



First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable George Hicke  
Speaker*



**Vol. L No. 64 - 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, July 19, 2000**

ISSN 0542-5492

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Seventh Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FILMON, Gary	Tuxedo	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean, Hon.	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Joy	Fort Garry	P.C.
SMITH, Scott	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, July 19, 2000

**The House met at 1:30 p.m.**

**PRAYERS**

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PRESENTING REPORTS BY  
STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES**

**Committee of Supply**

**Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (Acting Chairperson):** Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered certain resolutions, directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau), that the report of the Committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Standing Committee on Public Utilities  
and Natural Resources  
Fourth Report**

**Ms. Linda Asper (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources):** Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the Fourth Report of the Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources.

**Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk):** Your Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources presents the following as its Fourth Report.

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

*Your committee met on Tuesday, July 11, 2000, at 10 a.m. and Monday, July 17, 2000, at 7 p.m., in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.*

*Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:*

*Bill 15—The Water Rights Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les droits d'utilisation de l'eau*

*Wayne Motheral – Association of Manitoba Municipalities*

*Bill Hildebrandt – Private Citizen*

*Bill Hildebrandt for Michael Waldron – Private Citizen*

*Edward Hiebert – Private Citizen*

*Ralph Gowan – Private Citizen*

*Rae Park – Private Citizen*

*Sergio Fanzago – Private Citizen*

*Lawrence Dyck— Keystone Agricultural Producers*

*Jake Voth – Private Citizen*

*Edwin Peters – Orthez Channel Committee*

*David Oster – Reeve of West St. Paul*

*Michael Waldron – Private Citizen*

*Your committee has considered:*

*Bill 15—The Water Rights Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les droits d'utilisation de l'eau*

*and has agreed to report the same without amendment.*

**Ms. Asper:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), that the report of the Committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

**CancerCare Professionals  
Labour Dispute**

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition):** My question is for the Premier. Manitobans suffering from cancer are very concerned about the news that 75 CancerCare workers are on the verge of a walkout.

Can the Premier indicate what contingency plans are in place to keep these essential workers on the job and ensure that Manitobans with cancer do not suffer delays in their treatment?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** First of all, in terms of the negotiations that were proceeding with the health care professionals, we are pleased that 1900 of the 2200 individuals have settled the contract. There is one other contract that is tied and one contract that was defeated by two votes.

Mr. Speaker, there is no question that individuals working in CancerCare are crucial to Manitobans and to our health care system. There is also no question that we recognize that we have a shortage of people already, something we are trying to address with recruitment of individuals to the province. We are attempting to negotiate a settlement with those individuals, that we value, in a balanced way, keeping in mind the vital roles they provide to Manitobans, the crucial roles they play in health care, and the requirements of the Government to balance wage pressures in the whole public service.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Speaker, I know a lot of bargaining units have settled, but any walk off the job as a result of labour action will create additional shortages within the system. The Premier has already admitted that there are shortages of skilled workers, and that certainly could have devastating effects right throughout Manitoba, not only for CancerCare, but the other units throughout the province that have not settled yet.

Can he assure Manitobans that they will not be subject to delays in the treatment and the care that they receive as a result of any work stoppage?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the members of those bargaining units are already on public record about their views of the existing legislation.

We have shortened the waiting lists for cancer patients. It is still not short enough in our view. We need to do a number of things to resolve that. One is we are continuing to invest in CancerCare, as members opposite did with the capital program. We have followed through on

the commitment that members opposite have made on a comprehensive breast cancer strategy. We have announced a new prostate cancer strategy, hopefully having both preventative programs through early detection and treatment programs through looking at brachy therapy and other programs that are important.

The therapists and the radiation technologists and people that are employed dealing with cancer treatment, when we came to office, we felt there was a shortage. We understand there has been a reduction in the number of people trained. It is a four-year program. So we have a lot of work ahead of us in terms of both developing training in Manitoba for Manitobans, for Manitoba patients and recruitment of people outside of the province. We recognize it is highly competitive because other provinces are faced with the same shortages. We are going to do everything possible to balance off the needs of Manitobans that are dealing with this horrible disease of cancer and deal with a fair wage settlement for the people working in this area.

\* (13:35)

We are pleased that we have made a big step forward in settling the 1900 employees, and we are hopeful that we can settle the other lab techs, Mr. Speaker, that are still outstanding, but we recognize that we still have a big hurdle. We are working and doing everything possible to ensure that there is no work stoppage. The best way to stop a work stoppage is to settle at the bargaining table.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Well, Mr. Speaker, this government certainly misled Manitobans during the election campaign, and Manitobans know that the quick fix that they promised to the health care system within six months of being elected to office has not happened.

Mr. Speaker, we know there are many issues around cancer care. We are concerned that those that need treatment receive that treatment, but there are other issues right throughout the province of Manitoba and other people throughout the province of Manitoba that may be impacted as a result of a walkout or a reduction in service.

Can the Premier today tell Manitobans that their care will not be compromised?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, well, members opposite may want to know the facts before they start heckling from their seats. This contract expired when members opposite were in government and they were unable to achieve a collective bargaining agreement at the table. I have a number of letters from people who are working directly, including the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen), one of his constituents, letters saying that we understand that the new government has to deal with 11 years of neglect, but we are hoping you treat us in a fair way.

Mr. Speaker, this is a serious challenge for us, and we are hoping that we can resolve it at the bargaining table. We feel that one of the conditions precedent to trying to solve the bargaining units at the cancer institute was to have a settlement with the lab techs. That settlement has been achieved through ratification and through the votes that were announced this Monday. Having said that, the Department of Health is now addressing very seriously the recruitment and compensation challenges for the 40 individuals that work at the cancer institute. They are, as the Member opposite stated, crucial to our health care system. Cancer treatment is crucial to cancer patients, and we are approaching this collective bargaining challenge with that obviously in mind. We know that we will have a fair and balanced approach, both for cancer patients and for cancer employees, and for the Treasury of the Province of Manitoba.

#### **Osborne House Labour Dispute**

**Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose):** Mr. Speaker, currently Manitoba's largest women's shelter is reducing admissions as it goes through a very difficult bargaining process. I wonder if the Minister of Family Services has any current information on the state of bargaining.

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member for his question and his concern, which of course I think all Manitobans share. The process of conciliation is still underway with the parties, and they are meeting again. We certainly hope

that they will continue to discuss the issues before them and that a suitable arrangement in terms of a long-term contract will be reached in the next little while. But the contingency plan that was put in place starting Monday is in operation, and I am assured that all people who need service are receiving service in a secure and safe manner.

**Mr. Cummings:** I can appreciate the comments of the Minister, but I would like further confirmation from him, given that, annually, there have been about 10 000 overnight admissions at this facility. I wonder if the Minister can assure vulnerable women and families out there if there will in fact be adequate backup response if, in fact, a strike proceeds.

**Mr. Sale:** I can assure the Member that accommodation for women and children currently in the shelter is being secured in other facilities providing similar services, either in Winnipeg or in adjacent communities, and that further resources available in our department in the form of housing units are also available on an emergency basis if required. We expect to be able to accommodate all those families, women and children who require accommodation.

**Mr. Cummings:** I appreciate that the Minister and I both have to be very responsible in our questions and our comments because of the security that is involved and the sensitivity around this response to vulnerable women and families, but I have one final question, and that is: Will he or will this government be considering this service as part of an essential services agreement?

\* (13:40)

**Mr. Sale:** Mr. Speaker, obviously we have a labour dispute that is in process at the present time, and the objective of everyone around the table is to get a fair, long-term solution to that process. I think it is really interesting that people who cut wages of workers at various points during their time in office and for whom wages of workers were not a particular concern in any of the sectors in my department are now raising questions—which over 11 years of neglect have caused to come to a crisis at this time. We have a serious problem, and the serious problem goes

back to 11 years of either zero, zero, zero; cuts of 3.5 percent; and other reductions in support to that system. That is why we have a problem today, and we are attempting to solve it.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on a point of order.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader):** On a 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."

We understand that this minister does not care for the concerns of the women that are having a conflict problem in this province, and we understand that this minister has a problem with the past. So we have asked him about the future and the future protection of the women in this province.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Government House Leader, on the same point of order.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Same point of order, Mr. Speaker. If the Opposition House Leader was concerned about provoking debate, he should read his comments in Hansard as to what he just said.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, it is not a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

#### Crisis Shelters Essential Service

**Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose):** On a new question, Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett). This government made a decision, made a funding decision that they now have to live with in terms of how they balance their budget and where they spend their priorities. This Minister of Labour, however, perhaps will be more forthcoming in the answer to my question.

Does this government have any willingness to consider whether or not this type of service should be under The Essential Services Act?

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** Mr. Speaker, we have a situation where our government provided, for the first time in 10 years, a significant increase of more than 5 percent to shelter services in this budget. The issue we have before us is an issue that has come over 11 years of neglect, and we have a serious concern for women and their children and for shelter services in Manitoba. That is not going to be resolved by some kind of quick action to deal with some legislation in the past. It is going to be dealt with at the bargaining table with fair negotiations, which we support.

**Mr. Cummings:** Mr. Speaker, there has not been a threatened strike at this facility in recent memory. My concern is for the services that vulnerable women and children are seeking at probably the most important time in their lives when they need service. Again, I ask the Minister of Labour: Does she have any interest in pursuing The Essential Services Act?

\* (13:45)

**Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Family Services has stated in his answers this afternoon, we are confident that the negotiations which are ongoing will bear fruit and that we will be able to have a successful conclusion to our contract negotiations. That is what we are focussing on.

#### Canadian Farm Income Program Coverage Levels

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, Canada's Agriculture ministers have negotiated a three-year Canadian farm income program that offers far less assistance than what they previously had.

Will the Minister—and she admitted freely in the *Western Producer* that the new agreement did, in fact, offer a lot less than we had before—explain to farmers how she and why she would come home with an agreement and sign on to an agreement that would put our farmers at risk and offer them a lot less support than the previous administration had negotiated for farmers in this province?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** Mr. Speaker, this is an issue the Member has raised many times and one we have had much discussion about here in the Legislature during the Agriculture Estimates.

I began my negotiations with the other provinces and the federal government with eight provinces wanting to move towards a system of paying for disaster assistance based on cash receipts versus risk, and the federal government joined with those other provinces to move to that formula. That has resulted in an increase of funds for other provinces and for Manitoba to be maintained at the level that they have been in the past. Certainly this was not new to the previous government. The previous Minister of Agriculture began these negotiations when he was at the last Agriculture ministers' meeting in Prince Albert last year.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Can the Minister explain, then, when she came home, that she was, and I quote her: "very proud of the new agreement that we have signed"? How can she have this kind of pride in an agreement that is cash-receipt based instead of risk based in the province of Manitoba, while putting Manitoba producers in a very difficult, untenable position? How could she sign an agreement like that?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that we have finally been able to come to a conclusion on an agreement that has been in negotiations for over three years. I am also pleased that we now have a disaster assistance program that producers can count on rather than having ad hoc programs as we have in the past.

There is less money there. We hope that producers will not have to draw on that program, that they can get their money from the marketplace. But we have told the federal Minister of Agriculture that, should there be a serious disaster, we will be back in Ottawa to stand up for our farmers.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister: What will happen to our farmers in Manitoba, seeing we have had a massive reduction in freight assistance, seeing we have had a massive reduction in AIDA assistance, and AIDA will be gone, and the new

program will force our farmers to compete head to head with the American treasuries and the European treasuries? How does this minister perceive farmers to be able to compete in the marketplace with the treasuries of the United States and the Europeans under the provisions of this new CFIP program?

\* (13:50)

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I am really glad that the lights have come on for that member to realize that freight assistance is an issue. This is an issue we have been talking about for years, and it was that government that encouraged the federal government to eliminate the Crow benefit because there was going to be all this opportunity for Manitoba. Now they are saying that our farmers are suffering. They were part of that negotiation to eliminate the freight rate, and definitely it is very difficult for our farmers to compete against the federal treasuries, against the U.S. That is why we have to have subsidies around the world reduced so that our farmers do not have to compete against the treasuries of the federal government.

#### **Union Dues Political Contributions**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker, last week the Minister of Labour misused the words "reasonable" and "balanced" to describe her party's shameful attack on workers' democratic rights. Even the UFCW believes their members should have a right to be consulted about whether or not their union dues are used for political purposes. Apparently none of the democratic rights of workers are safe from this clearly anti-worker minister.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister if she agrees with the UFCW which says in its most recent newsletter: Members have the right to say they do not want their dues used for political purposes.

Does she agree with the UFCW, and will she give this right back to Manitoba workers?

**Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, for one, again, of the very few times in the 10 years I have been in this Legislature, the

Member for Springfield has rendered the Minister of Labour speechless.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, I would refer the Member to Question Period yesterday where we raised the issue, where the issue was raised of Bill 4, the amendments to The Elections Finances Act. The amendments to The Elections Finances Act that are before the House this session, and have been before the House actually for months and months and months, specifically prohibit donations from corporations and unions to political parties. That is the answer to the question.

#### **Minister of Labour Debate Request**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker, why will this minister not accept my challenge to debate her anti-worker, anti-business legislation on CJOB's Chuck Adler show live? Why will she not defend this anti-worker, anti-democracy bill? What is she frightened of?

**Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, if I am understanding the background of the question of the Member for Springfield, this morning I was in cabinet. But I am prepared anytime, anyplace, to debate anyone, including the critic for Labour, on this piece of legislation. This morning I was in cabinet. That is why I was unable to attend to that particular program.

#### **Labour Relations Act Amendments-Consultations**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask this minister, in regard to Bill 44, which business group that she consulted with recommended any of these changes that she is proposing, and would she be willing to table that?

\* (13:55)

**Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, the Labour Management Review Committee, which is made up of five represen-

tatives selected by the business community, five representatives selected by the labour community and an independent chair, Mr. Wally Fox-Decent, looked at all of the proposals, every single one of the proposals that has made its way in one form or another into Bill 44. All of them went to the Labour Management Review Committee. The Labour Management Review Committee spoke among themselves, and I believe, although their deliberations were confidential, that both sides talked among themselves, among their larger community, coming forward with their positions on the issues.

Of the proposals that were sent to the Labour Management Review Committee, seven of those proposals in total or in part had a consensus position on behalf of both labour and management, something that has not happened out of the Labour Management Review Committee in any of the times that the former government brought forth labour legislation.

#### **Sustainable Development Strategy Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Conservation. The Minister, in this House, has indicated his concern for global warming. I ask the Minister today whether he can indicate the level of greenhouse gas emissions at the present time in Manitoba compared to the base line of 1990, and what the projections are for them to be in the year 2010 if no action is taken.

**Hon. Oscar Lathlin (Minister of Conservation):** I thank the Member for the question. Let me advise the Member that this government has been working in co-operation with the federal government, as he knows, and I have told him that in my responses to his previous questions in the House. He knows, as well, that there is such an agreement called the Kyoto agreement. The federal government has not officially ratified the agreement, but it is a signatory to that agreement. During the signing of that particular agreement, of course that meant that the Canadian government and the provincial governments would have to start planning and gearing up for the implementation of that international agreement.



**Mr. Gerrard:** My supplementary to the Minister of Conservation: Since a Sustainable Development Strategy without an action plan on global warming is incomplete, can the Minister explain why his Sustainable Development Strategy, the COSDI report, does not include the action plan which he is talking about to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Manitoba?

**Mr. Lathlin:** I would beg to differ with the Member's assertions because we are currently working on developing an implementation plan—once the agreement has been ratified. But we are not even waiting for the federal government to ratify the agreement. We are now, as we speak, taking measures to ensure that we are part of an overall national response to these issues. I think the Member also knows that, in comparison to other provinces, in Manitoba, although the problem of global warming, emission of gases and so on is a very serious problem, in comparison to other jurisdictions, we rank well above the bottom of the list.

**Mr. Gerrard:** My supplementary to the Minister: Since there was a July 1 deadline for producing this strategy, and you did not meet that and that was a legal deadline, I would ask the Minister whether he believes that individuals are not necessary to meet legal deadlines for getting drivers' licences or hunting licences or fishing licences or paying taxes. I mean, if individuals were as cavalier as his ministry, this would be a very poorly functioning province. Can the Minister please explain why he is being so cavalier?

\* (14:00)

**Mr. Lathlin:** Again, Mr. Speaker, the words being put forth or the ideas being put forth by the Member, those are his opinions and he is entitled to them, of course. But let me, once again, tell him that when we came into government, of course there were deadlines that were set in place by the previous government, but in fact what they forgot to do was to develop and establish the necessary infrastructure that is required to implement the agreement, and there was no work done, absolutely no work done. So, for a while there, yes, I will admit we were in a catch-up mode, but we are well on our way to

catching up, and the work is being done as we speak.

### Free Trade Agreements Premier's Position

**Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the First Minister. On July 10, a special report from *Time* magazine tells us about the party that the Premier hosted at the Houstons country and western bar in the border city of Brandon, Manitoba, along with a number of governors and American officials. It goes on to say that Manitoba Premier Gary Doer trooped on to the stage to sing a duet with Amanda Stott, a 17-year-old local heart-throb.

My question to the Premier is: Was the duet in praise of free trade and the NAFTA agreement?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** I think the song was black is black and white is white, Mr. Speaker. I think it is interesting that Manitoba's great job of hosting this western premiers' meeting and the western governors' meeting—Amanda Stott was so good, the American ambassador wanted to take her back to Memphis or Atlanta. I think it is interesting that it is in *Time* magazine. We were pleased to see Amanda playing along with Great Big Sea and others at the wonderful street party here in Winnipeg last week. Again, it is very good that Manitoba and the International Peace Gardens, which is not properly identified in the picture with the Governor of Idaho, is featured in this magazine.

Good neighbourly relations have always been part of our values. We believe in community, we believe in co-operation, and we believe in being good neighbours.

**Mr. Enns:** Mr. Speaker, it truly does my heart good to hear this socialist Premier, First Minister, talk in such glowing terms about the relationship that we have with our largest trading partner. We heard nothing, though, not even an echo, of the time that he and his party, both provincially and federally, did everything they could to stop NAFTA and the Free Trade Agreement.

My specific question, when meeting with the governors, now that our trade in the western part of the provinces has reached \$26 billion, is the Premier now prepared to acknowledge that it was one of Prime Minister Mulroney's greatest moves for this country by bringing about free trade and the NAFTA agreement?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the next question I am going to get from members opposite is to celebrate that other great contribution of Brian Mulroney and that is the GST. We will not be celebrating those initiatives.

One of the largest negotiated settlements in exports—*[interjection]* Perhaps they do not want to listen, Mr. Speaker. One of the largest export agreements ever made between Canada and the United States, between Manitoba and the United States, was the Northern States Power Agreement, negotiated as part of the Limestone Agreement, which is producing some \$350 million in export revenues. That was not done with the aid of NAFTA, because trade has been going on and increasing for years.

I personally believe that with finite energy resources like oil and gas, particularly when you look at the natural gas prices going from 16 percent to 32 percent, we should have had a sovereign energy policy like Mexico, under NAFTA, so that Canada, which has distances that are long and weather that is cold, could protect its energy resources and not be paying 32 percent for natural gas next year. That is what we believe, and no thanks to Brian Mulroney.

**Mr. Enns:** My final question to the First Minister, a simple question. In between the singing and the partying, did he at any time take this opportunity to suggest that he, like former Prime Minister John Turner said he is going to tear up these agreements—remember when he picked up that telephone book, sir? Did he at any time suggest that he would be recommending to the Canadian government to abrogate, to get out of NAFTA or free trade with the Americans?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I also remember the former prime minister of Canada took an agreement dealing with the Charlottetown Accord and ripped it up in Québec City saying

Canada would fall apart if the country did not accept Charlottetown. So there have been examples of politicians ripping up documents in the past. I have not been one of those examples.

### **Manitoba Century Summit Labour Legislation**

**Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa):** Mr. Speaker, the Century Summit brought labour, business and government leaders together to develop a partnership for Manitoba's economic growth. I have read the final report, and nowhere in there is there any information containing the legislation, the information in Bill 44. It is clear that the First Minister (Mr. Doer), the Minister of Labour, who talked about partnership and consensus, now believe in partial consensus. Can the Minister advise those attending the Century Summit why her government failed to inform them of the regressive labour policies that they were bringing forward?

**Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, as I have stated many times in the House, the Labour Management Review Committee was consulted about every element of the Bill that eventually became Bill 44 that is before us today. We have discussed in the election campaign and since the election campaign the need to look at and review all of the labour legislation in the province of Manitoba, and we are in the process of doing that in my department. A good government takes a look at all of the legislation that has been passed in all of the government departments under a former government. It is only the right thing to do. We are in the process of doing that. We are convinced that with consensus, or partial consensus, on seven of the elements that are in Bill 44, we have a sound basis for a solid, reasonable labour relations climate in the province of Manitoba. We are convinced that that will continue to be the case after the passage of Bill 44.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Why would this government not listen to the advice of the participants at the Century Summit who talked about building on the momentum that already exists in this province? They talked about lowering taxes; they talked about the burgeoning income that government is getting because of the economy.

Nowhere did anyone state that they should return to the labour laws of the past. Where did this come from?

\* (14:10)

**Ms. Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, we are lowering taxes. We are lowering the income tax; we are lowering the property tax; we are lowering the small business tax in the province of Manitoba over the next three years by three points. We are listening to the people of Manitoba. We listened to the people of Manitoba, and that is why they elected us on September 21 last year.

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Can the Minister explain to Manitoba's business community how giving employees the final say in proceeding with binding arbitration will encourage negotiation?

**Ms. Barrett:** Mr. Speaker, the alternate dispute resolution mechanism that is in Bill 44 is modelled on the first contract legislation first brought forward in the province of Manitoba in 1984. In the 15 years since first contract legislation has been in place in this province, 830 contracts were eligible for first contract legislation; 830 first contracts were negotiated. Of those, 20 percent went to the Labour Board under first contract legislation. Of those 830, less than one percent of those contracts that were eligible for first contract legislation actually had any part of their contract negotiated or imposed by the Labour Board; 99 percent of the first contracts that were signed in this province did not have any form of imposition. That is a very successful rate of return, and we expect it to be the same negotiated settlement under this dispute resolution mechanism as well.

#### **Elections Finances Act Amendments—Justification**

**Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday it became very obvious that the First Minister is very sensitive about the Young New Democrats taking his personal motives for introducing his own elections finances legislation and attacking them. Maybe it is because even they can see that this government is nothing more than the old, tired Pawley-Doer NDP trying to live in the past.

My question to the First Minister: Does he realize that Manitobans, even members of his own party, feel he is forcing through this bill on bad faith in his mistaken belief that it will shackle his political opponents and not for the benefit of democracy and fairness?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I indicated yesterday in the House, and I will say it again today, that we are interested in the advice of members opposite at the committee stage, but we made a promise to the people of Manitoba to go into this next century banning union and corporate donations. You can vote in the old way to keep the status quo, or you can vote for the future, to ban union and corporate donations. I challenge you to speak up and tell us where you are at.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for Oral Questions has expired.

#### **MEMBERS' STATEMENTS**

##### **Flooding**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** It is truly unfortunate that this NDP Government is showing such callous disregard for the plight of flood victims throughout Manitoba. Many residents in my constituency of Springfield have been seriously affected by the onslaught of water. The least they could have expected from this NDP Government is understanding and sympathy. Instead, the Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province makes fun of the plight of the flood victims in Springfield. The Member for Concordia sure was interested in Springfield during the election campaign, visited there often, but once he was roundly rejected, Springfield no longer matters to this Premier. Pure and utter political discrimination, despicable behaviour.

What has the Premier said to the residents of Springfield, and I quote from Hansard: What we should give Springfield is a plunger, and that is how they can deal with their problems. Such a statement coming from the First Minister of this province is absolutely unacceptable.

Well, the residents of Springfield are horrified with this Premier and his government. First, the Premier refuses to contribute well over

the \$200,000 for drainage prevention in Springfield. Now he tells Springfield they can have a plunger. Mr. Speaker, statements such as his now characterize this government dominated by spin doctors and a mentality of irresponsibility. To the Premier: I think you know what the residents of Springfield would like you to do with your plunger.

### **Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame**

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin):** I want to take a few moments today to congratulate this year's inductees into the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame. Susan Gertrude Jasper of Hartney, Walter Edmund Kroeker of Winnipeg and the late Dr. Jack Nesbitt.

On July 11, the inductees were honoured by a ceremony celebrating their various and outstanding contributions to agriculture here in Manitoba. Mrs. Jasper is 97 years of age and has been involved in several organizations such as the Women's Institute and the Provincial Council of Women. In the 1950s she represented the Canadian Federation of Agriculture at the United Nations. She also enriched her community with her talents as a musician, gardener and piano teacher.

Mr. Kroeker was a partner in the family farm, which became one of the province's largest potato producers. He was a member of several boards, including the Canadian Horticultural Council. Mr. Kroeker was also involved in broadcasting, serving as a director of southern Manitoba broadcasting, now known as Golden West broadcasting.

Doctor Nesbitt was born in Shoal Lake in 1925 and passed away in 1998. He was involved in his family's dairy operation and creamery. He went on to become a faculty member at the University of Manitoba in the dairy science department. He served on the Manitoba Milk Control Board and was instrumental in the formation of the Manitoba Farm Bureau as well as the Keystone Agricultural Producers. He had a personal commitment to fostering leadership skills among the young through his involvement in 4-H and other youth programs.

I am sure all members of this Assembly join me in recognizing the accomplishments of these agricultural pioneers. They are all worthy additions to the Manitoba Agricultural Hall of Fame. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

\* (14:20)

### **Leif Ericsson**

**Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli):** Mr. Speaker, the year 2001 will mark the millennium anniversary of Leif Ericsson's arrival in North America.

The Norsemen or Vikings, as they were often called, were the first European people to arrive in North America. They set foot on the eastern coast of this continent nearly 500 years before Columbus landed. Hundreds of years later Icelandic and other Scandinavian pioneers, the descendants of the Norsemen, would join in the exploration and settlement of Canada.

In Gimli the Icelandic heritage is celebrated yearly. A special project has been undertaken this year to commemorate the role of the Norsemen in the history of North America. A traditional York boat is being given a Viking burial on the town's waterfront. The burying of old and unseaworthy craft was long the practice of the Norse. Also being buried will be a chest full of artifacts meant to document the personal and local history of the Gimli area. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Prior to recognizing the Honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau), could I ask the co-operation of all honourable members. It is very, very difficult to hear the Member's statement.

### **St. James Collegiate**

**Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, today, I want to take a few moments to highlight the important work of some of the students at St. James Collegiate.

Recently both myself and the Member for St. James (Ms. Korzeniowski) made a contribution to enable two representatives of the St. James Collegiate Teens Against Drunk Driving, or TADD, to attend the National Convention of

Canadian Youth Against Impaired Driving held in Edmonton.

Angela Collins [*phonetic*] and Terence Hadley [*phonetic*] had a wonderful time at this conference and came back with many new ideas and renewed energy for the entire TADD group.

This group has been very, very active throughout the years. Their adviser has been doing some wonderful work in creative activities.

As many of the members here are aware, TADD groups exist all over the country, bringing together young people in a common goal to stop their peers from drinking and driving. Every summer drinking and driving results in countless tragedies. The members of TADD use creative methods to educate people about the dangers of drinking and driving. They also help each other make responsible choices about alcohol consumption and create a positive peer pressure to avoid drinking and driving among youth.

I am sure all members of this Assembly will join myself and the Member for St. James (Ms. Korzeniowski) in congratulating this TADD group and all TADD groups on their hard work and worthwhile efforts to promote safety and responsibility among young people. This will lead to a much, much safer environment. Thank you very much.

#### **Marcus McKay Search**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I would first like to record my concern for the eight-year-old boy, Marcus McKay, who is still lost northeast of Dauphin, and the concern of myself and my party for his health and well-being.

The primary purpose of my statement today is to talk for a moment about the need for accurate employment and unemployment statistics in Manitoba.

While pleased with the reported recent unemployment rates in Manitoba at between 4 and 5 percent, I am mindful of the fact that a large group of Manitobans are excluded from the

statistic. I refer, of course, to those who live in First Nations communities in Manitoba. There is also a concern about those of aboriginal and other less well-off backgrounds, based on U.S. data which suggest that such individuals are generally undercounted in such statistics.

It is time in Manitoba that we have statistics that are complete and inclusive and accurate. It is sad that when the numbers are reported at 4 to 5 percent, the real numbers may in fact be as high as 8 to 10 percent. It is time that we do away with excuses for inaction. Both the federal and the provincial government should be charged to make changes. If the federal government will not act, the provincial government should act and provide us in this House with estimates of what the real numbers are and provide an effort to obtain those real numbers to supplement the numbers which are provided at the federal level.

It is time for the province to act if the federal government will not act. Let us make sure that Manitoba gets what it needs, accurate unemployment statistics, so we can know what is happening better in this province.

#### **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** I wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether there would be leave to consider this afternoon an Opposition Day?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave of the House to consider Opposition Day this afternoon?  
[*Agreed*]

#### **House Business**

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on Friday, July 21, at 10 a.m., to deal with the following matters: Volumes 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the March 31, 1997 and 1998, Public Accounts; Volumes 1, 2 and 3 of the March 31, 1999, Public Accounts; the Provincial Auditor's Report on the Operations of the Provincial Auditor's Office for the years ended March 31, 1997, 1998, and 1999; the Provincial Auditor's Report on the Public Accounts for the years ended March 31, 1997, 1998, 1999.

Second, I wish to announce that the Law Amendments Committee will meet on Monday, July 24, at 10 a.m., to resume consideration of the following bills: 13, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34 and 36.

I would like to advise, finally, that the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections will meet on Monday, July 24, at 10 a.m., to consider the following matters: the 1988, the 1990, the 1995 Statutory Reports of the Chief Electoral Officer on the conduct of Provincial General Elections; the 1988, 1990, 1991, 1995, 1997 and 1998 Annual Reports on the operations of The Elections Finances Act.

We will confirm whether there are other additions to that list, Mr. Speaker, in advance.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been announced that the Standing Committee on Public Accounts will meet on Friday, July 21, 2000, at 10 a.m., to deal with the following matters: Volumes 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the March 31, 1997 and 1998 Public Accounts, and Volumes 1, 2 and 3 of the March 31, 1999 Public Accounts; the Provincial Auditor's Report on the operations of the Provincial Auditor's Office for the years ended March 31, 1997, 1998 and 1999; the Provincial Auditor's Report on the Public Accounts for the years ended March 31, 1997, 1998 and 1999.

It has also been announced that the Law Amendments Committee will meet on Monday, July 24, at 10 a.m., to resume consideration of the following bills: 13, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 32, 33, 34 and 36.

It has also been advised that the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections will meet on Monday, July 24, 2000, at 10 a.m., to consider the following matters: the 1988, 1990 and 1995 Statutory Reports of the Chief Electoral Officer on the conduct of Provincial General Elections; the 1988, 1990, 1991, 1995, 1997 and 1998 Annual Reports on the operations of The Elections Finances Act, and will also confirm if any additions are to be added to this list.

#### Committee Changes

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to recognizing the Honourable Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner), I

would like to recognize the Honourable Member for Selkirk with committee changes.

\* (14:30)

**Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections be amended as follows: Concordia (Mr. Doer) for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell); Inkster (Ms. Barrett) for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh); Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) for Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers).

*Motion agreed to.*

**Mr. Dewar:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources for Thursday, July 20, be amended as follows: Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) for Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers).

*Motion agreed to.*

**Mr. Dewar:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for Tuesday, July 25, be amended as follows: St. Vital (Ms. Allan) for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen); Inkster (Ms. Barrett) for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh); Brandon West (Mr. Smith) for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway); Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) for La Verendrye (Mr. Lemieux); Transcona (Mr. Reid) for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau).

*Motion agreed to.*

#### OPPOSITION DAY MOTION

##### Examining Ways to Mediate the Impact of the 1999 and 2000 Flooding and Excess Rains

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** It gives me some pleasure to move a motion, seconded by the Honourable Member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay), that:

WHEREAS excess rainfall and flooding in the years 1998, 1999 and 2000 has resulted in

hundreds of thousands of acres of farmland going unseeded or seeded crops and forage crops being damaged and livestock being placed in peril, not only in southwestern Manitoba, but in a wide geographic area of the province; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's farmers have also been subjected to problems arising from low commodity prices and stiff competition in the global marketplace, resulting in dramatic and often unpredictable reductions in the farm income; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's agricultural community has a critical role to play in the overall health of the provincial economy, contributing indeed hundreds of millions of dollars annually to the economy and creating thousands of jobs; and

WHEREAS all Manitobans have a vested interest in ensuring that the province's agricultural sector continues to thrive; and

WHEREAS all sides of this House have agreed that the 1999 flood constitutes a disaster, yet the federal and provincial governments have failed to come to terms on a comprehensive assistance package; and

WHEREAS all sides of this House agree that the problem arising from excess rain in 1999 and 2000 is creating problems in the agricultural community for homeowners and for business and for municipalities alike.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the federal government to immediately revisit its stance on providing some form of financial assistance for the 1999 flooding that affected large areas of this province and to consider supplying an aid package similar to that historically provided for major Canadian natural disasters, including floods, forest fires and ice storms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly urge the Government of Manitoba to consider examining all applicable programs, services and financial options, including budgetary surpluses and fiscal stabilization funds available at both the federal

and provincial government levels in order to consider providing assistance to the agricultural community, to homeowners, to businesses and to municipalities affected by both the excess rains and flooding of 1999 and the impending disaster of 2000.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been moved by the Honourable Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner), seconded by the Honourable Member for Seine River (Mrs. Daquay),

WHEREAS the excess rainfall and flooding in the years 1998–

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Before we dispense, I would like to ask leave of the House to change some of the changes that were made while the Honourable Member was moving the motion.

The second WHEREAS, WHEREAS the global place resulting in dramatic and often unpredictable reductions in—where it says "their income," the Honourable Member used "the farm income." Is there agreement to that? Is there agreement? *[Agreed]*

Order. Also, where the third WHEREAS, where it says "contributing millions of dollars annually," it was "contributing indeed hundreds of millions of dollars." Is that agreed, to change it? *[interjection]* In the motion? Agreed? *[Agreed]*

Order. Just to remind all honourable members that they have 10 minutes.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** It is indeed a pleasure to rise on this motion. I believe it is absolutely imperative that we finally in this House can come to some term of agreement to support those that have suffered severely during the 1999 flood, whether they be in western Manitoba or eastern Manitoba. I believe it is imperative that they be given some assurance that there will be further assistance coming to them.

Secondly, I also believe that many of us, including the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), have seen the impending disaster on many farms this year due to the heavy excess

rains and flooding that we have seen in many municipalities in this province, including the city of Winnipeg.

I certainly hope that there can be some agreement by this House at the end of this debate, that we can finally proceed in approaching the federal government in a meaningful way to ensure that they also recognize their responsibility and indeed liability.

When one looks today on the huge amount of money that is required to raise a crop, whether it is a crop of barley or whether it is a crop of potatoes, that can range all the way from \$200 an acre input costs to some \$800 or \$900 an acre input costs. Many of the specialty crops that are raised specifically in those areas that are heavily flooded this year, including flooding that happened last year in the southwest area, sunflowers, indeed any kind of row crop at all, demands a very high level of management and income. It is impossible for many of these farmers to bear the load of a no-crop situation at the end of the day.

\* (14:40)

Our Crop Insurance Program that we have talked about many times, including much discussion in Estimates, is severely, severely inadequate. When you compare that, Mr. Speaker, to some of the programs that are available in the provinces of Ontario and Québec, and when you look today at the program that our Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) put her signature to, the CFIP program, it is clear that people in this province must get together, must band together and lobby Ottawa to treat Manitoba fairly in the future, whether it is during a disaster kind of a situation or whether it is simply an agreement that will negate the impact of federal decisions over the last number of years.

The reduction of the Crow rate without adequate subsidization, as the Americans have done—and I find the Minister of Agriculture's comments very interesting sometimes when she responds to legitimate questions that we have, that she throws back this agreement on the Crow benefit. Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have been very

supportive of doing away with the Crow, putting a competitive system in place. I was very supportive of a Free Trade Agreement, a true Free Trade Agreement that would allow us to compete on an equitable and individual basis with our competitors from the United States and Europe or any other farmers in the world. I truly believe that we can, as individual producers, meet that competition head-on and that we could do a good job in a competitive marketplace.

Yet this minister, this Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) consistently confuses the issue. She knows full well—and if she does not, then the Premier (Mr. Doer) needs to seriously look at putting somebody else in that position that understands the agricultural situation. We know that today the Americans have increased their support, non-agricultural, outside of agricultural support to agriculture to almost 50 percent of the income that farmers in the United States derive on their farms. We know that the Europeans are now up to 60 and 65 percent of agricultural support to agriculture, other than incomes derived from the land or from their operations.

We are at less than 7 percent in this country. *[interjection]* Well, Mr. Speaker, I find it very confusing that the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale) will yell across this Chamber continually and demonstrate his ignorance of the agricultural situation. Clearly, if he would ever take some time and go to Manitoba farms and sit down across the table with young Manitoba farmers, he would know how important this debate is. Yet he sits there and yells from his chair as if he knows nothing more to do than—maybe he should leave this Chamber and go look after the affairs of his own department. That might help the situation.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is imperative that this Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) and our Premier (Mr. Doer) call on Ottawa immediately and enforce upon them the fact that many of our young farmers are going broke and will grow broke if there is not further assistance offered by this government and that the Canadian federal income plan that has been negotiated is totally, totally inadequate and that the increases that Ottawa has afforded Ontario of 28% increase in their support, 38 percent for Québec increase in



support, 92 percent for British Columbia. Yet we in Manitoba are supposed to tell our farmers that you have been cut loose and you are on your own; there is no support for you. I think that is absolutely inconceivable that our minister would put her signature to an agreement such as that.

So I say to you, Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely imperative that we negotiate a new kind of agreement for the disaster that took place in 1999 in all of the province of Manitoba and support those farmers in their attempt to be able to raise enough funds to support their families and keep their family farms in place. It is the small farmers who are feeling the biggest amount of hurt, and this is constantly the group of people that the Minister of Agriculture has said she supports. I say to her, and I say to the Premier today, that it is imperative that we get on with that fact and indicate some significant support to those farmers.

There are significant funds left in our Stabilization Fund that we so long and hard fought for and ensured that there would be money in place without having to borrow money, so that we could provide disaster assistance to some of our community if and when they needed it whether they were in the city of Winnipeg or whether they were in Brandon or whether they were in any of the other smaller rural communities or whether they, in fact, were individual producers. We believe we left a legacy to the people of this province. Not only did we leave a legacy, we left a significant bank account that this province can draw upon.

I think it is imperative that this Premier demonstrates his will to support those farmers and support them today and not let them hang out by themselves and drown in the misery they are facing today. I think the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale) would serve well if he would take a trip out to some of these rural communities and sit down with those young farm families and listen to the sorrow that they have to face, closing their schools in their community, closing hospitals in rural Manitoba, and that is what this new New Democratic Government is all about, close all the services in rural Manitoba.

I would suggest to the Minister of Family Services take a trip. Go look. Go talk to the people. Go ask them how much hurt there is in rural Manitoba. I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that your minister will have a different tone when he comes back and will have a different perception, because he sits within the perimeter, does not even bother to go out and discuss this issue with the people of rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, there are significant actions that can be taken by this government without federal government agreement. We know how crassly the federal government has treated the farm community. They cut them loose. They took \$750 million away from the farm community when they did away with the transportation subsidy. They took \$2.5 billion more away when they did away with the GRIP program. They took another \$600 million away when they did away with the AIDA program, and yet this federal government will not have enough heart to come back to the people when they face a disaster.

The Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) sat in her seat and yammered and said: Who supported that? Yes, I supported the dissolution of the Crow, but I said very clearly to the federal government and I said very clearly to the then critic for Agriculture that in order to accommodate, there must be other programs of similar value put in place until the Europeans and the Americans realize that they have to come to their senses and allow the competitive process to continue. Then and only then, will our farmers be able to stand on their own two feet and compete in the marketplace.

I say to the Minister of Agriculture, if she truly understood agriculture, she would support this motion.

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Highways and Government Services):** I want to indicate initially that I am particularly disappointed in what could have, I think, been an effort to have some consensus in this House, because traditionally we have dealt with disasters in this province, I think, on a consensus basis.

When we were in opposition for 11 years, I can recall numerous emergency situations, disasters, the '93 situation, '97, '98 and '99. In each

and every case, yes, we would ask questions about policy issues, but there was a general consensus that the best approach when you were dealing with a disaster was to have an all-party approach, was to have an approach that put partisan interests aside and put our focus on the needs of people in terms of putting on a united front in dealing with the federal government.

\* (14:50)

I want to say to members opposite that if they want to get into political debates on disasters, they also have to be prepared in that particular case to be more factual. That is why, after my comments, I will be moving a number of amendments which I think can improve on this resolution and take out some of the statements I think which create difficulty.

I want to say, particularly to the previous member who just referenced the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, I have watched this member stand up in Question Period, writing the blank cheques against that fund. He said it was this great legacy that was left to our government.

I want the Member opposite to know perhaps they did not tell him when he was in government that the Fiscal Stabilization Fund in this province has been drained significantly. It is now \$192 million. It is now less than half of the target amount. I want to say to the member opposite, and perhaps the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) was not aware of this either, I am sure he was too busy reading *Time* magazine at the time, but I say they spent \$340 million out of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund in the last two years they were in government.

Now, some of it went to disaster assistance. I mentioned this in the House before. The only disaster I think that they were really worried about when they were spending that money was the impending electoral disaster of September 1999, and indeed it was a disaster for the Conservative Party. So do not let anyone, particularly the hardworking people of rural Manitoba who know a lot about fiscal realities, let them not buy any of that from members opposite.

I would get into how they spent all the proceeds of the sale of MTS, a company that took close to a hundred years to build, in how many years? In three years. I say to members opposite that they have seriously constrained our province's fiscal ability to deal with disasters. I want to put that on the record.

Now, in terms of a number of specifics. I note the Member opposite brought in a resolution that referenced a number of disasters, but spent most of the time on more of a personal vendetta with the Minister of Agriculture and agricultural policy. That is a good debate. We should get into that debate in this House.

But I want to address the emergency situation, because I think that is what most Manitobans would be expecting us to do today. I want to start by dealing with what we faced in this province the last number of weeks. I say to the Member opposite, by the way, that a number of us have taken the opportunity to go to areas affected by disaster. I went with the opposition critic to Headingley. I went to La Broquerie. I went to Brokenhead. Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, if we were not in this House, and I respect the fact that we are and we have good reason to be here, I would have liked to have visited other areas, and obviously, when time permits, I will be doing that. I want to say we have had a combination of a significant amount of rainfall combined with some significant events.

I want to say to members opposite too, because I was somewhat surprised again with the rather partisan tone of what happened, that we are following the same procedures that have been in place with DFA for many years. In 1998 and 1999, the disasters that took place in Russell and in southwest Manitoba in those years respectively, we are following the exact same procedures. That government, when they were in office, followed the same process, identifying the damage that is out there.

We received 13 resolutions, we have 4 more that we are anticipating, 21 municipalities in total indicating damage. I want to say that at that point in time we will be able to give some indication of eligibility for disaster assistance. I know it is of concern to people out there. I have said I understand the frustrations out there, but I

say to members opposite in particular that I find it unfortunate that they are doing what we never did in opposition, which is trying to make an issue out of what is the standard procedure.

EMO has been in contact with municipalities. We are getting that detailed information. I know there are concerns on everything arising from flooded basements. A number of MLAs have contacted me directly on concerns from their constituents and the impact on municipal property, other property. We are doing our best to take a proactive approach. We bought back more staff in terms of EMO. That is what the people of Manitoba expect.

I also want to say, and I want to put this on the record as well, that what we are looking at in the 21 municipalities is dealing with items fairly. I want to note that many of the types of costs that have been identified in a very preliminary way are very similar to some of the costs that were covered in '97 and in '99. In fact, they were covered in '93, '97, '98, '99.

I would hope that members opposite in particular would acknowledge this because I was rather disappointed to receive a resolution from a municipality in the southwest which I do not think recognizes the fact that there has been coverage in the southwest. The argument is over the amount and the type of the coverage. For example, some of the items that were of concern were covered in '97 and '98. I want to say on the record that this government will treat people the same when it comes to disaster assistance, whether they live in the southwest, the southeast, the north, anywhere in this province, Mr. Speaker. Our commitment, when a disaster arises, is to be fair to every citizen of this province, no matter where they live.

I want to stress again the need to have a balanced approach in terms of southwest Manitoba. I have met on numerous occasions with farmers, municipal officials and others from southwest Manitoba. I want to indicate that it is not an issue of whether assistance has been provided; \$23 million is the current estimate of the amount of coverage under DFAA for damage to property, both municipal and private.

*Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

At issue were some of the more extended costs, the \$71 million that the Province put up to cover other costs, basically input costs. I want to indicate that when we contacted the federal government, what is interesting is every time we talk to them directly, the answer is no, but in terms of some of the indirect communication, there have been numerous examples where the federal government has been trying, I think unfairly, to get people's hopes up by suggesting there may or may not be something, but every time we talk to them face to face, the answer has been no.

By the way, I have not once had the opportunity to talk to Art Eggleton, the Minister of disaster assistance. This same minister, we have requested a meeting seven times, is so arrogant—and I say this on the record because other ministers have met with us on very short notice—that after seven requests for a meeting, he has refused to meet.

One of the suggestions from farmers in the southwest, and I want to put it on the record today, the farmers that we met with last week said that if it means having a meeting, preferably in southwest Manitoba but even here in Winnipeg, with the farmers, the federal minister and the provincial minister, let us do it. I want to put on the record that I invite Art Eggleton not just to fly in to Shilo and fly out when it is convenient but to come to the province and meet with people, and I think that is the only incumbent thing for any minister of the Crown to do, face the people. *[interjection]*

Well, the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) says they met in Ottawa. The federal minister has refused to meet with the provincial government. I think that should speak volumes about the problems we face. We have a Prime Minister who came to the province and said there was no disaster designation. Not true. We have the Order-in-Council that represents it.

We are still saying to the federal government we have more than \$20-million, stand-alone money, on the table. We say, Madam Acting Speaker, that that money is there,

and we challenge the federal government to look at additional assistance.

That is why, Madam Acting Speaker, I would like to move an amendment that will clarify in far greater detail this motion and will also I think allow us to have a consensus which is important on this issue.

That is why I move, seconded by the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale),

THAT the proposed motion be amended as follows:

a) by adding the following after the first WHEREAS clause:

WHEREAS in January 2000, the Government of Manitoba announced excess moisture insurance under the Crop Insurance Program to address future problems such as those which occurred in 1999; and

b) by adding the following after the second WHEREAS clause:

WHEREAS the current government of Manitoba was successful in getting a one-time payment of \$100 million, cost-shared, for Manitoba farmers in recognition of the negative effects of federal government cutbacks in agriculture; and

c) by striking out the fifth WHEREAS clause and substituting the following:

WHEREAS all sides of the House agree that the 1999 flood constitutes a disaster, but the federal government has failed to provide compensation for conditions that are clearly recognized as compensable under the Disaster Financial Assistance Act (Canada); and

WHEREAS the current government of Manitoba contributed \$20 million to the 1999 crisis which the federal government has refused to cost-share on any basis; and

d) by striking out the BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED clause and substituting the following:

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the federal government to work co-operatively with the Province to pursue any option that will provide funding as identified in the Disaster Financial Assistance Act for municipal, agricultural, commercial and personal losses incurred as a result of flooding in 1999 and 2000.

\* (15:00)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski):** The amendment is in order.

### Point of Order

**Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River):** With the greatest respect, no one on this side of the House has had an opportunity to see the text copy of the amendment. I am wondering if the Member who moved the motion could have a copy of that.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski):** Order, please. We will just take a moment to make some copies. That is a reasonable request.

\* \* \*

\* (15:10)

**Mr. Ashton:** Based on some consultation with members opposite. I am wondering if there might be leave to change the second additional WHEREAS in the motion. Instead of saying "government cutbacks in agriculture," change that to "government cutbacks to transportation assistance." It is just a slight correction to the text.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski):** Is there leave to change the amendment as outlined by the Minister? *[Agreed]*

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition):** I am pleased to have an opportunity to stand today and put some comments on the record on the amended resolution and indicate that I do not believe, just with one cursory glance, that all of the WHEREASes that have been added or amended or changed are those that can be supported by our party, but I do want to indicate, Madam

Acting Speaker, that I believe I need to put comments on the record on behalf of farm families that have been waiting very patiently for some action from this government. I think, in all fairness, these families are finding that their patience is wearing out. We have not seen the kind of action from this government that many farm families have been waiting for. Indeed, many have called us, contacted members on this side of the House and indicated that the issues from the flooding in 1999 have not been addressed.

This government has failed our farm families badly. They have failed to provide a nickel of help to the farmers of the southwest for the disaster of 1999, and they have failed to negotiate a good deal with the federal government.

During the last election and immediately afterwards, the Premier and his colleagues extolled the new working relationship that they would have with the federal government if and when they were elected. They still talked about it when they were sworn into office. Well, we do have a new relationship with Ottawa and with this government in Manitoba, but the only person that seems to be happy about that new relationship is Paul Martin and the federal Treasury. It certainly has not made Manitobans or Manitoba farm families happy. This government has failed Manitoba farmers. They loudly predicted that they would solve the impasse with Ottawa, that they would come home with the money for our farmers in the southwest.

Well, I say to this Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) and to the Premier (Mr. Doer) show us the money, because the sad truth for the farmers in Manitoba is that there is no money. They said they would do what the former Minister of Agriculture, the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) would not do. I want to indicate today that they were right. The former Minister of Agriculture never would have signed such a bad deal with the federal government, and he would not have given up the fight.

So where are we now? The only money the southwest has seen is the \$70 million that we provided when we were in office. Not a dime

has flowed to those farmers since. We have this government saying that they have put money on the table to match the federal government's money, and the federal government just has to come through with its portion. Well, I say to the Minister of Agriculture and the Premier today that it is time for them to stop dithering, to stop blaming the federal government, and spend the 50-cent dollars that they say they have on the table.

We are not asking them to put the federal government's money on the table. We are saying put the money in the hands of the farm families today who need that very support that this government, this Premier and this Minister of Agriculture say is on the table. Madam Acting Speaker, if they are serious and if they are acting in good faith and they have any consideration at all for the farm families who are in trouble that money should be put in their hands. They are waiting, and they deserve an answer and some support from this government.

You know, the Premier sent his Minister of Agriculture to Ottawa on behalf of our farmers, and she walked out of the meeting. I do not believe that she has the right to walk out of a meeting when she is there representing farm families in Manitoba. She can do whatever she likes on her own time, and that is fair ball, but when the farmers in Manitoba have paid with their hard-earned tax dollars to send this minister to Ottawa to lobby on their behalf and to stand up for their interests, she really is not accepting her responsibility to stay at the table and get the job done for those families.

I mean after she walked out of the meeting, and the next time the Premier sent her to Ottawa on behalf of farmers in Manitoba, things got even worse. For the first time, we as a province have agreed to accept less than our fair share after a stroke of the pen by our Minister of Agriculture. Our farmers are guaranteed that they will get less by the actions of this government, this Premier, and this minister. We are going backwards in this province, and we have the Premier and this Minister of Agriculture to thank.

Madam Acting Speaker, this government said they would help the farmers in the

southwest, and they have not. They said they would have better relations with Ottawa, and they are worse. They said they have money on the table for the farmers of the southwest, but they will not give it to them. They went back to Ottawa to sign a new agreement and came back with less money than what they left with. This New Democratic government may have their hands at the wheel, but someone should tell them that they have hit the ditch. Farm families in Manitoba are in trouble and they are looking for help. They are looking for answers, and they are not getting any from this government or this minister. They are not looking for excuses or for finger-pointing from this Premier and from this minister.

Maybe the Premier's ears and his government's ears are so full of advice from the union bosses in the province of Manitoba that they cannot hear the legitimate cry from farm families who need help and need help now. These are families that in 1999 were devastated. They were not able to get crops in through no fault of their own. It was a natural disaster. We, when we were in government, came to their aid and provided the much-needed \$70 million in their greatest time of need, and they have asked for little more from this government than to give them what they deserve.

\* (15:20)

I find it shameful that we have to sit in this Legislature day after day and beg this government to take some action. Farmers are proud people. They do not want to have to beg on a daily basis, but they do want to be able to feed their families and they want to be able to get the assistance that other parts of the province and other communities have received in times of disaster and times of need. They are only asking, Madam Acting Speaker, for fair treatment from this Premier, from this Minister of Agriculture and from this government. It is sad to have to stand in the House today and debate a resolution that calls on this government to take action, to just look at the fairness and the balance that they talk about on a regular basis. Every time they stand in this Legislature, they talk about fairness and balance. Well, they have not provided any fairness. They have not provided any balance, and they have not provided a penny to the

southwest area, to those farm families that are in need from the disaster that happened in 1999.

All we are asking is for a bit of compassion and a bit of consideration on behalf of this Premier, this Minister of Agriculture and this government to show those families that they truly have the ear of a government that should show the kind of support that they deserve. So, Madam Acting Speaker, with those comments on the record, I would urge this minister to show compassion, to show that she cares and to show the fairness and balance that they espouse on a daily basis and provide the much-needed assistance.

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski):** The Interim Leader of the Opposition's time has expired.

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** I want to say that I am pleased to have the opportunity to say a few words with respect to the motion that has been brought forward by the Opposition and amended by my colleague, the Minister responsible for Government Services (Mr. Ashton).

As I looked at the resolution, I am reminded that we have a government motion on the Order Paper that has been sitting for some time now and we are looking for the Opposition to show their support for this motion that we put forward. In fact, we put this motion forward before my colleague and I went to Ottawa to try to get the federal government to recognize that indeed the southwest part of the province was not being treated in the same fashion as the people in the Red River Valley had been treated or people who had suffered other disasters.

Madam Acting Speaker, the members for some reason refused to support our motion and refused to give all-party support to a motion that we would have very much liked to have when we went to Ottawa to indicate that there was all-party support for having the federal government reconsider their decision as far as disaster assistance was being offered to the southeast part of the province. They refused to support that motion, and it continues to sit on the Order Paper.

We have a motion here that has been brought forward now, and it is an issue worthy of discussion. I just want to make a few comments. The Leader of the Opposition in her comment said that since we have taken over in government we have done nothing for the producers. I do not think the producers will say \$100 million is nothing. I do not think producers will think that the money we put into AIDA enhancements is nothing. Nor will they think that the money we were able to secure under the agreement that we have is nothing.

Madam Acting Speaker, the producers also appreciate the work we have done on the unseeded acreage program that we put in crop insurance. I have to tell the members opposite that producers have said they are very pleased that that is now part of crop insurance. Producers have also said that they appreciate the changes that we have made to crop insurance to enable producers to have their coverage enhanced, and in fact, that change we have made is going to put some additional money into producers' hands if they chose the option to buy additional coverage.

There are changes. The members opposite refuse to recognize that there have been changes, but the important thing is that producers recognize these as important changes. Certainly producers want continuity in their programs, not ad hoc programs.

Madam Acting Speaker, the members talk about the fact that we have less money in the program. The amount of money that is in the safety net program is the same money, but there is less money in the disaster assistance portion because that is where the money came from to top up the other provinces that were getting additional money because of the change from funding safety net programs based on risk towards cash receipts.

The decision was made to shift the money out of disaster assistance funding into the safety net portion. There is less money. We hope that people do not have to draw on that money, but should there be a disaster and farmers have to draw on their CFIP program, the dollars will go where the disaster is. We hope that disaster will not be in Manitoba. We hope that there will be no disasters at all.

There are still negotiations going on on that program. I would very much like to see the program take the form that, should there not be a disaster one year and there should be surplus money in the program, that money will roll over for additional money should there be a disaster in the following year.

I find it quite interesting that the members say that they are quite surprised with this agreement when this was the agreement that the previous minister began negotiating on in Prince Albert last year when they started this move shifting towards funding on cash receipts versus risk. It is not a position that we supported, and clearly that was one of the reasons why we had to leave the meeting. At some point, Madam Acting Speaker, when there are eight provinces and the federal government, you come to a point when you know that the federal government has agreed with all the other provinces, then you have to move forward.

We have to move forward. We have a safety net program. We have a review that will take place at the completion of the program, and hopefully, at that time, we can convince other provinces that this is not the right way to go. We have a monitoring system in place now to see what the impact of these changes is. Certainly, we would have much preferred to have the program funded based on risk as it was before. But sometimes, when you get into negotiations, you come to a point where you know that you are not going to get anymore. We were very pleased that, rather than losing \$10 million, which was what was intended, we were able to maintain Manitoba at the same level. So Manitobans will be maintained at the same level. Unfortunately, other provinces will be able to offer much richer safety nets, and we have to monitor that very closely and hope that we have conditions where we will not have to draw on these programs.

\* (15:30)

It is very interesting that the Member is so concerned about the impacts of the loss of the Crow. There are members opposite who were preaching the benefits of the loss of the Crow, and now they are saying that they did not go far enough. Well, when they were agreeing to the

elimination of the Crow, they also should have guaranteed that the kinds of funding that we farmers needed were going to be there. That never happened, and our farmers have been suffering ever since the change of the Crow. There was some money that came in, but Manitoba never benefited the way of the other provinces. *[interjection]* Madam Acting Speaker, the Member says he has no use for liars, well, neither do I have any use for liars. There certainly have been some stretched comments that have been put on the records over this last little while.

Madam Acting Speaker, what we say in this resolution is that, yes, we have to get the federal government to recognize their responsibility and we have to have fair treatment for all producers, no matter where they are in Manitoba. But, certainly, when we look at the southeast part of the province, I have to tell you, when we have met with the producers from the southeast part of the province, what they are telling us is that we have to improve drainage. They are very critical of the previous government who cut the budget for water resources and neglected drainage over their term of office. Over their term of office, they have neglected it, and producers in southeastern Manitoba are telling us that they want to see those drainages improved.

Madam Acting Speaker, we had a meeting with producers and we are going to work with them to resolve that problem that has been created by the previous government. That is what the farm organizations are saying; that is what producers are saying. Certainly, should there be a very serious situation with livestock, we will deal with it, but the claims are coming in for crop insurance and we would hope that producers will have their crops turned around where they will still get a very good crop.

The issue of disaster assistance that is outstanding in this province is quite unfortunate. Manitoba's money is on the table. We went to Ottawa with our money on the table and asked the federal government to recognize the difficulties of the people of the southwest part of the province. Unfortunately, they have refused. I raised the same issue with Mr. Vanclief when I was in Fredericton and asked him if he would

reconsider or whether he would lobby on behalf of the farmers of Manitoba. He quite clearly said—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski):** The Honourable Minister of Agriculture's time has expired.

**Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose):** I wanted to speak to the amendment to this opposition resolution because I, along with my colleagues—and I think I may have cut off a couple of my colleagues—feel somewhat motivated, having listened to the Minister of Agriculture and being disappointed with the approach that she is taking to responding to this motion. There were a few comments that would be considered quite unparliamentary if they were put on the record, coming from those of us who have a little dirt under our fingernails on this side of the House, listening to the Minister of Agriculture put misleading information on the record.

Well, the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) now has started to chirp from her seat. She should remember that we did not interrupt her when she was speaking. I will remind her that while she sanctimoniously says there have been changes made in the crop insurance coverage regarding unseeded acreage, she refuses to acknowledge that it was the previous Minister of Agriculture who introduced it. She may have signed the final direction to the crop insurance board to make that change. It was announced in Brandon the same time as the previous administration—*[interjection]* You were there. If you did not hear it, you were not listening. You were there.

This minister tells us repeatedly that she was there when the announcement was made, and then she denies hearing the Minister of Agriculture say that he was going to extend crop insurance for the future to cover unseeded acreage. That is a blatant misrepresentation of the facts by the Minister of Agriculture. If she wants to play politics with it, that is fine, but I suggest that playing politics with the problem that the people in rural Manitoba, the agricultural producers, have currently is not the way to go.

We are here to discuss seriously an issue regarding whether or not there is anything that



the provincial government can be doing at this stage in their administration that would deal with past wrongs that have occurred in terms of the disaster of 1999 and whether or not this minister, without breaking any rules of administration, without breaking the piggybank, is prepared to discuss whether or not there is a potential wherewithal of the current administration to deal with a very serious financial dilemma compounded by negative markets around the world.

I know and we all know that the provincial government cannot offset the hurt of world grain prices. That is indeed a federal responsibility, but there are things that are happening where farmers have suffered from the compounding of bad weather, bad prices and downright disaster in many parts of the province last year that is now leaving them in a situation where they must start using up their equity.

The AIDA program does not seem to be able to deliver dollars in a timely fashion, and I challenge this minister to prove to us that the money that was reduced from the Province's share of AIDA for not supporting negative margins, I challenge her to show and prove that that is not where the money came from that she used to sprinkle across all of—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Korzeniowski):** Order, please. I would like to remind the Honourable Member to please direct all comments through the Chair.

**Mr. Cummings:** Madam Acting Speaker, because I was not facing you directly does not mean I am not intending my comments to be through the Chair. I do challenge this minister to show that the money she used to sprinkle across agri Manitoba in the last number of months was not funding the negative margins. It is entirely too much of a coincidence for many of rural Manitoba's agricultural producers to have to accept the fact that that is not where the money came from. Frankly, that action, what it has done is make it so that for those who suffered the most and did, in fact, generate negative margins, we are, in fact, compounding their problem by not recognizing those negative margins.

Now, from a political point of view, I suspect the Government and the Minister

probably are not going to be crippled politically by that decision. The majority of their votes do not come from agri Manitoba. The majority of the voters in her riding and in Dauphin probably do not suffer from that same problem. I notice the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) waving to me from across the way. Probably he can argue he does not have a lot of negative margins in his constituency. I suspect there are some in the Gilbert Plains area, though, and I suspect Grandview, as well, as the Member would add to the list.

That is exactly why I say that the money that is not in the AIDA program as the provincial share for negative margins is providing a double whammy to those who suffered from what were disaster conditions last year in the production of their crops. You know, agriculture today, for the edification of those who are not involved in agriculture, who might be hearing this or currently sitting in the Chamber, the biggest percentage of net income on 80 percent of the farms in this country today comes from off-farm income, in other words, whether it is the spouse working off-farm, or both husband and wife taking part-time jobs or, in some cases, full-time jobs off of the farm and bringing that money back into their operation, and that number may even be higher than when that last survey or compilation was done.

That is a very, very sad reflection, Madam Acting Speaker, on whether or not agriculture is in a buoyant state. There are, in fact, operations out there that are well capitalized, that are highly efficient. They are moving ahead as rapidly as they can. Some of them have diversified. They are doing exceedingly well on an outward appearance, but they are a rapidly decreasing number. At the same time, they are the only source of relief that the other 80 percent has. They can sell to them. They can lease to them, and they can leave the industry.

\* (15:40)

I suggest that this government is failing to recognize that it has a responsibility to those people who are now leaving the industry. There are things that they could do that are quite within the financial and the responsibility area of this government, that they could deal with those

issues. I have pointed out one, the negative margin issue. The Minister did the right thing politically. She sprinkled like fairy dust about \$16 or \$19 million across all of agri Manitoba. That is considered agricultural aid. Every time the Minister stands up, she refers to that money. Every time the Premier stands up, he refers to that money. I am telling you that money should have been directed towards the areas where there was indeed a disaster and there was a financial hurt. Politically, that is an argument that no one on that side of the House seems to be prepared to accept, and that is an argument that, frankly, when it comes down to counting the votes, they will probably do quite well on. So I suggest that they have a right to be somewhat uncomfortable when somebody calls them to task on that redistribution of those dollars.

When I look at this amendment to the motion that is in front of us today, I suggest that the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ashton), in his wisdom, has provided an amendment that probably takes the teeth out of this resolution, makes it so that it will not be an unanimous resolution of this House. For that, he and his government will have to bear responsibility, because every time they stand up and say we will not pass a unanimous resolution in this House, they have to remember that they accept half of the responsibility for that. It seems to me that, as agri Manitoba changes, as it goes through these tough times, we have seen other jurisdictions, and especially Saskatchewan and Alberta, but particularly Alberta, that have forged forward and dealt with the issue and then gone to Ottawa and been able to claw back the dollars from Ottawa. The previous administration did that in terms of the announcement for the unseeded acres in the spring of 1999. This government and the Premier have clearly said there is money in the rainy-day fund that they so derisively talked about over the year. There is money there, but he says he wants to spend it for priorities of his government. It is very clear that agriculture is not one of those priorities.

**Mr. Cris Aglugub (The Maples):** This afternoon I am very pleased to be able to say a few words about the amendments that we have before us today. As we all know, all members of the House are concerned about the areas of

Manitoba which have received excess moisture in the past few weeks. Last week the Minister of Government Services toured the affected areas in Headingley, and the Agriculture Minister toured the areas around Steinbach and Springfield. Other areas affected included Portage, the Interlake, Virden, Shoal Lake, Hamiota, and Neepawa. Hail and tornado went through Hamiota on the weekend.

The departments of Conservation, Government Services and Agriculture are working proactively with the communities and producers to determine what information or assistance individuals in communities require. Estimates of crop condition and crop losses are being developed and continually updated by the Department of Agriculture.

It is important to note that there are programs and procedures in place to deal with situations of this kind. Producers are making use of the Crop Insurance Program which was designed for cases like this. There are approximately 270 Crop Insurance claims across the province; 100 of those claims have come in during the past week. Crop Insurance expects the number to continue to increase over the next week.

In Manitoba, we have a tradition of dealing with these types of natural disasters in a co-operative, non-partisan way. We experienced this in 1993, again in 1997, and we certainly want to continue this tradition.

When the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) was in southeast Manitoba, many of the concerns expressed there were with regard to drainage. We know that members opposite have raised concerns over the cuts to the former Department of Natural Resources under the previous government and the effect of these cuts on the maintenance of drainage or drains. We appreciate their acknowledgement of the difficult circumstances that the department, the producers now find themselves in as a result of these decisions.

In a press release last week, the Keystone Agricultural Producers stated that it is not so much where the water is coming from, but rather where the water is supposed to go. Addressing

drainage issues in the province will help alleviate the effects of excess moisture. This is why we continue to urge all members of this House to work co-operatively together, as we have done in other flooding circumstances, to provide as much support to all those experiencing flooding conditions in the Province of Manitoba.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

Since forming government, we have introduced the following supports to farm families: improvements made to the Crop Insurance Program to make it more flexible and responsive includes culverts for excess moisture, culverts for new crops such as hemp, and the introduction of the flexible price option for producers.

In February, the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) announced a \$100-million package, which is called the Canada-Manitoba agricultural payment for Manitoba producers to address the current income crisis. The package is cost-shared, with \$60 million from the federal government and \$40 million from the Government of Manitoba; \$23.6-million worth of enhancements were made to the 1999 AIDA program.

Most recently, Manitoba reached a new three-year safety net agreement, the Canada farm income program with the federal government. When the original formula for the new safety net program was proposed by the federal government, Manitoba would have seen a reduction. However, the Minister of Agriculture negotiated to ensure that Manitoba would maintain the same level of funding. In addition, we also negotiated to make the new income disaster assistance program three years, rather than two years that was proposed.

Those are my comments, Mr. Speaker. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, I regret that the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) on several specific issues considers to bare herself, if I can use that expression, of any measure of respect and integrity by insisting, for instance, on the fact that the decision for

expanding, and I say expanding because unseeded acreage was always available under the Crop Insurance Program. A number, not many, some 6 percent of the contract holders availed themselves of that program 10, 15, 20 years ago. It was always available. So to present unseeded acreage as a brand-new edition to the benefits that Crop Insurance provides is simply not true. That is so easy to determine, so easy to document. I am surprised that the Minister would leave herself open, to put herself in that kind of a position.

Of course, as my colleague the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) pointed out just a little while ago the Minister herself was present in the company of farm leaders, press, principally from western Manitoba, in Brandon when I announced among other things real and substantive aid to those farmers in need, \$50 an acre, and at the same time announced—and she was present—that instructions had gone out to the Crop Insurance Corporation to ensure that the unseeded acreage program would be changed.

\* (15:50)

The program was there. The program was there before I was there. It was there when Sam Uskiw was Minister of Agriculture for Ed Schreyer and the New Democrats. It was there before that. It was there at the birth of Crop Insurance in 1959-1960.

I remind all: Crop Insurance is here because of the Conservative administration of Duff Roblin and the Conservative administration in Ottawa. It was brought into being in the year '59. In '58 it was a pilot project. I am very proud that Manitoba led the way. Crop Insurance was born in Manitoba. That now is enjoyed by farmers right across this country. George Hutton, my predecessor, brought it in along with Mr. Hamilton under the Diefenbaker administration that brought it in.

Now that program was expanded and I announced that expansion in July. It was just about this time a year ago that I announced that directions were given to the Crop Insurance Corporation to expand the unseeded acreage from a voluntary program to a mandatory one. That is the only change that took place. I am

disappointed, disappointed in the fact that the Honourable Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) puts her reputation on the line by attempting to deny this little bit of history.

More specifically though to the resolution, I honestly believe what this government should be doing and what we all should be doing, we have for different reasons—and different people can take the credit for it. Certainly the federal Prime Minister or federal Minister of Finance, Paul Martin, and others, will take their full measure of credit for it. But we are enjoying an unprecedented period of reasonably good times in our economy and that is being reflected in all of our economic figures. For the first time in many years, individual provinces' financial affairs are in order. If you believe what we hear from Ottawa, in fact what we see coming out of Ottawa is that we are for the first time in many years accruing very significant, substantial billions of dollars of surpluses in the federal Treasury.

What is needed therefore now is a joint effort from all of us. This is what this resolution really calls for. My colleague the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) states it so eloquently, there has to be, at this time, and taking into consideration the situation of agriculture, a commitment made by all of us to come to support agriculture somewhere closer to how agriculture is being supported by our major competitors, the Europeans and the Americans.

Agriculture is and continues to be not the only source of our country's wealth but a very significant one. More importantly, particularly in provinces like Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta, agriculture is more than just bushels of wheat or barley or hectares or pounds of beef and pork or eggs. It is a social thing. It is a sustenance of rural life as we know it. It means much more than just dollars and cents. There are enough members opposite who understand that.

So we should look at, as the Europeans had made long ago, a commitment. I can understand the European commitment. That European commitment was made shortly after 1945, when rich, wealthy countries like France, like Britain, like Germany suffered through famine as a result of the devastation of their war and their

economy. They said to themselves, regardless of political parties, we will not be hungry again. So they made a commitment that they will support agriculture at a level which is surprising. A West German or a French farmer gets \$12 a bushel for his wheat, no matter whether the world price is \$3 or \$4. The American governments have not been far behind the Europeans. Just recently again we hear of massive, massive support payments to American agriculture.

Mr. Speaker, we can argue about the merits of the different programs. We can argue about who is taking credit for doing what. We can argue about past mistakes. But what is needed now is for this minister, for this government, they happen to be the government of the day, along with their counterparts in Saskatchewan, along with Alberta, we should not be storming out of agricultural ministers' meetings in a huff. We should be using all our influence to collectively put the political will into our provincial and federal governments to come to agriculture's aid at this time. That is what is required.

That is what this resolution addresses. Surely we ought to be able to understand that is extremely important to the ongoing welfare, not just of the residents here in the city of Winnipeg or in Brandon or in Portage, our urban residents, but to all of us, urban and rural. That is what we should be striving for, because there is a particular time right now when I honestly believe it is doable. It was not that easy half a dozen or a dozen years ago when all governments were running serious deficits, both federal and provincial, but it is, in my opinion, easier now.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to make a further suggestion to the honourable members opposite. They ought to consider knocking on the door of one Stockwell Day, the new leader of the Canadian Alliance Party, because I will go on the record: in eight months he will be our Prime Minister, and he will be appointing who will be the Minister of Agriculture. We should be making that as part of his platform.

Honourable members, it does not matter, who are we fighting for? We are fighting for the welfare of our farmers. We are fighting for the

welfare of our farmers and the welfare of the agricultural industry here in Manitoba. So let us grasp at all opportunities. But I see that big freedom train is starting to gain momentum, rolling now from the Okanagan Valley, Coquitlam in B.C., through Alberta, through Saskatchewan, on to Manitoba, right into Ottawa, being the next government, and we should be lobbying with that future Prime Minister right now to get a fair shake for our farmers.

\* (16:00)

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin):** I can not help but notice that the freedom train got stuck in Ottawa and did not go to Québec or the Maritimes that the Member across was talking.

Mr. Speaker, I want to rise today in support of the amendment put forward by the Minister of Highways and Government Services (Mr. Ashton). I think it provides this House an excellent opportunity to once and for all send a message to Ottawa that we are united and that we are together, and that all of us in this House can rise above the small petty politics that sometimes bog us down in this building.

The other reason I am pleased to rise today to speak on this amendment is to hopefully straighten out some of the misconceptions that members opposite seem to be labouring under. It was interesting to hear some of the comments about the political side of this whole agricultural debate. It was very interesting to hear members opposite accuse this government of playing politics, of not being too worried about whether we support people in the southwest who are farming because we are not going to ever win those seats anyway. They are seats held by Conservative members in this Legislature. Well, there are a number of absolutely varying faults in that approach. First of all, it indicates to us, and I know the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) referenced this in his comments, it indicates to me an old, outdated, stale approach to government.

It may be the approach that members opposite took when they were in government the last eleven and a half long, long years. It may be that was the approach that they took when they

were making decisions in this province. But they should have done it then and we are doing it now. They should have not worried about who was voting for who. They should have made decisions when they were in government based on facts, based on the reality of the situation out there in rural Manitoba. Then maybe they would not be dealing with complaints that the North had been ignored over the past decade or so, or that certain areas of the Parkland were ignored over a certain number of years in the last 11 years. Maybe things would have been fair from the beginning if the previous government did not have that mindset to begin with.

It is wrong to treat one part of this province differently than the other. It is not a democratic way to approach the very important public decision-making authority of this House. It is just not fair to Manitobans for the previous government to approach decision making in that way. If we accepted the argument brought forward by members opposite that we would only govern for areas that are represented by New Democrat MLAs, can I then flip the coin over and say that members opposite would not give a darn about this issue if it was in ridings outside of their own, that they would be arguing about? Is it just coincidence that Tory MLAs from across the way are going to bat because this is an issue that is predominantly in their area? It just happens to be that Gilbert Plains and Grandview get caught in that net, but that is not an argument that I think we should be making from this side of the House because it assumes that either their side or our side in government would not treat Manitobans fairly. I do not want that to happen.

The other thing that I want to make certain that all Manitobans understand and anybody who cares to read the Hansard on this debate, an important debate brought forward by the Member for Emerson, I want them to know that a lot of Manitoba taxpayers' dollars has gone into this situation already, \$100 million to begin, also \$70 million that has been put forward at a time when the Members opposite were in government, at a time when the opposition of the day said, great idea, go ahead, we are with you. Seventy million dollars of taxpayers money. Did that even move the federal government one iota into coming up to the table with their money?

You see, the Opposition's premise in this whole argument is wrong. The Opposition's premise is that if we, today, were to put more money into the southwest part of the province, into the agricultural disaster that is legitimately there, the feds would then come forward and they would then put their money on the table. Members opposite are somehow trying to paint this government and this minister and this Premier as the big obstacle to this. But the facts do not bear out your argument. There is \$70 million on the table already, Manitoba's taxpayers' money. Has that produced anything from the feds? No. Why would it produce anything from the feds now? Our money is on the table.

Your argument is nonsense. The argument that we see put forward by the Opposition does not make sense. It is not logical. It is not rational. It cannot be defended, but it is good politics for members who are representing those ridings in the southwest.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister has been having her reputation questioned in this House today by members opposite. Her integrity has been put under question by members opposite. They have hidden behind the excuse that they cannot say what they really think because parliamentary language stops them from doing that.

Well, the \$40 million CMAP money, \$40 million, this minister has come through on. The members opposite can sneeze at that if they like, but that is real action for real producers in a real disaster. No matter how the Opposition laughs about it, criticizes it and says nasty things about a minister who is working hard, it is still money in farmers' pockets. AIDA agricultural enhancements, I am going by memory here, but somewhere around the \$23 million mark, at least something over \$20 million, somewhere like that has been provided for. That was this minister who played the lead role in making that happen.

Mr. Speaker, I think what sums up the approach of the members opposite to this is the announcement that they were crowing about earlier today in this debate, in which they claim that crop insurance has always been there and we made the big announcement over a year ago.

Oh, yes, for 11 years people in Manitoba and farmers got pretty used to hearing announcements from this previous government. There was a lot of big talk. Not much action. Not much action at all. It was this minister through an election promise made by our party in the election, where we said that there will be excess moisture insurance, that provided this for farmers. If that had been in place at the outset of this disaster, there would be more money in farmers' pockets. The "if" depended on the previous government and they did not, they were more interested in making announcements than putting money into farmers' pockets. So there says it all about the previous government.

Just to conclude, I am very interested to see how members opposite will vote on this amendment, an amendment that we have amended through the co-operation of our minister and their critic. It will be very interesting to see if, once and for all, finally, the members opposite get it. Finally, will they vote for an amendment on a motion that will unite this legislature with farmers, with the farm groups, with municipal organizations, and finally be able to say to the federal government that we do indeed have a united, solid position in favour of farmers in Manitoba? It is up to you.

\* (16:10)

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain):** It is a pleasure to stand and put a few comments on the record. It is a little ironic, I think, that we listen to the members opposite talk about the previous government and some of the decisions that they made and suggest that they were based on a voter bloc of people, when within a short period of time of taking government we find out about deals that were made in the middle of the night to build five casinos in Manitoba, and deals that were made in the middle of the night to revoke labour legislation because a group of people and the union organizers at the Manitoba Teachers' Society got together and cut a deal to their voters.

The bills that come across from the opposite side are all directly related to payoffs, to organizations that they cut deals with. As I say, the deals were cut in the middle of the night, in a dark room, and perhaps a small press release or a

release to at least their own membership comes across the plate, and then they suggest that it was a promise made in the election and that they have to honour those particular promises. It continually amazes me how the members of the government of the day can talk about dealing with specific groups and organizations, to assent to them and their wishes in order to secure their vote in the future.

I also want to comment on the comments made by the Minister of transportation who talks of arrogance. He talks of arrogance of the federal ministers of the Government of Canada. Well, I can tell him about the arrogance of the ministers of the Government of Manitoba when they talk about going out and visiting with the people that are most affected in these areas. They have yet to do that. We have to bring our delegations in to the Province, in to meet the ministers. Even then, it is only on a whim that they might get in to see—we have a Minister of Health that refuses to meet with the health boards that he has now partly appointed. He refuses to come out and talk to them and discuss the issues. Yet we have a minister of transportation talk about arrogance.

We have a Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) goes out and actually organizes meetings, calls them, rents the hall, pays for the ads, and then chooses at the last moment to cancel the meetings because there may be some disagreement in the public with what he is trying to do.

The Minister of transportation talks about arrogance of ministers in Ottawa. I suggest that the Minister should take a look at his own benches and see the arrogance that oozes out of there every day.

In fact, on this side of the House, we have come to call it "garrogance" because it is prevalent throughout all the front benches. It is even leaching upwards to the back benches as we hear the arrogance of the members opposite every day.

**An Honourable Member:** Anything for a cheap political shot.

**Mr. Tweed:** It is interesting that they talk about cheap shots from the other side. It would not be

far beyond the Minister of transportation to drag anybody's name into the forum in this legislation if he could gain a political point on it. I suggest that the Minister of transportation take a look at his track record and the things that he said in the past, the way he has defamed people and individuals in this House, and he continues to talk about the arrogance of the ministers in Ottawa. It is a far cry, Mr. Speaker, that we should—

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Honourable Minister of Highways, on a point of order.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Ashton:** There was a fairly spirited debate going on, and I do not question the Member's right to engage in that. Certainly I was responding from my seat. But to make reference to me or anybody in this House having defamed people in this House is unacceptable. I would like to ask the Member to withdraw that. I have no difficulty with the tone of debate that is every member's right, but to suggest that I or anybody would have defamed anybody in this House, I think, is unacceptable. My only comments from my seat were in regard to Art Eggleton refusing to meet with us, which I take not as a personal insult but an insult to the people of Manitoba.

**Mr. Tweed:** Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order, if the rules of the House suggest that using that type of language is unparliamentary, then I would gladly withdraw it.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Honourable Member for his withdrawal. That should end the point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Tweed:** I find it interesting that, when we looked at the proposed motion by the Member for Emerson, we talk about governments in responding to situations and the crisis and to organizations in need.

It was pointed out to me recently, when the fires took place in northern Manitoba, did this government stand and say, no, we are going to

wait until the federal government comes forward with their portion or with their share? Did this government stand by and let the people continually suffer out-of-pocket expenses and ongoing expenses day to day while the government said: We are going to negotiate this disaster with the people in Ottawa, and we will get back to you; you just continue to suffer along and try and survive and try and make do with what you have. It did not happen that way. This government stepped forward with support for the people of northern Manitoba during the times of the fires. We said we will make the commitment to you, not only in words, but in actual funds and actual dollars. Then we will take our argument to Ottawa and pursue it from there, but we did not abandon the people.

I think that what has happened and what we see in this House is the constant blame or deflection of responsibility by the Government of the day to take responsibility for the disaster that actually took place in southern Manitoba and the devastation that has happened to these people, and they have to. Governments of the day are there to take responsibility, not to condemn, not to pass the buck, not to deflect the responsibilities, but to act. We have, to this day, not seen any action from this government in regard to the flood of '99, in which millions of acres were left unseeded or were mucked in or muddied in, as the term goes, and the cost and the devastation to the families and the farms out there have had basically no response from this government. They have had an understanding and, oh, yes, we accept your position. We know that you are in trouble and that the times are tough, but have they responded in any action other than to blame someone? No, they have not, and I think that is very unfortunate.

It is ironic that they would talk about representing people and yet failing to go out and meet with the people of those areas. The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers), it was he that brought it up that things are done for political reasons. Well, I would suggest that, yes, all governments do things for political reasons, but when people are in a state of devastation from a disaster that is no longer within their control, governments are elected to act and to respond.

Just recently, we all stood in the House and recognized the terrible disaster that happened in Alberta on the weekend. I do not think that any of us would stand and criticize a government for going out to that area of the province of Alberta and trying to offer and do whatever they can do help those people in their time of most need.

What I see is the flood of '99 is the same type of situation. It was an uncontrollable disaster. It was a disaster that nobody could predict, nobody foresaw was coming, and yet these people, their livelihoods were basically taken away from them for a year and, in this case, 18 months. Then again, with the wet spring we have had this year, the impact is still there, and it is still resonating throughout these communities.

So, Mr. Speaker, the resolution that the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) has brought forward, I do not believe, it is not a critical motion. It is talking about recognizing that the Legislature acknowledged to the Canadian government again and trying to draw their attention that the hurt is still there. It is still occurring. People are in desperate need in certain parts of the province. I suggest and I know that the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) would agree that it has created another stress on another part of our system just with the troubled times that these people are going through.

We talk about agreement, and I think there should be agreement. I think that right from the get go there should have been a sit down between the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) and the members of the Opposition to devise something that we could all be satisfied with and all be agreeable with, because that is the best way to take our message. But I think we have to have a message that we can both understand and accept and work together to develop, not have one side of the House force their bill, and then play politics with it.

So, with those comments, Mr. Speaker, I would ask that the members opposite seriously consider it and show their support for this type of a motion.



\* (16:20)

**Mr. Jim Rondeau (Assiniboia):** Mr. Speaker, I rise today to discuss this resolution and would like to put a few words on the record regarding it.

First, I would like to recognize that there has been a farm crisis and continues to be a farm crisis throughout rural Manitoba. I really believe that disaster assistance should have been made available by the federal government. Not only has it been declared as a disaster by the federal government; it fits their criteria, but they have not lived up to their obligations for the people of Manitoba and southwest Manitoba.

I think it is the role of this provincial government to hold the federal government accountable for their actions. I applaud the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) and the Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton) on their efforts to obtain compensation and try to get a permanent solution so that we never, ever have to deal with this situation again. What we need is a fair system. Whether it is a flood, whether it is a fire, no matter what the disaster, we need to be treated fairly by our federal government so that all of us are heard. Just because we are 4 percent or 5 percent of the population does not mean that we should be ignored by the federal government. We, as all citizens of Canada, deserve to be treated fairly by the federal government.

I look back at the ice storm in the east, and what happened was the federal government was there instantly. Even during our flood, the federal government was there. But what we need to do is have a recognition that some disasters happen slowly and some happen quickly. The speed of the disaster is irrelevant. What makes a difference is if it affects the commercial or personal well-being of the individuals. Truly, the ice storm did, truly the flood did. Fires do, and of course because of this excess moisture, because of the rain, because of the fact that people could not put in a crop, this was the disaster.

It was truly brought home to me in discussions with the Member for St. James (Ms. Korzeniowski), when we would, in canvassing our areas—and just recently we had this flood of

about seven centimetres in a very, very short period of time. That one rainfall created huge flooding in basements. And we are talking about one short period of time creating six, seven inches of rainwater that came overland into basements and created huge disasters for families.

You have people who flooded their basements and have many thousands of dollars worth of damage. And they have to deal with it. They have to get rid of their rugs, they have to do the walls, and it is a personal disaster. And it is caused by nature.

I think it is the role of all governments to assist people in time of need. In this case, in my own constituency of Assiniboia, what happened was people's basements were flooded. Many times people can not obtain insurance for this type of flooding.

So some people had \$2,000 worth of insurance, some people had \$5,000, but the damage was huge in comparison. I bring this example in, because my own mother, who had \$2,000 worth of insurance, I believe, basically had about \$25,000 worth of damage in her basement. And so what happens? She has to come up with \$23,000 to deal with the emergency. Hence, I know it is tough. People have to take out of their pockets and put in for natural disasters.

I believe it is the role of government to deal with that. I understand the City of Winnipeg, as is Headingley and a number of different areas, have asked and stated that it was a disaster area because of the flood. I believe it is the Government's role to assist people in their need. I do not believe it should be on a partisanship basis. I believe the federal government should have very standard criteria where if it affects people very negatively then they will get compensation, not depending on where they live in the country or the type of disaster. As long as it substantially affects the income, livelihood, property or people themselves, the federal government should be there. The provincial government should be there. Government should help the people.

So I urge all the governments to work together. I believe we are trying to do that. I believe we went to Ottawa with the good intent to do so. I believe that this disaster, the 1999 flood, the 2000 flood, even this disaster that has happened because of the excess rainfall very quickly, clearly falls under the disaster financial assistance act. It is overland flooding. It does affect people financially. It does create a lot of disasters.

I urge our government to continue to work with municipalities, the federal government and others to make sure that people do receive the assistance they need. I urge the federal government to assume the responsibilities that they have not. I urge them to come to the table, follow their responsibilities to all citizens of Canada and be an active part in providing for this disaster. I strongly thank the Government and the ministers for trying to assist all Manitobans and encourage them to continue to do so. Thank you.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Mr. Speaker, I rise to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan), a subamendment

THAT the amendment be amended by adding in clause 3 of the amendment after the word "for" in the third line "flooding in Manitoba" and by adding to the end of clause 3 "as agreed to under the CFIP program"; and

THAT the final clause of the amendment be amended by striking out the word "identified" and replacing it with the word "including".

**Mr. Speaker:** For a clarification, where the Honourable Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) has: "the amendment after the word 'for' in the third line 'flooding in Manitoba,'" I think the Honourable Member meant second line, after the word 'for' in the 'flooding in Manitoba.' It is the second line. So we will change third to second? Is that agreed? [*Agreed*]

Moved by the Honourable Member for Emerson, seconded by the Honourable Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan),

THAT the amendment be amended by adding in clause 3 of the amendment after the

word "for" in the second line "flooding in Manitoba" and by adding to the end of clause 3 "as agreed to under the CFIP program;" and

THAT the final clause of the amendment be amended by striking out the word "identified" and replacing it with the word "including."

The subamendment is in order. Debate may proceed.

### Point of Order

**Mr. Struthers:** I am sure it is a fine subamendment. I would like to read it. I have not seen a copy of it. I would like to have a copy of it if that is possible.

**Mr. Speaker:** We will have copies made and distributed to the House.

\* \* \*

\*(16:30)

**Mr. Jack Penner:** I just want to thank the Honourable Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton) and the Honourable Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) for agreeing that this subamendment could go forward. I think this explains and really puts in place the intent of the motion as originally intended.

For the edification of the Honourable Member for Dauphin, if he would go back in history to 1988, he would find that the Honourable Minister of Natural Resources, the Honourable Minister of Agriculture, the Honourable Minister of Health, the Honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs and the Honourable Minister of Natural Resources all went to Swan River and all went to the Interlake to deal with the matter immediately.

So what the Honourable Member for Dauphin put on the record before was not quite correct, and I just want to correct that statement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris):** I am not sure when I am rising to speak now as to exactly what I am speaking to or against or what, but, at any rate, Mr. Speaker, I do have the amendment from the

NDP Government in front of me, and I would like to address a few of my comments towards that amendment.

If I take a look at the first clause, clause (a), it says that: "the Government of Manitoba announced Excess Moisture Insurance, you know, that is not a new program. Unseeded acreage insurance has been a part of the Manitoba Crop Insurance Program for years and farmers could access that program if they so chose. They would have to make that decision in the fall, of course, as to whether they wanted the insurance, and it was optional. Then along came the 1997 flood which probably covered in excess of 600 000, 800 000 acres of land under water only to have about 1000 to 1500 acres left unseeded. Therefore the whole program of having unseeded acreage insurance or excess moisture insurance, as the present government would call the program, is something that really was there in the first place. It was the farmer's option to take the program.

And then, our then-Minister of Agriculture the Honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) arose at the meeting in Melita and said that our government would institute—but he indicated at that Melita meeting to several thousand farmers that our government was going to put in unseeded acreage insurance as a mandatory part of the program for crop insurance. Everybody at that meeting that night applauded loudly and approved it. The now Premier of the province was there in attendance; agreed with it. The Leader of the Liberal Party was there; agreed with it. And there were so many witnesses to that event, supporting. Even the Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan) was there.

So there was a whole sounding approval to the institution of the unseeded acreage insurance program. So this government that is now in power cannot take any of the credit for having instituted that program because it was there already. It was there already and it was part of the Crop Insurance Program for years prior to that as an option. Now it is a mandatory part of the program. It is part of their whole Crop Insurance Program.

But let me also mention, really in terms of the unseeded acreage in Manitoba, for the last

number of years prior to 1997, very few acres were left unseeded at the end of the seeding window in spring and so it was considered by many farmers to be a program that was really not necessary. In fact when the idea was first bridged with western Manitoba producers in 1997, it was considered that the program really was not a necessity and they did not want to have it as a mandatory aspect of the program. However, things changed. In 1999, lo and behold, we had the largest number of unseeded acreage this province has probably seen in the lifetime of agriculture in this province.

Now it came to the forefront that unseeded acreage insurance was indeed a necessity. So the government brought in, and my colleague from Lakeside announced it, and in 2000, the government of the day was taking credit for implementing it, which is really something that they had nothing to do with. But they even chose to give it a different name so as to make it look like it was something that they brought in. They call it the Excess Moisture Insurance program.

I take a look at the nomenclature for this program. I take a look at the number of fields that right now have been subjected to excess rainfall. I see these fields and I look at the name of this program, Excess Moisture Insurance, by definition the Red River Valley right now, east or southeast or however you want to describe it, has received a whole bunch of excess moisture.

So I guess my question to the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) is: If by name this program is Excess Moisture Insurance, is she going to take a field that right now is suffering a 50% loss due to excess moisture and cover it under this program, because this is what the program name would imply? Mr. Speaker, I take a look at this first paragraph, and I say, well, it is really something that has been there right along.

The other area that I would like to take issue with in this amendment that is proposed by the Government is that they said "WHEREAS all sides of the House agree that the 1999 flood constitutes a disaster but the federal government has failed to provide compensation for conditions that are clearly recognized as compensable under the Disaster Financial Assistance Act (Canada)." I looked at that

paragraph, and really if they are looking at the DFA program, the DFA program for compensation, one of the very specific things that the preamble of that program stipulates is that it does not replace lost income, income loss. It does not replace income loss.

*Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

So what the Government is saying with regard to that paragraph is that they are expecting the federal government to totally revamp that program in order to compensate the people who have had a loss of income. Now, Madam Acting Speaker, if we consider the 1999 excess rainfall, we often refer to it as flooding. But it really was not flooding; it was a lot of excess rain. It resulted in a lot of acres not being seeded, and therefore it resulted in a very substantial loss of income to producers in the southwest part of the province and the north-central part of the northwest part of the province, the southeast part of the province, everywhere where there was excess rain that prevented producers from getting their crop planted. So really this was a loss of income.

\* (16:40)

I do not think anybody would disagree that what it was was an economic disaster of a huge proportion. The disasters previously that we have always been subjected to in this province have been disasters which have destroyed and have had destruction on real property. This program, the DFA program, is set up to address the restitution of damages for real property, the loss of real property. So I think that the Government by putting that in as an amendment is asking the federal government to totally revamp the entire DFA program as it applies to Canadian citizens across this country.

Madam Acting Speaker, the other area that I want to just briefly touch is the fact that we have made the point with this government to put the money on the table and get the cheques out to the farmers who need it. By doing that, you can put on that cheque slip: Here is the amount of money that is coming from Manitoba; here is the Canada portion, zero. We embarrass the federal government into coming forward with their money. That is the way you have to do it,

because the feds, you have to drag them kicking and screaming to the table every time.

Now the other thing is that, with flood-proofing programs, we in the case of Manitoba have had a cost-sharing in place with the federal government. We have fronted the dollars and paid our portion of that flood-proofing program, and then reluctantly the federal government has come in.

So I see my light is flashing, my time is almost up, but I would just like to say that what we need to have is for this government to come forward, put the money on the table, issue the cheques, and that way you get the federal government to come along. So I thank you for the time and the chance to put a few comments on the record. Thank you.

**Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman):** Madam Acting Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise here this afternoon and put a few remarks on the record. These last few years have been particularly difficult ones for the farming community in Manitoba. The dual threat of natural disaster and plummeting commodity prices have left producers reeling, many unable to continue their operations. The growing subsidy disparity between Manitobans and the other rural farmers is a damaging enough force without even taking into consideration the flooding that has occurred in this province over the last few years.

Last year, we witnessed one of the worst farm disasters this province has seen in quite some time as large tracts of crops and fields in the southwest were flooded and rained out. This year, water is once again wreaking havoc on our farmers. These last few weeks have seen an excessive volume of rainfall in the southeast part of our province. Five rural municipalities immediately declared emergencies, while a number of others were close behind. They have called on the provincial government for aid in dealing with the resulting flooding and damage. The declarations of emergency by these rural municipalities should be of grave concern to this government.

These Manitobans are in need of assistance. Many farmers have lost crops to the water and

are losing ground in an already difficult struggle. For farmers who have been hit, incomes will be reduced in many cases substantially. As we have been so graphically shown over the last year, a washed-out crop has disastrous consequences both for the immediate producer and the commodity around that individual. The southwest is still bearing witness to that today. No thanks to this government, I might add.

Cattle producers have also been affected. Grazing pastures have been submerged and many have seen their hay stocks submerged or floating away. This not only leaves them short on feed in the present, but when combined with the flooding of hay crops, it presents a bleak picture for the fall and the fast-approaching winter. In many cases, cows are standing belly deep in waterlogged pastures, with nothing to eat and nowhere to go. Simply put, the situation has become a disaster.

It is time for the provincial government to come to the aid of these Manitobans. Ministers have toured through affected areas to assess the damage, as have members of the Conservative caucus which form the Opposition. It is clear that something must be done. I would think that this government would be more than enthusiastic to come out on the side of the flooded citizens after its bungling in last year's flood-aid efforts. Surely the Government realizes that people cannot simply pick up and proceed with business as usual after their homes and farms have been flooded. Although, with the lack of response from this government to the crisis in the southwest, I am not sure if they are aware of this fact.

After all the water damages that destroyed their many years of hard work, there must be a rebuilding. In most cases, the deficit created by rebuilding requires government assistance if it is to be overcome. Unfortunately, many farmers who experienced difficulty last year had no option but to handle their deficits alone. We on this side of the House are very sorry that that was the case. I hope that this government does not abrogate on its responsibility to flooded Manitobans again this year.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

I want to take a moment to encourage the Government to make a difference for these individuals. They have done nothing to deserve this onslaught of water, just as last year the farmers and businesses of the southwest did nothing to deserve the fate that befell them. Now they and their families will suffer the staggering costs of cleanup and rebuilding. We can help them with this. As members of this Legislature, we can do nothing to stem the rains or lower the water levels, but we can play a very active role in the recovery process that comes after them.

This government should commit today to providing the assistance that will be needed in the aftermath of this disaster. Further to this, it is high time that the Government antes up and meet the needs of farmers who are still suffering from last year's crisis. I want to also urge the Government to leave its political stripes out of this matter. To this date, the main incidents of flooding and crisis, as was the case last year, have occurred in areas that are represented by members of the Opposition. I trust that the Government will not factor this into any decision it might make on disaster assistance. It should go without saying that the people who now face hardships because of the rains are just as much Manitobans as those anywhere else in the province and therefore deserve the fair and generous assistance of this government.

I want to conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that we on this side of the House are most concerned about the disaster that is rapidly developing in some parts of Manitoba. The severe results of excessive rain and flooding should not be underestimated, whether it be a basement full of water, a barn or pasture that has been flooded or machinery that has sat half covered by water, the end result is the same, substantial recovery costs to the owner. Government can and should be there to help those that have been affected get back on their feet. I thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie):** Good afternoon, fellow colleagues. I thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to rise and participate in the debate which involves a resolution that is very much to my heart, being a producer and growing up within a farming family, being the third generation to participate

in that activity in this country and for centuries before this country was adopted as home for our family.

Mr. Speaker, it is very, very important that all colleagues of this House recognize the dilemma that is facing the producers in their culture in our province. I know that it has been recognized on many occasions and many speeches within this House that a disaster does exist. However, I believe, that it is very, very important that we unanimously adopt this motion as amended, because it will prove that we stand united when it comes to the producers in agricultural industry within our province.

\* (16:50)

We have to get by the political grandstanding that we have seen take place under the new administration of the New Democratic Party here in the province of Manitoba. When our agricultural minister left the meetings for political expediency and was not there to participate within the debate, it gave indication that our minister was not prepared to forward the most important issue facing our producers today. In her absence, other jurisdictions had the opportunity to participate in the debate, and it is showing now with the level of support that we are garnering from our federal government. This particular political grandstanding is again continuing in a more recent event here in Winnipeg.

We had, meeting in Winnipeg, the national convention for Egg Producers from across the nation of Canada. Our agricultural minister stood and had the opportunity to present the position that would unite the producers as we all attempt to diversify into the egg industry, which is very vital to this province of Manitoba. However, the minister responsible for agriculture in this province took it upon herself, again, to bring in political rhetoric to a point where the individuals that represented both Québec and Alberta were so confronted by her text of her speech that they were forced to leave that banquet hall in disgust.

It is deplorable that our minister would take such a stance and, in fact, not recognize that she is and has the responsibility riding on her shoulders of the agricultural industry here in this

province, to show diplomacy and regard for other jurisdictions, but yet bring forward Manitoba producers' views in a manner that is non-confrontational—and to show the indignation that she did that night that constituted the leaving of that banquet hall, a more social atmosphere, if I might say so, Mr. Speaker, the delegations from Alberta and Québec. I recognize, as do all members of the House, the important impact that the federal government has to play in the agricultural industry here in this province, but I do recognize that this province and this government must take a greater role in supporting the agricultural industry. We need to return the dollars that are extracted from agriculture back to agriculture. We need to reduce the climate in which our producers are forced to carry on their everyday activities.

I want to bring mention to one particular line in the revenue column of this province's financial statement, that being for motive fuels. More than \$57 million is collected by this province for motive fuel, which more primarily is identified by the movement of products by the rail lines within our province.

CP Rail recognizes that the tonnage hauled throughout their rail network is, in fact, almost two-thirds oriented to agricultural industry. It is only prudent to assume that close to their fuel consumed in hauling that tonnage extracts two-thirds of that \$57 million that is collected by the Finance Minister (Mr. Selinger) here in this House.

I want to encourage at this time the Finance Minister to closely examine that line of revenue and where that revenue is extracted. Because it comes on the backs of the farmers here in the province of Manitoba. Fifty-seven million dollars. If in fact two-thirds of that were to be returned to the producers here in this province, it would be a tremendous shot in the arm for an industry that just recently, in fact, today the forecast for the net revenues for the province of Manitoba agricultural producers is forecast to be absolutely zero. Zero in net income increase for the forthcoming year.

All of our costs have increased. It does not matter what one looks at. But even if we were to

look at fuel, for instance, we are paying a phenomenal increase, 30-plus-percent increase over last year in just our fuel cost only. And yet, we are looking at a zero increase in our income. How can we sustain such increases without the provincial government which is a very integral player in the taxation regime in which we as producers function?

So I ask the Minister of Finance to examine closely the taxes that are collected on the backs of the farmers and the farming families here in the province of Manitoba, to look at reducing those costs so that we can, in fact, exist and continue to produce in the field of agriculture, of which all of us are so proud.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to leave with a particular note in regard to the federal government's level of support. I recently travelled to the United States, where last Friday the Congress passed the 2001 farm program bill, which provides for a level of funding to all programs related to agriculture in the United States at \$750 billion, \$750 billion which absolutely pales in comparison to the \$3.5 billion dollars that the Canadian government allocates towards farm programs and the Agriculture and Agri-food Canada's operation. It behooves me to understand how the federal government can look at our closest neighbour, our strongest competition in this world of global economy, and not recognize the regime in which we have had to compete.

In fact, even further to last Friday, the Congress as well initiated \$175 million worth of support to the apple producers within United States as a recognition of the depressed prices. How are our producers in the Annapolis Valley, in the Okanagan valleys of our nation to compete with this level of support? We have to come together as a united Legislature to pass this amended motion so that we can demonstrate that we are in support of the farming community within this province of ours. Mr. Speaker, I ask for all colleagues here present to support the motion as amended in this House today.

**Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa):** I am pleased to be able to join the debate along with my colleagues today to talk about agriculture in this House as we debate this resolution. As an

observer of agricultural issues over a number of years, not being actively involved in it, there does not seem to be an industry anywhere in the world that can, with its issues, cause some confusion amongst members of the public.

I want to speak particularly of the 1999 disaster that took place in a large area of southwestern Manitoba. Unfortunately, we sometimes get that particular event mixed in and confused with a lot of other agricultural issues. Those issues are out there. Issues that took place this year with excessive moisture, issues that others have talked about dealing with rural prices and subsidies. The fact of the matter is all of these things get rolled into one, and I think the government of the day escapes the scrutiny that they so much deserve dealing with that '99 disaster by talking about so many other things without dealing specifically with the situation in southwestern Manitoba.

\* (17:00)

I know that the Premier of today and the Minister of Agriculture visited Melita, I believe, in the spring of last year when they were in opposition and certainly did their share in supporting the initiatives that we brought forward at that time, but I do not know whether they have been out there since. I do not know whether the Premier has been back to southwestern Manitoba other than to the Premiers' Conference in Brandon and some visits to Brandon and down to the Peace Gardens in Boissevain. But I would urge him to take some time and take some of his ministers to places like Melita and Souris.

**An Honourable Member:** Will you pair me?

**Mr. Gilleshammer:** Yes, I will pair you, I will go with you. I think maybe we have struck a deal here that the Premier has agreed, in the near future, to attend that area of southwestern Manitoba to talk at the kitchen table with some real people, to talk to business people, to families, to school boards and municipal councils, to church groups, and try and get a better understanding of the hurt that is out there. Even though there was a response last June to the issue of unseeded acreages, to the issue of custom seeding, to the issue of forage

restoration, there still is a lot of hurt out there, and the problem has not gone away. I think that the Premier, at that time, putting politics aside, was showing some genuine compassion in going out there and a genuine will to try and understand those issues. I would urge him to go back there to take some time. He asked if I would pair with him, and I certainly would. In fact, I would help him to set up some meetings that I think would be beneficial for him.

There have been very, very responsible producers out there who have brought forward issues. I believe Scott Rose was one of them and a group from Souris who were prepared to share the numbers, share the information about their farm and other farms in the area. There was also Bob McNabb from Minnedosa and some of his colleagues who came forward with information, and I know that the Premier has seen this information. I think it really does nothing for him or his minister or his government to not address those issues and understand those issues, yet talk about changes to crop insurance, which we all accept.

The previous minister announced to those in Melita that day when the Premier was there and yes, the current minister may have signed her name to it. But that coverage was there on an optional basis in the past. We were going to move to make it compulsory. Now that you have, that is fine. That does not address the '99 issue, neither does the \$100 million that has been put into the system for all producers in Manitoba. The issue is targeting some support to those producers who in 1999 were unable to plant a crop. I think that every time that issue is raised and the Premier or the Minister of Agriculture goes on the big picture of all these things they have done, it is really a bit of a slap on the face for those producers who feel they are not being heard, they are not being understood by the Premier.

Again, I am encouraged that he is showing some interest today in going out there in the near future to try and understand those issues and the problems that they are having. I am wondering, too, whether it is wise to let his agricultural minister go to Ottawa anymore. I know the first time she went there she left abruptly with a press release in hand, of course, which makes one

wonder just how quickly they can be manufactured, and while she was away from the table, presumably some comments and decisions were being made.

Another time she went down there she comes back with \$10 million less than was on the table before, so again I just say to the Premier maybe it is not a good idea to have her go down there by herself, and perhaps he should join her there because I know he is a hard bargainer. He got that experience in his previous life at the union table, to say the right things at the right time, to pound his fist on the table when he needs to. I know that he is also flexible because we saw this in the Shilo delegation and his willingness to, I think, go out to Shilo and meet those people and understand that situation and modify his position. I think he is going to be given credit for that in the big picture. So perhaps the next time there is another agricultural ministers meeting he should get involved himself and use those negotiating skills he has and see that he can do more for Manitoba to address the agricultural issues that my colleagues have been talking about today.

I say that we have representation on this side from people who actually are in the agricultural industry but we also have many constituents out there who are, I think, prepared to state their case, do it in a very passionate way but to back it up with some hard, cold facts that I think the Premier needs to look at because amending the crop insurance does not solve the problem of 1999. I know that the Premier is going to raise this with the Prime Minister. We have seen over the last 10 months or so the fact that federal members of Parliament from Manitoba are saying what a wonderful relationship they had with the Premier of Manitoba today, that they can get together and discuss things. I know that he has the ear of senior ministers in the federal government and he needs to, I think, take the same approach to the '99 agricultural issue as he has taken to other issues and make this a priority. I know you cannot have too many topics on the table at one time, but with his new-found friendships with members of the federal government I am sure he can press the case and see that the shortcomings of the response to the '99 agricultural crisis in southwestern Manitoba can still be addressed.



So, with that, Mr. Speaker, I will end my comments and certainly would encourage the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture to come out to southwestern Manitoba at their earliest convenience. I know that while he was out there for the Premier's conference he had time for a wine and cheese party in Neepawa. I think his time might have been better spent. *[interjection]* Well, maybe you did not have enough money to pay for it. Others did.

But I would encourage him to set some of his time aside to visit with southwestern Manitoba producers and hear first-hand the issues that they have, the needs that they have. I do not think it is too late to resolve them. I think he can use his strong relationship with the Prime Minister of Canada. I know that in earlier times he found time to produce a picture of a former premier and a former prime minister. Surely there must be one of the current Premier and the Prime Minister too, meeting together and discussing issues. I would look forward to him using that influence with the Prime Minister to get him to revisit this issue.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of this resolution as it is now amended in consideration of the situation currently in rural Manitoba and the situation as it has evolved from 1999 in southwestern Manitoba. I have been a consistent advocate for the need in southwestern Manitoba to put in place a JERI program, as was done in the Red River Valley, jointly funded by the Province and the federal government, to put in place support for small business in rural communities that have suffered and need some help and have called for such help, again as was done in the Red River Valley.

I have been consistent in calling for an initiative which I would call a water management initiative, much like the diking initiative, and so on, that was developed in the Red River Valley but appropriate for southwestern Manitoba, looking at drainage and irrigation and water management in a broader sense, again with federal-provincial participation but with clear leadership from the Province in this area, putting forward a strong proposal cost-analyzed, the merits and the benefits from it.

These, to date, have not happened. We can debate back and forth why they have not happened, but I continue to be a supporter of these types of initiatives for southwestern Manitoba to continue to address the circumstances of 1999, and, again, for these types of initiatives to take place in areas which have been affected this year by the heavy rains and wet weather.

I want to talk briefly about some of the problems which have arisen in recent days. Clearly, the heavy rains and wet weather have led to road washouts in areas like Lac du Bonnet and La Broquerie. Road washouts are clearly covered under the DFAA agreement, have been in the past. Such maintenance, one presumes, will be covered again this year. There should be federal and provincial support where this level of damage has occurred.

The more problematic and uncertain help from the federal and provincial governments deals with circumstances where there has been heavy rain damage to agricultural lands to circumstances—and when one asks why this has occurred, then it becomes clear that some of the reasons for the heavy damage are not just that there were heavy rains but that in some circumstances, as in the R.M. of Macdonald, there has been poor upkeep of drains for some 20 or 30 years.

\* (17:10)

In fair measure, this is an area which for a municipality as the R.M. of Macdonald there needs to be provincial leadership and involvement because the size of the drains, the significant and substantial nature of the infrastructure means that there needs to be a senior government partner like the provincial government involved in some fashion to make sure that municipalities around the province have an infrastructure program, if you call it, a drainage program, a water management program with some funds backing it up, to make sure that water management in our province is handled in an ongoing and responsible way to lessen the impact of the heavy rains as we have had them.

I would like to refer to circumstances in the R.M. of Cartier some years ago, where clearly

the attention that was paid by individual farmers had a very dramatic effect on the extent of flooding. Farmers who had taken the precautions and made sure that their drains were kept up and their fields were well drained had in fact virtually no problems with some heavy rains, and adjacent farmers who had not paid similar attention to the drainage from their fields got into severe troubles.

Indeed, this is a lesson, not just to individual farmers, but to R.M.s and to the Province. If we are going to have and to deal on an ongoing basis, as we do in this province, with heavy rains and wet weather, then we need a province-wide and substantive water management approach to make sure that drains, irrigation, which we are behind on in this province, are up to date to give advantages to our agricultural producers and to make sure we are using the latest in approaches, but also keeping up the attention as it is needed. In areas of Rosburn, for example, a considerable part of the problems with drains can be attributed to a situation with beavers there building dams, blocking drains and culverts. Again, it is an issue in some fashion of maintaining the drainage system, the water management system for our province. Here is where we need a water management initiative supported, not only with some framework at the provincial level, but with some funding assistance to municipalities in partnership to make sure on a province-wide basis that we have attention.

I have spoken in quite specific terms of some of the things that I believe that need to be done. We have some programs in place that will provide some level of compensation through Crop Insurance and so on. These should be indeed reviewed to make sure that they are effective, as we understand more on how extensive the damage is.

Clearly, there is a major role here for the provincial government to show some leadership. This proposed resolution clearly indicates the role for the provincial as well as the federal government. I would hope that the provincial government, with various departments, shows the initiative that is badly needed, I would suggest, particularly if the predictions are correct that global warming will lead to increased wet

weather in the spring in Manitoba and increased problems with flooding and wet-weather situations.

So let us make sure that that long-run plan is in place. Let us make sure that we have a situation which will provide better security for farmers, for people who live in rural areas, as well as indeed helping people in urban areas, because people in urban areas have problems with flooding, too, from time to time. Thank you.

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to stand and talk to the subamendment to the amendment to the original motion.

I am very pleased to have this opportunity to do that, at the very least to be able to address the subamendment that was put forward and also to recognize, I think, something that has sort of gelled this afternoon that I have not sensed being prevalent here in this House on this particular issue for a while this spring; that is that a lot of work has gone into putting together, not just the original motion that was put forward, but also the amendment that my colleague the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the Minister of Government Services, put forward as an amendment to the original motion, and also, I may add, to the subamendment that was brought forward by the MLA for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner), the critic for the Opposition, the Agriculture critic for the Official Opposition.

Mr. Speaker, I really do hope that the work that has been done here today can form the basis of what should have happened quite a long time ago, and that is that a strong united position can come forward out of this debate this afternoon, that we can move forward together with an amendment that says that areas of Manitoba that have been hit by a legitimate disaster can be approached with an all-party motion with the support of all members of this Legislature.

So, with those very, very few words, I am pleased to have been able to contribute to this motion today. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for Emerson.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Mr. Speaker, I—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Does the Honourable Member have leave to be recognized the second time, as he has already spoken? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would propose that under the amendment that I had proposed under clause 3 that we remove the word "the" after "under" and "CFIP" before "program." It would then read: As agreed to under new programs. It would say "under new programs."

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave to withdraw the words "the CFIP" and to add "new" and change "program" to "programs"? Is there leave? *[Agreed]* Is it agreed to? *[Agreed]*

Is the House ready for the question?

**Some Honourable Members:** Question.

**Mr. Speaker:** The question before the House is subamendment moved by the Honourable Member for Emerson.

Is it the pleasure of the House to have the subamendment read?

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the subamendment?

\* (17:20)

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** All agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

The question before the House is the amendment proposed by the Honourable Minister of Highways and Government Services (Mr. Ashton), as amended.

Is it the pleasure of the House to have the amendment read?

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the amendment?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** Agreed. The question before the House is the motion of the Honourable Member for Emerson, as amended.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** As amended. Agreed.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there agreement to call the hour six o'clock? *[Agreed]*

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, July 19, 2000

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