms. Jasper was a representative to the Canadian Federation of Agriculture and also attended the United Nations as a delegate from the Canadian Federation of Agriculture. She served tirelessly with the Council of Women for nine years, lobbying federal and provincial cabinets to improve conditions for agriculture, women's rights and educational facilities.

Always a lover of flowers and home beautification, Ms. Jasper joined the Hartney Horticultural Society and became a provincial director for 15 years, also serving a term as president for the Manitoba Horticultural Association. She was often called upon to judge flower shows. Ms. Jasper was also a director of the International Peace Garden for 16 years.

She was also extremely active in her own community, serving in volunteer roles in her church and community groups. In 1992, Ms. Jasper received the Premier's Volunteer Service Award.

Mr. Speaker, I commend Ms. Jasper on her commitment to agriculture and to her province. Thank you.

* (14:50)

Winnipeg Folk Festival

Ms. Nancy Allan (St. Vital): I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Winnipeg Folk Festival on the outstanding success of their 27th annual event last weekend. This internationally recognized festival attracted the second largest audience in its history, despite the less than optimum conditions of the grounds because of a record rainfall on Thursday night.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize the core staff for their year-long commitment and dedication, and the success of this year's festival: Trudy Schroeder, the General Manager; Pierre Guérin, the Festival Producer; Linda Freed, Director of Development; Barbara Hiebert, the Volunteer Manager; Linda Cubbidge, the Communications Manager; Phil Beaulieu, the Technical Director; Arwene Helene, the Production Manager; Dianne Little,

the Acting Manager of Finance and Administration; Dianne Smith, Performer Services Administration; Eric Unwin, the Acting Manager of Home Made Music; and Ron Lindsay, Festival Tents.

I would like to pay tribute to the volunteers who are the heart and soul of the festival. I would like to thank the board who volunteer their time and their leadership all year. I would like to thank the 1500 volunteers who did a superb job. This was the first year in their 27-year history that the tarp run had to be postponed until five o'clock in the day because of the wet weather on the grounds to try to allow the ground to dry, and the volunteers did a phenomenal job under extreme circumstances.

Bravo to Brenda Douglas, former volunteer, former crew co-ordinator, and former chair of the board, who was recognized with a Volunteer Service Award. Bravo also to CBC, who received their Volunteer Service Award for their long-standing commitment to the Festival, starting out 27 years ago with a \$16,000 grant to launch the Festival. Finally, a fond farewell to a long-time volunteer and friend of the Festival, Sandra Deagle, whom we lost recently after a courageous battle with cancer. Her courage was an inspiration to us all.

House Business

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wish to announce that the Law Amendments Committee will meet on Wednesday, July 19, at 10 a.m., to consider Bills 8, 10, 13, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30 and 40.

Mr. Speaker: It has been announced by the Honourable Government House Leader that the Law Amendments Committee will meet on Wednesday, July 19, 2000, at 10 a.m., to consider the following Bills: 8, 10, 13, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 30 and 40.

Committee Changes

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Wellington (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources, which will meet on July 17 at

7 p.m., be amended as follows: The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger); Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) for The Maples (Mr. Aglugub); Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers) for St. James (Ms. Korzeniowski).

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources, now this is for Monday, 7 p.m., be: Emerson for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire); Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger); Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen); Gimli (Mr. Helwer) for Springfield (Mr. Schuler).

Motion agreed to.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE (Continued)

Provincial Flooding

Mr. Speaker: We will now proceed with the consideration of a matter of urgent public importance brought forward by the Honourable Member for Emerson.

I would just like to remind members that the time limit for speaking on a matter of urgent public importance is 10 minutes. I will now recognize the Honourable Member for Emerson.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. You know, when the rains started falling after most of the forecasts were for a drought in southern Manitoba this year, most of the long-range forecasts, and most of the long-range forecasts were for a very dry mid-western United States, many of our farmers looked at themselves and said, this spring, I wonder if it will be worth putting a crop in this spring, because if you have a prolonged drought, the crop insurance coverage levels that we have today will not nearly come close to covering even a portion of the input costs.

When the rains started falling, Mr. Speaker, most of the farmers said, you know, this is the

first sign and an indication that we are going to have a good crop this year. Then, when the rains started continuing to fall, first at six inches, then at eight inches, then at twelve inches, and then some areas fourteen and seventeen inches, it became very evident that the devastation that was being caused would be far greater than maybe even a significant drought would have been for some individual producers.

It is not everybody, Mr. Speaker, who is suffering through these large heavy downpours. It is those people who farm on a level plain area whose land is not rolling and can run off the excess moisture levels. It is those farmers who farm in those flatter parts of this province such as the Red River Valley or the eastern parts of this province and indeed much of western Manitoba is the make-up of. We all know that in southwest Manitoba, we call that pothole country. We expect some areas of that part of the province never to be seeded, because those are natural water-holding areas that our province, our aquifers, and all those kinds of things depend on. Our wildlife depends on some of those water-holding storage areas. Everybody accepts that. Farmers have farmed that way in the southwest part of the province for many years.

In the southeast area, the southeast part of the province, almost just the opposite is true. We have in many areas of the southeast, in the R.M. of Stuartburn and the R.M. of Piney, many swamps. There is the Sundown swamp, there is the Minisino swamp, there is the Caliento swamp, the Caliento Bog, and a number of other smaller bog areas. Again, these hold water throughout the year, and people or the provinces have guarded very jealously about draining these areas, because they provide water storage areas and recharge areas for our aquifers.

However, many other areas of the province such as the Red River Valley, such as the area north of Stuartburn and other areas are relatively flat farmland, and that farmland depends on a good drainage system. When that drainage system either becomes overburdened by excess moisture levels and/or insufficient maintenance of either municipal, provincial or other drains, these farmers in those areas then face serious, serious problems, and the economic losses cannot be overstated.

I will just give you some of the numbers, although I am always warned by some not to use too many numbers. But the agricultural community and the agricultural economy has changed dramatically in the last number of years, last couple of years even. When our fuel prices on farm went from 32 cents a litre in one and a half months to almost 50 cents a litre, that caused a dramatic change in cost. When fertilizer prices, because of the energy-based formulations in anhydrous ammonia and other fertilizers, ureas, changed by \$100 and sometimes \$150 a tonne additional cost, that changed the cost structure. When many of the other chemicals that are oil-based chemicals saw these kinds of increase in prices, the end result was that farm input costs rose dramatically over the last year.

* (15:00)

At the same time, Mr. Speaker, our revenues—and I often sit here and I wonder what some of our people who are employed in industry would say if their revenues dropped with the drops or rises in the agricultural commodities. If any one of our employees in this building would be asked to take a 50% decrease in their salaries, what would they say? How would they react? Yet farmers not only have taken a 50% decrease in salary, they have taken a 50% reduction in their total gross income. That is part of the problem that we face today. When you have a cost of production of, let us say, \$200 an acre and you farm a thousand acres of land, that means that your cost out of pocket before you have any reasonable chance of an income, before we have any reasonable chance of income, they have to invest \$200,000, a quarter of a million dollars.

I know that the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sales) does not like to hear this, him being a former civil servant and one of the union organizers in this province, does not understand. It just shows how crass in nature they really are, because they do not understand or do not want to understand the farm situation. They do not want to understand the situation of the food producers. This minister goes to the table every morning without being thankful for the food that he eats and now laughs at the situation and criticizes it.

I think it is about time that the members of this government, this NDP administration under-

stand the nature of agriculture and how it functions and how important gross incomes are. I know that the Minister of Agriculture is the only one on that side of the House that truly would have some feel for the nature of the agricultural community and agriculture in its entirety.

Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that when those kinds of costs are incurred, \$200 an acre of gross input costs, without any reasonable ability at all to recover any of that investment in any given year when you have flooding like this, when you have a total crop loss on a farm, and some of these people do, and the Minister of Agriculture can verify that, because she went out and had a look yesterday and this morning herself. She knows what the situation is like on some of these farms.

Some of the potato fields that she saw are a virtual disaster. Without question there will not be a potato I do not believe harvested on that farm. That farmer will have input costs of some \$600 an acre, because the seed itself is hugely expensive and all the equipment required to put that seed in the ground and the fertilizer, the prefertilization, the prechemical application and all that sort of stuff that has to go in. That farmer probably has right now as we speak probably between \$500 and \$600 in the ground.

If that person gets no crop at all, how long will the banks finance him? How long will the banks finance that operation? Do you think they will go \$1000 an acre next year just on input costs? Do you think the banks will borrow him another \$500? I think not. That is the urgency of this debate.

Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely important that we recognize the huge investment that these farmers make. The only opportunity to recoup that investment or part of that investment is to grow a crop and to be able to sell that crop at a reasonable market value.

First of all, the market values are not there. Now the rain has devastated the crop that was sown and destroyed it entirely. I beg this House and I beg this Premier of this province and his Executive Council to give full consideration to the true hurt that is going on in this—

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member's time has expired.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): Mr. Speaker, as you indicated when you were making a ruling on whether this should be a matter of urgent public importance, there have been many other options to raise this. But I am very pleased that we are debating this whole issue this afternoon because I do believe that it is important to set the ordinary business of the House aside to talk about an issue that has come up quite quickly and one that is affecting many people.

Mr. Speaker, the agriculture industry is a very important industry to the economy of Manitoba. There is a saying: As agriculture goes, so goes the economy. We have seen that. When agriculture has been in difficulty, there has been difficulty in the small communities, and truly the difficulties in agriculture do spill over into Winnipeg. I know that one of the areas where you see that happening is in the farm machinery business. When agriculture is in difficulty, you see less purchase of farm, machinery, and that certainly has impacts on the urban economies as well, as well as food processing and many other areas that urban people often do not realize, that their jobs are derived from agriculture, and we have to have a healthy agriculture economy.

I had the opportunity this morning to visit several places in the southeast part of the province, and certainly it is a very difficult situation there. There is a lot of land, a lot of crop that has been soaked out because of excessive moisture. The pastures are quite wet, but a lot of the water has drained away, and I was very pleased to see that, although areas where livestock was in water and had no place to get onto higher ground, in the areas that I was in, that whole issue has been resolved. Although the pasture land is still very wet. The water has drained away.

Certainly there has been a loss of hay. We saw a lot of hay that will not be of any value, and farmers are looking to chop that hay up and spread it out over the fields in order that the second crop can grow. When I talk to farmers today, they were very hopeful that the weather is

going to turn around, the sun is going to shine. With the moisture that is there, although there will be some crop loss, they are hoping that it will end up having some very good crops this year in certain areas.

Our big concern as government is the forecast that we are hearing right now and the possibility of rain coming in the next little while. That is the reason that the departments of Conservation, Government Services and Agriculture are working proactively with communities and producers to determine what information or assistance individuals or communities require. You have to take that proactive step to be ready should there be further disasters.

We have to also look at the programs that are in place at the present time. Certainly I know that there are going to be a lot of claims on crop insurance, and in fact, to date, there has been a total of 270 crop insurance claims across the province. One hundred of those have come in just in the last week. So you can anticipate that there is going to be a lot of crop loss.

* (15:10)

When I was in the southeast part of the province this morning, a couple of the points that were made with me was people are not looking for cash payments from the government right now because obviously you do not even know what the damage is. What people are asking us to look at is long-term solutions. They pointed out various areas where there had been plans for drainages. In fact, they talked about a very large drainage in the R.M. of Springfield that was planned, but in the '90s the project got cancelled. Although the municipality put their money in place, the money from the province, and I am not sure about the details of the program, whether there was federal money involved as well, that money did not come through. So those drainages were not completed. Certainly the Member for Emerson stated very clearly that it was his government that made cutbacks to the Department of Conservation and cutbacks in funding that resulted in drainages not being cleaned out and drainages not being maintained, and, as a result, there are a lot of drainages where water is not flowing away properly.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is a very serious problem and one that is very important to this region and one where there has to be a lot of long-term work done. The issue of drainage is not going to be solved overnight, but by working together I hope this issue can be resolved, so that should this kind of situation arise again, that over time there will be a much better drainage system than is in place right now.

When the Member was speaking, he talked about some of the issues in the southwest part of the province, and earlier today we had discussion about the southwest part of the province and the difficulties that are there and the lack of disaster assistance for that area. I think we should remember, Mr. Speaker, that we do have a resolution on the books—it has been sitting for some time—that the members of the Opposition refused to pass. If they would have helped us by passing that resolution before we went to Ottawa, I am sure it would have carried some weight to show that we had all-party agreement on this matter.

Mr. Speaker, when I speak about drainage, as well, I think we should also note that there is a water rights bill that is on the Order Paper right now and one that people from southwestern Manitoba would certainly like to see passed, that they can have some of their water issues resolved. It will have impacts on the other parts of the province as well.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite are not letting that bill move forward despite the fact that it is very important for municipalities to have that legislation put in place, so that they can work on drainage plans and do some planning that will help all producers.

So, Mr. Speaker, the agriculture industry is very important to the economy of Manitoba, and I want to address an issue also raised by the Member who just spoke who said that members on this side of the House have no understanding of agriculture. Well, I have to tell the Member that he is wrong. There is a tremendous amount of knowledge on this side of the House. I have to tell the Member that there are several people on this side of the House who have been involved in farm operations, who own their own farms and do have a recognition and an understanding of

the industry in Manitoba. So I would encourage the Member to be cautious with the comments he makes when he says that the members on this side of the House do not understand agriculture.

If these members did not understand agriculture, Mr. Speaker, I would not have had the kind of support that I have had from my colleagues when it comes to putting money in for the CMAP program and for other programs.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to say a few words on this matter. I want to say that I would very much hope that we are going to have some good weather and that we are working together as departments to prepare, should the situation become more difficult and there should be more rain.

But municipalities have applied, have filed their resolutions declaring it a disaster in their area. There is a process in place within the Department of Agriculture. Now the staff of the Department of Agriculture is monitoring the situation very closely, and, certainly, we are going to be working with producers to ensure that their concerns are addressed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to say that we want to work on long-term solutions, and we are addressing the water situation in all parts of the province. Thank you.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I rise today to put some comments on the motion from the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) because this is a very, very serious issue for farmers in the province of Manitoba. More specifically, this is becoming a very devastating issue for families, the farm families, the women, the children, the farmers in the southwest part of Manitoba.

I note that we have in our gallery today the mayor of the community of Souris, and indeed this is a gentleman who understands the plight of people in the southwest corner of Manitoba and has been a fairly strong advocate in supporting the plight of those farmers in the southwest part

of our province. I also represent a portion of that constituency which has been devastated for the second year in a row. I have listened carefully to the comments from the Minister of Agriculture. I fail to see what her comments have to do specifically with the situation that exists in the southwest part of our province.

Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture may be right about a situation that exists in southeastern Manitoba at the present time. But southeastern Manitoba had a history of being flooded, and the fact that there are issues with regard to drainage there have not been issues of today. They are issues that have been long-standing in nature. They are issues that have been ongoing for a long period of time.

Point of Order

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food): On a point of order, I wonder if the Member could clarify. The resolution that is put forward says that there is a need to debate a multitude of problems arising from two years of flooding and excess moisture conditions in a wide range of areas of the province, including the city of Winnipeg.

The Member is indicating that this resolution is addressing the southwest part of the province. I would ask him to clarify if this is a resolution addressing all of the province. Because if he has brought forward a resolution dealing with the southwest part of the province, that would not be the same situation. If they were doing that, they should have actually passed the resolution that was on the books, not bring forward another urgent matter of public importance.

* (15:20)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Honourable Minister, that is not a point of order. Disputes over the facts are not points of order.

* * *

Mr. Derkach: My point, if the Minister would pay attention to what I said, she would understand that I was talking about the narrow scope in which she addressed this huge issue, Mr.

Deputy Speaker. She did not address the economics and the lack of assistance that this government has put forward for the farmers in this province, specifically and especially to the farmers and the farm families, the women and the children of southwestern Manitoba. That is the issue that is most devastating in this province today.

I recognize that people in southeastern Manitoba, that people in Winnipeg today are suffering as a result of excess water and excess rain. I remind this House that in 1997, when the Red River flood was an issue for the entire province, the families of southwestern Manitoba loaded women, youth, men into buses and made their way into the city of Winnipeg and into the southern communities of this province to see what it was that they could do to assist with the disaster that was occurring in this province at that time.

Today those same families who gave of themselves in 1997 are asking themselves the question why it is that our governments have abandoned us. This is callous treatment. I hesitate to say this, but it is almost a situation of cruelty to the people of southwestern Manitoba.

I have been in this House for 15 years. During that period of time, we have witnessed devastating events in all parts of this province: in 1988, the fires of northern Manitoba; the floods in southern Manitoba.

I believe it was 1989 we had the floods in the Swan River Valley. The action of the provincial government was immediate during that period of time. I will not forget the issues of the Swan River Valley, when we attended to the needs of those people immediately. Whether it was in the reconstruction of bridges and roads, there was significant monies flowed to the people who were living in that region to alleviate their situation and their problems.

Well, where are we today? The Minister of Agriculture keeps wringing her hands and keeps talking about the fact that this is Ottawa's problem, not mine. The people in this province do not care about the two levels of government arguing amongst themselves. I say to the Minister of Agriculture to put her money where her

mouth is. Put the money on the table for the farmers of Manitoba, for the farm families.

The member for Dauphin-Roblin makes a smart remark from his seat about the plight of the farmers in southwestern Manitoba. I think that is offensive and that is shameful of a member of this House to make a remark of that nature which reflects on the people of southwestern Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a serious matter. I would challenge the members opposite to say that it is not a serious matter.

Point of Order

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder if you would call the members on the other side of the House to order. I am experiencing great difficulty hearing the Honourable Member for Russell.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: All honourable members of the House, please listen to the debates.

* * *

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not take this matter lightly. I am speaking on behalf of those farm families who are experiencing hardship, who are experiencing stress, who are experiencing an enormous amount of pain during these days. If members opposite do not believe me then I invite them to join me in my constituency or in the southwestern part of this province where we can sit down face to face with those farm families, with those men, women and young people, so that the Government can indeed get a truer perspective of what is happening in that part of the province.

There are fields in that part of the province which are not seeded for the second year in a row. There are incomes which were not realized last year and will not be realized in some instances again this year. How long can those families endure that kind of hardship and that kind of pain?

I do not take this matter lightly, because we as a government, if we were in government—now

the NDP are in government, it is their responsibility to answer that challenge. If in fact there is an issue with Ottawa where there is today, we will join them in trying to make sure that we recoup the funding that is legitimate on behalf of Manitobans from the federal government.

But let us not hold back the money that is owed to the people of Manitoba from the Province. We owe it to them to pay them their money, to allow them to carry on with their lives. And I know members opposite there are not taking this as lightly as I said in my comments. I know they are listening, and I know they have listened in the past. But sometimes politics interferes with good decision making, and I think this is the point. I asked the members opposite, and I asked the members of the Government, to take their responsibilities seriously, to pay the money that is owed to the farmers in the southwest part of our province for the disaster that occurred last year so that indeed these families can continue on with their lives.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this has an impact far beyond just the family. It has an impact on each and every community in that part of the province. These are proud people, but their pride is quickly vanishing because they see that they cannot fight this issue much longer. You cannot do it for two successive years in a row, especially when you couple that with such low commodity prices. These are our citizens. These are people that we have some responsibility for, and I ask this government to seriously consider or reconsider its position. Yes, if they in fact pay for the obligation they have, if they put that money on the table, we will join them in a march to Ottawa to make sure that the federal government lives up to its responsibility as it duly should. Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Scott Smith (Brandon West): Mr. Deputy Speaker, this issue is a matter of urgent public issue. I agree with some of the statements of the Member opposite. I have agreed with many of the statements from many of us in the House here. For anybody to point a finger, I think is a serious mistake, at any one person not believing that this is of the seriousness that it is here in Manitoba.

I know some of us and some members would like to say some people do not cross any

lines, be it the Perimeter Highway in Winnipeg or the highways outside of Brandon or maybe the highways in Russell, to see outside areas. But, in fact, in this case, I think every single person in this House has either been to an affected area in 1999 or has seen the affected areas here in 2000. There are a few issues combining as one, as a few of the members opposite have mentioned before, and there is a need for long-term solutions on this issue.

Last year, 1999, was a disaster in Manitoba. It was a disaster, not only for producers and producers' families and the communities around those producers, but for the entire province of Manitoba. The business community, the jobs related to the business community in the larger urban areas here in Manitoba and the effects that it had on agriculture on that expansion out dollar-wise into the communities, into the larger communities. I think everybody in this room would agree that it was certainly a disaster. The only ones that do not agree with it seem to be the federal government.

* (15:30)

The solution to the problem is I think what everybody would like to work toward and would like to see. In 1999, the Province of Manitoba came up with substantial dollars through both the previous government and, in fact, carried on into the new government. The dollars have been put on the table. Many dollars have been laid out, and I think the members opposite, I am not speaking for them, but would agree that the federal government has been quite negligent in coming forward with a commitment that I believe is seriously their commitment and a commitment, not only to the farmers and the producers, but to the rest of Manitobans.

The hardships and the dollars that have been straight, bottom-line costs for all of Manitobans are huge. This government went through our Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton), through the Disaster Assistance, to try to recoup dollars and get dollars on the table by the federal government, with little or no success.

The MP from the Brandon area, the only Conservative MP to the coast, has brought it up in the House of Commons, asking whether they

would consider looking at any type of funding agreement, whether they would look at 90-10 or 80-20 or a 50-50, the same that we have done. That has been of no success. In fact, it was over and over again by Mr. Eggleton and a few others that, no, there would be no dollars for the disaster assistance.

Mr. Eggleton and a few others agreed that there was a disaster in Manitoba, which we all know, we do not have to be told that. Yet, when the Prime Minister was out, he did not seem to realize that his ministers had agreed that there was a disaster out here.

Now that to me is a significant piece that we should be looking at. We should be saying you have had ministers say it is a disaster here in Manitoba, you have come out and said, no, there is not a disaster in Manitoba, now obviously there is a little bit of problem in communications at the federal level. We know there is a disaster. The Minister stated there was a disaster from the federal level. Yet, the Prime Minister did not seem to realize that. He does now. Our Premier (Mr. Doer) made him fully aware of that, our Agriculture Minister (Ms. Wowchuk) has made him aware of that, as has our Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton).

The dollars need to be put into the hands of the producers. We all agree on that. Some of the members previously had said spend, spend, spend—in their words. I am not sure if that is the best way to go. I think that these need to be negotiated. I understand fully the problems that families are having out there. They need the dollars now, but we need to look at the entire case in this matter.

We have put dollars on the table to get the feds to come out and belly up to the counter and say, yes, your dollars are there, our dollars are there, we are going to help the citizens here, not only in Manitoba but in Canada. I think that it is heading in the direction with the disaster that they have seen quite quickly announced in and around the Ottawa Valley to some of their producers, that I think we may see a little bit more action, considering the federal election coming, on behalf of the federal government.

It does not help the farmers today and it does not help them yesterday. It does not keep

the wolves away from them in forms of paying back dollars that they owe, but the extension of trying to overextend dollars that we do not have is probably not the solution to go with.

The dollars that have been put forward by the Province, \$100 million, is substantial; \$40 million from the Province of Manitoba is a lot of money. If we had an unlimited bank account or if we made our own money, I guess, it would be one thing, but we have to deal with the reality of balanced budgets. We have to deal with the reality of fiscal responsibility. We have to deal with the reality that not only was there a disaster last year, that again it is looking like if we do not get a relief from the moisture that is coming and affecting some of the areas, although localized right now, we do not know what is going to happen in the next few weeks.

In fact, I do not want it to be treated like it was last year. I think that we need to take steps quickly, which the Minister has been. He has been out with members opposite, the Member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) as recently as yesterday, to see the impact. So to say that this government or members on this side do not understand and do not relate to what the disasters are or the areas that they are in or the input costs the people are out is misleading in making any statement like that. In fact, we do understand, members opposite understand.

The members opposite understand realities of financing, I would hope. Over the last 10 or 12 years, there may have been times where they had to make decisions based on not wanting to borrow more money than your revenue is allowing you to bring in. I do not think we would want to spend every single dollar in a bank account, anyone of us on a personal level, without thinking ahead a little bit past tomorrow. What could happen if in fact there was a disaster again this year and then there was no bank, there was no money, there was nothing left to do but maybe sell off another Crown corporation to get some dollars in? And that is not an option.

Quite frankly, I think, we all agree and we should all probably target and get it together a little bit like the members did opposite with going to Ottawa with the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire). They had a very good

display when they went to Ottawa. They had facts, they had figures, they had dollars. They presented a fine case and were not successful. But I think we have to get back to that. I think we have to all agree to disagree on some of the smaller specifics on just how quickly a reaction should happen. I think we should get it together on a bit of a—I hate to use the word "united" or "alternative"—but I think we need to simply look at this, look at who is responsible for the disaster that has happened in our province. It has happened in other provinces. People have got the money. Maybe it is in terms of there is more voters in other areas.

I know the Member opposite seems to be pointing out that we are responsible for the disaster. I disagree with that. I disagree strongly. We are not responsible for the disaster. I think we need to get together. I think we need to focus our efforts, as opposed to pointing our fingers and mentioning one person has not had their rubber boots on to go out and see what the disaster is and in fact get together and try to really assist not only the farmers, the farm producers, the farm families, but the business community's effects and the people who are working in those business communities in the urban areas.

I think we better focus a little bit more. We better all agree to disagree on some of the arguments that we have. We better get a joint effort to actually do something about it instead of talking like the members opposite have been doing for quite a long period instead of actually focussing and going forward with some positives as opposed to the sky is falling. Many people that it does affect, the sky is falling. It is unfortunate. It is, I believe, not the way to go. I believe that the positive action that this government has taken through our ministers has been nothing but positive. I think we are going in the right direction. Maybe the heavy rainfall in the Ottawa Valley that we have seen in the last little while and the disaster that is actually hitting home for people in Ontario might go a lot further than we will in the disaster relief that I think will be coming.

So with that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know we could all probably speak on this issue for hours. It is just a few words I would like to put

on as comments that I have. Hopefully we can work together and work for a solution that is actually going to work for the people that are affected.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am still upset, seething, quite frankly, from what occurred at Question Period here a little while ago, the performance by our First Minister, the Premier (Mr. Doer), the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk). It is going to make it difficult for me to keep the kind of moderate, reasonable approach that I always take to issues of great importance, and this is important.

* (15:40)

The fact of the matter is that despite the grandstanding and the headlining and the travelling to Ottawa and the visits with Minister Vanclief, our Minister of Agriculture has come home, signed the deal that gives Quebec farmers more, Ontario farmers more, British Columbia farmers more, Manitoba farmers less. That is the first time that has happened. That is the first time that has happened. We have a Premier that does not know the difference.

Mr. Premier, if I were to say to honourable members opposite that one of the proudest accomplishments that I had in the Walter Weir administration was the introduction of public automobile insurance, Autopac, I would suspect someone would think that maybe I was stretching the truth, as indeed I am. But for the First Minister to suggest that this government went down to Ottawa to negotiate unseeded acreage protection into our Crop Insurance program is nonsense. Unseeded acreage protection in crop insurance has been available for 10, 15, 20, 30, 40 years.

An Honourable Member: So where is the problem then, Harry?

Mr. Enns: I will tell you the problem. Again, you do not know Manitoba. The problem is, and this was the uniqueness about '99 and the southwest, the problem at the southwest historically is not too much rain. That is why they never availed themselves of it. We are all human. We understand that. Only 7 percent or 8 percent of

farmers in Manitoba bought crop insurance coverage for unseeded acreage, and they were mostly in the Red River Valley. The southwest did not have that problem. That is what made '99 such a unique situation. That is what made what happened in the southwest even more unique than what we called the flood of the century here in the Red River Valley, because the Red River Valley has a history of flooding. It floods virtually every decade. It flooded in '50. It flooded in '74. It flooded in '86. It flooded in '97. It has a history of flooding. The history of the southwest is as a rule, lack of moisture.

I do not blame any southwestern farmer for not having taken advantage of unseeded acreage crop insurance protection. Now had we had that in place it would have certainly helped in the situation. What particularly galls me is that the Minister, the now Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), was in the audience at Brandon when I, among other things, announced initially the \$50 support program per acre—that was in July of last year—and indicated that we would be bringing for the coming year the changes that would make unseeded acreage cover mandatory in the crop insurance program.

She knows that. Her First Minister should know that, and they now attempt to make it appear that this is something that they brought on by themselves. I am a politician of some experience. I know that we take licence and we stretch, we exaggerate the truth sometimes a little bit but that was just going a bit too far.

Now the issue here again—and showing some leadership by the province, and quite frankly, the record is very clear. It was my privilege and my responsibility as a matter of fact to be the minister of Natural Resources in '89 when this province experienced its worst forest fires in a century. We had to move. We had to evacuate up to 40 000, 45 000 people mostly from the North and bring them into communities here in the south. Many hospitable communities, including many communities in rural Manitoba, and fortunately Winnipeg accepted them. The cost of that operation was some \$74 million. Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$32 million was entirely the federal government's responsibility because it involved First Nations people.

Did we quibble about paying that money? We did not quibble. We were helping people get

out of harms way, out of smoke, out of fire. That \$32 million was paid by the provincial government up front, and then we fought. We had to fight for it the next 2.5 years to get the federal share and that was from a so-called friendly government, Conservative government. Remember our good friend Mr. Mulroney in Ottawa. We finally got it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the benefit of the Honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale), the '97 flood, the top payout value of flood damage that existed in '97 that was applied in other flood years was \$35,000 per residency. The floodwaters had not finished rising when the Filmon cabinet, the Conservative government raised those limits to \$135,000 per family to give peace of mind to those residents who saw their houses damaged, totally damaged, to see those farm families who saw their houses damaged, something like that.

That is what I call immediate action. Immediate action. Now, if there was bureaucratic—but everybody that was damaged, everybody that had flood damage in the '97 flood knew within weeks what kind of compensation they were going to get. There sits the Minister, my friend from Neepawa, the last minister of Natural Resources knows that that is a fact. Now, the fact that we had situations where we did not know whether people were going to rebuild or not, whether they were going to do that, and settlements were delayed, that, of course, happened, but people knew that support was there.

Again, in many instances, substantial federal dollars had to be provided for the ring dikes that are being built around St. Adolphe and for the improvement of the ring dikes in the other Red River Valley communities—a government that cares, a government that understands, a government that has some understanding of rural Manitoba, does not sit on their butts. They get off and move and do the things.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in '99—it was about this time of the year. We had to wait as the situation, as the unbelievable situation unfolded in the southwest, and it became clear that thousands, thousands, indeed, upwards to a million acres were not going to be seeded. We waited just the

bare minimum time until the end of June, and the last seedable dates under Crop Insurance is about June 25, and on or about the first or second week of July—I could be out, forgive me. I may be out by a week or two, but my Premier and a good number of my cabinet colleagues were making a public announcement in Brandon indicating that the farmers would receive, as soon as we could possibly flow it, an initial \$50-an-acre cash payout for every unseeded acre that they could record. That program ended up costing some \$60 million, \$70 million.

I also remember what I said in Melita and on other occasions, that that was not enough, that that should be \$60, \$70, \$80, \$90 an acre, and I believed it, because that is the treatment that the Red River Valley farmers received, and this government has bounced the ball, blamed Ottawa.

Pay out the money. Pay out the amount that the Province has committed themselves to, which is some \$21 million. Pay it out now. It will help with the bill, and then fight with Ottawa. That is doing it in a responsible way, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is what has to be done under these circumstances.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Highways and Government Services): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this. I want to indicate it is important, I think, for members opposite, in debating this resolution which covers a significant number of topic areas, to recognize what the current situation is with recent conditions in this province. I want to indicate that we do have damage reported in 16 municipalities, and we currently have 7 which have submitted resolutions.

I want to indicate that basically we have been in contact, both as a government and through our staff, our fine staff at the Emergency Measures Organization, right from Day One in terms of the most recent occurrences. I want to reference, for example, Headingley, which is kind of a good example—and I am not trying to minimize what has happened in other areas, but I was out there yesterday with the Member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

There was the combination of two factors, a wet summer and a significant amount of rainfall,

five inches in about one hour. I think members opposite can appreciate that that combination of circumstances create a great deal of difficulty in what is very flat terrain. There are reports of damage in that area, and I can indicate from talking to municipal officials there, talking to the reeve, the bottom line is we are going to be in very close contact. There may, indeed, be items that are covered under the existing program.

* (15:50)

I want to indicate that in terms of other municipalities, as well, we have received some initial reports. We have not received detailed reports. The process we are following, by the way, is the same process that is followed in all disasters, was followed by the previous government, and we will follow. The first element of the response from the provincial government is to work with local municipalities on the immediate impact of the disaster. The second stage is to put in place compensation mechanisms, and we have a very developed system we are following in this case.

So I want to put on the record that we have been acting both as a government and as a staff right from Day One. I have encouraged municipal leaders—I talked to them yesterday—to make sure that local residents are aware of the guidelines, the DFAA guidelines. Basically, as members in this House will know, when an area is affected by a disaster, certain types of claims are possible, particularly in terms of property, that cannot be insured for the type of damage. That kind of damage to property is covered whether it be public or private.

The reports we have from the different municipalities range quite considerably in terms of the impact. In the city of Winnipeg, there has been damage to a number of residences. Many of them are affected by clean water flooding, in fact, 216, but no damage to public property. In Beausejour and Brokenhead, unconfirmed reports of basement damage and some crop damage, minor road washouts.

In the R.M. of Cartier, we have received reports of flooding in 20 basements, minor municipal damage. R.M. of East St. Paul, we have been informed there is a resolution forth-

coming. We have not received specific information on the damages. The R.M. of Hamiota, the R.M. advised that one resident had reported damage to buildings because of a severe storm which I think the Member opposite will be aware of. A resolution may be forthcoming requesting DFA. No damage to public sector property. R.M. of Hanover, resolution submitted to Emergency Measures requesting DFA. Some unspecified damage to public and private property.

R.M. of Headingley, damage includes basement flooding, surface flooding of land, including standing crops and erosion, public sector includes road washouts. They have received 10 requests for disaster assistance, and the resolution has been passed and is being forwarded to us. R.M. of La Broquerie has submitted a resolution. There is no known damage to the private sector, however, there has been a report of potential damage to a golf course, reports of standing crops and large washout on the public side, 70 minor reports of damage to sites in the public sector.

R.M. of Lac du Bonnet, which has also submitted a resolution, no damage to houses, potential damage to standing crops and four reports of minor damage to municipal sites. R.M. of Macdonald has submitted a resolution requesting DFA. We have no specific reports yet. R.M. of Portage la Prairie, unconfirmed reports of damage received to date, small washouts to roads. R.M. of Reynolds, private sector unconfirmed reports of damage. The same in terms of the public sector. R.M. of Ste. Anne may wish to extend its extension on the local declaration of emergency. We have not received specific reports on damage.

St. François Xavier, private sector, several reports of damage to private residences, unspecified municipal. R.M. of Springfield, municipal officials are gathering information on the private sector. Public sector, 30 sites have been damaged. Nine indications of major damage in the R.M. of Springfield. R.M. of Stuartburn, no damage to homes, however, some crop damage. No municipal damage and some indications of damage in Peguis to roads and ditches, crops and pasture and some impact on basements.

I wanted to give members that update because we will continue with our commitment

to update members on a regular basis. I also want to indicate to members opposite that I think it is important to recognize the importance of maintaining disaster assistance programs that will allow us to react to this kind of an emergency. In fact, one of the key things we have raised in the context of both the '97 program and the '99 program is indeed the basic principle of federal, and I say, significant federal cost-sharing for disaster assistance.

I am disappointed, quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that members opposite continue, I think, instead of putting the pressure on the federal government, continue to try and make this an issue in Question Period or in debate in this Legislature. I say to members opposite and I say to the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), who should I think know with his experience—*[interjection]* The member says let us provide the help and go to Ottawa.

I want to put on the record the circumstance that the previous government left this government in. You know, this was a government that had passed legislation, that set in place in legislation a requirement that the Fiscal Stabilization Fund be approximately \$400 million, I believe. You know what the current level is? \$184 million. You know how much money the previous government spent from the Fiscal Stabilization Fund? \$340 million, some of which did go to disaster assistance. But you know what? The only disaster the Conservatives were concerned about the last couple of years when it came to the Fiscal Stabilization Fund was the political disaster they were facing in September of 1999.

I find it amazing that members opposite will get up and say, when it comes to disasters, well, we will just go to the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. They spent \$340 million, most of which was on operating expenditures, in two years. They sold MTS. They spent it all in three years.

I say to members opposite, and I particularly say to the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), other members—and I know the people in Arthur-Virden are aware of the challenge that any government faces, like any farm and like any household does in terms of its own budget. I say to members opposite that we have, I think, a

consensus in this House. We have legislation that requires balanced budgets. Well, I say to members opposite when they say, well, put more money in, put more money in, if they had not drained the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would have a lot more fiscal flexibility. We are trying to preserve a couple of things. Our ability to react, and I say to the members opposite who spent like drunken sailors going into the election, they spent the money for their own political hides, when we are faced with a disaster as we are currently, we need the fiscal ability to react.

To do that, we have to protect our own finances in this province, but we have to have support from the federal government to come across with its share. I say to the members opposite, and I say this in sadness, because, you know, when we had the '97 flood and the '99 flood, we never had a debate like this, a partisan debate in this House initiated by members opposite. We had a united front. We went out as one province. We went out to the federal government with a united front.

I say to the members opposite they may score political points, but their actions have undercut our position in Ottawa. I say to members opposite, when they sit down with their constituents, they may wish to explain why they spent the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, \$340 million, in three years and why they would rather raise political points in this House than the traditional approach in this House.

So we followed in opposition. We supported a joint effort, a united effort, an all-party effort, and I say to members opposite it is still not too late on the current situation. Please, put the interests of Manitobans ahead of partisan interests. Let us work together to deal with the disaster that we are dealing with, whether it be '97, '99 or the year 2000. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I am sure glad I made it back in the House in time to see that tirade. Mr. Deputy Speaker, how many times in this House have we heard the same rhetoric from this government since they got elected over the last 10 months? I was going to go through the number of programs, and I have

done that before myself, to outline the seriousness of the nature of the cause in western Manitoba, not just southwest Manitoba but the whole region that was impacted by the flood in 1999.

We have a Minister of Government Services and Emergency Measures that had such an emergency that he could not stay and hear the debate, but we have a situation whereby—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Point of order being raised.

*(16:00)

Point of Order

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe, if the Member for Arthur-Virden would check some of the rules of the order in this House, he is not to mention the members who are not in attendance, and he is not to refer to their presence or absence. I know that the Member for Arthur-Virden knows this rule. I would ask that you educate the Member a little bit. Instead of trying to score cheap political points on this kind of an issue, he should stick to the rules.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: May I remind all honourable members of the House that absences are not referred to in this House.

* * *

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I apologize. I apologize for the fact that I referred to the Member as not being here. That is a rule of the House, and I apologize for that. It does not deter from the fact that in this House many, many times, there has been lip service given to wanting a united front to go someplace to get something for somebody in southwest Manitoba. This government has neglected its responsibilities time and time and time again in regard to trying to bring forward dollars that it says are being used for cheap political points.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the previous government had wanted to do that, they might have just come in and said, we will put another \$25 an acre into southwest Manitoba last year for the unseeded acreage. There was \$50 an acre put in and it amounted to \$70 million, and the members opposite agreed to it; they would have been very

foolish not to have in the middle of a disaster. At least there was something for them to come forward and put their arms around. There was support there for the people of that region, and it came from the previous Tory government.

There was \$50 put on the table and there has been nothing by this government, not one cent for those farmers who never qualified under the AIDA program. The only money they have got yet for southwest Manitoba is the \$50 that this government put forward. Now there are many complications to deal with. The programs from the federal government and the AIDA, we had to practically bring them in dragging, kicking and screaming to put their dollars on the table, from which they clawed back some of those dollars. There is no doubt about that.

Any money that comes under the CMAP program, the Canada-Manitoba Adjustment Program, that they came forward with and left Alberta out—by the way, they went and did their own thing and then sent the bill to Ottawa for half of it, and they are begrudgingly paying some of that bill. That is what we have asked time and time again in this House for these people to do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has been made very, very clear that those programs, the CMAP program was generally made available for every farmer in the province of Manitoba. When will the members of this government opposite recognize that not one cent of that money went for targeted disaster payments in southwest Manitoba?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wanted to raise the issue that the analogy that I will draw on this is that dollars under the CMAP program were made because of low commodity prices in all of Manitoba. It was used by the farmers out there and much deserving because there definitely is a problem with the prices and our commodities as well caused by those subsidies that I have mentioned many times in this House since being elected last fall.

The dollars in the CMAP program and the Red River Valley and the Swan Valley and other areas of Manitoba were used for low commodity prices. If those are the dollars that the Govern-

ment is saying were made available for southwest Manitoba, then why do they not come out and say so? Many times in this House they have also said that those dollars were for the farmers and the low commodity prices in southwest Manitoba. Well, you cannot have it both ways. It is either money made available for the low commodity prices or its money made available for a disaster.

In all of Manitoba, it was money that was used for low commodity prices. The same program was brought in in Saskatchewan, Mr. Deputy Speaker. My point is if that money was used for low commodity prices in the southwest, then it was not disaster money. If it was money for disaster money for disaster programs in the southwest, then this government is telling us that the grain in southwest Manitoba is worth less than the grain in any other part of this province, and that is very objectionable.

That is a part of the point of why the Minister's comments today are being met with extreme scepticism in the province of Manitoba. For him to state, and I will quote again, "The first priority is to stabilize the agriculture situation. For some producers it means your whole existence." That kind of a quote coming from the Premier of this province is why farmers in rural Manitoba today are so sceptical about him coming out and saying, oh, well, we are there to help you and we are there to serve and we are there to try and get some kind of funding for you, and we are going to deal with the disasters as they come forward.

I still have farmers in southwest Manitoba that have not even got the claims from their basement floodings dealt with, and it is a year after the fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I have farmers out there who not only were they not able to get an acre of their forages off last year or their grain seeded, but on many of those forage acres they have not been able to turn a wheel this year to take off any forage, not because it is too wet this year, but because last year's disaster drowned the crop out and it has not grown back. That is on thousands of acres in western Manitoba.

You know, as much as cattle prices are enjoying some profitability in this kind of a

climate that we are in today, it is pretty much a detriment to each individual farmer to see himself sitting there with one hundred or two hundred or less cattle but no forage to feed them. What is he supposed to do, go out and sell the basic herd for diversification that he has painstakingly grown over all these years to go out and buy forage for the ones that are left? Is that the kind of support that this government is giving to the farmers in western Manitoba?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of emergency services just made my case in his position that he just put forward in this House a few minutes ago. He maintained that there is \$184 million still in the Fiscal Stabilization account, and that account was set up for disasters. It is there to be used in these kinds of situations, and it was used as a means of balancing the books in Manitoba, so that we would be able to have the kinds of funds that are available for this government today. They have \$400-million more in their budget for the year 2000 than the previous government had. Some of it, albeit, came from transfer payments that they may or may not have expected to get from the federal government, a kind of windfall, if you will, but by this government's own assessment of the situation in western Manitoba, they have come up and determined that there is half of the need.

The farm groups came in, the southwest rally group and the Minnedosa rally group, and indicated that they needed \$85 million to \$90 million of support for that whole entire region, 3.4 million acres in western Manitoba. This government, by their own definition, has come in and said we believe there is \$43-million worth of hurt in that particular region. The members across the way should recognize that those farmers begrudgingly said we will accept the Government's definition of what the volume of disaster is, \$43 million. That is what they are asking for here. They are asking for it to be split between the provincial government and the federal government.

So my question in this House today was: Does this government not believe that spending \$6 an acre in southwest Manitoba is worth taking the risk on being able to save that kind of a region, \$6 from the provincial government and \$6 from the federal government? If they want

united all-party support, and I have said it in Estimates and I said it in the House today in Question Period and I am stating it again now, our side will be there unanimously supporting them if they put in the \$21.5 million. Show the cheque to the farmers out there and put it on the table. Put it in the mail to them, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Then we will be there to go to Ottawa and get the other \$6 an acre, the other \$21.5 million.

That is what we are asking for, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is why this government is not getting the support that it thinks it is. Thank you.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): I rise to speak on the MUPI today based on the fact that I am the MLA for the Interlake which is largely an agricultural community and has, as well, experienced severe rainfall and flooding, as has occurred in the southwest.

I guess the first point that I would like to make, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to draw the attention of the House and the people of Manitoba to the tunnel vision that the previous administration continues to display in this House. I hear it time and again, southwest Manitoba, southwest Manitoba. What about the rest of the province?

* (16:10)

That is the first point I would like to put on the record. Their total concentration is focussed on this one postage-stamp province of the southwest of Manitoba here. They really are lost in the past, and it is most unfortunate that they do not think in terms of the province as a whole when they get up to speak in the House here.

Another point I would like to raise. Let us look at the cause of flooding, first of all, and cause of the disaster that we are facing right now, the reasons that farmers are facing a problem. It is twofold. The first is the fact that despite a lot of rhetoric, to the contrary, in the 10 years they were in government, they did not introduce coverage for unseeded acreage, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Talk is cheap and they talked a lot, but they never came across with it. It was up to this government to finally introduce this program to expand coverage to unseeded acreage, which will make things a lot more secure for the

farm communities in the future, no thanks to the previous administration.

The second most important thing that we have to note here is when it comes to water, when it comes to rainfall, the solution is to get the water off the field, get it into the drainage system, into the lake and you can continue to farm. Unfortunately, over the past 10 years or so, the cuts to the maintenance budget, to the capital programs, to drainage through the department, the old department of Natural Resources and Environment, the cuts were atrocious. Three quarters of the budget was cut, and the drains have been sitting idle for the past decade here. They are all grown in. They are full of reeds and everything. It is a small wonder that fields are flooding today.

That takes me back to the tunnel vision of the previous administration here, and I heard it just two minutes ago. In the southwest of Manitoba, that postage-stamp province, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they never had problems with flooding down there. It was usually dry. Very seldom they had to deal with any flooding. So, of course, why would they invest in something like unseeded acreage when it did not affect southwestern Manitoba? The rest of Manitoba can take a hike as far as they were concerned. As long as the southwest was okay, everything was fine, you know.

The fact that there was no program of unseeded acreage, the fact that the drainage budget was cut down next to nothing, I think that has to be put on the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They have acknowledged it themselves. The former minister of Natural Resources and the former minister of Agriculture himself acknowledged it in Estimates just the other day. He said: I will tell you what we did. We took 20 percent away from this department, Natural Resources. We took 20 percent from the department of Environment, and that was tough for your managers to cope with. I acknowledge that. Well, there you go. They get up in the House, one after another, and criticize us for our performance here, and yet their performance as far as drainage goes, as far as unseeded acreage goes, is deplorable and disgraceful. That is pure and simple.

Now we are dealing with heavy rainfall in the southeast of the province. This is creating a

problem that no members of the Opposition have raised with us today yet. We all know that the concentration of the hog industry is largely in this area. I do not think they have really taken into consideration the potential for flooding in this area which we are experiencing today. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what about all that hog manure that was spread on the ground? Now it is all covered in water. It is all going to run off when this water recedes. We are going to be faced with another situation like we had in Walkerton, Ontario with E. coli contaminating wells.

When you speak of wells, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what did the former administration do two or three years ago? They cut the provincial funding that allowed people to test their wells. They eliminated that program. They introduced another user fee, the party that speaks against taxes. They were very good at introducing all kinds of little service fees, little service taxes.

One of the things they did was put a tax on testing water so that people cannot even go to the government to get their water tested now, thanks to that administration, a fine example to set, really concerned about people in rural Manitoba. It is very ironic.

We hear day after day from the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), for example, and his cohort to the left of him, the honourable member for Whitehood, or, sorry, I mean from Fort Whyte. Day after day after day in this House, they are calling for tax cuts, tax cuts, tax cuts. How do you expect us to support our people in times of crisis when you want to reduce the operating capital of the Government down to nil? It is a very irresponsible approach to take, and I think that before they rise in the House next time to start preaching about tax cuts for the rich, that they should take into consideration the fact that our drainage network across this province is in a deplorable state and needs tens if not hundreds of millions of dollars to restore it back to the point where it will service the agricultural community.

That is the irony of your approach to this situation. You continue to preach about tax cuts and how important the agricultural industry is to this province, and yet when it comes to some-

thing like drainage, there is no money whatsoever put on the table for a decade. You people were in office here; you never put a nickel into drainage, and I face this every day in my riding today. Seventy-five percent of my casework has to deal with drainage. Day after day drains are blown in. We have got \$10,000, \$20,000 to do all the maintenance in all of the Interlake. It is unbelievable. For you to sit here today and lecture us about agriculture is quite ironic.

I would like to go on at length to talk about the positive things that this government has done, the unseeded acreage for example, the coverage in that respect, so on and so forth, but my time is up, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Thank you very much.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Deputy Speaker, here we are July 13, 2000, basically a year and some after the heavy rains in the southwestern part of Manitoba. The provincial Conservatives, when they were in government, clearly saw a need, clearly saw that there was a need on behalf of many individuals, on behalf of farmers, an instant need.

One of the things they did not do which the present government does is they did not set up a committee to study it. They did not hire a lot of spin doctors to spin a message out to the public. They went out with the Honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), who was the minister at that time, and what did they do, Mr. Deputy Speaker? They made an announcement that the farmers would get instant relief from the hardships that they were facing. They showed leadership and they showed courage and they showed a plan and a vision for this province.

Here we are a year and some later and what do we have from the current government, Mr. Deputy Speaker? We have more study, more committees, more everything, more spin doctors, more spin, and that is what we get day in, day out, day in, day out. We get spin and spin and spin but no dollars, and in the meantime our farmers in southwestern Manitoba suffer and suffer and suffer because of this government and their inaction.

* (16:20)

In fact, now we have another problem added to that. For instance, in the case of the R.M. of

Springfield, 10 percent of the R.M. is under water. The previous speaker talked about the great deeds, supposedly, that his government accomplished which we know is just more spin. It is the same dollars that are just spun around. This government can take \$100,000, and by the time they are finished spinning it, they have announced it 10 times and made it \$1 million. It is still only \$100,000. They have hired the spin doctors, and you can see them after Question Period. They just line that hallway, and it is spin, spin, spin. That is all you hear from the cabinet ministers. When they are supposed to be up giving real answers, they are just giving spin.

We know the adage that an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. I take, for example, the Rural Municipality of Springfield that has already put up \$136,000 to improve the drainage facilities within the Cooks Creek Conservation District. Part of that program is, for every dollar that the R.M. puts in, the province puts in \$3. I would like the Member who just spoke so courageously about all the things his government has done—which they have not—where is the provincial money? Here we go back again. It is spin. It is not action. What did the provincial government put up? They put up approximately \$1.25 for every dollar that the R.M. put out. Where is the \$216,000 that this particular government has short-changed Springfield? Because you know what, it is not enough, and it is important to deal with the problems at hand, but they always talk about: Oh, we have got this plan; oh, we have got this vision. No, they do not. They have got spin. That is all they have got. Why do you not put up your share of the money for the Cooks Creek Conservation District, and let us continue to do the positive things that have been done to date? But no. What we will get out this government is spin.

In fact, the Premier sat during Question Period, and he said: What we should give Springfield is a plunger, and that is how they can deal with their problems. I say to the Premier that is about all we have got out of you since you have been in government. That is all we have got out of them so far is flippant answers, callous remarks. They do not care about what is happening in the rural areas. They care about what the headlines say in the newspaper, what

the spin is, and it is constant. It goes round and round and round, and it is never any-thing concrete. It is the federal government's fault; it is the former provincial government's fault; it is the Mayor's fault; it is the reeves' fault; it is the school trustees' fault, and you know, it goes on and on and on. This is a typical blame-the-victim kind of a government, and no help, no hand up, nothing from these individuals.

Again, I point out that, over the years, we have seen a lot of positive work being done by the conservation districts that were set up, I might add, by this government where the decisions are made locally, where they see where the problems are, because in a lot of cases it is a matter of that the water is bunching up. I mean, there is only so much that a particular ditch can take. The drainage is certainly in place. Maybe it just takes that the ditches have to be enlarged. Maybe it is just that some other way has to be looked at. That should be done at the local level, but when you have a government that is not even committed to live up to its cost-sharing dollars, and they have the gall to complain about the federal government. If that is not a load, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Why do you not first clean up on your own doorstep? Why do you not go to the conservation districts and do like what was agreed to, and match them which you were supposed to do, on a 3 to 1 basis. The Minister for Agriculture was out in Springfield today. Why did she not say to the Reeve: I am going to match your \$136,000 on a 3-to-1 basis? You have short-changed them. You have short-changed them by \$216,000, and you know that, Minister. Why do you not get up in the House? Why does not the Minister get up in this House, and why does she not announce that she will give the extra \$216,000, that things can be done, Mr. Deputy Speaker? An ounce of prevention to a pound of cure. That is what we need.

What we do not need is the spin. If you listen to this government, it is a constant we, we this, we that, and it is always the same dollars spun around, spun around, spun around, that you actually get to the point where it is difficult to believe anything that comes off from the other side.

There are individuals in southwestern Manitoba who are suffering greatly from what

happened a year ago. It is even worse than what we are seeing right now. Now, at least, the farmers, they had gotten in their crops in early which they are very thankful of. You certainly would not be able to get into the fields currently if you needed to. I was out in Springfield and a farmer was trying to drain a pond that had created itself in the middle of his field. He took his tractor and he drove from the middle of the field to the ditch to try to create at least some kind of a runoff. By the time he got to the ditch he was down to his axles. I suggest it probably took an awful lot of effort to get that tractor out of the field.

The fields are almost to the point in some part where it is silt. You cannot even walk into the fields. There is so much water. It is so water-logged that you cannot get any equipment in. What happened in the southwest is the crops did not even have a chance to grow to any significant degree that they could have withstood the water. This government has got to deal with the problems that happened a year ago. They have got to deal with the issues that are now before them with flooding like was done with previous governments, with courage and with direction. You have to stand up and be counted. You put your money on the table and then you go to the federal government, but do not stand day after day and blame everybody else. I say shame on this government.

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is deplorable that members of the Opposition would take a matter of such urgent public importance and turn it into a matter of urgent political importance for their own party. I say that to each of the members of that side who spoke here today who have not once, not once, referred to what they have actually put forward here in their motion for matter of public importance.

Not once did anyone on that side talk about the city of Winnipeg. Not once did the members opposite talk about the problems of sewage backup in the city of Winnipeg. Not once did the members opposite talk about what is going on in the southeast part of this province. Not once did the members opposite talk about anything other than their cheap political points they want to score on the southwest part of this province. The

people of the southwest part of this province deserve a lot better representation in this House than what they are getting today from members opposite.

It is absolutely unfortunate that members opposite would come here today, I would say, with a good idea and turn it into such a fiasco on their side of this House. You bet, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is a matter of urgent public importance. I walked through farmyards in 1997 in the southwest part of this province. I had the rubber boots on and I went with farmers and I talked to them. I looked at the conditions of their farmyards. I looked at the conditions of the yards that they housed their cattle in. I saw absolutely devastated areas in the southwest a day before the former minister of Agriculture was out making an announcement in the southwest.

Let not the Opposition try to pretend that they are the only ones concerned about this issue. I was there. Our current Minister of Agriculture was there. We did not fly over the area and tip the government wing at the farmers. We were on the ground. We were out there. We were looking and we were talking to people about it.

It was the producers, it was the farmers, they told us they had problems. On top of that, we met with businesses in Melita, we met with businesses in Reston, we met with businesses in Deloraine and Boissevain and Hartney, and we did our work. So let not the members opposite try to put on the record in this House that we are callous or that we are uncompassionate or that we do not care. If they are going to resort to those kind of tactics, they are not serving their people well and their constituents because we have a matter of urgent public importance on the slate here today and not one of them, including the former minister of Agriculture, even recognized that in his remarks that he put on the record. That is shameful.

* (16:30)

I heard a lot of comments this afternoon in the House about how we are simply here looking for headlines, how we are here somehow trying to play politics. What would be a lot more productive from members opposite if they would shed their silly attitude of playing politics in this

House on this important issue and have the courage of their convictions to stand with us and say to the feds you have to treat the southwest farmer the same as you treated the people of Saguenay and people in Ontario and people in other parts of this country, or is this opposition going to sit back and continue to be patsies for the federal Liberals? Are they going to continue to provide an out for the federal Liberals? Are they going to sit back and choose to play politics with an important issue like this, or are they going to some day stand with us and go to Ottawa and say, look, you federal Liberals, you have a responsibility, an obligation, to treat Manitobans like any other Canadian and be treated fairly? That is your decision.

I remember several months ago making this same speech to the same members across the way. I advised them then that they should stand with us instead of splitting our position in Manitoba, instead of working against the Keystone Agricultural Producers, instead of working against the AMM, instead of working against the Government. Stand with the coalition and tell the federal government that they have a responsibility. Do not let them off the hook like you continue to do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I listened with a great deal of amusement and a great deal of shock as the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) stood in this House earlier this afternoon and tried to give our current minister a rough time for the deals, for the agreement that she signed last week in Ottawa. It was that very former minister of Agriculture who got us down the road of risk as opposed to cash receipts. It was that former minister who put us on that road in the first place. Now he stands in this House, and he gives our current minister a rough time. That is deplorable.

I must say I was very disappointed when the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) did that because I listened with a great deal of interest in some of the history lessons that the former minister has given us in this House. Overall, I find his speeches absolutely enthralling, absolutely interesting. I enjoy listening to the history lessons he gives us, except when he revises a little bit of that history. I think he knows that he should be careful with that in the

House. I think he knows that he should be careful with that when he speaks of it.

My colleague from the Interlake earlier today made a very important point. When the current Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) and I were in the southwest part of the province, we were told that one of the problems was that one farmer would drain his land onto another farmer's field to be drained onto another farmer's field and so on. The municipalities and the farmers told us that it was a problem that all this water was being drained onto the next farmer.

We, at this time, have a bill put forward to deal with water rights. What is the reaction of members opposite? What is their reaction? Are they supportive of this so that we can introduce some sort of organization, some kind of a plan to drainage in Manitoba? No, they put up a fuss over this. When are the members opposite going to be constructive? When are they? Instead of just opposing for cheap political points, trying to score cheap political points, why do they not agree with the AMM when the AMM told us that they supported that legislation? Why do they not stand in solidarity with other groups, including the provincial government? It is going to be tough because they have to agree with us. They think we are a bunch of socialists with horns growing out of our ears, and they cannot actually come and support us, but sometimes you have to rise above your little petty jealousies and your little partisan politics and rise above it for your own constituents.

The other day I was listening to CBC Radio, and who is on there but the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner), who I notice moves this matter of urgent public importance. What was he saying? He was saying that this government contributed to the problem because they cut the budget that was there to clean out the drains that take the water out of the southwest and other parts of Manitoba.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member was in cabinet at the time. Others across the way were in cabinet at the time. They have contributed to this problem. They have caused a good part of it, and now they do not have the courage to stand up with us, with the AMM, with KAP, with the constituents in southwest Manitoba and other

parts and approach the federal government and get an agreement that is fair with Saguenay and other parts of this country. I think that the members opposite should be ashamed for playing such politics using an important issue like this one. Thank you.

Mr. Jim Penner (Steinbach): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to stand today to speak about an issue of tremendous importance to Manitoba farmers, but indeed to all Manitobans. Somehow we fail to recognize that everybody in the province eats, and agriculture is an important thing to everybody. It is not a rural-urban affair. It is a Manitoba affair. So I am hoping that all Manitobans will recognize the seriousness today of the issue that we are trying to bring forward and focus on today with a special emphasis of this program.

We hear so much about the conversion on the road to Damascus. Although I do not understand how this biblical illustration applies in the illustration that has been quoted, we take this opportunity today to exhort members opposite to experience a type of conversion. You know, convert to a real sympathetic understanding; convert to a real caring attitude towards the farmers who are devastated. This is not a conversion, as has been implied, of a 360-degree turn or a 180-degree turn. It is a realignment. There are many good things about people that do not need to be converted, just like the Apostle Paul, who applied his energies to a more productive and ethical life.

So, however we want to interpret or misinterpret or mock or blaspheme, we must admit to one thing is that we need to convert our views, and probably the illustrations that have been used in this House about a conversion on a road to Damascus need to be reviewed in the light of the truth of the Scriptures.

Also, I do not feel like this is really a political issue. This is not political grandstanding. This is a dispute of the interpretation of the facts, with us as the mechanism to draw attention to the seriousness of the problem. As a new member, it appears to me that the system does not have much heart when it comes to politics. Ideology seems to blind us, and we seem to be inconsiderate of people's needs when it might not be politically beneficial.

I also feel, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that, if these issues are thoroughly understood, the farming industry has spin-off so that probably for every dollar that is received in payment for produce on the farm there are about \$7 added to our GDP. That means that that dollar gets spent quite regularly, and the businesses that benefit are many of the businesses that are invested in by our union pension funds. Our union pension funds in Manitoba are dependent upon the success of business, and the success of business is dependent upon the farmers. So we should not be partisan about some of these things if we really want to take a common-sense look at everything.

As a rural member of this Legislature—and I put "rural" in quotation marks—farming is a key industry in our province and, indeed, in all of Canada. In fact, I note that agriculture is the third largest, I believe, employer in all of Canada with about \$100 billion in domestic retail and food services sales. In fact, each of the 280 000 Canadian farms produces, on average, enough food for 120 people annually, but it takes the hard work of about 1.9 million Canadians to bring that food to our tables.

* (16:40)

However, lost in these big numbers is the average farmer who works his or her fields each year to produce for themselves and to provide for the individuals around the world. It is too easy, I believe, for governments to forget about the individual lives and struggles of farmers in our country. It is clear that this government has failed to recognize this struggle.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the second consecutive year, Manitoba farmers are facing the devastating effects of flooding. I would note again that a quick survey of nine farmers in my area found that there were over 1200 acres of feed among nine farms rotting in the fields. Perhaps it would help move this government if there was a name attached to some of this devastation. Ron Bachmeier lost 130 acres; Jake Banman, 170 acres; Sonny Peters, 60 acres; Leo Plett, 100 acres; Leo Penner, 300, no relative; Brownsville Farms, 280 acres; Erwin Oswald has 50 acres under water that he cannot harvest this year; Sterling Bennett, 50 acres; Norman

Holme, 100 acres. Not only are these crops rotting in the fields, you cannot even walk on the land, let alone drive. You cannot access this land. This land is swamped; it has turned soft; and there is no way of recovering the crops from these lands. Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is just a small number of the people in southern Manitoba affected by the rainfall, but they are real individuals facing real-life situations.

We also note that, if drainage licences are required through a central agency instead of through the municipalities, the process might be so long that in the future, by the time our drainage licence is available, the weeks that have gone by would have made the drainage unnecessary since the crops would be rotten. So we are very concerned about things that are happening in this legislature.

Now, with two devastating years, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have seen the tale of two governments. Last year, the then-Filmon government, when faced with a crisis in the agricultural community, recognized the need to act quickly, and they did so providing affected farmers with financial aid. Instead of trying to pass the buck to a federal government, our government acted on its responsibility and quickly moved to address the need. This does not mean that we do not think that the federal government is weak in their approach. We are wondering who is responsible in the federal government, and we obviously are not capable of negotiating with the federal government.

In contrast, we see today a government that has abdicated its responsibility and has turned its back on farmers, all the while singing the tune: Our hands are tied; our hands are tied. In fact, we know that this government has funds to do the right thing and to help Manitoba farmers if it just puts its share of the money on the table at this time. The former administration worked to establish an emergency fund for exactly these situations, and yet this government sits on its hands and refuses to show the support and compassion that it wrongly proposes to have.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this government has perhaps taken the stand that it can afford to ignore the plight of Manitoba farmers. Perhaps they feel that they stand in a few enough num-

bers that they can turn their backs on them and not be hurt politically. I must, however, remind the members opposite that the agriculture industry is much more than the men and women who work in the field. Indeed, the impact of agriculture extends far beyond these fields. It reaches into the manufacturing sector, as I indicated before. It reaches into the retail sector.

My experience as businessperson in this province for over thirty years has taught me that the income of farmers is a very vital link in the chain of supply and demand. When that link in the chain is damaged or broken, it hurts many people beyond the farm, because so much of the income that the farmers receive for their crops is spent on needed supplies for maintenance of their farms, for seeding, for equipment. Of course, when we lose farm families, we lose them as consumers in the communities.

We have heard the tales from western Manitoba last year of businesses that were worried about the economic impact they were faced with in light of poor crops. Even in our little community of Steinbach, southeast of Winnipeg, the rain came down last Friday and wiped out McDonald's for some weeks. It absolutely flooded McDonald's. Mr. Deputy Speaker, as a former businessperson, I can tell you that the economic health of a community, and certainly one as significant as the farming sector, affects businesses right across the board. We wish that members across the way would rethink their position and act now.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): It is my pleasure to rise to add a few comments on this issue today dealing with flooding in the province of Manitoba. I have listened to members of the Opposition raise this issue in Question Period a few times during the course of this session. I have been quite disappointed that they do not understand some of the realities that we are faced with in this province, and they have continually attempted to press our government with respect to writing cheques just to anybody and everybody in this province. In fact, they fail to understand that we have a cost-sharing formula under the federal disaster assistance program, and that we have some, I think it is \$70 million that is sitting on the table. Twenty million dollars of that is stand-alone money, coming

directly from the taxpayers, singly from the Province of Manitoba, and not cost-shared in any way by the federal government, under the disaster assistance program. But the Opposition fails to recognize that that money is currently on the table. It is unfortunate that is the case.

We have had said over and over and over again that the people living in the southwest corner of the province of Manitoba deserve to be treated in a fair and impartial way, similar to what we have seen in other provinces like Ontario and Québec, under the floods and the ice storms that they have experienced in those two provinces. We will continue to say that we believe that the southwest area people of the province of Manitoba deserve to be treated equally with the people in the provinces of Ontario and Québec. Unfortunate that the members of the Opposition have refused—in fact have divided the ranks now, and have fallen right into the trap of the federal government, perhaps in a divide-and-conquer strategy whereby the federal government can say now that the Manitoba Legislature is no longer united on this subject after so much effort has gone into trying to secure this federal disaster assistance money for the people of Manitoba. So we say shame on the Opposition for taking the stance that they have and falling into the trap of the federal government on the divide and conquer strategy.

I also want to talk for a few moments about flooding. I do note, having sat in on this debate here this afternoon, that portions of my community of Transcona have been severely hit by flooding over quite a number of years, in fact, particularly south Transcona, which has been flooded many, many times over the course of the last several decades. Of course, it took a great number of years before we could impress upon the former government the need to have any kind of funding support to do infrastructure work to alleviate the draining there. What is disappointing about what I did not hear in this Chamber today by members of the Opposition is any support for flood matters or dealing with flood-related matters for the city of Winnipeg. In fact, I heard no comments by members opposite. They are just confined solely with the blinkers on to their own specific special interests, and have made no comments whatsoever about the problems we are experiencing in the city of

Winnipeg. Not one of you has mentioned the flooding problems in south Transcona, which is an ongoing and continuing problem. We are dealing with it again. We are having to have meetings there again. I think all you are trying to do is gain some type of political points, grandstanding on this issue, and you have made no mention of the issue dealing with the flooding problems that we have in the city of Winnipeg.

An Honourable Member: Utter garbage.

Mr. Reid: You say utter garbage. Show me where it is on the record where you have raised the issue of flooding in the city of Winnipeg. Not once did you raise that issue. I say shame on you for not raising that issue. It is just as important to the people of the city of Winnipeg as it is to the producers and the people living in rural Manitoba. So I say shame on you for not raising that issue.

Point of Order

Mr. Jack Penner: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, the Honourable Member forgets that the resolution clearly indicated the city of Winnipeg as well.

Mr. Reid: On the same point of order, not only did the Member opposite not reference that a section of *Beauchesne's* was breached, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but the Member never once mentioned the city of Winnipeg flooding problem in speeches that his members have made in this House here today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to say there is no point of order on both sides.

* * *

* (16:50)

Mr. Reid: It is interesting to note, too, having sat in on committee on pieces of legislation that we have before us dealing with The Water Rights Act and listening to the comments made by the former minister of Natural Resources and other members of the Conservative caucus talking about the gutting of the Natural Resources department when they were in government that could have alleviated some of the

flooding problems. This problem, if you had not gutted the funding that would have supported that infrastructure development, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So, I say shame, shame on members for cutting that funding in this province.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): I would like to know if this member is aware of the situation with Shirley Lake out in his community where we, as a government, put the money into funding so that he would no longer have the funding out in his area. So for him to say that we have no responsibility here in the province of Manitoba, this member is not aware of what we have done for his community, and that is put a lot of money into fund resolution, something his government never did when they were in power.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. There is no point of order. There is no violation of the rules of the House.

* * *

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I know the Honourable Member opposite will remember that there has been a revision in the boundaries and I have just assumed responsibility for south Transcona as a result of the last election campaign. But I had raised that issue as the Member for Transcona even before I became the representative, the flooding and that problem. The problem was the flooding is still ongoing, and having toured south Transcona in the last couple of weeks and talked to the residents at a public meeting, the flooding is still continuing in that part of the community. We are trying to deal with that problem—

An Honourable Member: Fix it.

Mr. Reid: Fix it. Ten years we waited for you to deal with it and it still has not been dealt with. Now we have to deal with it and we are going to deal with that flooding problem. I say to the members opposite, if you were so concerned about the blanket, the umbrella for all of the people of Manitoba, you would have mentioned the people of Winnipeg, which comprise two-thirds of the population of this province and the

flooding problems that are encountered in the city Winnipeg, whether it be in the community of St. James, the community of St. Vital, the community of Transcona or other parts of the city of Winnipeg. We are all equal in this province, and they deserve to be recognized for the problems they have as well, not just for the rural flooding.

When I think about the Bill that is before us in this Legislature, The Water Rights Amendment Act, you would have recognized that everybody is downstream from somebody else and yet you want to have unfettered draining of that water onto somebody else's land without any conscience for the impact that the people downstream are going to have as a result of those decisions.

So I say shame on you for the decisions that you have made to oppose this Water Rights Act, and the impact it is going to have on other landowners that are in the surrounding community that are going to be impacted by allowing others, under your way of thinking, hopefully you do not have that opportunity now. Rightly so, you do not have that opportunity but others now will have the opportunity to have some say in what happens with their land as a result of decisions of others to drain the water without any consideration of what happens to other landowners in the area. So I say that—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Point of order being raised by the Member for Emerson.

An Honourable Member: Oh, give it up, Jack.

Point of Order

Mr. Jack Penner: I know the Honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale) says: Oh, give it up, Jack. I think this is one Chamber that we do not need to give it up. The point of order is that the Honourable Member says that most of us on this side do not realize the impact of The Water Rights Act. I want the Member to know that I live and farm right on the river. I am at the bottom end of the receiving, and I absolutely oppose this Water Rights Act.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order please. Differences as to perception of facts are not points of order.

* * *

Mr. Reid: It is interesting to note, too, that members opposite, when we were in committee talking about this particular piece of legislation and the impact downstream of others—and this piece of legislation is trying to help that situation—that even the AMM, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities, could not support the position that the members opposite took to that particular committee. Having sat through those hearings and listened to the questions and answers that were posed and related to committee members, the members opposite are on the wrong side of this issue. They have to recognize that they are on the wrong side of this issue, and that there are other people downstream of those who decide they want to just drain their land without any consequences or any consideration for others. You are taking the wrong tack. I say that not only in your communities but in the city of Winnipeg we have to have a long-term plan on how to deal with this flooding situation, and I say shame on you for not recognizing that the city of Winnipeg too is also involved in flooding.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. In accordance with the subrule 34(6), the two hours allowed for this debate has expired. The House will now proceed to Orders of the Day.

Mr. Laurendeau: Mr. Deputy Speaker, in conversing with the Minister of Agriculture across the way, I understand—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is this a point of order?

Mr. Laurendeau: On House business, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On House business?

An Honourable Member: Speaking on behalf of the—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Nobody speaks until recognized by this Chair.

The House business is being—[*interjection*] Both of you? At the same time? Order, please. We have reached the end, according to Rule 34(6): At the end of the allowed time, the House

will revert and resume the next proceeding which is Orders of the Day.

Hon. Tim Sale (Acting Government House Leader): I believe that if you canvass the House, there will be leave to see it is six o'clock, according to previous agreement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there a will in the House to call it six o'clock?

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned, and stands adjourned until Monday at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, July 13, 2000

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