



Second Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, July 4, 2001

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Kenaston Underpass

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Jamie Kitchen, Graham Peterson, Chantal Girard and others, praying that the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Matt Williams, J. Sokol, L. Noseworthy and others, praying that the Premier of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Kenaston Underpass

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen), I have reviewed the petition and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [*Agreed*]

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

THAT the intersection at Wilkes and Kenaston has grown to become the largest unseparated crossing in Canada; and

THAT the volume of traffic for this railroad crossing is twelve times the acceptable limit as set out by Transport Canada; and

THAT vehicles which have to wait for trains at this intersection burn up approximately

\$1.4 million in fuel, pollute the environment with over 8 tons of emissions and cause approximately \$7.3 million in motorist delays every year.

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Premier of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), I have reviewed the petition and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [*Agreed*]

Madam Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth:

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WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY THAT the Premier of Manitoba consider reversing his decision to not support construction of an underpass at Kenaston and Wilkes.

* (13:35)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have

with us this afternoon John Kimbell, founder and chair of the National Aboriginal Achievement Awards, and also Peter Jensen, director for corporate development, National Aboriginal Achievement Awards. They are the guests of the honourable Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Robinson).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here today.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Health Sciences Centre Waiting Room Death

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I think all members in the House extend their deepest sympathies to Marie Rogalsky and her entire family for the recent loss of her husband, Herman, that took place this weekend. Mr. Rogalsky passed away in a Health Sciences Centre waiting room while he was waiting for an ultrasound test.

Mr. Speaker, after being told the wait would be two to three hours, it was reported that Mrs. Rogalsky left the hospital, returning about an hour later to find her husband, and I quote: He was dead, blue, black in the face.

This Premier promised Manitobans that he would fix health care in six months and that patients would not be treated in hospital hallways. Yet, in a year and a half under his watch, three people have died in waiting rooms and in emergency room hallways.

What does this Premier have to say with his broken promises to the Rogalsky family and their children?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I, too, would offer our condolences to the Rogalsky family on the loss of Herman at the hospital over the weekend.

I think it is very important that we not play politics with a tragedy like this. We know that the individual was seen at the Seven Oaks Hospital within an hour by a doctor in the triage area. We also know that shortly thereafter at the Health Sciences Centre the death took place.

It is certainly very important for us to deal with this situation and the tragedy through facts. We certainly will expect the Chief Medical Examiner to review this situation and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority to find out what happened and if there is anything that could have taken place that would have prevented this very, very unfortunate death.

Mr. Murray: Well, Mr. Speaker, there is truth in what the Premier said. Mrs. Rogalsky first did go to Seven Oaks General Hospital but then had to go to the Health Sciences Centre for the ultrasound test. Because there was no ambulance available, Mrs. Rogalsky had to drive her husband, who was suffering in pain from a blood clot, from Seven Oaks to the Health Sciences Centre for that test.

I should remind the Premier that during the months of March the wait for an ultrasound test has gone from 13 weeks, 14 weeks in April and now 15 weeks in May. Mrs. Rogalsky believes her husband would be alive today if the test had been done immediately.

In this article, she is quoted as saying: Now I do not have a husband just because they said it was a two- or three-hour wait. He is gone, he is totally gone and I do not have a husband anymore.

Mrs. Rogalsky believes her husband would be alive today if the test had been done immediately.

This Premier promised Manitobans like the Rogalsky family that he would slash waiting lists and fix health care. Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Rogalsky family and all Manitobans, why has he broken his promise?

* (13:40)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, again dealing with the political statements, politics should not play any part in this discussion. There were no patients in the hallways and the waiting lists that we were talking about and the ultrasound equipment locations had not changed between the two administrations.

Mr. Speaker, every day nurses, doctors, technicians save hundreds of lives in Winnipeg emergency wards and emergency wards across the province. There was a triage decision made at the Seven Oaks Hospital. I am not in this House equipped to, nor would I suggest the Leader of the Opposition is equipped to second guess that medical decision. I think the Chief Medical Examiner of Manitoba is equipped to deal with the circumstances of the unfortunate death, the circumstances that took place, and whether any changes or any change could have made a difference. I will rely on medical advice and facts to determine from the Chief Medical Examiner, and I will await his recommendations because I think Manitobans will want to know the facts and will want to know them from medical experts.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, it was Mrs. Rogalsky who found her husband lying dead on a couch in a waiting room. After alerting hospital staff about her husband, she then picked up the phone and called her son who arrived at the hospital from Tyndall Park in 10 minutes, that is 5 minutes before emergency personnel. Can the Premier explain to this family why it took emergency personnel in a hospital 5 minutes longer to get to Mr. Rogalsky than it took his son who lives in Tyndall Park? Can he explain to Mrs. Rogalsky why she does not have a husband anymore?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Chief Medical Examiner will be reviewing everything dealing with this case, the original triage decision, the situation dealing with the diagnosis at the original hospital that took place within an hour. We will be reviewing the decision and availability of ambulances, who made that decision and were there ambulances available, the decision to have the individual third on the list for ultrasound. There were two ultrasounds that were completed within the period of time that Mr. Rogalsky was awaiting that ultrasound.

Again, I am not going to second guess the medical priorities that were established and the whole issue of the response after Mrs. Rogalsky found her husband and some of the issues that have been raised and brought to my attention, which I have no plausible explanation to on the issue of follow-up with the family after the

incident. All these issues must be examined and reviewed by medical experts independent of the decisions made at Seven Oaks and the decisions made at the Health Sciences Centre. All matters will be examined in the public interest.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition, on a new question.

Health Sciences Centre Waiting Room Death

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): On a new question, Mr. Speaker. In February of 2000 John Lecoy died in the Health Sciences Centre emergency room. He was never seen by a doctor. Eight months later, in October, Robert Collicott died in the same emergency room while he was waiting for care. He, too, had not been seen by a doctor. These deaths were the first in an emergency room hallway in Manitoba since 1983. Now Herman Rogalsky has also died while waiting for care.

* (13:45)

The Premier did not fix health care in six months as he promised. He did not act following the first death that occurred under his watch. He did not act following the second death that occurred under his watch. Is he going to act now that there has been a third death? How many Manitobans have to die before this Premier takes action?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): I caution the Leader of the Opposition in terms of some of the facts that he has stated. Particularly in matters of this kind, I think to go for the political hit does not serve the public on this kind of matter. With respect to the Lecoy and the Collicott matters, the Collicott matter was reviewed by the Chief Medical Examiner. Mr. Collicott was triaged by the triage nurse. Three recommendations concerning emergency rooms: that is, an extra triage nurse at Health Sciences Centre; a possible ambulance diversion when the emergency room is crowded; and the imposition of a central bed registry, something that has been promised since 1992, were all recommendations, Mr. Speaker, that came out of those particular matters dealing with emergency rooms.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Doer) completely misled Manitobans during the last election. He promised to fix health care in six months. He promised to slash waiting lists. He promised to hire more full-time nurses. On all counts he has failed to deliver. He has no credibility. With this third completely unacceptable death in the last year and a half, he should be mortified at what his broken promises have done to health care in our province.

Mr. Speaker, November of last year, nurses stated that nothing had changed in the ER since the first death. They were hopeful after the second death that perhaps something, something would happen. Unbelievably, they have now seen a third death.

Mr. Speaker, why? Why did this Premier not take some action?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is not accurate. If he is going to raise matters of this kind, I would suggest that he be accurate in this House. First off—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Chomiak: First off, Mr. Speaker, the incident that occurred, the very unfortunate incident that occurred on the weekend occurred while the individual was awaiting an ultrasound test at the Health Sciences Centre, and that is being reviewed. The issues surrounding that have been reviewed. He was awaiting an ultrasound test, after having been triaged to Seven Oaks Hospital.

With respect to the changes at the emergency room, I met with the emergency nurses myself several months ago to talk about the changes that had been put in place, including the addition of a triage nurse, the diversion policy with respect to the changes there, as well as the imposition of a central bed registry, because I met with the nurses myself to discuss those issues and discuss how they were working out and how we would deal with those issues.

Mr. Murray: Mr. Speaker, in November of last year nurses warned this Government that failure to act would lead to more deaths. One nurse said,

and I quote: I can guarantee 100 percent death is going to happen again.

This Premier ignored their warnings and he has broken his election promise, three completely unacceptable deaths in a year and a half. How many more warnings does this Premier need before he is going to take action? What does he say to those people who are afraid, and what does he do to take action before more people die waiting for him to make some plans?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, again, the member ought to be careful in his statements. I am precluded from indicating some of the factors concerning some of the events, concerning the exact cause of deaths, for example, of Mr. Collicott, but the member ought to be cautious in terms of the blanket statements he is throwing out.

Mr. Speaker, when we came into office, we realized that human resources was a major problem. We are now training more doctors than at any time in the past decade. We are now educating more nurses than any time in the past decade. We have now put in a program for X-ray technicians and lab technicians.

* (13:50)

We have expanded the ultrasound class for the first time to deal with the human resources. The Canadian Institute for Health Information indicated Manitoba has done more on the hallway situation than any other jurisdiction in the country. In fact, Ontario took the Manitoba plan to deal with hallway medicine and copied it.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

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

All we are getting from this minister is empty promises, and we know they are all broken.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member's question. The member had indicated inaccurately that we had not done a number of initiatives since we came to office. I was just pointing out to the member the number of initiatives that we have undertaken since we came to office.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, I would like to remind all honourable ministers of *Beauchesne's* Citation 417: Answers to questions should deal with the matter raised.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Next question.

Health Sciences Centre Waiting Room Death

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): As a wife and mother, I was very disturbed today to hear that Herman Rogalsky died alone in a hospital waiting room. I would like to ask the Minister of Health: Is that the way families are supposed to find their husbands and their children are supposed to find their fathers when they put their loved one in his care?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): As I indicated, the circumstances surrounding this situation are very tragic and our hearts go out to the families. If I were the Rogalsky family, I would be very upset as well and concerned, and that is why we are going to do follow-up on all these matters.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to ask this minister what he has to say to Herman Rogalsky's wife, Marie, to his children, his grandchildren and his foster children who no longer have a father, a husband, a grandfather because his health care system failed this family?

Mr. Chomiak: I have already indicated that if I were the family of Mr. Rogalsky I would be very upset and concerned. I would expect that the health system would respond by examining all

the circumstances, and that is what we intend to do.

Mrs. Driedger: I would like to ask the Minister of Health what he has to say to Mrs. Rogalsky, who today said: It is the health system that needs revamping. They need to take care of their patients. We have doctors and nurses flying out to the United States leaving our province and leaving the people to die. No good health care. We do not have a good health care system, and it is going to get worse and worse as time goes by.

What does he have to say to Mrs. Rogalsky and others who are watching his health care system fail Manitobans?

Mr. Chomiak: As I indicated in my previous responses that is why we are doing follow-up. My belief on all these matters is every time there is a problem or difficulty that comes to our attention we ought to examine it, and we ought to learn from it so that we can ensure that those kinds of things do not happen again.

That was part of the entire issue around the 12 baby deaths at the Health Sciences Centre, and an inquest and a follow-up report that indicated a number of follow-ups in the system had to be undertaken. That is why we were so committed to that, and that is why we try to follow-up on every one of these issues to make sure that every time something unfortunate happens, out of that misfortune perhaps come some improvements to the system. That is probably the only satisfaction we can give to people who have had an unfortunate incident in the health care system.

* (13:55)

Health Care System Election Promises

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): We have heard the Premier (Mr. Doer) today, in answers to questions, talk about not playing politics with this kind of an issue. I would like to ask the Premier why he played politics and misled Manitobans during the last election campaign when he said that all Manitobans had to do was elect him and he would fix our health care system within six months?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I think it has been pretty evident that there have been more activities and more initiatives in the past 18 or 19 months of this Government than occurred over the past decade.

For example, we increased, for the first time, the number of doctors that are being educated after the cuts of 1992. We have doubled the enrolment of nurses so we can get back and retain some of the nurses we have, after the programs had been cut in 1996 and '97. We, for the first time, reinstated the X-ray lab program after the lab program had been completely eliminated by the previous government. We are increasing the ultrasound class so we can have additional ultrasound operators. We put in a specific plan on November 22, 1999, to deal with the issue of hallway medicine and we got an 80% reduction and a recognition across the country as having done the best in the country.

For the first time, we are the third-lowest waiting list for hip and knee replacements in the country.

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne's* 417: Answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and not provoke debate.

I do not need an entire list of broken promises from this minister. If he wants to list off that there have been three more deaths than since 1983, Mr. Speaker, 1983 was the last time, and that was under their watch as well.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, just because members make a statement does not mean we have to stand up and agree with it. If in fact the statement was wrong and the question was wrong, as it was, it is incumbent upon me to provide the member with the accurate facts as to the statement she made. She was wrong with what she said, and I was simply outlining the appropriate response.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for River East, on the same point of order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: We have from a Minister of Health who, during the election campaign, said they were going to fix hallway medicine within six months after being elected, and again on January 7 of 2000, the Minister of Health was quoted in the paper as saying he is still on target. Says the Minister of Health: Hallway medicine to end in six months. That is what we were elected on. That was a commitment we made, and it is going to happen.

Mr. Speaker, he was dead wrong. The facts prove that today.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, I listened to the question very carefully and I was listening to the answer very carefully. The honourable member does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mrs. Mitchelson: We hear very often from this Government—

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, this Government is great at playing the blame game. They like to blame triage nurses, blame—

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Amid the heckles from members opposite, the member opposite does not have a question. Mr. Speaker, would you please ask her, since this is a supplementary question, to please put a succinct question?

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for River East, on the same point of order.

Mrs. Mitchelson: This is a very serious issue. We have a Government that has misled Manitobans, has been very dishonest with Manitobans. I think it is important that we have the ability to question them on their integrity and on their honesty and ask the questions on how Manitobans can trust them when they have broken promise after promise.

*(14:00)

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Government House Leader, I would like to take this opportunity to remind all honourable members that *Beauchesne's* Citation 409(2) advises that a supplementary question should not require a preamble.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I would ask the honourable member to please put her question.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Why do this Premier (Mr. Doer) and this Minister of Health continue to blame the triage nurses, to blame the health care system, to blame the former government for all the problems within the health care system, and why do they not take some leadership and some ownership and live up to the commitments that they made to Manitobans? Why did they give Manitobans false hope?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I think if the member would have listened to my responses to the earlier questions, she would have heard quite clearly. The member would be hard pressed, even under their interpretation of some of the issues, to indicate that we blamed anyone. I said we would review. I said if I were the family we would be concerned, and I said we will do follow-up and review all the issues.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, my question for the Minister of Health is: Why have we seen three Manitobans die under his watch, the first deaths while waiting for treatment since 1983? Why have we seen, and why do we continue to

see deterioration of our health care system under his watch?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I am not sure if the member is aware of several incidents that occurred when people left the ERs when they were government and died after having left the ER because they could not get in. In fact, there was an inquest to that effect.

Just let me point out, quote: We have the shortest medical waits, October 12, *Winnipeg Free Press*; Medical treatment fastest in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, our *Winnipeg Sun*; Manitoba develops six-month ER cure, Toronto *Globe and Mail*; Empty hallways, *Winnipeg Free Press*, December 21, 2000.

Health Care System Government Action

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): The Government did promise to fix everything in six months with \$15 million.

Mr. Speaker, I would just like to quote what Mrs. Rogalsky said about our health care system. She said: It is the health system that needs revamping. They need to take care of their patients. We do not have a good health care system, and it is going to get worse and worse as time goes by.

I want to ask this Premier (Mr. Doer): When will he drop his ideological games in health care, buying clinics that the public did not need to buy, trying to create phantoms to attack in health care? When will he start minding his knitting and dedicate his attention to this most important issue, the saving of our health care system, which is in stress all across the country? When will he stop playing the big roller with the arena and get down to doing what Manitobans elected him to do?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I have already indicated if I was the Rogalsky family, and I, as Health Minister, I would be very upset with the situation. I would ask for follow-up and that will take place.

With respect to what the member states, I fail to understand why members do not

acknowledge that we have increased the medical class, so we will have more doctors. We have increased the nursing class, so we will have more nurses. We have increased the X-ray class, so we will have more X-ray technicians. We are increasing the ultrasound class, so we will have more individuals providing ultrasound.

In addition to that, during the hallway medicine initiative, half of the resources went into community-based programs, including expanded oncology, expanded home intravenous, 11 percent to community health centres in Winnipeg this budgetary year, 8 percent to personal care homes, resources put into community and other options, as well as an expansion of community access centres, which is the way that health care is supposed to develop and supposed to go, in addition to trying to rebuild the infrastructure.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, if the member wants to bring out lists and play who has the longest lists, I have a long one of my successes in health care, too.

I want to ask the Premier (Mr. Doer): Why will he not acknowledge that the Manitoba health care system, just like the system right across the country whatever party is in government, is under stress that it cannot handle by normal means? When will he acknowledge that the answer means a very thorough rethink of our health care system and not the kind of quick-fix ideological debate that he is trying to put forward as a solution? When will he mind his knitting and look after health care for Manitobans like the Rogalskys?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate that we recently had a Sinclair report that examined the 12 baby deaths at the Health Sciences Centre during the mid-'90s with some significant recommendations which we are in the process of implementing. We recently had a nursing task force that went out to deal with nursing conditions and had a whole series of recommendations which we are implementing to improve the working conditions for nurses. We also had nurses tell us we need more nurses, so we are training more nurses. We had doctors tell us we need more doctors. We are training more doctors. We had doctors in rural northern Manitoba saying we need to be retained in rural

northern Manitoba, so we put in place a series of incentives to keep doctors in rural northern Manitoba. We also opened more beds, and I will tell you if we had the human resources, which we hope to have in another year or two, we would open far more beds.

Mr. Praznik: I want to again address my question to the Premier who is in charge of this Government. I want to ask the Premier why he will not acknowledge that the debate around health care is a larger debate about saving our health care system than just putting a little more money in it, as he has done, or just tinkering. It is a major debate that he is running away from. I want to ask this Premier: What does he say to Mrs. Rogalsky when she says to all of us in this Legislature to start thinking about people's lives? I want to ask him that question.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): There are a number of issues that were raised by the former Minister of Health. Every introduction and every initiative we have taken is taking a long-term and short-term issue with changing and saving lives. I want to say again in this House that hundreds of Manitobans are seen by doctors, nurses, technicians and lives are saved every day in our health care system. I want to give credit in this time of concern to the front-line medical people that make good decisions on behalf of people and patients every day they work on behalf of Manitobans throughout our health care system.

I also want to say to the Rogalsky family that every concern that has been raised by you and others that we have identified in our initial review of this case will be examined independent of Government, independent of the two facilities, by the Chief Medical Examiner. The public has a right to the answer to a number of questions that have arisen out of this case and the public will get those answers from an independent source.

* (14:10)

Electromagnetic Fields Health Concerns

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister responsible

for Manitoba Hydro: In assessing the relationship between power frequency magnetic fields and childhood cancer, one moves from individual studies to pooled analysis to authoritative reviews. Late last week an authoritative review by the International Agency for Cancer Research produced its report. They concluded that pooled analysis from a number of well-conducted studies show a fairly consistent statistical association between childhood leukemia and power frequency residential magnetic field strengths above 0.4 microTesla with an approximate twofold increase in risk of childhood leukemia.

At the very least the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro should now, on the basis of this review, undertake a survey to measure to see whether any Manitoba residences are close enough in proximity to power lines that they would be in the range where they would be experiencing a power frequency magnetic field of 0.4 microTesla or above.

Will the minister undertake such a survey and notify those homes of the results of this report if they are within that range of high voltage power lines?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): I will have the Clean Environment Commission and, of course, our officials review the research that he has indicated and correlate it with the levels of EMF exposure of magnetic fields that are in Manitoba. If there are any concerns that arise as a result of that, I will report it back to the Legislature.

Mr. Gerrard: I think it is very important that Manitobans know whether there are exposed homes. Will you undertake as a minister to make sure that Manitobans know whether their homes are close enough to power lines to be in the range of this exposure to power frequency magnetic fields?

Mr. Selinger: As I indicated in my first response, we will take a look at the research and the level of exposure and see if there are any concerns. Of course, we will report it back to the member and anybody else who is interested.

Mr. Gerrard: My supplementary: Is the minister indicating that he is not willing to

undertake such a survey and inform Manitobans where there may be a risk?

Mr. Selinger: I indicated very clearly, in my first two responses, we will review the research. We will see if the research indicates any risk with respect to Manitobans. If there is any exposure or any risk with respect to any Manitoban, I will be happy to report that back to any member of the Legislature or any member of the public.

Health Care System Government Action

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say at the outset that I am not blaming the Premier (Mr. Doer) or the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) personally for the death of Mr. Rogalsky, but we have to heed the words of the people who have experienced disasters in our health care system. We have a person here who is a living example of why we should change the way we do things in the health care system. This woman, who has a bad heart, was forced to drive her husband to a health care facility because of lack of ambulances.

Now if there is different information, then it needs to be corrected, but the issue here is that we have a mess in the health care system because this Government has not—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you please direct the member's attention to the rules of this House. A question should have one carefully phrased sentence as a preamble.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Russell, on the same point of order.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, with the greatest of respect for the House leader, on the same point of order, I started my question by ensuring that it was not the Premier nor the Minister of Health who we were blaming personally. That, of course, extended my preamble. I apologize for that. I am ready to put my questions.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member has apologized for that. That should take care of the matter.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Russell, please put your question.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the Minister of Health whether he is prepared to stop the political rhetoric of going through the list of things that he has done as minister, and whether he is prepared to seriously address this kind of issue in our health care system, because he has been warned by the nurses in our province, he has been warned by other professionals that we need to change the approach to health care in Manitoba. Is he prepared to listen to these people and embark on a change in the delivery of health care services in this province?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, that is what we have been doing since the day we were elected to office.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister whether he can for one moment lay his political rhetoric aside and really contemplate the tragedy that occurs day in and day out because of ideology that we are not prepared to change in looking at how we can revamp the health care system in this province. Is he prepared to lay his ideology aside and look at the issues and address them as they need to be addressed in this province?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, first off, we always start from the patient's perspective. That is why for 10 years there was no PACT, no community-based mental health program. We were the first government to implement a community-based mental health program. That is why we doubled the money to emergency services. That is why there are more ambulances on the streets of the city of Winnipeg, that we had an agreement with last year, despite 10 years of constant struggles back and forth. That is why we reversed the previous decision to stop training nurses and go back to the diploma course. That is why we stopped the previous decision that had the cancellation or the reduction of doctors, and we put in place expanded doctors. That is why there are more

resources going to the community-based programs. That is why we put in place those programs on a daily basis to try to respond to needs.

Mr. Speaker, we are not perfect, but we are continuing to work at it every day.

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my question of the Premier (Mr. Doer). Since his minister is not prepared to lay aside his political rhetoric, will the Premier take this matter under serious consideration?

He has already said that he will provide information and there will be an inquest into this death, but will he assure Manitobans and Mrs. Rogalsky that he will take some action to ensure that there are no more deaths in our waiting rooms and in our hallways as we have experienced in the last year and a half?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I cannot promise no more deaths across the health care system. What I can promise is we will provide the resources to people in the system. What I can promise is that we will respond to their concerns, the concerns of patients, nurses and doctors. We will respond to their needs, we will try to meet their needs, and try to develop the programs and the systems that ensure that we can have the best and a better health care system every single day.

I cannot promise perfection, but I can promise that we are listening. We have put in place and we will continue to put in place both the programs and the resources necessary to give the people who work in the system the tools to provide the best patient care they can.

Diagnostic Testing Waiting Lists

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, a constituent of mine, Mr. Ed Merriam, has been told he will be waiting for up to nine months to receive an echocardiogram that his doctor says he needs now. This is not just about Ed, but about all those who are on the waiting list for six, seven and eight months.

What does it take? Does this constituent of mine, Mr. Merriam, have to die alone in a

hospital waiting room before he gets this Premier's and this minister's attention?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, so often members have brought individual cases to this House that have been very, very inaccurate. If the member would provide me with the details I would be quite happy to follow up on that particular matter.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my constituent, Ed Merriam, does he have to wait until his family walks in and finds him dead before that waiting list is reduced? It is not just about him, it is about the people who are waiting six, seven, eight and nine months and maybe more. Do the families have to wait for that moment to come when they die in the waiting room to get this minister's attention?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, with respect to the specific machines that do that work, I think we were reduced to three. We have now put in place capital to purchase eight, I believe, eight angiogram machines to provide that kind of service. I believe, if that is correct, we have, I think, doubled the number of machines that we are going to have in Winnipeg.

* (14:20)

Mr. Schuler: I ask this minister, on behalf of all of those who are waiting, how he responds to: He is gone, he is totally gone, and I do not have a husband anymore.

We might as well add into there: We do not have a father anymore. How does the minister respond to this family and to Mr. Merriam's family and the nine-month waiting list, waiting for crucial medical help while this minister does nothing?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I have indicated time and time again that when issues come to our attention we respond. That is why we have increased the number of CAT scan machines in this province by eight, eight new CAT scans, and an additional MRI and another one on the way.

On the angiogram machines, we have gone from I think a low of three to up to eight. On

ultrasound it is a human resource problem, but we are increasing the ultrasound; last week, \$9 million on new equipment; a \$4-million linear accelerator at CancerCare Manitoba; prior to that, \$32 million in new equipment, the greatest expansion of new equipment this province has ever seen. While it is not perfect, what we have to do is train the people to operate those machines, and we are doing that.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Ms. Cheryl Bayer

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today to share with the members of this House the outstanding achievements and accomplishments of a recent high school graduate and one of our own pages.

On Monday, June 21, I had the pleasure of attending Collège Béliveau graduation ceremony. The evening was one of recognition and celebration for all graduates. I also had the special pleasure of presenting the Member of the Legislative Assembly Award to Cheryl Bayer, a bright young woman who has been serving as a page in our Legislative Assembly. Ms. Bayer's accomplishments are numerous and are certainly a tribute to her dedication and hard work.

Along with the Member of the Legislature Assembly Award, Ms. Bayer also received the following honours: Excellence in French, Excellence in Pre-Calculus, Excellence in Advanced Calculus, Excellence in Biology, Excellence in Chemistry, the Collège Béliveau Student Council Scholarship, the St. Boniface-St. Vital Rotary Club Scholarship, Alumni Entrance Scholarship and the Governor General's Medal.

Ms. Bayer also graduated on Collège Béliveau's honour roll. Mr. Speaker, this list of accomplishments is sure to grow as Ms. Bayer will undoubtedly continue to succeed in whatever she pursues in her future. She is an outstanding young woman who has demonstrated her abilities and talents in her school, her

community and her workplace. Cheryl, on behalf of all members of this House, I congratulate you and wish you the best of luck and continued success. Thank you.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I, too, would like to give congratulations to a talented young woman who is a constituent in Radisson constituency. We have all had hundreds of students in our province graduate from high schools this past month in our constituencies, and I would like to offer congratulations to all of them in their accomplishments.

However, I would like to draw attention of the Chamber to this very special graduate who all of you have grown to know. This young woman is Cheryl Bayer, one of our pages who has been assisting us as members in this House all year. She has graduated from the French immersion program at Collège Béliveau, in my constituency, and was awarded a number of prizes at the graduation ceremony, including the MLA Award, to recognize her long list of achievements. Mr. Speaker, at her graduation she received the Governor General's Medal, the Alumni Entrance Scholarship, the Rotary Club Scholarship and the Collège Béliveau Student Council Scholarship.

She received the award of Excellence in Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry and French and maintained a grade point average of more than 90 percent. Cheryl was also awarded the Member of the Legislative Assembly Award to recognize her contribution to the life of the school while maintaining this high academic standing.

Cheryl does a lot more than achieve academically. She plays the flute in the school band, participates in the debating club and was a key member of the Collège Béliveau Grad Committee. Her achievements are made all the more remarkable because of the time she has dedicated to her duties here at the Legislature which take her away from her school activities and time on a regular basis.

I would like to encourage all members to join me in congratulating Cheryl on her graduation and wish her every success in the future.

Strawberry Production

Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to offer all honourable members of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly a small taste of Portage la Prairie.

It has been a tradition for quite a number of years now for the Member for Portage la Prairie to bring a sample of the delectable strawberry crop, which has made the region of Portage la Prairie famous worldwide. The strawberries you have in front of you are courtesy of the great constituency of Portage la Prairie.

Over the past two decades, strawberries have become a prominent crop in Portage la Prairie. There are now dozens of strawberry farms in the region; approximately 70 acres are devoted to strawberry production. Nowhere else in the country is there an abundance of strawberries as there are in Portage la Prairie. As such, the city has earned the title Strawberry Capital of Canada. The label is well deserved as was evidenced in the Guinness Book of World Records, where Portage la Prairie is registered with a giant bowl of strawberries weighing in at 1511 kilograms.

In Portage la Prairie we are proud of our economic diversity. These strawberries represent the area's ever-increasing commitment to crop diversification. I also invite all members to visit Portage la Prairie and partake of the saskatoon crop which is coming in next week and the raspberry crop in a couple of weeks time. I am sure this will spur your appetite with the strawberries you have at your place here today.

I hope all members enjoy this small taste of Portage la Prairie, and I encourage everyone to attend the Portage Ex this weekend, July 7 through 9, and sample some of our festivities in Portage la Prairie. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

High School Driver Education

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): This year Manitoba's High School Driver Education Program will celebrate its 35th anniversary. In 1966, driver education started under a branch of

the Department of Public Works which later became the Department of Highways and Transportation. This program started as a pilot project with a budget of just over \$56,000. The first instructor preparation course occurred the same year, training 35 instructors.

During the first year of operation there were 27 Manitoba public high schools operating the program with 1400 students enrolled in the driver education training. From this modest start the demand for this program grew quickly and significantly. By 1967, the number of instructors and students tripled to 4500 students and 108 instructors.

In 1987, Manitoba Public Insurance assumed responsibility for the High School Driver Education Program from the division of Driver and Vehicle Licencing. Today, Manitoba Public Insurance operates and funds a province-wide High School Driver Education Program. Traditionally, MPI has hosted one or two summer high school driver education classes in Winnipeg and on occasion one class in Brandon during the summer.

This year there are additional driver training opportunities that were offered to every Manitoba major community high school. This year it is anticipated that there will be nearly 400 Manitoba high school students in 13 schools taking advantage of the summer program.

In addition to the summer program, MPI also operates spring and fall sessions. Last year MPI hosted 463 courses in 156 schools, training some 14 500 students at a cost of over \$2 million. The goal is to increase the number of trained students to over 15 000, a significant increase from a humble beginning. The High School Driver Education Program is also offered in Fisher River, Long Plain, Cranberry Portage, Sagkeeng, Anishinabe and The Pas. Norway House may soon be added. As further interest is shown, additional courses will occur.

I am sure that all members of the Legislature, Mr. Speaker, join me in congratulating MPI and Driver and Vehicle Licencing for 35 years of a High School Driver Education Program service to our public, and may this valued service continue.

* (14:30)

Mr. Speaker: Order. Members' Statements, Wednesday, is—*[interjection]* That is fine. The honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns).

Independence Day (U.S.A.)

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard). I know he, along with the Premier (Mr. Doer), and indeed all members, would join me in this timely statement.

We wish our great neighbour to the south a very happy 225th birthday celebration on this their memorable day of July 4. It is something that we Canadians and, particularly, we Manitobans should be cognizant of the fact that we have and enjoy continuing good relations with this great nation that really is and continues to be a beacon of light for mankind throughout the world.

It was a remarkable coming together of an evolution of political thought into creating that first day of independence on the part of the country that we know of as the United States of America that has flourished with all its faults, with all its difficulties, to the greatness that it still is today. I maintain that we are particularly fortunate that we are neighbours to them.

Of course, some of us remember fondly the highlight of the summer social occasion when we did enjoy the presence of a Canadian consulate here in Winnipeg. Their doors were thrown open, and all too often it was a pleasant day, and their yards, their gardens were thrown open to what was, in my opinion, the party of the summer for municipal officials, politicians, the business community and a whole number of Manitobans who appreciate just how important the United States is to us here in Manitoba.

So, on behalf of all of us in the Chamber, happy birthday, Uncle Sam.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you canvass the

House to see if there is leave to not see the clock until 8 p.m. this evening.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to not see the clock till 8 p.m. this evening? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Mackintosh: Pursuant to the rules, I believe it is an Opposition Day today, Mr. Speaker.

OPPOSITION DAY MOTION

Request for the Provincial Auditor To Examine and Audit the True North Entertainment Complex Limited Partnership

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): I move, seconded by the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed),

WHEREAS Manitobans desire an open, honest and accountable government; and

WHEREAS the Premier of Manitoba did state on May 10, 2001, on CBC-TV news that, "The VLT money is up to \$1.5 million a year" in the proposed arena project; and

WHEREAS the Premier of Manitoba, to date, refuses to acknowledge he made this commitment to Manitobans; and

WHEREAS on June 27, 2001, the Premier of Manitoba did state in the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba that, "We feel that the term sheet is very, very consistent with what we have said verbally."

WHEREAS on page 8 of the True North Entertainment Complex Limited Partnership and the Government of Canada, the Government of Manitoba, the City of Winnipeg Term Sheet it indicates that the True North L.P. will be allocated 75 percent of the first \$2 million of annual gross revenues from the VLTs; and

WHEREAS in the event that annual gross revenues exceed \$2 million the revenue allocation formula may be adjusted downward to provide 20 percent of gross revenues to the True North L.P.; and

WHEREAS according to the criteria for VLT distribution, the coin in threshold for a

single VLT in an establishment in the city of Winnipeg is \$432; and

WHEREAS 50 VLTs in the city of Winnipeg must, according to the criteria for VLT distribution, take in a minimum coin threshold of \$7,884,000 per year to avoid redistribution; and

WHEREAS according to page 8 of the Term Sheet, the Siteholder Agreement shall be 25 years; and

WHEREAS the True North L.P. may realize \$2,676,800 annually in VLT revenues; and

WHEREAS these numbers directly contradict the Premier of Manitoba's statement that, "The VLT money is up to \$1.5 million a year"; and

WHEREAS Winnipeg Liberal MP Anita Neville was reported on June 24, 2001, in *The Winnipeg Sun* to have expressed an interest in seeing the project's business plan; and

WHEREAS Ms. Neville further advised that the federal government's proposed \$10-million contribution to the building was definitely not a done deal; and

WHEREAS the Provincial Auditor has publicly stated in *The Winnipeg Sun* on June 27, 2001, that, "There seems to be a general concern about the project in the community . . . We could add confirmation in our report to citizens"; and

WHEREAS under Section 15(1) of The Provincial Auditor's Act, ". . . the Lieutenant Governor in Council or the member of the Executive Council charged with the administration of The Financial Administration Act, may, at any time, direct the Provincial Auditor to make an examination and audit of the accounts of any person, . . . branch, commission, board, department or agency of the government, in any way receiving, paying, or accounting for, public moneys and report thereon to him, and the Provincial Auditor shall forthwith make the examination, audit and report as directed, if in his opinion the making of the examination, audit and report does not interfere with his primary responsibilities"; and

WHEREAS the True North Entertainment Complex Limited Partnership is, under the Term Sheet dated May 14, 2001, to be the recipient of a minimum \$13 million from the Province of Manitoba; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Legislative Assembly urge the Manitoba Government to consider requesting the Provincial Auditor to make an examination and audit of the True North Entertainment Complex Limited Partnership including all aspects of public moneys allocated to the project; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Legislative Assembly urge the Manitoba Government to consider providing all necessary financial documentation related to the project including a business plan to the Provincial Auditor as soon as possible.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: So, before I recognize the honourable Member for Southdale, there were a few words that were altered, so I would just like to say that it will go down on record as tabled.

Mr. Reimer: I wonder whether the alteration was between my reading and the lettering. Just pretzelizing it. Well, that happens.

Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to put a few words on the record in regard to this Opposition Day motion in the fact that one of the things that we are asking for is we were wanting this Premier (Mr. Doer) and this Government to come out with some more accountability in regard to the exact true nature of the dispensation of the VLTs in the term sheet that the minister and the First Minister (Mr. Doer) have referred to. Because in the terms of reference for the term sheet, it is very, very clear that it points out consistently that the VLT monies that are referred to are the gross revenues of the VLTs that are being distributed.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

When I talk about or when I understand gross revenues, I understand it being the dollars into the machines. The allocation that is being put forth by the True North proposition, in fact, it says I believe it is five times, where you

remark about annual gross revenues, that the amount of money that can be realized is a lot more than the \$1.5 million that the Premier has continually said is the maximum that will come back to the True North endeavours.

* (14:40)

I think these are some of the things that the Auditor General should take a look at, and in essence bring forth clarification to not only this House, but to the people of Manitoba, because they are asking the questions as to what amount of money is actually involved from the public purse.

I know the Premier (Mr. Doer) has said that it is a 70-30 split and the 30 percent being from the public purse. If you look at the \$13 million that has been committed by the provincial government, plus the amount of money that is being committed by the Province in regard to the amount of money for the VLT distribution, the numbers just do not jibe because the VLTs were taken from locations that were bringing in, I guess, at a minimum \$432 per machine. If you look at the amount of dollars that they could bring in under the minimum guidelines that are set up by the Lotteries distribution agreements, you are looking at, as was pointed out, 50 machines at \$432 a machine, we are looking at \$7.8 million a year. If the Premier is saying that they are going to get a minimum of 1.5 and 20 percent of the remaining over the allocation, you are looking at almost \$2.67 million of money that will be going to this private corporation for their financing for their project. I guess if you extrapolate that amount of money over 25 years, you are almost up to \$67 million, plus the \$13 million that they have already committed to. You are looking at \$79.9 million that will be going to this complex of public money.

Now this is a lot more money than what has been bandied around in regard to what the Premier (Mr. Doer) is talking about, this 70-30 split. It just does not make sense. It does not fit in, and the figures do not seem to jibe. Now the Premier is saying that these are some of the things that we worked out in the final agreement and everything, but, Mr. Speaker, these types of things are dollars and cents that the taxpayers of Manitoba should be questioning.

We are not questioning the fact that there is going to be an arena or the possible location of the arena. Whether it is in that location or in some other place, we feel that we will support the arena. However, it is the accountability of where the dollars come from and the fact that the arena is being proposed. It is the mechanics behind it that this Government is getting involved with that is causing the problems, the mechanics of not being accountable to where the monies are coming from. It is this type of hidden agenda that we see this Premier hiding behind in the fact that they are pushing for this arena, and the Auditor is the one who should be taking a final look at it.

We are asking for this Premier and this Government to put it before the Provincial Auditor, let them go through the cost analysis and come back with a report to the Legislature. That is what we are looking for. There are too many unanswered questions as to whether the monies are truly \$1.5 million, whether they are \$2.6 million, whether there is a total commitment by this Government of almost \$80 million over 25 years. These are some of the questions, I think, that have to be asked and answered, because not only is the site taking down a building that was on the verge of being declared a heritage building; now they are looking at a building that is going to be smaller than the original building that we have on Arena Road.

It is this type of indecision that we feel that the Government is not giving an accurate picture of. There has to be the ability to make an informed decision when you are spending taxpayers' dollars. It is that type of decision that I think we are asking this Premier and this Government to come by. It is a situation that I think a lot of people are questioning, and we on this side would put forth this type of motion.

There are other areas that I think need looking at in regard to the whole distribution of the funding on this, and I believe that there are some of my other colleagues who are also wanting to put something on the record. So I will let some other people put some comments on the record, too. Thank you very much.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it

gives me pleasure to make some comments today and put my comments on the record.

The debate clearly is about the True North Project as a whole. The Opposition claims to support the project, but, in fact, it struggles valiantly to put together a case of blocking True North.

Through Question Periods, Mr. Deputy Speaker, through comments they have made in the hallway to the media and other sources, on the one hand they are saying, yes, yes, we are in favour of revitalization; on the other hand, they raise all kinds of red herrings with regard to this particular issue with regard to True North.

The case they make is a flimsy one. I have the greatest respect for the member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen), but he has argued that one of the investments in the project, the Crocus Fund, is illegal. He was refuted directly on this point by the principal of Crocus, and, regrettably, I have not heard any apologies or anything with regard to Crocus. It may not be necessary to do so. That is just one I would like to point out.

Members opposite then tried to argue that the level of VLT revenues involved in the project was misrepresented. In fact, the term sheet of the True North deal released in the House long before the matter was even raised by the Opposition states the VLT contribution accurately and also in detail.

Most recently, members opposite have sought a reference to the Provincial Auditor, but here they are pushing against an open door. As the Auditor himself has stated, the terms of the deal are available, and he can review them at any time if he sees a problem. But at this point, he does not see any problems.

Certainly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this particular project holds a lot for the future of Winnipeg and the downtown of the city. Over and over, speakers on this side of the House have stated that Winnipeg needs something. It needs Red River community college downtown. It also needs the Ashdown Building, the former Ashdown Building, and Big 4 which is also being renovated, certainly as we speak.

Winnipeg, we see as having a glowing future, but we have to do something about it. We have to make movements in that direction. We cannot just hope that someone else will do it. We just cannot stand by and wonder who is going to do it or when is it going to happen. The public of Manitoba and citizens of Winnipeg want us, as a government, to certainly not only have pride in our city but to do something about it, to revitalize the downtown, and I know other speakers on this side of the House are certainly going to speak to that. If the Opposition truly supports the True North Project, Mr. Deputy Speaker, let them join the government members in describing the new entertainment complex as one of a series of positive steps to revitalize Winnipeg's downtown.

You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know the Opposition does not like True North. Why do they not come out and stand up and say that? If they do not want it, tell the people of Winnipeg, tell the people in Fort Whyte, tell people in Charleswood, tell people all over the city that they do not want True North. They do not want to revitalize the downtown; they do not care about Winnipeg. Forget True North, and somebody else will do it. Somebody else will do it in 10 years or 20 years time. They would not do it. They could not do it. We are doing it, and we have got to believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

We as a government said we do not have all the answers, and we do not. We do not profess to, but we are willing to try, and certainly to our best judgment, and time will prove us right that this was a good move for Winnipeg, a good move for Portage Avenue and a good move for Manitoba.

It certainly is passing strange that these flimsy arguments that the Opposition uses, that these grab bag motions have been put forward by a caucus that claims to support True North. You know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a project that we feel very close to because we know it will be successful and we know that, when you have the private sector willing to step up and be counted and the people of Manitoba note that with regard to cost overruns and have the community access, all of those important things that Manitobans feel dearly about, that they are going to be certainly included. This is something

that we as a government know that a lot of movement that we have made in the last year and a half have been very, very, progressive and forward thinking and we know that people of Manitoba see that as well and the people that we speak to.

* (14:50)

I think it is more important, when I go out to my constituency and I have an opportunity to speak to people at graduations and the young people that come up to me and comment to me about how forward-thinking, how visionary we are as a government, we are willing to move ahead, and there is truly a future for young people in Manitoba, they see that in our Government. They see what we are doing and what we are trying to do. I know there are a lot of members on this side as well as members opposite that wish to comment on True North and the value of True North. I know, just in conclusion, government members have argued that True North Project is worthy of the support of Manitobans. It is a modern showpiece facility open to all citizens. It is one element among several in the strategy of downtown revitalization. It is a symbol of commitment by the private sector of governments.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to move an amendment, seconded by the Minister responsible for Advanced Education (Ms. McGifford),

THAT *the proposed motion be amended as follows:*

(a) *by deleting the third WHEREAS clause; and*

(b) *by deleting everything after the sixth WHEREAS clause and substituting the following:*

WHEREAS all the accurate details of the True North Entertainment Complex proposal are contained in the Term Sheet provided to this Legislature;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly support the Manitoba Government's decision to provide all financial

documentation, including the Term Sheet, to the Provincial Auditor should he decide to make an examination and audit of the True North Entertainment Complex; and

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba supports the True North Entertainment Complex proposal as set out in the Term Sheet.

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The amendment is in order.

Mr. Reimer: Since you have ruled the amendment in order, would it be appropriate for this side of the House to get a copy of that amendment?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Clerk will provide a copy to the Opposition.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): I am going to put a few words on the record in regard to the arena deal. It is just typical of this Government in the way they handle and do things with everything in the public domain in Manitoba. Whenever they do not like a law that is in front of them that is stopping them from doing it, they change it. Whenever they do not like the law and they cannot change it, they break it. Whenever they make a public statement that holds them accountable for what they say, they deny it.

Again an amendment to this resolution is just so typical of what they have done. They have a hidden agenda. They have refused to supply all the information in regard to the deal for the public. That is what people want. People are not opposed. I think everybody would agree that people are not opposed to looking at ideas of creating a downtown entertainment complex.

What they are opposed to and what they are disappointed in with this Government is the deceitful, backdoor, underhanded, undermining way that they have brought it forward to the people of Manitoba. That is what they resent. They resent a Premier that says publicly on television that VLT revenue will be capped at \$1.5 million and then denies he says it, will not

even stand up and admit he said it. The Premier likes to lecture people on principles and on honesty and integrity, and yet he fails to have any of those so-called qualities that he speaks of.

I am going to tell you a little story about rural Manitoba, where we have built many arenas and many curling facilities and many entertainment complexes. We did not have to go through the hiding and the deceiving and the deception that this Government has gone through to deceive the people of Manitoba.

The story I am going to tell you is the story of two communities, one community where the council decided to move ahead without informing the public and telling them the details of the deal and holding back information and basically tearing that community apart because they felt that they were being deceived by their elected officials. The project went ahead, the debt mounted and added and added and added. Eventually the council had to come public with their decisions that they made and that they were hiding from the public and admit that they had made mistakes and admit that they were not going to be able to recover the incomes and the revenues that they had projected. They had to come back to the community with their hat in hand to get it understood. It divided the community, it split the community, not only in half, but into several fragmented groups. That is what this Government is going to do with this project.

The second project, the council met with the R.M.s. Mr. Deputy Speaker, all the surrounding organizations presented a package to them, told them what their costs were going to be, told them what the municipal, what the town, what the businesses' costs were going to be, and the community bought into it. They paid that facility off in a matter of months, because the people understood, they agreed with the principle, and they moved forward and worked with the council, and, unlike this Government, did not deceive people, did not lie to people, did not tell them to not worry.

The Minister of Culture (Mr. Lemieux) brings forward a resolution. Typical of all these things this Government does is say, do not worry, trust us, it is not that much, do not worry. You do not need to know the details. If you ask

for any details, God forbid you would be against the project. Well, the people of Manitoba are not against this project. I would suggest what they are against is an arrogant government that is hiding information from them and refusing to release the details of the deal. That will come back to bite you. I hope it does and I hope it will soon.

The matter of the fact is that you have deceived the communities, you have misled the public, and then you denied that you have done it. I think that that unfortunately is going to be the brand that is going to be on this Government for years to come and into the future. They do things through the backdoor, change the laws, break the laws, lie to people, deceive the public, basically whatever works. And you know what? Do not worry. If we do not like it we will deny we did it and we will deny we said it.

* (15:00)

I would like to quote back to the Premier, and I am sure he will get a chance to stand up and deny it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or, no, maybe he will not deny it. He just will not say that he did not say it. I guess that is the moral high ground that this Premier takes on issues when he is afraid to stand up and face accountability and face the public in Manitoba.

He stated in 1999, talking about an arena project in Manitoba, he said open it up. Let us even have a referendum or a vote on what the public would see. Today he cowers in his office, hiding information, deceiving people, lying to Manitobans, making it so that they believe only what he wants them to believe and what he wants them to hear, and then when they hear it, denies that he says it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, an example of this is a newspaper editorial, Sunday, June 24, where the article reads: We saw the first rotten apple fall from the tree last week when we discovered the provincial government lied to us when they told us the True North group building the arena would get a maximum of \$1.5 million in VLT revenue per year.

Now, the Premier goes up and says, well, I was discussing this issue and that issue and, boy,

there was a million things in front of me, but I did have the wherewithal and the know-withal to interrupt the reporter and say, oh, no, but let me make that perfectly clear, we were capping that at \$1.5 million a year. He actually interrupted the person doing the interview to drive that point home. Then he stands, no, pardon me, he sits in this Legislature and denies, no, not denies, excuse me, Mr. Deputy Speaker, refuses to admit that he said it. Talk about cowardly acts.

We have another example where the same article goes on to say: What is even more galling about this lie is that Premier Gary Doer's people, including Deputy Premier Jean Friesen, tried to tell us Thursday that neither Doer nor anyone else in the Government ever said that.

Well, we know what the truth is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we know what the lie is. We know where the truth comes from and we know where the lies come from. It is interesting that this amendment, I mean, smart politics, I guess, if that is what you want to call it, but slick politics is what I call it and what people in Manitoba call it. This is a government in hiding and a government that is afraid to face the public with the issues. They have backdoored so many things in their 18 months in office that they have just become accustomed to doing that. They are actually even starting to get arrogant about it. We all know what happens when governments get arrogant.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all people want to know in Manitoba and all we want to know on this side of the House is the facts. Present the facts to the people. Let the people decide whether it is a good deal or a bad deal for Manitobans, and then if the Government chooses, they still have the ability to move forward with the project. They do not have to listen to the people of Manitoba. If they present the facts to the people of Manitoba and the people decide they do not want it, this Government can still move ahead with this great project of theirs. If they are so confident and so comfortable, why are they hiding the facts from the people?

Everybody in Manitoba is interested in knowing the facts and wanting to know the facts. They do not want to be misled by the Premier

(Mr. Doer) who says one thing and then denies—oh, again, I will have to say he did not deny that he said it, he just would not admit that he said it. I guess there is a difference, but in reality when the people are judging the Premier, they will judge his words on what he said and what is actually seen and what he does. Obviously, the two are not the same. That is how we are all judged, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I want to suggest, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as the resolution does, it should be taken to the Auditor. Let him come back to the public with the public amount of commitment and let the people decide. I ask the Premier, what are you afraid of?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): There are lots of matters that I would like to send to the Auditor, but we believe in his office. I mentioned Isobord and why Manitoba was fifth down on the list of secured creditors, losing \$25 million. I could go on and on and on about projects that Deloitte and Touche had to write off, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but I guess collective amnesia is better than collective responsibility for the members opposite.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, speaking to the amended resolution, we have always maintained and we continue to maintain that all the facts in the agreement that ultimately will be in any final signed contract are in the term sheet, the 29 or 30 conditions. We said at the time the story broke, when the story broke and after the story broke, that every detail would be in the term sheet, and we have tabled that in the House.

I suggest to members opposite that the term sheet has been made available to them. It is fully factual. It deals with the capital commitments that we are making out of the strategic infrastructure program and the \$3 million beyond that. It deals with many other items that are dealing with the operating.

I said it before and I will say it again. We used the Assiniboia Downs racetrack, the Jockey Club agreement, as part of the model we used for the operating shortfalls, and most of my interview dealt with that, the 25 minutes notwithstanding the time that was on the tape. I always maintained and continue to maintain that the estimate for the VLT revenues is about \$150

a day based on 310 days opening. That would produce the revenues and the formula to produce an estimate of close to \$1.5 million.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I note, Mr. Speaker, when you are dealing with numbers, for example, the cost to the Government is quite a bit less than the value of the VLTs, but I tried to give the public a set of numbers. The members opposite when they announced 150 VLTs, they did not use the figure \$5 million or \$6 million for the Jockey Club. That was their right to do so. I used 50, and I estimated that, based on Lotteries Corporation numbers, to be \$1.5 million. I think that is fully disclosing the 50 VLTs.

I went on further in the same interview to also inform reporters about the tax treatment because it was special on the property tax side for a limited portion of the agreement, and I thought that that was not being leaked in the media or released by the private investors or released at City Hall.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, this amended resolution deals with the big picture. This Legislature should be dealing with the big picture. First of all, the Auditor is entitled to all financial documents. We are not just providing documents to the Auditor on an ongoing basis. We are strengthening the Auditor's act in this session of the Legislature. Members opposite did not give the Auditor accurate numbers that he could finally verify for their last two fiscal years in government. We are not only giving accurate numbers in Government totally, and in this specifically, but we are also strengthening the Auditor's act in this session of the Legislature.

Secondly, there are so many WHEREASes that are inaccurate that I would suggest, in terms of legal considerations, when there is a dispute between the numbers of coin-in as opposed to profit-out from the member from Niakwa, that members of this Legislature use the term sheet which is a legal document and has legal facts and figures in it as opposed to political rhetoric.

Thirdly, on the big picture, it is time now to fish or cut bait. It is time for members opposite who are trying to play it a bit both ways to vote

for the new entertainment complex or vote against it. Have the courage of your convictions. You wanted to put a resolution on the floor, which quite frankly surprised me. With the crisis in agriculture, it surprised me that the gold dust twins would be putting a resolution on the floor to deal with the new entertainment centre. It is on the floor now, folks. Let us vote for the new entertainment centre. Let us vote for progress in downtown Winnipeg, and let us vote for progress for the province of Manitoba. Let us vote for the new entertainment complex. Let us join together in a united voice for our future, Mr. Speaker. Now we are dealing with the big picture, and we can see which one of these people wants to nitpick this deal, which ones are for it and which ones are against it. Let us vote for it. Thank you very much.

* (15:10)

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): It is an interesting experience to sit on this side of the House and listen to all the bumpf and bluster that comes from the Premier and his merry band of ministers that he leads around with a string through their nose from one project to another, but typical of this Government, they deal by misrepresenting the facts, by taking the details and twisting and turning in the wind with them until it is hard to separate the reality from their nightmare that they want to impose on the people of Manitoba.

You do not have to look any further than this amendment where, in one clause, the Opposition, led by the Premier, is saying that all the accurate details of the True North Entertainment Complex proposal are contained in the term sheet while, in the very, very next clause with this amendment, they are asking for the Auditor to be given all financial documentation, including the term sheet.

So what is it? Typically, they want it this way, and they want it that way, and they never know where they are going to land.

The real issue here is the same issue that has been before this House time and time and time with this Government, and that is about honesty when dealing the people of Manitoba, and it is about process. In this case, the process has been

usurped by the little triumvirate on the opposite side of the House, led by the Premier and Eugene Kostyra, his mandarin from days gone by, who have sat down with the mayor and concocted this little scheme to build an edifice to themselves and, at the same time, have avoided any type of transparency with the public, have avoided any input from the public and are just trying to ram this project through without due process and without respect for the laws or for the people of Manitoba, and that is a travesty.

This is not a discussion about whether or not we should have a new entertainment complex. We have said many times on this side of the House we believe that the citizens of Manitoba deserve a new entertainment complex. The one we have has served us well. Well, it served us well for a lot of years; maybe the last 10 or 15 we could argue that our arena has not served us well, but it has served the community, and it was built in a time when there was vision. That building has served us well, but its usefulness is quickly running out.

The question is: Can we have a revitalized downtown with a new arena complex and with an adaptive, restorative, well-thought-out re-use of a historical landmark that has been with this community for centuries? That is the question that we need to ask ourselves. That is the question that we need to put to the people of this province and the people of this city. If we do that and we take the appropriate time to go through a process, a public consultation, we as a community will come up with the right answers. We as a community will come up with the right solutions to solve the problems that are plaguing downtown Winnipeg. We will not solve these problems by building an arena. We will not solve these problems by tearing down a building that has both a historic and heritage value to this community.

The saddest part of this whole argument is if we just took our time we could have them both and we could really do something wonderful for this community. But, oh, no, we are in a big rush. This is the same Premier (Mr. Doer) and the same mayor who stood in the way of trying to build a new entertainment complex where the baseball park now rests and of trying to save a National Hockey League team in this province,

the same two people who fought it tooth and nail all the way and, as a matter of fact, the same Premier who went down to defeat in the '95 election, and one of the primary reasons his party and he went down to defeat was his stance on not supporting the saving of the NHL franchise and the building of a new entertainment complex.

So now a few years later, what do we have? We have a Premier of the province who has to ram this project through without any public consultation. As a matter of fact, worse than that, he is trying to prevent any public consultation. This I find to be incredible. How is he doing it? Well, he is supporting it through public infrastructure, through public funds into capital, and let the record stand true because the business plan, if anybody ever got a chance to look at it, would show clearly that there is \$38.5 million in cash going into the up-front construction cost of this building, of public money, \$38.5 million from the three levels of government. There is less than \$25 million. We do not know exactly how much because nobody can see the business plan. The Premier signed a term sheet that keeps all this information confidential. So he knows it and Eugene Kostyra knows it and the mayor knows it and maybe a few members in his Cabinet know it, but they are not telling because they know if they did tell, this whole thing would crumble under its own weight. That is what this Premier is afraid of. That is what this Government is afraid of.

So we have \$38.5 million from the three levels of government versus less than \$25 million from the private sector. We have \$61.5 million in debt, all of which is going to be supported through kickbacks from the public sector, through VLT revenue that will be over \$2 million, from rebates and amusement tax and property tax from the City of Winnipeg that will amount to over \$2 million. So there is no risk. He is right. There is no risk to anybody in this; as a matter of fact, exactly the opposite. He has taken all the risk off the private sector and given them cash to compensate for it. Why does he not just show us the business plan and let the Auditor tell the truth about that part of it?

This is the same Premier who in 1995 said and I quote: And I would encourage all of us that

care about hockey to put all the options on the table. Open it up. Let us even have a referendum or vote on what the public would see.

Now, that was his position in 1996. Oh, my, how the tables have turned. How the tables have turned. Now he will not even hear of a referendum. Oh, it costs too much money, he tells us. It costs too much money. *[interjection]* Well, the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Ashton) asks what I would say. Well, I will tell him what I would say. I would say what I said then, that I and some volunteers stood together arm in arm and tried to save our NHL franchise and build a new entertainment complex.

We did it in a very public way under very demanding public scrutiny. We produced a business plan. It is in the library and it was filed with the Government. We went through a very open process, and I would encourage this Government to do the same, because what benefit, what benefit are we going to bring to this community by ripping down a structure that has historical value to this community on Portage Avenue and placing over top of that site a building that is too big to be managed on that site, a building that has to be squeezed in? So it will not be a useful building. It will not have an extended life. It will not be something that this city can be proud of.

The Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism—that is what we call him today. We used to call him the Minister of Lotteries as well, and maybe tomorrow we will not be able to call him the Minister responsible for Heritage because after the resignation of his chair of his Heritage committee, who resigned for the exact reasons we are talking about today, which is the interference by the Government in the process, well respected in our community, forced into a corner where he had to resign in order to make his point because this minister and this Premier (Mr. Doer) were going to ram this project through.

* (15:20)

Mr. Speaker, we looked very, very closely in 1996 at the site. We left the Convention Centre site because it was too small for a 16 000-seat arena. Well, look at the numbers, because the

Eaton's site is smaller than the Convention Centre site by probably 25 percent, and yet, this Premier is going to jam a building—[interjection] Yes, it will hold hockey. We will be able to be well known throughout Canada as having a rinky-dink building, squeezed into a site that was too small in our downtown, that has the risk of destroying downtown Winnipeg for the next 40 years.

I remind the Premier, it was under his watch that the North Portage shopping centre was developed, so all of a sudden today he has come out with a big concern about The Bay. Well, I would remind him it was under his watch that downtown was virtually destroyed by the construction of the North Portage.

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

Hon. Jean Friesen (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): I am glad to have the opportunity to speak on this bill. It is interesting. Sorry, not a bill, it is on an amendment to the motion introduced by the Opposition.

I do notice that the previous speaker to me had great difficulty in addressing the amendment, because the amendment, of course, calls for support for the True North Project. Although previous speakers, from the other side of the House, have said that—indeed, I think the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) said that all Manitobans supported True North.

I think the first speaker on this, the introducer of the motion, said that we should understand very clearly that the Opposition supports True North. I was surprised that the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) was not able to address that in his speech, because this amendment offers the Opposition the ability to clear up the misunderstandings that many Manitobans have about whether in fact they do support True North or not. It is a very clear indication, and I anticipate that they will be voting for the amendment. So I was disappointed perhaps to not hear from the Member for Fort Whyte the reasons for which he might be supporting True North.

In fact, what I heard was great opposition to the building, great opposition to the location,

great opposition to the nature of public investment, great opposition to the nature of the private investment. Mr. Speaker, it perhaps does not surprise us, those of us who have listened to the questions from the members of the Opposition over the previous number of weeks, but certainly it is a surprise given that they have gone to some lengths in this debate to indicate their support for True North. So I expect that, by rising to their feet on this amendment, they will be able to put the difficulties and the confusion that some people are feeling to rest.

Mr. Speaker, the original motion that they brought perhaps also muddies the waters considerably. It does put a number of factual difficulties in the way of members of the House. I have said before that the Member for Fort Whyte has particular difficulties in ensuring the information he brings to this House is correct. All members have a responsibility to bring correct information to the House.

It is important in maintaining one's credibility and it becomes important at times like this so that, for example, when the Member for Fort Whyte talks about Crocus funds and asks questions based upon what he believes to be the illegality of some elements of Crocus funds, then I think he has an obligation to correct the record when he does it, correct the record when he makes those inaccurate accusations, and possibly even others would anticipate that they were apologies, as well.

The Member for Fort Whyte has also talked about the relationship between public- and private-sector numbers. Now I noticed today he did put the correct numbers on the record, but in previous times he has had incorrect numbers and has not been at any pains to correct them or indeed to apologize for that information. It leads one to think, you know, that one of the new definitions of oxymoron is Tory research, because they never seem to care, it seems to me, about accuracy or about correction or about getting the facts straight. This original motion certainly does that.

Mr. Speaker, there is an element of bitterness, it seems to me, in the initiation of this debate. I think, as I listen to the Member for Fort Whyte talk about the election of '95 when he

talked about the MEC deal, when he talked personally about the mayor and the Premier as standing in the way of the proposals that he had for the Winnipeg Jets and that the previous government had, there was not just an element of bitterness but a very strong, I think, very strong element of personal animosity. This is not just about a debate about facts that the Tory Party particularly wants to trump up, but it seems to be both bitter and personal. It seems to me that that is not called for in this particular debate. Perhaps they should have dealt with some of the more general issues, particularly if this is to be a credible debate.

The terms of this agreement, the terms are available and have been available for over a month. It seemed to me that, when the members of the Opposition raised issues about this, it had been at least a month since the term sheet had been tabled at City Council and tabled in this House. Those terms have been public, the formulas and the caps on the formulas that the members have been particularly concerned about and misunderstood, perhaps, if I am to put the kindest representation on it, misunderstood in the beginning. I really have not heard any of their speeches deal with that term sheet.

I have not actually heard them talk about the elements of that term sheet, the public document tabled publicly by this Government, tabled publicly by the mayor at City Council. One would think that, if they were talking quite seriously about True North, they would want to examine that, they would want to look at the details, they would want to look at the elements of that that pertain to their arguments. I think the obvious difficulty is they cannot.

It is public. It has not been done in secrecy in the way that elements of the MEC deal were. It does talk about specific numbers on paper, specific formulas on paper. Those are commitments that have been made publicly by all the levels of government and the private investors, quite different, in fact, Mr. Speaker, from the kinds of varying numbers, the wavering numbers that we had from the previous government and the MEC proponents, \$90 million one day, \$10 million before an election, \$37 million on another day, quite varying numbers and almost seem to have been drawn out of thin air at

various times to suit particular timing and political issues. So I think we are clear that this has been publicly and clearly announced, that the facts are there for everyone to examine, including the Auditor, as I suggested in this House in response to questions more recently.

I want, however, to also speak about the kinds of things that the Opposition has not spoken about. They are not talking about the revitalization of downtown Winnipeg. Nobody so far has raised that issue, and that does not surprise me because the previous government walked away from downtown Winnipeg. It walked away. It walked away from inner-city neighbourhoods. We came and looked at downtown Winnipeg. We saw the kinds of boarded-up store windows along there. We looked at the representation that that had, not just for Winnipeggers but for all Manitobans. People who come to Winnipeg and to Manitoba, in part judge, and it is not perhaps necessarily fair, by the economic vitality of the province, in part, by downtown Winnipeg. So the kind of momentum, the kind of activity, the kind of hope that we are now seeing expressed about the revitalization of downtown Winnipeg is in part due to the True North Project. It is not by any means, and I would never argue for a single case, but there are other elements. There is context. It is the whole package. The commitment of this Government, with public investment, to the revitalization of downtown Winnipeg that I think is leading to hope in a new generation of Manitobans. I say Manitobans, not just Winnipeg, because I believe this is important to all Manitobans.

Let us look, for example, at the bringing down of several thousand students to Red River College in the Exchange District, the revitalization of probably one of the most significant of historic buildings in the Exchange District. That is a very important move and one that, I think, is welcome by all Manitobans. It will and has already generated other interests.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

There is a momentum in the Exchange District because of that, whether it is in residential construction, whether it is in commercial

activity, whether it is in the clustering of information technology industries, or indeed whether it is in the renovation of other historic buildings, the Ashdown warehouse, or the Big 4 consortium, for example, that the Government is a partner with in other groups.

So I think the revitalization of downtown Winnipeg, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in part through historic buildings, in part through commerce, in part through government leadership and the investment to the public sector, is something from which we have heard not a single word from the other side of this House. There are very good reasons why they should be embarrassed about downtown Winnipeg.

* (15:30)

In this context as well, in the reconstruction of the neighbourhoods of downtown Winnipeg, it is not just commercial development, it is not just the changes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, or our support for CentreVenture, or our support for the Exchange District, our leadership in the development of downtown Winnipeg. It is also the concern for the housing that surrounds that and for the neighbourhoods and communities that surrounds that. Through the Winnipeg Housing and Homelessness Initiative, through Neighbourhoods Alive!, we have begun to return hope to those communities. I think you will find that, in many areas of Winnipeg, the concern for revitalization, the concern for the hope of a new generation of Winnipeg is in part reflected in their support for True North.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I listened with interest to the Deputy Premier as she spoke very eloquently about her vision for revitalization of downtown and has placed all of her hope and all of her support behind one project, and that being the True North Project.

Well, we heard from some very credible members of our community this morning, as a caucus, and it is really unfortunate that many of the ministers on the government side of the House would not meet with them. They sent their backbenchers. They used their backbenchers to sit and give a deaf ear to members of the community that had some very valid arguments and some very valid points to make

about the revitalization of our downtown. They talked about the Eaton's building.

The kinds of antics that we are hearing from the government side of the House are a slap in the face to individuals that have spent a lot of time and energy and effort researching and looking at issues surrounding what could happen downtown to make our downtown even better than what the True North Project is proposing.

They talked about being able to utilize the Eaton's building, and I am rather disheartened to hear the Deputy Premier talk about all of the other heritage buildings that are of such value in our city of Winnipeg and not mention a word about the Eaton's building and what significance it has. When the Heritage Council recommended to this Government that the Eaton's building was worthy of saving and should be designated, this Government turned their backs on the Heritage Council that they appointed, Bill Neville and some very credible individuals. They closed their ears and they said, thanks, but no thanks, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are hidebound and determined to move ahead and tear down the Eaton's building despite what you have to say.

I say shame on the Government for taking that kind of approach. There was a presentation that was made this morning that had an individual that has chosen to live downtown in Winnipeg. I think that there are many that have made that choice and that decision. But were they asked? Were they consulted by this Government? Were the plans for the redevelopment of the Eaton's building and the True North Project shared with those that have chosen to make downtown Winnipeg their community, asked whether this was a good plan or were there other options or alternatives that might enhance the community and draw other people to our downtown area like they were drawn to downtown? They were not given that opportunity.

As a matter of fact, the Minister for Family Services (Mr. Sale), who represents the area, would not give attention to his own constituents and give them the benefit of having provided some input into the project.

They have chosen a path to go down which I think is not well thought out. They are choosing

a project that will build a new arena in an area, a new arena which will be smaller than the arena that presently exists in our city of Winnipeg. What thought has gone into this project? Have they looked at the traffic and the way the traffic will have to move downtown? Have they looked at pedestrian accessibility? I think that there has been research that has been done that tells us that there are many unanswered questions around this, not only on the financial side, because we have not seen a business plan. We do not know how much public money is going into the facility. I mean, here you have a government that is saying to us: Trust us. We are telling you without a business plan how many millions of dollars we are putting into this. Just like they said: Trust us, elect us, and we will fix the health care system within six months after we are elected. Just elect us and we will do it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, how can Manitobans trust a party and a government that made those kinds of reckless promises during an election campaign, misled and used Manitobans and gave Manitobans false hope and a false sense of security? How can they possibly trust this Government to give us the true facts on how much public money is going into this project and what other options were looked at?

This is a government that says: Trust us, Manitobans, trust us. We as Government know better. We know what is best for you. The masses do not have any understanding or any knowledge. We know what is best for you. We will tell you. We will dictate to you what is in your best interest. Better still, we will use your tax dollars to deliver on those projects that we are talking about.

This is not a government that asks Manitobans, gives Manitobans choices or options. It is really telling when members of our community put in the time and the effort and the energy to research the background on the Eaton's building, to research other options and alternatives that might be more viable in our community and want just a listening ear, would like the Government to listen and to give them some reasons or help them understand why their suggestions or their options would not be viable.

Why would Manitobans and Winnipeggers not have an option to choose between different

areas in our downtown that could be revitalized? Why could we not have both a new arena and a revitalized Eaton's building, as recommended by the Heritage Council, to be designated? Why could we not have both? Mr. Deputy Speaker, that would be a win-win for downtown and for the citizens of Manitoba. But instead this Government has chosen one project and one plan without consulting the people that live downtown, asking them what they might want, ignoring the Heritage Council, their own Heritage Council that recommended that the Eaton's building be designated, and without telling Manitobans what the real cost to the taxpayer is going to be.

I think this has been a flawed process. Time will tell us exactly the kind of top-down, heavy-handed attitude that this Government has taken in many areas. Manitobans will not be blind to the approach that Today's NDP has taken. Manitobans will be the losers. Thank you.

* (15:40)

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Mr. Deputy Speaker, first let me set the record straight. Our side of the House believes that there is need for a new arena in the downtown area that is driven by the private sector. I do not think anyone on this side of the House has ever said anything differently. Once again members on the other side of the House continue to perpetrate misinformation. In fact they are becoming masters at that. I remember when the members opposite were in the Opposition benches, in particular the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen) and the Premier (Mr. Doer), continually day in and day out espousing the need for community input, public meetings, public hearings on every single issue involving larger development in any area of the city. In fact, the current Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, who sat on The Forks board, continually, continually promoted public hearings in terms of any development in The Forks area, and justifiably so.

That is all we are asking for. We are asking to have public input both on the site location and on the details regarding the project. My constituents for the most part support a new arena, but what they want to know is how much is it going

to cost them. That is what we have been asking. We cannot get those answers. Taxpayers want to know exactly how much money, public money, taxpayers' dollars are going to go into this project, and, contrary to what the members on the other side continue to purport, the details and the business plan have never been brought forward. The details that are identified in the amendment, the member, my colleague from Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen), alluded to it.

This amendment is even confusing. In the first WHEREAS clause, they say that all accurate details of the True North entertainment complex proposal are contained in the term sheet that has been provided. Then they go on in THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED and say that we as Opposition should support the Government's decision to provide all financial documentation including the term sheet. So therefore, where is the rest of the information if it is not all contained in the term sheet as you said in this clause that you are asking to have inserted where we had clause 3? I mean, this is ridiculous.

Secondly, I was very disappointed to learn today that one of Winnipeg's well-known, well-respected, extremely well-educated and well-versed on the history of Winnipeg and the historic facets of Manitoba's history resigned from his position as chair of the Manitoba Heritage Council. *[interjection]* Yes, Bill Neville resigned because he was so disappointed with this Government's handling of the recommendations that went forth to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Mr. Lemieux), that this Government did not listen to the recommendations of a community-based group who are well versed and well renowned on the historic value of the downtown Eaton's location. As my colleague from River East indicated earlier, we did have a very, very interesting presentation this morning. There are alternate sites, and there will be problems with the current location identified.

The new proposal for this arena does not even answer the needs of the community. The size of the proposed complex is questionable. Will it accommodate any more people than are accommodated currently for rock band concerts? No. Will it address congestion downtown and

parking problems? No. Will it attract people downtown 24 hours a day to help revitalize the downtown area? No.

There are things that can be done with the current Eaton's building, and all that Manitobans are asking for is to look at all the options, consider all the possibilities, and there are many other locations that would accommodate this new arena. If we are going to do it, let us do it right. Many people are complaining about both the size of the proposed complex and the site location. There are very serious concerns regarding parking and the flow of traffic after a major event in that complex.

We are not against it. I just heard the minister of post-secondary education once again put misinformation on the record. We said we support a downtown arena. Get it right. We support a downtown arena and supported by the private sector.

Point of Order

Mrs. Dacquay: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I wonder if you would mind calling the members on the opposite side of the House to order so that other members can hear my comments?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I could hear interactions on both sides of the House. May I warn all the members of the House that the honourable Member for Seine River has the floor.

* * *

Mrs. Dacquay: I thank the honourable Deputy Speaker. I have difficulty understanding why the Government is so opposed to having public input. It raises all sorts of questions with Manitobans. There is a need to ensure that the project is done properly and done so that Manitobans will be able to enjoy all of its amenities and that there will not be any impediments to the project. This morning, as I indicated earlier, we had a very interesting presentation that indicated there are other alternate sites available and that there are other ideal projects that could be pursued in the redevelopment of a very historic Manitoba building. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): I rise today to make my contribution to this discussion. I want to talk about heritage and process. Not long after the current Heritage Minister was fired from his previous portfolio, I had the opportunity to talk to him and tell him what a wonderful portfolio he had in culture and heritage, that this was a wonderful portfolio where he had the opportunity to work with the community on heritage and cultural issues.

I think that he took that quite seriously. I had hoped he would take it seriously, because I can tell you that while the heritage community and the heritage proponents in this province are small in number, they are amongst the most dedicated of Manitobans in trying to preserve our heritage.

* (15:50)

I think the Minister of Culture (Mr. Lemieux) and the Government have made a major mistake in not giving the committee on heritage an opportunity to present their views and to be heard and to enter into discussions with the Government on a major project like this. Instead, the Government has steam-rolled over them. Last week, I had the opportunity to ask some questions. The Minister responsible for Heritage claimed he knew nothing about a report. He knew nothing of the details. He mentioned that in Hansard on June 21. He said: I will receive it. I will be pleased to read that and see the report and see what they have to recommend.

He had already been told by Donna Dul, the Heritage person within his department, what the recommendations were.

Then, on June 28, he said: We heard about it shortly after the council's meeting. So on the one day, on the 21st and on the 25th, he denied hearing of it, denied any knowledge of that report and the contents. Then, last week on June 28, he said: We heard about it shortly after the council's meeting.

I mean, this led my colleague from St. Norbert to rise and say he had deliberately misled this House. My honourable colleague withdrew those comments not because they were false but because they were unparliamentary. He has admitted in two excerpts in Hansard that he knew nothing about it, and then on the 28th he

said: We heard about it shortly after the council's meeting.

Donna Dul phoned the minister's office. The minister claims, no, I did not talk to her, but he did have that information, and I think that this treatment of one of his staff, this treatment of people interested in heritage, is very, very unfortunate.

Then today we find that the chairman of the Manitoba Heritage Council, Bill Neville, has resigned, saying he felt constrained in his duties. Now, members opposite understand the English language very well. He is saying that this Government was not prepared to enter discussions, to take this report seriously, to look at the heritage significance of this building. This is the ultimate that a chair of a government committee can do. The chair of the Manitoba Heritage Council says: I have resigned because I felt constrained in my duties.

This means that the Government has made that decision to build an arena. They have fast tracked it. They have not had the discussions with the community, particularly with the heritage community. This has led the chair of the Manitoba Heritage Council to resign. This is an extremely well-respected historian in our community, someone who served many governments on the Heritage Council, someone who has the respect of virtually all Manitobans and certainly of the heritage community. Here we have a government who says: No, we do not have the report. Then they say: We received the report and we made the decision the same day.

Manitobans have reason to distrust this Government. Manitobans have reasons to say this Government does not care about the people they have appointed to boards and commissions in this province. He has resigned because he felt constrained. He also goes on to say he is disappointed. I hope that the Premier and the Minister of Culture (Mr. Lemieux) and other Cabinet ministers take the time to look at the statements made during this debate, because this is a reflection on the Government and their view on heritage in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a wonderful, wonderful province with a tremendous, rich

history. The Heritage Council is an extension of Government which looks at the heritage buildings, looks at the historic sites, assists the Government greatly in reviewing the heritage of Manitoba. The Government could easily have received the report, could have examined the report, could have discussed the report and still done what they wanted to do.

Yet they steam-roller over this Heritage Council. They talk about not receiving it. Then he finally admits he did receive it; he made the decision the same day to reject the report. Well, Manitobans are a lot smarter than that. They understand exactly what this Government is doing and they understand why Mr. Bill Neville has had to resign, because he feels that he is constrained by this Government. This is a person who would bring information from the heritage community to this Government, give this minister and this Cabinet an opportunity to look at heritage buildings and heritage sites. Yes, governments cannot decide to save them all, but at least you can allow the process to take place.

At least listen to what these people appointed by you are telling you about heritage instead of making a decision, hiding a report, then bringing it forward, and then saying on the same day it is made public: We have made a decision, we are going to go ahead with this no matter what this report says. It is not only Bill Neville who is disappointed.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Many, many Manitobans are seeing that this Government was on a course. They made a decision and they were going to stick with that decision no matter what other people said. And anybody who has raised a question about it is being accused of nitpicking. Nitpicking. We are talking about a major, major decision, the expenditure of many millions of public dollars as well as some private dollars. When people have the temerity to ask questions about it, the Premier and others say: Well, you are nitpicking.

Manitobans have the right to have full disclosure. Manitobans have the right to believe that their heritage is being protected. Manitobans have faith in the Heritage Council because the people on that Heritage Council are not just

people off the street who happen to have an NDP membership, so they are appointed. These are people with a genuine interest in the history of this province. They understand how architecture and buildings are part of what Manitobans are. They need to have the ability to talk to their minister, to talk to the Government, to talk to Cabinet, to help to preserve part of this heritage. But instead of that you have a minister who denies that he has ever seen the report, he denies that Donna Dul, his key employee in Heritage, brought that information to him, then later he admits, yes, I did know about it, although I did not see it.

I mean, this kind of confusing dialogue by Government leads to Manitobans mistrusting you. There is a level of mistrust that happens when they feel that you are hiding things from them and when you are deliberately not taking the time to look at the recommendations brought forward by very learned heritage people in this province. I can tell you it would not surprise me that other members of the Heritage Council also resign, except of course the ones who work for the provincial government who are there because of their duties with the Department of Heritage. But I can tell you, you have left them in a very, very difficult position. Mr. Neville has done the honourable thing. He is saying: I felt constrained in my duties. I can say to the minister, this is a very sad day for heritage in Manitoba. I can tell you that you brought it on yourself. The Heritage Council is a very valuable tool that a minister of heritage can use.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable member's time has expired. Does the honourable member have leave to continue?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been denied.

Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry): It is a sad day when we have to rise on speaking to decisions that are made by members opposite, decisions that are made within a vacuum. It is a sad day because it reflects on all of Manitoba. We have here a decision that was made by members opposite, the decision-making process made without collaboration with the community, without collaboration with the local residents,

without collaboration with the Heritage Council. This is a day that Manitobans will remember, and this is a time in this House when we can talk about the opportunity members opposite have of reflecting on the decision that they did make and backtrack on it.

* (16:00)

This is a decision that is clearly made without a business plan, with no consultation and without reflection on the heritage and the value that the Eaton's building has brought to Manitoba. When you talk to residents in urban Winnipeg, we find many people who have worked at Eaton's, many people who have been a part of the Eaton's company. The building itself, I can remember as a small child driving in from the country with my parents. We always went to Eaton's for Christmas shopping. Christmastime at Eaton's was a time when you shared a lot of memories, you shared a meal together in the Paddlewheel. There were a lot of fond memories. We can talk about the heritage. We can talk about the roots. We can talk about what has happened here in Manitoba this month.

Having said that, members on this side of the House clearly are very much in favour of an arena downtown, very much in favour of an arena. What members on this side of the House are not in favour of is poor planning, no consultation and no thought about whether or not the arena would be a place where people could go and enjoy the events that are there.

What we have before us now is a plan set out by members opposite, a plan and decision made without any thought to the actual factual information centred around the building and around the arena. The fact of the matter is it is a poor plan. There is not enough room in the old Eaton's building to provide an entertainment centre, an arena that would accommodate the people of Manitoba. The traffic congestion would be unbelievable in downtown Winnipeg.

So here we have members opposite, they have not only opened the pubs on Sunday downtown to enhance the atmosphere, but on top of that, they are planning on opening an arena that promises to be congested, that promises to tie up traffic, that really does not enhance the

downtown area in any way, shape or form. It is not the fact that members opposite have decided to build an arena; that is the good part of the plan. The only other part that we object to on this side of the House is the fact that the plan will fail. Manitobans will see the lack of planning. Manitobans will see the ill-thought-out input into taking the Eaton's building as an arena.

I would ask the question of the members opposite: How many of the residents have the members opposite actually talked to about the Eaton's building. How many of the downtown businesses have members opposite actually talked to about their business?

Mr. Speaker, this is a travesty because the Province of Manitoba has an idea, a thought, an opportunity to build an arena and an entertainment centre that would accommodate sports, that would build the city, that would do lots of positive things. Unfortunately, because of the desire to push this idea through without much thought or consultation with the public, it will be a disaster in a very short time.

When Manitobans find out that the building will extend right onto Portage Avenue to cut off the traffic flow, they will wonder. When they find out that a tunnel effect will be created by the arena built on the former Eaton's site, when they find out about this tunnel, they will wonder why was this done in this location?

This is an opportunity for members opposite to stop, think, do some creative problem solving. Consult the local residents, consult the local businesses and put a plan into place that would relocate the arena to a place that would be viable for Manitobans and for downtown Winnipeg.

Today we got news that Bill Neville of the Manitoba Heritage Council actually resigned, as my colleague from Minnedosa emphasized, because he felt he was constrained in his duties. This is very serious. The Heritage chair has a great commitment to building the heritage here in Manitoba, the roots, the foundations. Bill Neville has been quoted as saying that he is disappointed in both the City's and the Province's decision to fast-track the demolition of the Eaton's building: It is a done deal as far as

they are concerned, he said. They are not even interested in reconsidering alternatives or even creating time to reconsider or review. I think what they are doing is mistaken.

Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the House are telling the current NDP government and this province they are making a huge mistake. The Eaton's building is in excellent repair. It has a lot of structural commodities within the building that will cause it to be a building that stands for many more years here in the centre of downtown Winnipeg. This building has a lot of marketing value. It has a great deal of assets that can be utilized by customers who want to pick up a building and develop it. More importantly, we have a community downtown, a community of people who live, work and have pride in the downtown.

Members on this side of the House have watched the present Government push through bills. A bill that opens up the liquor stores on Sunday, that is now putting an arena into a compressed area, which causes all sorts of things like increased crime, possible danger. It is not a set up that will help moms and dads and families to be enticed to go downtown for entertainment or watch a sports game or go to some sort of a concert, not when they know coming out of the building, they will not be able to get to their cars. They will not be able to be reassured that their small children will not be trampled underfoot by the crowds.

This is a blueprint set up by the former Pawley government, the Pawley government who built the bridge to nowhere. Now the present Government is building a structure that cannot accommodate the numbers of people that should be going down to be a part of that building, experience the events in the building.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, with the lack of planning, with the lack of putting the ideas together, connecting the dots, with that lack of thoughtful thinking or thoughtful planning put into what has happened in this House for this province of Manitoba in this session. With this lack of thinking, it is very chaotic in terms of what they are trying to do, particularly in the area of downtown Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, the rehabilitation of older buildings is of paramount importance.

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

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the Premier (Mr. Doer) on this issue dodging all of the really serious questions that Manitobans and Winnipeggers are putting to him about things that in the old days when he was in opposition he would rail about, the need for environmental reviews, the need for proper process, the need for historical consideration. Well, now that he is Premier, well, all that stuff be damned; we do not need it anymore; it is gone.

My constituents in the Pine Falls-Sagkeeng area of Manitoba, they would like to know why this Premier and this Government does not show the same speed in getting on with their economic development project, why their ministers have said again that it is going to be another year of study and process on whether or not we will get approval for the wood allotment for a sawmill that will employ several hundred Aboriginal people in my part of the world. For those Aboriginal people, the minister responsible for heritage, he could care less; the minister of northern and native affairs, he cares less; the Premier, he could care less about those Aboriginal people. They sit in delay on those projects. But on the arena project, the Premier moves ahead with steam. All process be gone; all process be gone.

* (16:10)

Now, this is absolutely amazing, Mr. Speaker. There is no doubt that a project of this nature can be a very good thing for the downtown. We are not denying that. We have not opposed that. You know, what amazed me today, today we had occasion to be visited by a group of people who told us many of them traditionally had been New Democrats because they thought the New Democrats cared about heritage, cared about history, cared about community, cared about residents of the downtown, cared about process, cared about the environment.

They came to see us because they said, you know, one of them who used to work in their caucus called her MLA, the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Sale), and it was evident that he has had no say in this thing. He is just part of Cabinet, keep your mouth shut, forget history, forget process, because Premier Doer, he is on a roll and no one is going to stand in his way.

Mr. Speaker, those people brought us a very good presentation of some very serious information, information I would have thought the Member for Lord Roberts (Ms. McGifford), the Member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) would have been interested in. Do you know what they told us? When they went to meet with the New Democrats, there were not 32 NDP MLAs there; there were not 30; there were not 25; there were not 20; there were not even 10. Only 8 of their members could find the time to meet with this group of people. Why? Because they might actually have something to say that is adverse to their agenda. Not one Cabinet minister, not one of their upper members, they told us, could take the time to meet with—oh, the Member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). Well, I hope she can find the courage, more courage than she found to fight for farmers, to fight in this case, I will tell you.

Mr. Speaker, what did they raise with us as issues? You know, a very interesting fact most Manitobans are only starting to wake up to is that the land available for this arena is almost 100 feet narrower than the current Winnipeg Arena, 100 feet narrower. How are they going to compensate? They are going to compensate by cantilevering out two ways over a major downtown thoroughfare making it a dark, fairly dingy place. Then they are going to reduce the public space, the space where crowds go to get into the seats, from 50 feet on each side to 25.

An Honourable Member: Now you are the architect.

Mr. Praznik: Well, you know, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) says: You are the architect. You know, I may have been educated in Manitoba during NDP governments, so I cannot really count necessarily on the quality, but I do know when you start adding up feet and doing some simple math, there is not the room.

So what are they going to have? They are going to have an arena that is really too small for us to get into any kind of major league event where we may have a potential to get in, and it is going to be so tight for space and claustrophobic, it is going to be a laughingstock the day it opens. It will be a laughingstock by its size the day it opens. All of us have been to the Winnipeg Arena and know when you get a crowd in that 50 feet that is available, how tight even that is. Think of shrinking it by 25 feet.

Members of the NDP want to live in a fog and ignore it, but these are the facts. And then they talk about the Eaton's building, our so-called Minister of Heritage (Mr. Lemieux)—what an incompetent minister that Bill Neville has to resign today because this is just a patsy for the Premier (Mr. Doer). He has no courage to protect heritage. There is not one heritage site in this province that is safe as long as that minister, who has no spine, continues to sit in that desk. He should resign. He should resign, Mr. Speaker.

He should resign, and you know, Mr. Speaker, what did this group of architects, what did this group—well, if it was so wrong the minister did not have to resign the portfolio. But I tell you this, what did those architects tell us about the Eaton's building? A building that is still one of the best structurally in downtown Winnipeg today, with all kinds of opportunities for development. Even to find out that Canada Safeway was turned away by the owners because they were busy cutting a big deal with our big-league Premier, Mr. Doer.

Mr. Speaker: Order. When referring to honourable members, please use the constituency or ministers by their portfolio.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, Canada Safeway was interested in a downtown store that would have been of benefit for the constituents of the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Sale). But did he stand up for them? No. Hiding under the Cabinet table, he would not even talk, would not even help a person who worked in their caucus.

Mr. Speaker, do we support this project? Yes, we support a project. We also support a proper process. That is why we are going to see

if all these weak-kneed, jelly-boned New Democrats who always claim to stand up for the little people, who claim to stand up for the downtown, who claim somehow that, oh boy, they are all going to be strong. Except when the Premier says, this is what we are doing. All their brains get left behind in the locker. And so we are going to see if they stand by the things that they always said they did, about process, about the environmental review.

That is why, Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to move, seconded by the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard),

THAT the proposed amendment be amended as follows:

- (a) *by deleting the first WHEREAS clause; and*
- (b) *by deleting the first THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED clause; and*
- (c) *by deleting the second THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED clause and substituting the following:*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the True North Entertainment Complex as set out in the Term Sheet, subject to the following:

1. All appropriate financial documents, including the Term Sheet and the business plan, be provided to the Provincial Auditor for review and comment.
2. A full environment impact review of the project be conducted by the Clean Environment Commission and that this review include the effects of the project on vehicular and pedestrian flows in downtown Winnipeg as well as the impact of the project on the residents of downtown. That adequate intervenor funding be provided by the proponents to downtown residents and other concerned citizens to allow their full and meaningful participation in the environmental review.
3. The government explore options for an alternative downtown site for the True North Project while actively encouraging development opportunities for the valuable Eaton's Building which may

result in two significant development projects for Winnipeg's Downtown thereby creating a win, win situation for all.

4. All appropriate due diligence reviews be undertaken by the government.

Mr. Speaker, we make this motion. We challenge them to stand up and do the right thing.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: On the subamendment moved by the honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, seconded by the honourable Member for River Heights, the subamendment is in order.

The debate on the subamendment may proceed.

* (16:20)

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): I look forward to actually continuing debate because I realize the members opposite have faced some difficulty from the original amendment and now brought in a subamendment.

Mr. Speaker, given the fact this is an Opposition Day and the members opposite had every opportunity to draft a motion that would put in place exactly what their position is on an issue, I find it interesting that once we moved an amendment that would have actually required them to take a stand on the specific True North proposal that what they have done now is they have moved a further subamendment in an attempt to get that issue off the floor.

I say to members opposite what is interesting about their proposal is, once again, the members have had plenty of opportunity with an Opposition Day motion to put all of these particular clauses in their original motion. *[interjection]* Well, the Opposition House Leader (Mr. Laurendeau) said they had the proper amendment initially. What they can do is seek to persuade members of this House on the proposed amendment. They can seek to defeat the amendment and then revert to the original

motion. So essentially I think it is quite instructive.

I also understand, Mr. Speaker, and it is quite interesting that the members opposite have brought in a further subamendment that really also removes a couple of the RESOLVED clauses that had been proposed. I just want to summarize what I have heard from members opposite today, because I realize they are somewhat sensitive about this, particularly the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) and others.

Here is essentially what the position of the members opposite is. When the amendment is put forward that requires us to vote on whether we support the arena proposal or not, what they do is they stand up and they say, well, they are opposed to the site, they are opposed to the financing. The Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) is even opposed to the design. I mean, God forbid the Member for Lac du Bonnet should actually design an arena here, but what they have said is that despite the fact they are opposed to all those particular elements, they still turn around—

Point of Order

Mrs. Mitchelson: I guess the significant question that needs to be asked is: Are the Government and the Member for Thompson opposed to an environmental assessment process?

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, the honourable Member for River East does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: I want to summarize some of the debate we have heard, because it is interesting that members opposite get up and they attack every portion of the proposal, and that is their right. Having been in opposition for a number of years myself, I am not criticizing the role of members of the Opposition to do that, but to suggest that somehow they are in favour of the arena proposal but they are opposed to the location, they are opposed to the financing and they are opposed to the design is to defy credibility.

What is interesting about the second motion that we moved, the amendment we had moved, I believe, put forward a very straightforward question. I know there were some references to a former member of this House, Abe Kovnats, who said in opposition, you cannot have it both ways.

They can have it both ways if they want, but in this particular case, on an issue of this significance, I do think they have to take a stand. People know the position of this Government.

We have also taken the very difficult position, as well, of actually addressing some of the priorities in terms of infrastructure, for example. Members opposite want—I mean, I have been adding it up here. They want various items. They want the Kenaston underpass. They say they want the arena. Some of them say they want the footbridge. They have spent the infrastructure—*[interjection]* Well, Mr. Speaker, the Member for St. Norbert—

Point of Order

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the honourable minister might want to choose his words a little more carefully when he accuses any of us of supporting the little bridge for the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), for his walking footbridge.

I know the Minister of Transportation supports it, to put \$15 million into a footbridge, but it is not going to be this member voting to support it.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the honourable Official Opposition House Leader, he does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: What I am suggesting to members opposite is that we have put our position forward. I realize there is an element of frustration on that side because for 11 years members opposite had the opportunity to redevelop the downtown of Winnipeg, and what we saw from 1988 through to 1999 was some of

the most significant decline that we have ever seen.

This Government is not only working on the arena, and I can say this particularly with pride as the Minister responsible for Transportation and Government Services, we have also managed to put in place a redevelopment of the Exchange District through Red River College. We have done numerous things to develop the downtown in the last year and a half, and I realize that members opposite may have some frustration with that.

I say to members opposite that I also appreciate the difficulty they are in. They have been very critical of the True North proposal, and that is their right, but I want to put on the record that I give credibility, I think, to the process that has been put in place. I particularly want to give credit to the leadership taken by the private sector in this, Mr. Speaker.

I am surprised that members opposite have such difficulty with that because I want to read back the comments of the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) who said that the day the arena opens, it will be a joke, a laughing stock, because I think that is a real insult to the hard work and effort of many civic-minded citizens of this province who have put forward this proposal. We are working in partnership with them, and those kinds of comments I say to the Member for Lac du Bonnet will come back to haunt him and the Conservative Party when the arena is opened.

I want to suggest to members opposite as they participate in this debate that they perhaps focus on the key issue. Whereas they could not do anything of this significance in the 11 years they were in government, we are working with the City, working with the federal government and, most importantly, working with the private sector to develop a proposal that, I believe, will stand the test of time.

* (16:30)

I want to say to members opposite that they may want to be armchair financial analysts—I mean the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) talked about illegal involvement from the Crocus

Fund; he was incorrect. They may want to be armchair architects. We heard an impassioned speech from the member from Lac du Bonnet, who may be an amateur architectural buff. I am, too, by the way. I mean I am concerned about architecture. I am concerned about the Parthenon marbles but I would not dare to design personally, even verbally in this House, the arena. I believe the arena was developed by the private sector in co-operation with the public sector to deal with a specific market that is out there, and I want to put on the record that one of the things that we need to develop this city and to develop this province, is some forward thinking. I say that, for members like the member from Lac du Bonnet to be calling this a laughingstock and a joke, I think is uncalled for. If he does not agree with the design or the process, that is fair ball.

I acknowledge some of the issues in terms of the heritage side of the issues that have been raised, but the bottom line is here. The final decision the members of this Legislature have to make is whether they support the True North proposal or they do not support the True North proposal. We have taken a stand on that. We look forward on the succeeding votes on this matter, on a matter put forward to this House by the members opposite. We look forward to finding out where they really stand at the end of the day because you cannot have it both ways. You cannot say you are in favour of True North and then oppose the site, the financing and the design of it. You either support the proposal or you come out with alternatives and you oppose it. If they want to propose alternatives, that is fair ball. They want to oppose it, that is fair ball. You cannot have it both ways. Perhaps in this House in opposition, on occasion, you might get away with it, but not with the general public. They want to know where you stand, and we look forward to finding out where the Tories stand on this issue. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Gerrard: I rise, seconding this motion, or this subamendment, which recommends that there be an environmental review by the Clean

Environment Commission, that there be due diligence done in this process. This subamendment and this discussion are really about due diligence. Due diligence is important because it is there to protect and there for the best interests of the citizens of Manitoba. Due diligence, as we have set it up in this province for many years, is important to help guide the decisions of government and have decisions of government made in the wisest possible way. Due diligence is also important, because in going through an appropriate process of evaluating a business plan, doing environmental and heritage reviews, one can ensure that we have the best possible opportunities for business development.

We are looking here at an arena complex, a building which, clearly from the architectural displays, from the flexibility of the new building in many respects, is an exciting one. But that excitement, the enthusiasm that we may have for that structure should be tempered with the need to do due diligence, to make sure that we have taken this, step by step, through a process of review and assessment so that the public can be involved, and feel involved, so that out of it we get the best possible result for all of Manitoba.

When we look at the environmental process, it is apparent that we have an environmental act. This falls under the class 2 development process. It would be appropriate, as we are calling for in this subamendment, to have the Clean Environment Commission review this.

The NDP government last year tabled, as their sustainable development strategy, the COSDI report. The COSDI report, to remind the members opposite, which is the Government strategy right now, mandates that there should be public participation and planning and assessment and review.

Let me quote: There should be an opportunity for effective, meaningful, public participation and consultation processes at all levels of planning; significant resource allocation; an effects assessment and review to include an opportunity for input into information requirements; an establishment of guidelines for the proponent; opportunity for the public to meet with the proponent, the proponent's experts and the technical advisory committee; opportunity for the public to meet with government and

proponent experts; the early and effective notification; consistency in the manner of notice; and easy access to information.

Government departments, as part of this plan, which is a government plan as it stands right now, are to develop and provide to the public clear and user-friendly guides to assist public participation in the planning and development review process. This is a government strategy. It should have been followed. The sad thing is that the Government has not followed it. When I asked the other day what was the environmental review process, I got an answer that they will follow all the acts. Here we have the act. It has not been followed.

Where is the Clean Environment Commission report? It is not there. The Clean Environment Commission has not even started public hearing. One of the first things that I asked the Premier was: When are the public hearings going to be held on the demolition of Eaton's and the building of the new arena? We are still awaiting the answer because the Premier has failed to follow due process to date. There is an opportunity yet for the Premier to turn around and to follow due process. Sad to say, sad for all Manitobans that that due process has not been followed so far.

Just earlier this week, the Minister of Conservation tabled Manitoba's Provincial Sustainable Development Code of Practice, a code which is to apply to all government decisions by all departments to include process for forming those affected by decisions and actions in a timely manner and ensuring meaningful opportunity for public consultation and due process including, where applicable, collaborative decision making, consensus building, alternatives to dispute resolution, and again, ensuring that the assessment of proposed programs and projects are carried out to determine and address their sustainability impacts. This has not been done adequately in terms of the demolition of Eaton's and the building of the new arena.

Day by day, as time is passed, we are getting new information. That new information contradicts what the Premier has been saying. The new information contradicts what the Premier has

said about this being a dilapidated rat-infested building that is worthless.

Let me quote from a report on the historical significance of the T. Eaton's building: Contrary to popular belief, the building is in excellent condition. A laser survey conducted in 1985 determined that the foundations had shifted one inch in 96 years. This building, according to this report—it may only be one report, but it is done by a professional architect, Terri Fuglem, who is an Assistant Professor of Architecture at the University of Manitoba, who has taken a careful look at this building.

She says the Eaton's building system is as strong as any modern warehouse system built today, capable of carrying extremely heavy loads, while at the same time, affording effortless renovation. She describes not only the historic significance, but the structural soundness, the innovative design, the qualities of the Eaton's building that clearly should be part of a public review, a much better understanding than Manitobans have had to date from what the Premier has said about a dilapidated rat-infested building. Clearly there is an alternate view and it is time to have a better public look at this building.

* (16:40)

The report goes on to say that the real construction value of such a building today is very high, over \$150 million. The members want to bulldoze and get rid of a \$150-million structure, if one were to build it today. There is no understanding of real worth on the other side. To tear down this building the report says would not only tear a hole into the collective memory of the city, it would substantially add to the landfill. Would we really pay good money to tear down such an important institution?

The most progressive urban thinking today advocates the rehabilitation of older neighbourhoods and buildings. To tear down historic structures is passé. Clearly what the report is saying is that the NDP are passé. They belong to the old world, the past. We want the future, not the kind of old-style thinking that the NDP are trying to push on Manitobans, trying to push to the detriment of Manitobans. Clearly there is enough in this report to warrant a careful, careful analysis, public hearings, and looking very closely at what the options are.

The resignation of Bill Neville today sends a very strong message.

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

Mr. Lemieux: I wish to put a few comments with regard to the subamendment to the amendment. What I would like to state is with regard to the points that were listed before us with regard to financial documents including a term sheet and business plan to provide a Provincial Auditor review.

To my understanding, the Provincial Auditor's job is not to look at and make recommendations to this House. If the Provincial Auditor wishes to access information afterwards he certainly has that responsibility, but the Provincial Auditor's job is not to jump in ahead of and then recommend to this body. We hear continually over and over from members opposite about how they are in favour and yet they are stalling, stalling, trying to bushwhack this particular project.

Mr. Speaker, the people of Manitoba want Winnipeg to be revitalized. We have 147 buildings and facilities right now that have been designated either through the federal government, the provincial government or the municipal government as heritage sites. All the levels of government are very, very conscious of the heritage aspects of our city. What we want to do is revitalize. Sometimes from the ashes the phoenix rises and then you have a new and certainly you have a new—*[interjection]*

Well, you know, Mr. Speaker I have to make a comment because this project is not there to keep a national hockey league franchise in Winnipeg. This is an entertainment complex to provide the citizens of Manitoba as well as Winnipeg with the facility to have community access for minor hockey teams, high school teams and so on which will also have the opportunity to have a new facility.

Even the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) and others that made comments the current arena in Winnipeg served the citizens well. It did but its time has come. Some credit

should be given to the Member for Fort Whyte for trying to do something about this approximately five years ago. I give credit to the gentleman for doing that. They tried to do it. I think it had nothing to do with him but, regrettably, I think the private sector just was not there at the time.

With regard to point No. 3, about how the Government should explore options and alternatives of the downtown site and actively look, this is the private sector, Mr. Speaker, who is driving this, the private sector that we have confidence in. Do the members opposite not have confidence in the private sector to be able to do something like this. They have a vision. They want to proceed. What we are doing is trying to participate in this and provide some assistance as well.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this particular subamendment is certainly a stalling tactic in many ways. I mean, you have the private sector who want to go ahead and move ahead and move Winnipeg ahead, move it into the new millennium. You have the federal government, who, through any financial assistance, I am advised that certainly they have an environmental aspect to any financial assistance that they provide. That is still to take place, I understand. Certainly the True North group had an open house. They certainly invited the public to take a look at what the project is going to be and wanted full input from people. To their credit they wanted to have an open forum for people to come forward and make their views known.

Now, I know that members opposite, look, you could not get the job done. We are trying to do it. I understand you can nitpick and you can try to attack different aspects of it. I am proud to say that members of the corporate community in Winnipeg are my friends. I believe in them and they believe in this Government. We should be proud of that fact.

When you have the True North organization coming forward and wanting to move ahead and then you end up with a subamendment that is in front of us today that makes comments with regard to the Provincial Auditor, somehow the Provincial Auditor is going to look over this project and give recommendations of this House before the fact. There is a term sheet out already, Mr. Speaker, out there in the public.

Mr. Speaker: Order. It is very, very hard to hear. I have to hear the words of whoever has the floor in case there is a breach of the rules or unparliamentary language. I ask the full cooperation of all honourable members, please.

Mr. Lemieux: You know, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Ashton) made mention of a couple of points. He said the Opposition could be against the design, they can be against the financing, they can be against the private sector. The problem is, how can you do that and still be in favour of True North, because you have got the design that has been put in place, that is sound, the financing where the private sector is taking up the majority of costs. You have got the private sector, who is driving this initiative with the assistance of the Government of Manitoba, the federal government and the City, who want to move ahead. I wonder if the members opposite have taken the opportunity to speak to their constituents. They will soon find out that Manitobans are in favour of it and their constituents are in favour of it.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (16:50)

Point of Order

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, there was so much noise going on, I am not sure if I heard correctly that the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) has broken ranks with the New Democrats, and he is now asking that the arena project be moved to Elmwood. That is what I thought I heard him say, but I think that is an important point that the House should know.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) made an excellent point. It is very difficult to hear. On the point of order raised by the honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, he does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Lemieux: I can understand why it can get loud at times. It is because people feel either opposed to it or for it. Sometimes people are trying to express those views a little louder than maybe they should, but, you know, Mr. Speaker,

with regard to heritage, as made mention, there are a lot of projects in Manitoba that certainly this Government, I know the previous government have certainly looked at with regard to designations. In this particular occasion my department, the Historical Resources Branch, made recommendations with regard to why they felt that the narrow interpretation of the advisory council was to look at just the heritage significance. Then the branch, when they received the recommendation, certainly looked at that. They took a look at this: Is the owner wanting to have this site designated? No.

Taking a look at re-use. They had to take a look at the re-use of the building. No, there was nothing. People have been looking around for a year, 18 months or two years. No one has come forward. Members of the Opposition, I do not see them putting their money up wanting to do something with the building. For two years that building has stood vacant, and the legacy they left was Portage Avenue being boarded up from The Bay all the way to Main Street. That is their legacy.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, we have heard the minister saying we are not prepared to come forward with the money. I can tell him right now that on this side of the House we have 20 bucks already. We are doubling the price his government accepted as the value of the Eaton's building. It is right here.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Before ruling on the point of order by the honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, I would just like to remind all honourable members when rising on a point of order it should be used to point out a breach of the rules or unparliamentary language. It should not be used for debate.

The honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet does not have a point of order, but I would like him to table three original copies of the material.

Mr. Lemieux: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I notice the lights flashing, and just want to make a comment that to those individuals who feel a close, sentimental value or certainly a close relationship to the Eaton's building, I would certainly want to say to them that they are entitled to their views. I, for one, would want to be very respectful of their views, and I think that Manitobans would be as well.

I know that a decision has been made, certainly, by me after I took a look at the recommendation made by my department, and so I want to just state to those individuals who feel closely about the Eaton's building is that there are different ways to show respect and to value that particular building without keeping the—

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

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to rise this afternoon to speak to the subamendment of the amendment and the motion, but what I want to say is that we on this side of the House support a downtown arena. That is not a question, and we have always said that. I do not think there has been a member on this side of the House that has said we are opposed to a downtown arena.

There is a difference between supporting a downtown arena and the requested support for a specific location which now houses a historic building, one that the cultural community has come around to support, one that the historic community has come around to support, made recommendations to the minister, and he decided to play dead, roll over and yield to his corporate buddies and go against what the historic community and the advisory committee recommended, to the point where today Mr. Bill Neville submitted his resignation because he could not tolerate the approach of this Government and this minister.

We have seen this happen in this province on more than one occasion, where deals have been cut, apart from society, and the Government has moved ahead on its hidden agenda. I guess the first one that we have to reference is the Pan Am Clinic. That deal was cut between

the Premier and some of his buddies. The Government decided to pay \$7.3 million for a facility they did not have to buy. I submit that the same thing has happened in this case. This minister has been leaned on by the Premier. He has succumbed to the pressure of the Premier and has gone against what has been recommended by an advisory committee that says the Eaton building should stay as a historic building in this city.

When you evaluate these things you have to look at the commercial value of a property as well. If this property had no commercial value and could not be used by any developer for any economic benefit, then I would say perhaps the minister would have some validity in recommending that the building be torn down.

We have had evidence. The NDP have had the same presentation that we have had from professionals and people who know the structural value of this building and who could also put a business case forward which would indicate that if you preserve this building, if you renovated it and you found tenants for it and then built a downtown arena in another location you would have a win-win situation. Then you would have the tax base of the Eaton's building, a viable building which would produce tax revenue for the City, provide activity downtown, give the city some life. In addition to that you would have a downtown arena located in a proper location where there is access to it, where you are not crowding people, where you have corridors that are made for the transportation of vehicles and pedestrians in a way which would complement the city.

That is what I am asking this minister to look at, not to be blinded by a commitment made by his Premier to some corporate friends but indeed to look at what the value for the population of this city, the population of this province is.

The value of the Eaton's building goes beyond the city. There are people in every corner of this province who have an attachment to the historic value of this building. I do not care, we could go as far north as the communities that you come from and to the west side of the province communities that I come from who have always been associated with the T. Eaton company.

People understand the value of this building. It is unfortunate that the minister has taken the approach that he has. I think the minister should be embarrassed by the fact that he has had the head of the heritage advisory committee resign in protest because he disagrees with this unilateral decision that the minister has taken because he has been leaned on by the Premier of the Province.

* (17:00)

I find it passing strange that members of the Government have not been up on this resolution today. The advocate for the historical community in this province, the minister, has had to get up twice on this motion. Why are the members of the Government not speaking to this motion? Have they been gagged? Do they realize the value of the Eaton's building and are now reluctant to speak because they know that indeed their constituents are not going to support this particular decision taken by this Government?

The other issue here is: Why has the Government hidden from a public process? Why have they hidden from a public process? Why do they not allow people who have views on both sides of the issue, those who support that location for an arena, those who oppose it? Why do they not allow public processes to take place? There is no rush to get this arena built in the next few months. We do not have a major hockey team waiting to occupy the arena right now.

The reality is that the new arena is going to be smaller than the existing arena. The Member for Burrows says it is going to be better. Well, let me tell you how better it is going to be. Do the people of Manitoba, the people who support this, the people who buy season tickets, know that the pedestrian corridors inside the arena are going to be half the size that they are in the existing arena? Do the public know that? I do not think so. Do the public of Manitoba know that the side street—is it Hargrave?—

Some Honourable Members: Hargrave.

Mr. Derkach:—that it is going to have two lanes taken away, and then the second floor is going to hang right over the top of the entire street? Do the people of Manitoba know that, when you leave the building, you are going to be entering

right into the traffic? Why do we not allow public process so that people can express their views and their opinions? Why is the Premier (Mr. Doer) rushing ahead with this deal? Mr. Speaker, this smells, and the Premier is going to rue the day that he made this decision, and so is the Minister of Culture and Heritage (Mr. Lemieux). There is no more "heritage" in this.

I fear for the historic sites in our city with this minister in charge because, as soon as somebody comes along and offers this Government a deal, they will fall for it. I ask you to consider this. What was the value of the Eaton building? What did the Government put as a value on this Eaton building? I think it was mentioned here this afternoon. It was \$10, right? So is this the value that the proponent is going to put on it when he asks for a guarantee from mortgage companies? Is it going to be \$10, or is in fact there going to be an ability to inflate this to show that you are putting in a significant amount of equity into the project? Is that really the way we do business in this province? I doubt it. Maybe it is the way this Government does business but it is not the way Manitobans are used to doing business.

I see my light is flashing, Mr. Speaker. Our subamendment speaks to some salient points, number one, that all financial documents, including the term sheet, be made available to the Provincial Auditor. Secondly, that a full environmental impact for the citizens of this province and this city be conducted on this building, on this project, and that the Government explore other options as to where to locate this project, because there are alternatives.

There are very good alternatives downtown, and the Government should not be forced by its friends to locate it in a building which is going to mean certain amounts of money and certain advantages to the private sector.

So, for that reason, we have proposed a subamendment, and I would encourage all members to support it.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): You know, Mr. Speaker, it is going to be interesting to stand up on a day like today. We call this Opposition Day. Opposition to what? We are not in opposition to a rink downtown. We are in favour of a rink downtown. But what we are opposed to here is the process. The process that

this Government is going through is unspeakable. I mean, we have a Minister of Heritage (Mr. Lemieux). I think we are going to be changing that title. I think we are going to have a new portfolio for this minister. He has been through one now. This will be the second one. His new portfolio we are going to give him is going to be the minister of demolition. So it will be, from now on, the minister of demolition.

You know, if he was around back in the earlier days—I think Fort Garry—we might not have actually saved the gates. I think they would have been probably levelled at the same time. I guess the next one on his hit list could be the Hotel Fort Garry.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I sat on City Council with Bill Neville, and this gentleman stands strong for what he believes in. There were many buildings, when I was on City Council, that came forward for heritage designation. I did not always support some of the positions that were being taken, but Bill always put forward a good argument and he always put forward the historic argument towards why the preservation of a building was important. After looking at those facts, we usually voted with Bill and we usually supported him and saved those buildings. That is 10 years ago, and I am proud of our record of what we did manage to save 10 years ago because, if some people would have had their way, none of those buildings would exist.

So I am standing up today for my constituents who believe in a little bit of history. I stand up for all my constituents when I speak in this House. Some of them might even happen to sit on the other side of the House, and I am hoping they can support me today when I am putting forward my views that the building that the Government is allowing to be destroyed, allowing to be ripped down, a building that we have all within the city of Winnipeg had an opportunity—as I was growing up, I remember my family going down to Eaton's every single Saturday. That is where we did our food shopping. We would go in the parkade and then we would walk across through the car walk, through the passageway over to Eaton's store. Then we would end up down in the bargain centre in the basement and if we were lucky, we would get to visit the toy department.

The building is sentimental to me. It is sentimental to other people, but it is also the type of building it is. This building can be redesigned very easily, Mr. Speaker. Our whole art world is going to be in trouble if this Government keeps it up. The way they are at it, they want to rip everything down.

You look at the architecture of this building and the design. When you think about it, it is a hundred years ago, but they designed it so that the interior could be changed rapidly, easily and inexpensively. To build a building like this today would cost you \$150 million to put together this type of structure. We have a structure here that could be revisited.

It is all about sustainable development. Where are we going with sustainable development? Here we are, taking down a usable building, a usable space, a piece of our history, a piece of our heritage and this Government, this minister, does not even take the position or support the advisory committee. Instead, he gets his department to write up a report, I am sure they had to talk to a few of them very strongly to have this type of report. I think they would have to threaten them, probably, with their jobs. I would have a hard time believing that his people in his department would recommend to rip down this building. I have seen some of the buildings that they have recommended to have ripped down and not ripped down.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

There were a lot less valuable buildings that were saved in this city. Let me tell you there were some buildings that did not stand in as high a category that if we had ever attempted as a government to rip down this Government today as opposition would have taken us to stride. All their socialist friends from across the city would have been down here on the steps and we would have had a thousand presenters, and they would have been down our necks. But the Premier (Mr. Doer) has spoken and the union bosses have spoken and they have said leave it alone. Leave it alone because the Premier, wants it to happen. The Premier is there with his buddies saying, make it happen.

Will they look at another site, Mr. Deputy Speaker? No, they will not. They are too interested in ripping down a piece of our heritage. They do not want to look at an environmental impact on the study because it might slow down the process. What is their rush?

If we truly want to make this into a city that we are proud of, why do we not take a look at it? Why do we not take a look at what we are doing? How do we take advantage of a situation by ripping down a building? It is something that we will never be able to reconstruct. It is gone. The CP building, the hotel—it is gone today. It is a part of our heritage that we will never again get to revisit. Some of us had an opportunity in our youth to visit those buildings, but they are gone. This is a piece of history.

* (17:10)

You go to old Québec and what have you got in old Québec but a number of old buildings, a part of history. We have an opportunity in Winnipeg to save some of that. We have an opportunity to build an arena downtown where it belongs, on a footprint where it fits, an arena that would give us the ability to hold functions that at least we could compete with Saskatoon, maybe Fargo. It would be nice. Maybe Regina, maybe we can compete with Regina. Not the way we are going. At the rate we are going, we will not be able to compete with the Keystone Centre in Brandon. They can hold bigger functions in Brandon than we will be able to hold here. It is getting ridiculous.

Are we going to be the capital of Manitoba or not? Why are we building a rinky-dink rink when we should be building something we are proud of in the future? Why do we not plan something instead of building the Doer Dome? Give me a break. Here we are ripping down a heritage site so that this First Minister can have something to stand back and say: I built it.

Well, in 25 or 30 years, they will be ripping it down because it will not be a proper size. They will be ripping it down and they will be saying we are getting rid of this piece of non-history. It will have no value because the buildings they establish now, in 35, 40 years, they have done their use and you rip them down. I am waiting

for the day when the Heritage Minister gets a report that this building should come down. I am sure he is going to line the D8 and want to take the bricks home and line his driveway so he has a piece of history there. I am sure they will all be collecting those bricks to line their driveways and line their gardens so they can have a piece of history at home.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I would like to keep that piece of history downtown where it belongs, standing proud and strong on Portage Avenue. I am sure if we turned around and we got some developers to truly look at this picture, to truly look at all aspects, that we could save this building. But no, we do not see any strength over there. We see a bunch of weak-kneed people that will not even stand up and put their words on the record, because they have been muzzled. They have been muzzled and they are told to sit in their seats and clap like trained seals and support the Government. That is what they have been told. Do not voice your opinion. Do what you are told and sit there and you will remain in the back bench and that is where you are going to stay. Maybe Mr. Lemieux, when he is moved for the third time, there might be room for one of these quiet, quiet people from the back bench to move up.

I am not about to not stand for history. Bill Neville should never have had to resign because this minister forced an issue. I am ashamed of what this Government is doing. We have to build an arena, but that is not the location. We should be taking our time and doing a proper job of it, not a rush job, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I feel somewhat inadequate following my colleague, because he spoke with considerable passion. But I rise to speak today because it is the process that concerns me that we are now entering into in relationship to a downtown arena. No one has a problem with the construction of a new arena, especially if it were to be driven by the private sector, as this one has been sold.

There appears to be, however, quite a bit of difference between the announcements and the publicity that we are receiving around this project and the reality of what may actually

occur as we see the development unfold. I happen to have spent the last 14 years or so, the last dozen years at least living very close to where the proposed design would be, the concept would be, on the old Eaton's site.

When I think that there are a lot of answers, the public have not even had the opportunity to ask the questions, let alone seek the answers. The debate today probably allows us an opportunity to put in the public forum the questions that I believe this Government needs to respond to in a clear fashion so that this project can proceed with complete and unwavering support.

That is, No. 1, have they chosen this location because of other motives than what are being spoken about? Have they told the public what this project may look like when it is completed? Have they talked about, as we are just coming to realize, that Hargrave Street is going to be considerably different, that it will in fact be overhung by the—*[interjection]* Well, it could end up being a hangover, to tell you the truth, but there will be an overhang from the new arena that will go over top of a portion of the street.

Then I think about that on the other side just a block down and around the corner, there are two big parking lots that are not being used for anything except parking lots.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Now, obviously there needs to be downtown parking, but it strikes me as not fitting into the vision of urban planning and the vision that some of my urban colleagues have talked about having for the city of Winnipeg, our capital city, a city which we are all very proud of. We want to think that any development that would go here would in fact be a centrepiece for the future of this city and for the province.

So there is an opportunity. I can see how the Premier probably leapt at the opportunity. He did not want to be faced with the possibility of the Eaton building not being filled. He thought, oh, this is going to be a nightmare under my watch. The Eaton building may be torn down, but if it is going to be torn down and replaced

with a new arena, then that will not be a problem. It seems to me that what we have seen is a quick fix that has been foisted, if you will, or at least bought lock stock and barrel, by the current leaders of this Government, probably in co-operation with the people in the city of Winnipeg, in local governments who say we do not want to see another derelict building sitting in the downtown area, especially when we are uncertain whether or not it can be used.

Now it is beginning to come to light that this building, not only has it got heritage written all over it, it has a lot of viable opportunities that could be put to use. This building is a lot more structurally sound, I am beginning to understand, compared to what we were led to believe. Structural soundness to an old farm boy, Mr. Speaker, means that we have in today's world an opportunity to take advantage of that building at a lesser cost than what it would cost to replace it.

Now what are the opportunities for that building? Let us just take a look at whether or not you could have residential, you could have office, you could have a mixture of opportunities in that building or you could have, well, my colleague behind me says to have a look at Plan Winnipeg. Any opportunity you have to bring people downtown, not just to visit to go to a ball game, not just to visit to go to a hockey game, but to live and work and recreate in the downtown area of your capital city, that will bring a revitalization that you cannot achieve in any other way.

While I would hate to point to Hogtown as being an example that we should follow, I have had an opportunity to live in the downtown area there for a short period of time and the first thing that struck me was that there were people living there. You saw the underground parking at 11 o'clock at night. Instead of the streets being dead, cars were coming and going; people were coming home. They were living downtown in the core area. They have revitalized big sections of that city and made it the vital capital that it is and I think that Winnipeg is possibly, inadvertently throwing away a magnificent opportunity.

So, when the Premier (Mr. Doer) throws back at us that we are just nitpicking, that we want to be against this, I think that he is hoping that this will be a done deal so quick that a

majority of people will not realize the opportunity that they are missing. They will not realize that there may be more to the financial package behind this than what meets the eye. There may be more to lose than there is to gain if we follow what, on a very quick glance, everybody said: Hooray! This is a laudable project. We need to support the opportunity to redo the hockey edifice in this city. Goodness knows, we love our hockey in this part of the world. But why can we not have a win-win? I look to the Minister of Culture (Mr. Lemieux). I look to the Minister responsible for Municipal Affairs (Ms Friesen) and the current structure of this Government.

* (17:20)

It would seem to me that she would have a tremendous opportunity to tap the guy on her left on the shoulder and say: Look, maybe if we look at Plan Winnipeg at the same time as we look at the building of this arena, maybe if we look at some larger picture urban planning, that we could have not only a hockey arena built during our short term as Government, we could also see the revitalization of a very important part of our town. Instead, we are going to see the potential removal of a building—Eaton's is stamped all over western Canada and its development from the early days. In fact, I think if you look out in my neighbourhood, you will find that there were whole houses that were sort of an off-the-shelf project that came through the Eaton's distribution system. I mean, they were the hometown store to so many of us, whether we actually entered that building or not. The history that is attached to it is enormous, Mr. Speaker.

So, in conclusion, the Premier (Mr. Doer)—I hope he has the monitor on down in his office. I hope that he is listening to the comments that are being made. I hope that he is listening to the silence of his own caucus, the silence of the members on that side who, except for the Minister of Culture (Mr. Lemieux) and one or two other comments that have been made, have not stood up and defended the project the way he is going to have to defend it over the coming months, because he is going to have to justify the finances. He is going to have to justify the loss of an historic edifice. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, this Government is on the verge of moving too quickly and not following proper

process. Process will give the public an opportunity to sort through the facts and decide if this is a location or if there may be a better one, maybe, just a couple of blocks down the street. Thank you.

Ms. Friesen: I am delighted to be able to speak on this subamendment. I notice that the Opposition appears to be a bit disconcerted about this. Perhaps they do not want to hear about downtown revitalization again. Although I notice in their—I do notice—Mr. Speaker, I am having—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, I can hear by the howls that I must have hit a nerve there, that they do not want to hear about downtown revitalization—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Friesen: I notice, for example, Mr. Speaker, that the previous speaker talked about people coming downtown, that people should be downtown. It should be a bustling place. It should be like Toronto. Well, for 12 years, where were they? What did they do? What did they do to make downtown the bustling, lively place that it should be? Were they there supporting festivals? Were they there supporting people living downtown?

Mr. Speaker, these are the people who walked away from the North End. Why? These are the people who were not prepared to put money into recreation in the North End. These are the people who let two recreational facilities go in the city of Winnipeg. No wonder they do not want to hear about downtown revitalization.

Mr. Speaker, I want to suggest that the Opposition is going to use this subamendment to argue that the Government is opposed to environmental reviews. I know the way in which they take simple facts and the way in which they distort them. I mean we are lucky if they do get the facts right. I do not want to go into that again. We could put a list of false information

and obligations that they have to bring the right information to this.

However, Mr. Speaker, I want to refer the Opposition to the term sheet, the publicly available term sheet that we made available, that the City made available, that was tabled in this House, that I have read out in great detail in Question Period, because it seems to me that questions which the Opposition raises could not possibly have been based upon a reading of the term sheet. So I took it upon myself to read it to them. to explain to them that there is a difference between caps and caps on formulas. In fact, they have not raised that issue again, so perhaps it was worthwhile, my reading it to them.

So, on the issue of the environment, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to read section 8 of the term sheet which stipulates that the True North obligations are: e) to develop the True North Centre in accordance with all applicable federal and provincial environmental laws and regulations. I understand that that is happening. Under f) develop the True North Centre in full compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, by-laws and procedures and including, *inter alia*, all occupational, health, safety and employment legislation. I understand that that is what is happening; and g) subject to Winnipeg infrastructure contributions, obtain all development permits, building permits, other approvals and to pay all fees, licences and deposits, including development-cost charges in accordance with applicable laws.

So I think if they were to read the term sheet which was tabled publicly in this House a month or so ago, then they might perhaps have brought a different kind of motion. Nevertheless, they are now interested in having people downtown. These are the people, of course, who moved the Crystal Casino out of downtown and put it into a different part of the city. Nevertheless, these are the people who want to see people living and working downtown.

Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the beginning of the movement for the renovation of warehouses was begun and, in fact, most of it was down under the Pawley government. The first Ashdown warehouse, which was the development of the first warehouse in Winnipeg, a

very beautiful building, one that I think has given people confidence that warehouse development for living and working can happen in Winnipeg, is something that was done under the Pawley government.

The arts building in the Exchange District, where many of the arts groups have congregated and which led to a development of artist studios in the Exchange District, was done under the Pawley government. I do not see any comparable changes, any comparable advances in the 11 years that their government was in power in areas bringing people downtown to work, to live, to create a density of activity in the Exchange District, for example.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Friesen: So this is indeed an unusual turn of events to hear an opposition which for 11 years in government chose to ignore recreational opportunities, chose to ignore the issue of having density and mass of people downtown, which, in fact, showed very little interest in the downtown of Winnipeg altogether.

I am having to speak rather loudly, Mr. Speaker. They do seem to be quite unnerved by facing in fact the difficulties that they put Winnipeg in with their abandonment of the inner city and of the neighbourhoods which surround it. So that is why this Government has tackled issues on several fronts. Not only have we begun the revitalization and the turning around of downtown Winnipeg with our investment in Red River community college, our investment in the Big 4, our investment in festivals in downtown Winnipeg, our investments in the museum and the completion of that, one of our major tourist activities, as well as a continued investment, indeed an increased investment, in the University of Winnipeg, something which is a very important part of downtown, brings hundreds of students downtown every day, brings people downtown to revitalize the downtown. We are doing that now in another part of the community. So that is one piece.

Mr. Speaker, the members opposite who are so exercised at the moment, it seems to me never asked the question when they were in

government: How do we revitalize downtown? I must admit I am really stunned to hear actually the Opposition speak of planning because they had no interest in planning. They got rid of 25 planners in the department that I am now responsible for, so to hear them speak of planning is really an oxymoron in itself.

So what they were looking at and which they were prepared to accept for Winnipeg was indeed not just a donut, and I know that is the common term, but "edge city" was the term I was looking at. This is what is happening in the United States. Where shopping centres meet, you are getting what is developing as the new kind of city. So that is exactly the kind of city which they were heading for, and you cannot have, I do not believe, a city in this country that does not have a heart, that does not have a downtown that is full of people. In that sense I do agree with the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings).

That is what this is about. It is about developing. It is about bringing young people downtown. It is developing not just the commercial elements of downtown but the public sector elements as well as the privately led discussion around the arena. This is about bringing a lot of elements, in fact, all the elements of Winnipeg, of young people, of public sector, of private enterprise, of people who are now looking at retail opportunities both in the Exchange District and in the downtown heart of Winnipeg in ways that they did not look in the last 11 years of that government, and that is really what is eating them, Mr. Speaker.

* (17:30)

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hour being 5:30, pursuant to the rules, I must interrupt the debate to put the question.

The question is as follows: Proposed subamendment to the amendment of the Opposition Day motion moved by the honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik):

THAT the proposed amendment be amended as follows:

(a) *by deleting the first WHEREAS clause;*

(b) *by deleting the first* THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED *clause; and*

(c) *by deleting the second* THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED *clause and substituting the following:*

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the True North Entertainment Complex as set out in the Term Sheet, subject to the following:

1. All appropriate financial documents, including the term sheet and the business plan, be provided to the Provincial Auditor for review and comment.
2. A full environment impact review of the project be conducted by the Clean Environment Commission and that this review include the effects of the project on vehicular and pedestrian flows in downtown Winnipeg as well as the impact of the project on residents of the downtown. That adequate intervener funding be provided by the proponents to downtown residents and other concerned citizens to allow their full and meaningful participation in the environmental review.
3. The government explore options for an alternative downtown site for the True North Project while actively encouraging development opportunities for the valuable Eaton's building which may result in two significant development projects for the Winnipeg downtown thereby creating a win-win situation for all.
4. All appropriate due diligence reviews be undertaken by the government.

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

* (18:20)

Formal Vote

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

Order. The question before the House is the subamendment of the honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik).

Division

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

Yeas

Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Enns, Faurchou, Gerrard, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Laurendeau, Loewen, Maguire, Mitchelson, Murray, Penner (Emerson), Pitura, Praznik, Reimer, Schuler, Smith (Fort Garry), Tweed.

Nays

Aglugub, Allan, Ashton, Asper, Barrett, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Friesen, Jennissen, Korzeniowski, Lathlin, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Mihychuk, Nevakshonoff, Reid, Robinson, Rondeau, Sale, Santos, Schellenberg, Selinger, Smith (Brandon West), Struthers, Wowchuk.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 22, Nays 30.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the subamendment lost.

The question before the House is the proposed amendment to the Opposition Day

motion moved by the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Mr. Lemieux)

THAT the proposed motion be amended as follows:

(a) *by deleting the third WHEREAS clause—*

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: Okay.

and (b) *by deleting everything after the sixth WHEREAS clause and substituting the following:*

WHEREAS all the accurate details of the True North Entertainment Complex proposal are contained in the Term Sheet provided to this Legislature.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly support the Manitoba Government's decision to provide all financial documentation, including the Term Sheet, to the Provincial Auditor should he decide to make an examination and audit of the True North Entertainment Complex; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba supports the True North Entertainment Complex proposal as set out in the Term Sheet.

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the amendment, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed to the amendment, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

* (19:20)

Formal Vote

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

Order. The question before the House is the amendment of the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism (Mr. Lemieux).

Division

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

Yeas

Aglugub, Allan, Ashton, Asper, Barrett, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Friesen, Jennissen, Korzeniowski, Lathlin, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Mihychuk, Nevakshonoff, Reid, Rondeau, Sale, Santos, Schellenberg, Selinger, Smith (Brandon West), Struthers.

Nays

Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Enns, Faurshou, Gerrard, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Laurendeau, Loewen, Maguire, Mutchelson, Murray, Praznik, Reimer, Schuler, Smith (Fort Garry), Tweed.

Madam Clerk: Yeas 28, Nays 20.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the amendment carried.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the Opposition Day motion, as amended.

WHEREAS Manitobans desire—dispense?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

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

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Formal Vote

Mr. Laurendeau: Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

The question before the House is the motion of the honourable Member for Southdale (Mr. Reimer), as amended.

Division

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

Yeas

Aglugub, Allan, Ashton, Asper, Barrett, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Friesen, Jennissen, Korzeniowski, Lathlin, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Mihychuk, Nevakshonoff, Reid, Rondeau, Sale, Santos, Schellenberg, Selinger, Smith (Brandon West), Struthers.

Nays

Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Enns, Faurshou, Gerrard, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Laurendeau, Loewen, Maguire, Mitchelson, Murray, Praznik, Reimer, Schuler, Smith (Fort Garry), Tweed.

Madam Clerk: Yeas 28, Nays 20.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, would you canvass the House to see if there is leave not to see the clock until 10 p.m?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House to not see the clock till 10 p.m.? [*Agreed*]

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, would you please call concurrence and third readings and then debate on concurrence and third readings of the bills as they appear on the Order Paper?

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 7—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 7, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act, as reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 21—The Manitoba Ethnocultural Advisory and Advocacy Council Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett), that Bill 21, The Manitoba Ethnocultural Advisory and Advocacy Council Act, as reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 22—The Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak), that Bill 22,

The Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act, as reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

* (19:30)

Bill 26—The Winnipeg Commodity Exchange Restructuring Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Smith), that Bill 26, The Winnipeg Commodity Exchange Restructuring Act, as reported from the Standing Committee on Economic Development, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 27—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act (2)

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 27, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act (2), as reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, we will be voting in favour of this bill, but we would like a recorded vote. Yeas and Nays.

Mr. Speaker: Before putting the question—

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to say briefly, I will be voting in favour of this bill, but I believe that the members opposite in the NDP should have extended this throughout northern Manitoba, instead of leaving out a number of communities.

Mr. Speaker: Before putting the question, are there any other speakers? Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is concurrence and third reading of Bill 27, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act (2). Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Formal Vote

Mr. Laurendeau: Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The normal practice of the House is when all in agreement there is no recorded vote. But, if there is agreement of the House to have a recorded vote, we will have a recorded vote. Is there a will of the House to have a recorded vote?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Yeas and Nays. Call in the members.

Order. The question before the House is concurrence and third readings, Bill 27, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act (2).

Division

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

Yeas

Aglugub, Allan, Ashton, Asper, Barrett, Cerilli, Chomiak, Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Dewar, Doer, Driedger, Dyck, Enns, Faurschou, Friesen, Gerrard, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Jennissen, Korzeniowski, Lathlin, Laurendeau, Lemieux, Loewen, Mackintosh, Maguire, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Mihychuk, Mitchelson, Murray, Praznik, Reid, Reimer, Rondeau, Sale, Santos, Schellenberg, Schuler, Selinger, Smith (Brandon West), Smith (Fort Garry), Struthers, Tweed.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 47, Nays 0.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion unanimously carried.

Bill 40—The Podiatrists Act

Hon Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak), that Bill 40, The Podiatrists Act, as amended and reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is third reading of Bill 40. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 42—The Regulated Health Professions Statutes Amendment Act

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak), that Bill 42, The Regulated Health Professions Statutes Amendment Act, as reported from the Standing Committee on Law Amendments, be concurred in and be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is third reading of Bill 42. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

* * *

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Speaker, before calling debates, would you canvass the House to see if there is leave to waive private members' hour tomorrow and have regular Orders of the Day?

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour for tomorrow a.m. and have regular Orders of the Day? [*Agreed*]

DEBATE ON CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 10—The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: To resume debate on concurrence and third readings, Bill 10, The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods and Consequential Amendments Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for River Heights.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I want to say briefly, although I support the thrust of community safety and believe that there are some positive things in this bill, I think that the Government did not pay adequate attention to the cogent and intelligent comments of one of the presenters, Mr. Fred Curry, who should have been listened to a lot better in terms of having a piece of legislation be much better implemented than it would be as it is currently being passed.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is Bill 10, The Safer Communities and Neighbourhoods and Consequential Amendments Act. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 17—The Student Aid Act

Mr. Speaker: To resume debate on third reading on Bill 17, The Student Aid Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Russell? [*Agreed*] The bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Russell.

Bill 24—The Liquor Control Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: Bill 24, The Liquor Control Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act, standing in the name of the honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House for the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for St. Norbert? [*Agreed*] The bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for St. Norbert.

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that the House resolve into the Committee of Supply.

Motion agreed to.

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

Concurrence Motion

* (20:00)

Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos): The Committee of Supply has before it for our consideration the motion concurring in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2002. The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Mr. Chairman, I take the opportunity to, on concurrence, have a brief discussion with the Minister of Highways and Transportation.

I have been a patient MLA, and more patient are some of my constituents who, on one of his provincial roads, Provincial Road 518, one, in fact, that I reside on just two kilometres or three

kilometres north of me, has been under water now for three months and likely will be under water for the remainder of the summer and the winter causing a number of my constituents to travel 15 kilometres or 20 kilometres out to No. 6 highway and then back into Woodlands to come back through there.

I appreciate that this has been an unusual year, but this is a provincial road. I accept some responsibility; it was designated for upgrading on different highway programs. I was able to achieve the first eight kilometres or nine kilometres of that upgrading from the Village of Woodlands north to where it intersects with Provincial Road 415 which leads to Inwood and to St. Laurent. But, right now as I speak, there is at least about a 3000-metre stretch of that provincial road under a foot or a foot and a half of water making it totally impossible and I am just asking the minister: What possible hope is there for getting some ways of making that road accessible by freeze up?

It is not an easy assignment because West Shoal Lake is only a mile, a mile and a half away. I believe what it is; it is a low dip in the road. The road has never been upgraded since the time that it was taken over as a provincial road back in Weir's years in the early 1960s. But I confess I have resided in that area for some 42 years. I have never seen the condition of that road in that way. It has been a poor road in springtime, but never totally blocked.

I offer the minister an opportunity to look at that as an extra special case. There are a number of my constituents who are greatly inconvenienced by it. One of them was featured on the front pages of the *Winnipeg Free Press* not so long ago. You might recall that Interlake farmer standing in his water-soaked fields. His son farms a successful dairy and beef farm south of that section of road, so I cite just that one case where family is split up and have to make a 20-kilometre detour by St. Laurent No. 6 highway to contact each other and to transport hay back and forth to each other.

Mr. Chair, I do not know what can be done. It just about calls for some kind of a causeway to be built to try to put that road back in order. But I do remind the minister that it is a provincial

road, Provincial Road No. 518. The particular section that I speak of would be about 15 kilometres north of No. 6 of the community of Woodlands.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): Mr. Chairperson, I appreciate the comments from the member. He is quite right. It is a pretty difficult situation. In fact, quite coincidentally, I just talked to my seatmate, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Mines (Ms. Mihychuk), who, as he knows, has some personal knowledge of the Interlake and actually gave me a first-hand description of the current state of that road.

I know there are significant problems. I actually just drove Highway 6 last week, and we are still dealing with some of the problems generally in that area. I can tell the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) that the most significant areas of spring impact this year include, basically, Highway 6 and some of the connecting highways, 68 and 5 and 23. We have been re-orienting a lot of our efforts to try and deal with some of those spring situations including on the construction side. In fact, we have put a significant amount of work already into a number of the highways that I mentioned.

I think it is important to recognize that that is the first thing we are trying to do. It is more difficult in the case of the Shoal Lakes because of the rising water levels. What I can indicate to the member is that I have asked the department, and I will be continuing to pursue this over the next period of time, to look at the impact this spring because I think it shows us two things.

One is specific situations, Shoal Lakes being a good example. I had the opportunity to visit the area with my colleague the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) early on. It is interesting, I have driven through that area a thousand times but when you see it from the air, which I had the opportunity to do, you can see that essentially what is happening is that nature is essentially filling in those swamps. Those swamps are now becoming lakes. The water level is at an unprecedented level. The member will remember we actually had to pump water across Highway 6 on a regular basis.

But there are two things we need to look at from this spring. One is the situation of particular roads that are more sensitive to the spring

situation. I will give the example of 5 and 23. I know the member from the area raised it, the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), in Question Period. There is a lot of organic matter. It is a highway that is particularly susceptible to these kinds of conditions. We are targeting it. We have been, in fact, for significant work to try and bring it back into shape.

The second is quite apart from parts of our highway system that are more vulnerable; 68, by the way, east of Ste. Rose is probably in that same category. We are also running into situations where, as in the case of Highway 6, I think we have to ask the question whether there is going to be a continuing wet cycle.

I think the coverage in the *Free Press* has been instructive of what I certainly know in my other capacity as minister responsible for the Emergency Management Organization, and that is where there is a cycle where there are more and more natural disasters, more and more precipitation in this particular case. We will be looking at that. We have already in the case of a number of highways essentially had to, on a temporary basis, try and raise the level. Unfortunately, in some areas, you are dealing with too large an area to do that on a temporary basis. But I will undertake to get back to the member on that particular road as time progresses.

* (20:10)

I can indicate, too, that with the current labour dispute, I am hoping that will be resolved. I think there has been some progress even today that will allow us to access the services of our engineers. There has been a rotating withdrawal. That is going to be very important because we need to do some engineering work on that, and I will undertake to keep the member informed on that. I would also appreciate it if he could communicate to his constituents on behalf of the department that certainly we recognize that that area was significantly hit.

I know that there are highways, in fact, that highway in particular, that still are not back to normal, and as much as we cannot control the weather side, it is obvious we are going to have to look at some other solutions down the line if

we are into any kind of permanent wet cycle and particularly when you are dealing with the situations in the Westbourne area, the Interlake area and a couple of other areas in the province where you are dealing with overland flooding. It is that much more complicated for us to deal with.

Earlier this year, we dealt with the situation with a number of our rivers rising. We had some damage from river flooding, but that is more easily dealt with because the rivers rise and once the level recedes, you can essentially do the repair work, put the roads back into place. But with the overland flooding there is going to be some real questions as to the degree to which the level of water, the water table itself, is going to be raised on an ongoing basis.

A lot of those highways, as the member pointed out, go back now 30, 35 years at a time when we were not into this kind of wet cycle. So I think we are going to have to go back, and as much as it has been a real challenge for the department this year—it has been the worst spring in memory—I am hoping that the one good thing that will come out of it is recognizing where our highway system is going to be vulnerable.

I mentioned some of the highways. I do not want to leave out the many other highways, but the highway that the member is talking about, 518, is certainly in that category. It is one that we are going to have to do some work on. We obviously are focussing on the short run, but also to see if there are any ways in which we can help prevent this in the future. I thank the member for raising the question.

Mr. Enns: I have empathy for the Minister of Transportation's problems this year with the roads. I appreciate the general overview of a number of roads in the Interlake area that he referred to. But I am speaking about a specific provincial road that has been impassable for any vehicle or traffic since spring, and, as I inspected it just over this weekend, will likely be impassable going into winter. It is, I keep pointing out, a provincial road. We need to look at some emergency measures, not to put it into shape, but to make it passable. I know that there are a lot of roads in very poor shape and it is going to take a while to get them into reasonable

shape. Some reconstruction for future protection might have to be given. But this is a case where it is totally impassable. I am just wondering what kind of response the department is going to have to that situation.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Chairperson, I will get back to the member on this. I will also undertake as well, once we are out of session, whenever that may be, I will come out and take a look at it directly. There are a number of other roads I plan on looking at over the next period of time, but I will undertake to come out and look at that personally. I perhaps would appreciate even if the member could give me a personal tour of that particular stretch. I do know it is a problem, though, and I thank the member for raising the question.

Mr. Enns: The other issue that I want to raise at this opportunity while we are dealing with concurrence of the Estimates are those of my friend the Intergovernmental Affairs Minister, responsible for many things, including municipal affairs and municipal subdivisions. The matter that I raise is one that is familiar to her. I have raised the issue with her in private, and, if the minister will recall, briefly reminded her of the situation again during the course of the consideration of her Estimates. I refer to a specific subdivision that the R.M. of Woodlands has been requesting for some time now up in the east Shoal Lakes area.

My understanding from the last information the minister gave me is that it has been referred to the Municipal Board for their review of the potential subdivision. When last I requested the minister for further information, she indicated to me that indeed the Municipal Board had a look at it, but she withheld any information as to what the recommendations of the Municipal Board were or indeed what her final recommendation might be in this regard.

I simply want to put on the record again that this is a case where in the municipality of Woodlands my understanding is all appropriate procedures have been followed, that is, different departments have been asked for their opinion, specifically the Department of Agriculture, to sign off, as it were, on the fact that this is not prime agricultural land and land that could lend

itself to the kind of subdivision that is being proposed. My simple request is, again, on behalf of my council at Woodlands, the R.M. of Woodlands, in particular a gentleman that I referred to in my earlier discussions, a Mr. Bill Ogilvie, who is kind of the person that is directly interested in this subdivision.

Can the minister give me an indication, not me so much, but the R.M. an indication of what the final outcome of this long-standing request has been?

I checked earlier this morning with my council, because I was aware that the minister graced our fair village of Woodlands with her presence just a week ago at one of the regional AMM conferences. I thought that, perhaps, she might have had a chance to discuss this matter more directly with my reeve, Reeve Peltz, from the Woodlands Council, but apparently, they still are awaiting word with respect to the outcome of this request.

For the record, I simply lay it and put it on the table again that the R.M. of Woodlands has acted, in my opinion, very responsibly. They have held public hearings with respect to this subdivision request. The local council has passed several resolutions endorsing the proposed subdivision. Under these circumstances, I really am having difficulty in understanding why this is becoming, or has become, such an apparently difficult issue for the department to agree to.

Hon. Jean Friesen (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the member raising this issue. He has done so on a number of occasions, and that is certainly his duty as a member on behalf of his R.M.

* (20:20)

Yes, I was in Woodlands at the AMM meeting. We did not have a chance to meet individually with specific municipalities. The case of Woodlands is, as I indicated to the member before, one where there are differences of opinion. I am speaking off the top of my head here, and I should not. It was sent to the Municipal Board and the Municipal Board has reported. The R.M. of Woodlands' development

plan issue is in the department at the moment and they are giving me advice on all of the issues that were raised by the Municipal Board and the hearings.

This is something which is standard practice, well, standard practice for previous ministers of Municipal Affairs, I think, in all governments, and that is something that does take time. It is unfortunate, and I certainly understand the concerns that the member is raising and the concerns that the rural municipality would have on this. So I am aware of the concerns over timing. All I can say is that we will do our best to move this expeditiously through the various procedures that every government has undertaken with these kinds of issues.

Mr. Enns: Well, Mr. Chairman, I obviously cannot state it any more strongly than I have stated. I simply, for the record, indicate that the minister is quite correct, that there is a process that has to be followed and it takes some time to do this, but if she checks the file, this has been ongoing now for very close to two years. It has been looked at. You know, it sat in the Selkirk office of her department for a lengthy period of time. It was then, in my understanding, referred to the minister's office who, some six months ago or eight months ago, referred it to the Municipal Board for review. It spent its fullness of time at that body, has since come back to the department. I am really having some difficulty to understand why that specific proposal should not be in a position to be dealt with, at this time.

You know, she refers to additional processes. I am not fully familiar with all of the processes that are required, but I am aware of a number of them. I know that, for instance, different interests, different departments have to be involved in the planning process that is part of the process.

My understanding is that all of that has been done. It was done initially. Initially, the kind of spade work, as is the responsibility of her subdivision people, in this case in the regional office of Selkirk, did the initial work. It then went to the Municipal Board for review, because there were, and I acknowledge there were some objections to it raised by less than a handful, two

or three individuals. I remind the minister again that, at public hearings, when the issue was before the local council, it was examined through that body and approved. I earnestly ask the minister to resolve this issue one way or another for the potential developer. It has been a long time and I think they are deserving of an answer.

Ms. Friesen: Yes, it has been a considerable length of time, and my task is to review each of these issues carefully. I do not believe any minister considers themselves a rubber stamp. They do like to look at the issues. They do like to get the best advice they can to present to their colleagues. That is really the situation that it is in at the moment. Yes, I know that from the outside, and I do not mean the member in this case, but often from the perspective of planners, developers, et cetera, and municipal councillors that sometimes procedures seem very cumbersome, very elaborate, sometimes repetitive. Nevertheless, they are the ones, I think, that ministers of all political stripes in previous administrations have given due consideration to. I appreciate what the member is saying, in terms of try to resolve it as soon as one can. That is certainly my goal, and I will take his advice to heart.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): I have a couple of questions for the Minister of Transportation. I am wondering if I could just—I know there are others, and I just have a couple. Following up on questions for the Member for Lakeside, 23 and 5, as you know, and I think you have an understanding. I just wondered if your department, or I guess, if you had any opportunity to go out and see the situation that is there. I am guessing that there are probably two or three areas of three or four miles of road that are basically gone. They are soft roads. People are continually getting stuck in it, even today. I do recognize that the Government has put some extra resources into this area to try to get it back to even passable. I wonder if you have any long-term, or if you have had a chance to see it, if you do have a long-term plan for that particular area.

Mr. Ashton: Depending on when we are out of session, obviously it will be a decision that Opposition members will have more influence on than I will, but I plan on going out directly to

5 and 23. Obviously, I have reports both from the member and from people in the area and from the department. What we are doing, as the member knows, we are putting resources in. In fact, we tried to really move the capital budget around with some significant resources in there.

I mentioned this earlier and I will just state it again: This spring being the worst spring on record, it has really shown some of the vulnerable aspects on some parts of the road system. Mr. Chair, 5 and 23 are particularly vulnerable because of the organic matter that goes back to construction of 1967. The member may have actually more knowledge about the background of the road, certainly, than I do, but certainly I will be going out directly, and we certainly will be looking at the impact of the spring on the road system, generally, in looking at our resources.

I will be frank with the member. Our department has been working pretty well around the clock on 5, 23, 68, 6. I could list probably another two dozen roads, as well as some others with smaller areas. I certainly did want to flag that the area the member is referring to is something I recognize as minister, and our department does as being one of the hardest hit areas. We are putting the resources in, and I will come out. I will not say when, because I do not want to presume to have any idea of when this session might end. But I plan on getting out within a matter of days, at the end of the session, into that area to look at it personally.

Perhaps this is similar to what I said to the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns). I will be certainly more than willing to look at any particular stretches that the member could recommend I look at. I plan on looking at that—68. I have already seen 6. I see it on a regular basis when I drive home, and I plan on visiting some of the more hard-hit areas once we are out of session, so I thank the member for raising it and I will come out directly and see it personally.

Mr. Tweed: I would offer to the minister if he is coming and was interested, I would certainly be prepared to show him a few of the areas that have been pointed out. I recognize the strain on the budget. I do think it is a safety issue as much

as anything for the people out there. That seems to be what I hear constantly.

I know the minister has also received several letters in regards to 350 north of No. 1. I had the opportunity to travel that road a couple of weeks ago, and a lady phoned me today that has had contact with the minister's office, and she is advising me, as of today, that it has become impassable. I just wonder if, I am not asking you to make a commitment today, but I would like you to give it some consideration. Perhaps consult with the department to find out the details on it. I have travelled it. We got through it a couple of weeks ago. Today, she says it is impassable. So I would draw that to you, the minister's attention again, just hoping that through staff and through yourself you might get a chance to travel down it.

* (20:30)

Mr. Ashton: I can indicate that while I do not have immediate plans in terms of that particular highway, visiting it the same way if it were 5 or 23, I am certainly aware of it, or at least I know the person in the representation we had received in my office on the condition of the road. I can indicate that it has been a bad spring in a number of ways. It has been particularly tough on our gravel roads, and some of the surface roads that have started to crack up.

Mr. Chair, 68 is a good example. I have received the reports of the condition of 68, and, quite frankly, as much as the rain is probably good for our forest fire situation, I have got to the point where every time I see reports of rain coming I know it is going to be a real inconvenience for people far more than is normally the case. Those of us who travel on gravel roads, which I do on a fairly regular basis, know that gravel roads do have a certain degree of impassability in certain weather conditions. But what has happened here is just a continuing saturation of the subgrade in a lot of roads that has made it very difficult for the department to be able to do anything other than provide the most basic level of service.

Of course, more importantly, to the members of the public it has been very frustrating so I want to acknowledge that. Certainly

we have received calls in our office and I thank the member for raising that particular section of the road. I may try to get out there if I can over a next period of time but once we are out of session I plan to make it a priority to get out and personally look at a lot of the road situations in my capacity on the EMO side. Before the spring, I did not have the opportunity to get out and see quite a few areas that were potentially affected by flooding and were affected by high moisture levels last fall, and I plan on now focussing over the next period of time on the highways side, that side of my portfolio because I know it has been tough. I also, by the way, want to do one thing and that is visible to a lot of the front-line staff. I mentioned this in the House once. What symbolized it for me is on Highway 6, right around Easter, it was about minus 7. There must have been a 50-kilometre-an-hour wind coming off the lake, looking at the two Highways employees that were pumping the water from one side of the road to the other, and they were directing traffic. I do not want to just pick on their efforts, but the one person that had to face the lake for an eight-hour shift, I can tell you, if we had a medal in the department, I would have nominated him for it.

That is the kind of work that the department has been doing around the clock. I particularly want to note that one of the things that has been really important, and this is important, I think, for me as minister, is that a lot of this comes from the fact that people live in the area themselves. That is a very important part of our highway system. We have people who are essentially maintaining the roads. They have a real personal connection with it.

Anyway, I just wanted to indicate that I will be looking at the roads, but also thanking the employees for the dedicated work they put in. I know the Minister of Conservation's department and other departments also put in a lot of extra effort this spring and it is continuing, by the way. I know that a lot of our staff are at the burn-out point, but they recognize that we needed that extra effort to get the roads back in shape.

We still have a ways to go with the moisture and some of the work that still needs to be done. I am not suggesting at all that we are back to

where we were, but our goal and our refocussing of the capital budget this spring has been aimed at bringing some of those roads back, actually bringing the roads, period, back to the state they were in before the spring. I thank the member for raising this particular road.

Mr. Tweed: I would agree that the staff out there has done a great job. I think the fact that, generally, the people in that area and, I suggest, in a lot of areas of the province, are not complainers, they accept some of the situations and conditions. I know that the staff has put in a lot of extra time, and I know that the communities do appreciate the effort that they are putting in.

I am going to change gears with the same minister. The R.M. of Strathcona had sent a letter in with regard to the Pelican Lake Centre. It was originally sent, I think, to the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale). They are distressed out there in the fact that they feel that the Government has abandoned them on the property and the buildings that currently exist. I know that they have made requests of the Government to meet with the Minister of Family Services. I followed it up with a letter to him asking that he would meet directly with them. The contract apparently ended at the end of June and these people are, I think, feeling deserted.

I guess the reason I ask the Minister of Transportation and Government Services (Mr. Ashton) this question is because I was referred to him by the Minister of Family Services. The letter, I think, stated something to the fact that it is now under your jurisdiction. So, I would ask if the minister has received the request. I would hope he has. It has been, probably, close to a month now, and, also, if he would commit to meeting with these people.

They need to feel that the Government, at least, has an interest in this facility that has been part of their community for over 80 years, maybe even a little longer. It is sitting abandoned now and empty, and there really is no direction coming from any of the parties involved in the building and the community. They have met. They have organized. They have committees working on projects to try and utilize the facility, but have heard nothing from the Province. I just wondered if the minister would

commit, maybe when he is out visiting 5 and 23. It would be an ideal time. It is at that junction or close to it. I would ask if he would be prepared to meet with them.

Mr. Ashton: The member raised this issue in the House and I know he is aware of the background and that is that such a facility has, up until now, been under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Family Services, general area of the Sanitorium Board having ownership.

I can indicate that my department has now been looking at the situation there. I hope to be able to be in a position to be able to communicate what options we would see. I hope the member will appreciate that, up until now, the Government Services part of my department has not really had much of a role. I do acknowledge that. There are obviously some challenges out there with the buildings, from the reports I have seen. I know that is an important area of land. If there was any potential in terms of building this, obviously it is of significant interest to people in the area. We recognize that. What we are doing now is trying to run through some permanent work, in terms of options. I hope to be able to respond, probably within the next week or two, at least in some way, shape or form. Certainly, if I am in the area, I do not mind sitting down with people.

What I did want to do is to be able to have some knowledge through the department, and do more than just sit down and have a general discussion with people in the area. I hope the member will appreciate it. If he could communicate back that we are working on it. And he is quite correct, my department will be more involved with this than they have been in the past when it was under the sanitary board, and I will certainly undertake to make sure that we move this along and get a response to the community.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): My question is to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen). I would like to ask her about the Springfield development plan and what the status of it is right now.

Ms. Friesen: The Springfield development plan went to the Municipal Board, Mr. Chair. The

Municipal Board made a number of recommendations. I, in fact, met, at their request, with the mayor and council of Springfield, although I believe only the reeve came. I believe that council has now considered it. The report of the Municipal Board is a public document. There are suggestions, I think, in that report for certain kinds of studies that would be advisable before proceeding. I believe that the department has received a letter from the R.M. of Springfield asking for further clarification about those studies. I believe that staff have been in discussion. I do not know if a formal letter has gone back, but certainly staff have been in discussion with the R.M. of Springfield about how we can be of assistance in that.

* (20:40)

Mr. Schuler: I would like to ask the minister if she has had an opportunity to sit down with the reeve and hear some of the concerns he has about the recommendations that were made by the Municipal Board. Would she be open to a meeting with the reeve and with the councillors to work through some of the issues that they have?

Ms. Friesen: I did, as I indicated, at the request of the reeve, meet with him in order to release the report of the Municipal Board. It was, obviously as the member knows, a plan which has been under consideration for 10 or more years. It has been a longstanding issue. So, although that was not a common step, it was one that I thought we certainly should respond to.

I would certainly be happy to meet with the reeve and the council at their request. I have not received that request, I do not think. I do not know what the progress or state of affairs is in the request that the municipality has made for some further discussion and assistance with the studies that were suggested. Certainly, I am always ready to meet with municipalities.

Mr. Schuler: Some of the concerns that I have, and certainly others have, about the Springfield development plan, is it has been driven by hype and misinformation. For instance there was the story that came out in one of our illustrious newspapers that 3000 lots were being planned around Birds Hill Park, which if the minister

knows that at five acres would actually have taken in all of the town of Oakbank. It is this kind of misinformation that was out there.

I would like to ask the minister if she would care to comment about Anola being considered an agricultural preserve, and was that something from the Municipal Board or was that a recommendation from the minister?

Ms. Friesen: I am just looking over my briefing notes on this and wanted to correct something that I said to a previous question. The municipality has asked for a meeting. Our staff had the meeting with them, but we have not so far met, the reeve and myself. As the member suggested, that is certainly quite feasible.

My briefing note does not give me the details of the Anola issue. Again I am going off the top of my head, the Anola issue is one where I think there is a question of further study. I am not responsible for what newspapers report, nor is the member. Certainly the report of the Municipal Board is a public document. That is something which I think we would probably start from. If the member has some specific questions, I will endeavour to get back to him.

His question was whether the issue of the designation of Anola as an agricultural area was the Municipal Board's or the minister's. I will get back to him on that.

Mr. Schuler: The reason why I ask is, if it was something that came from the minister, I do not know if she is aware that the area around Anola tends to be a little bit more rocky of nature. It tends to lend itself somewhat more to larger livestock operations. It does well for grazing. It is not necessarily that good for grains and that kind of farming because it tends to be fairly rocky. It does not have the best soil in it. Certainly there have been some housing developments of a smaller scale being planned. Everything, of course, is on hold right now because of the designation that it be an agriculture preserve. That is the Anola area. We are talking about quite a large area. It is not just the town of Anola, of course.

It is the concern not just about Anola, but there are other areas as well. I am glad that the

minister clarified her comments because I think it is very important, from meetings that I have had with the reeve and council, and I had one just a while ago. With some frustration in regard to the development plan, they do feel that their concerns are not necessarily being addressed. I think it probably would help if the minister would take the opportunity and meet with them, at least hear their concerns directly and be able to address them in a very direct manner.

Ms. Friesen: I know that the concerns that the municipality has, there are many concerns, the municipality is not necessarily all of one mind on all issues. I think the purpose of the Municipal Board's recommendations was to leave the door open to enable further study, not to close the door on issues that were very difficult. I think it was an attempt to meet the needs of Springfield council, which had spent many councils discussing this issue. I accept the recommendation of the member that a meeting would be useful. What I will do is ask staff what state their meetings are themselves with Springfield, and see what might be possible in terms of a meeting between myself and the reeve and council.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I had previously spoken with the minister regarding the issue that I wanted to address this evening, that being an outstanding issue that has been with the department for some time regarding the assessment and taxation of legions in the province of Manitoba. Just by way of background, we have an anomaly in the province in that a legion has been exempted by a private member's resolution. This has caused a precedent in the province where it appears that other legions do not enjoy that same exemption across the province. For some time, legions have been pressing to be treated in like manner and to be allowed an exemption from education tax on the premises that are not part of the cocktail lounge, or the bar area.

* (20:50)

I understand that this is a little bit problematic for the department but, nevertheless, I think, because of a precedent, the issue either has to be resolved by the minister and by Government, or it has to be allowed to proceed

through the courts. I would submit that this matter could be resolved in a way which would cost government significantly less money if it were resolved in a mutually agreeable manner. If it is allowed to proceed through the courts, Mr. Chair, I would submit that it will probably cost the taxpayers of Manitoba significantly more and will impact on municipalities as well.

My question to the minister is—and I do not want to spend a lot of time on this. Rather, I would like to get to the nub of the issue, if you like, and ask the minister whether she is prepared to deal with this issue. Mr. John Petrinka has been representing some of the legions for some time. As a matter of fact, he did that when I was in her portfolio. The matter was not resolved, and I acknowledge that up front. But I ask the minister whether or not she is in a position now to either do one of two things: resolve the matter in a mutually agreeable manner, or allow this matter to proceed through the courts. As I understand it, although the statement of claim has been filed, there has been no response from the assessment branches at this time.

Ms. Friesen: I appreciate the member raising this. I know that he is in discussion with Mr. Petrinka. He has spoken to me privately about it. I have advised him that from the department's perspective this is a matter which is now before the courts. That makes it, as he knows, extremely difficult for me to talk about it. I think there is a question in Mr. Petrinka's mind about what is meant by the term "before the courts." I believe that both parties are moving toward a statement of facts to enable the case to go to court. To the best of my knowledge, that is where it stands. Our lawyer is trying to establish those statements of fact. From the perspective of the department, it is in the lawyer's hands and will be determined by the courts.

Mr. Derkach: I am not someone who is an expert in the legal issues as they relate to matters before the court, but I do know that, in fact, until the statement of facts is filed by the department, this matter is not really seen as being before the courts. So, we could get hung up on issues like this and get nowhere but, I think, this is a matter that has been before government for far too long. I wish that I had resolved it when I had that

responsibility. I regret to say that it was not resolved then. I think we understand the issues, but it is not an easy one to resolve. Being sort of caught on dead centre does not allow for anybody to have a resolution to this.

I guess my second question to the minister would be: Is she prepared to try to resolve this matter with the regions prior to it going to court, or is she resolved now to seeing the matter go through the courts, and then to live with the consequences and the settlement that might be imposed on the Government through the courts?

Ms. Friesen: The member has raised this issue before, and had asked me, at that point, about the status of the court action brought by Mr. Petrinka on behalf of a number of legions. I think we should be clear that it is not all legions, it is some legions. The member formerly asked me and I want to read it into the record because it is something that has been conveyed to the member opposite but perhaps has not been put on the public record. The Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) had asked about the interpretation of the last paragraph. This was the last time in concurrence, the last paragraph of the March 23, 2001, letter from Mr. McFetridge, the Government's lawyer, to Mr. Petrinka.

The response that I received back—and this is March 23, of course, and things have moved I believe since then—that the parties have been unable at that point to agree upon a set of facts and that Mr. McFetridge's letter was a last attempt to resolve the impasse with a statement of facts, and failing that, to undertake to file a statement of defence and proceed with pretrial examinations and to trial where evidence would be called. I think that was—I do not know if the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) received that response. It was in a package of material on concurrence that was given to the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) as the particular critic for this department. So I just wanted to read that in the record.

Yes, this is an issue which has been before more than one government. It is an issue I think which a number of ministers, even within the former government, have found an impasse. It seemed, after I spent some time—I met a number of times with Mr. Petrinka on a number of different issues around the legions' questions, or

the questions of some of the legions, and it seemed to me that the only way to move forward on this and to resolve the issue was for it to be solved, that the option available to Mr. Petrinka was the courts, and that is where the matter stands now.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, the individual, Mr. Petrinka, whose tax consultant has written to the minister as late as the 6th of June, 2001, advising her that the legions that he represents would be amenable to looking at the fairness of the issue and resolving this matter outside of the court through a negotiated process—I think this is an indication from the legions that they do not want to extract every drop of blood they can from government; rather they would like to see a mutually agreed upon settlement where they could then continue to operate their facilities.

As the minister knows, our legions are becoming fewer in number. They are having more difficulty surviving, and it is a natural fact of dropping numbers and smaller numbers in the legions themselves. I think it is for that reason that legions feel that they would like to see a settlement where they do not have to drag a process through courts, which is expensive for them. Even at this point in time, they lack those resources to be able to scale a full-fledged fight, I believe, and so they would prefer to see this settled in a mutually agreeable way.

I know that the members of the minister's party have prided themselves on being viewed and photographed with members of the legions in our province. Although they are called community service announcements, I point to the fact that in a photograph announcing a Memorial Day parade, the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) are photographed here with members of the Legion Branch No. 30 in West Kildonan. Certainly, Mr. Chair, this would suggest to me that they have considerable respect for the people who have defended our country and are serving in the legions. I point to two more brochures that were put out by Judy Wasylcia-Leis, an NDP federal member, who once again in her brochure is photographed at four different times with members of the legion in two different brochures.

Now, I am prepared to table those, Mr. Chair, if it is of any value, but I guess the point I

am trying to make here is that we can all pay lip-service with how we value the sacrifice that was made by men and women who defended our country and now have come home to make their lives in our country but also have formed legions, which we, I think on both sides of the House, have not only appreciated but have respected and have supported.

All that the legions are asking here is that we extend the same courtesy and the same benefit to them that is now bestowed on the legion in Dauphin. Although this was done by an act of the Legislature and a private member's bill, I understand that fully, and it was supported at the time, I do believe that it is time for us to address the issue of the other legions and treat them in the same compassionate and fair way that we saw fit, although the minister and I were not in the Chamber at the time, to deal with this one particular legion.

I know that earlier the minister had indicated through Mr. Petrinka that if both sides or if the Opposition agreed with a resolution to this matter that she would perhaps be prepared to move with a solution. I can tell her that as a former minister and a member of the Opposition now, I would be prepared to take a look at her proposal for a settlement. Indeed, as far as I am concerned, it is high time for us to get this off our books and off our minds and allow the legions to exist in the province, even though their numbers are dwindling, and allow them the dignity that they deserve.

* (21:00)

Ms. Friesen: I am not quite sure where the member is going with some of his comments about who is photographed with whom, but I think it would be a mistake to confuse issues around this bill with issues of respect for veterans. I do not think that would be a very wise thing to do. The member does raise, however, an issue of the difficulties that legions are facing with the declining numbers of veterans and then the very strong desire to keep open the legions as a place of comradeship and fellowship for veterans.

I should perhaps draw the member's attention to Bill 24, where this Government has proposed to reduce the minimum membership

requirement for chartered veterans associations from 100 to 50 to assist that continuance. I think that is an innovative proposal. I think it has been well received by all of the veterans associations and I think could be quite helpful.

So we are well aware of the difficulties with some veterans associations, not all of them. There are some which are partly location and partly special, I suppose, sets of circumstances which have enabled some veterans associations to have very large and thriving memberships. It is not the case for all. Obviously the declining numbers of veterans is an issue that they face right across the country.

The issue of taxation of the legions themselves is an issue that has been raised in this House by the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) as well as from the Member for Russell himself. I believe, as other ministers in this position have said, that the issue of municipal taxation is one that before those kinds of wholesale changes that I believe the member is pursuing, I am not sure that he is, but he may be, is something that we would certainly be cautious about and something that we would want to discuss with the municipalities themselves. I have not looked recently at resolutions from the AMM on this matter, but that is certainly something we could go back and look at.

On the specific issues that the member is raising about a resolution of, there are a number of issues here, but one of them I think is the resolution of the issue of the dispute over previous years' taxation and what has been taxed. The actual space of what has been taxed is a matter for which I think previous ministers, in the plural, have not been able to resolve, and the only resolution at this point appears to be before the courts.

Without going into further details, once something is before the courts or moving to the courts and the statement of facts and statement of defence are being prepared, that it would be unwise for any minister to comment any further on the specifics of a case.

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Chair, I will get to the issue of the matter before the courts in a little

while, but I want to ask the minister whether or not she is prepared to sit down with the legions, because I do know that the person representing the legions, Mr. Petrinka, has asked for a meeting with the Premier (Mr. Doer) and has asked for a meeting with the minister.

At this moment, I do not know whether those meetings have been confirmed. They were confirmed at one point and then cancelled, but understanding the minister's and the Premier's schedules, I can understand that sometimes matters like that need to be set aside for a little while until there is time to deal with it.

But I would like to ask the minister whether she is prepared to meet with Mr. Petrinka and/or the legions who have this problem and whether a meeting has been confirmed with the Premier and Mr. Petrinka.

Ms. Friesen: I am not able to speak for the Premier's schedule, although I can undertake for the member to find out whether a meeting has been arranged. I can say for myself that I have met several times with Mr. Petrinka in my office. I have also spoken to Mr. Petrinka several times in the hallways.

As the case has moved to court, I think it would be very difficult to have a further meeting with Mr. Petrinka. These things are not looked upon well by the courts, I understand. I am not a lawyer, and I do not pretend to have all the reasons for that, but my understanding is that once things move to the court, that they are in the hands of lawyers and that the court proceedings should proceed in due manner, and that is the issue that we are at I think at the moment.

Mr. Derkach: Well, Mr. Chair, I do not want to get into an argument with the minister about the number of times that she has made herself available for a meeting with Mr. Petrinka, but it appears that Mr. Petrinka's recollections of meetings with the minister are that he has only met with her once. I do not know that, because I was not present. I will just take the minister's word for it, and we will leave it at that.

That is not the issue here, Mr. Chair. The issue here is whether or not the minister is

prepared, rather than seeing this matter go to court and proceeding through the courts which is going to be expensive for both the Province and the legions, whether the minister is prepared, would she consider sitting down with either the legions or with the representative for the legions to accommodate a resolution of this matter.

Ms. Friesen: Well, we can certainly look up the number of times that I have met with Mr. Petrinka. To the best of my knowledge and off the top of my head, I think it is three times, but we can certainly check the dates of that, and a number of times in the hallway which certainly I would not consider meetings, but certainly information was conveyed from Mr. Petrinka.

What I can do is to undertake to consult my department to see whether it is advisable to meet while court proceedings are moving to some resolution at least before the courts and to see whether, indeed, that is advisable. I think that would be the prudent step to take, and I can undertake to respond to the member on this.

I should add, Mr. Chairman, that I have never met with legionnaires themselves. I have always only met with Mr. Petrinka, who represents some legions, but not all. I do not have the list in front of me. I am not sure that the list is always the same or whether there are some legions that are added and some that are not. So I have not met with the president or the vice-president or the secretary or the table officers of any of the legions or indeed of their regional command. So it has always been through Mr. Petrinka. Those are the meetings that I have had and that I recall.

So I will undertake to speak to my staff and to ask them for advice on what is prudent, what is advisable under the circumstances of this particular issue, where both sides are assembling their facts before proceeding to trial.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, I thank the minister for that. I am not in any way attempting to have this matter reflect on the way in which the minister handles issues, because I think that it would be advisable for her to meet with the legions or a representation of people who are at the executive of the legion groups and then to get a flavour, I guess, of whether or not this is

indeed an issue that is on the minds of many legions or whether it is just a few that have this concern.

From my recollection of the matter, this is an issue that has been in the papers. It is an issue that has been on the minds of legion members. All I think that the legions want at the end of the day is to be treated fairly, because the minister knows that there was a situation created when the one legion was exempted, of unfairness in how legions are treated. I know that staff in the department have had some difficulty in trying to address this issue, but I do believe that they also would like to see this off the books and see some resolution to it. We just do not know what the best way is. Of course, as I have mentioned before, the courts is a long process. Not only that, it also impacts negatively on the ability of these groups to be able to conduct their affairs.

* (21:10)

So I would ask the minister, I acknowledge the fact that she is prepared to meet or have some advice from her department as it relates to meeting with the legions or Mr. Petrinka, but I would indeed encourage her to see whether or not a resolution to this matter could be found through the process of negotiations rather than taking a matter through the courts.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I appreciate the advice of the member, who, of course, is a former minister who has dealt with this issue. It is one I think that we are all looking for resolution on, and I assume that previous ministers were looking for resolution as well.

What I have undertaken to do, I think, is to ask the advice of the department on what the next step could be given the situation before the courts. I will undertake to check on the meetings that I have had with Mr. Petrinka and the times and dates if our department has those.

The third issue that the member raised is one that has been raised before. That is the particular treatment that is by private member's bill allowed to the legion in Dauphin. It is an anomaly. It is done by private member's bill. It certainly creates a difference in treatment. All other legions are treated in the same manner. The Dauphin one is an exemption. To change all legions to meet the criteria of the Dauphin

exemption would be an issue which would have an impact upon municipal taxation. As I have always said, it is something that those kinds of changes in general would be ones that we would want to discuss with municipalities.

Mr. Derkach: During our committee sessions on Bill 31 and I think it was Bill 38, the two bills that were before committee that evening, the issue was raised about the occasions where individuals have experienced intimidation or what they felt was intimidation by members of the Assessment department. The minister did indicate very strongly that she would not stand for intimidation by any assessors, of individuals. If I recall this issue, legions feel that the Assessment branch has been stalling them and has not been allowing this matter to proceed to resolution either through negotiation or through the courts.

So I would ask the minister whether she would commit here today to ensure that this matter is either allowed to proceed through the courts quickly so that the information that has to be before the courts from the department is filed as early as possible or whether she will undertake to attempt a resolution through negotiation.

Ms. Friesen: This is coming from a different direction but to the same issue. My concern is that the matter is before the courts, that the two parties are trying to establish a set of facts which will enable the court to begin and that we should allow that process to take its course. In these matters there are differences of opinion. That is why people go to court in the first place, to try and reach a resolution. I think that is, to the best of my understanding, what is being undertaken here.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Chair, we could go around and around this issue for ever and a day. I simply wanted to ensure that the minister was aware of concerns that have been raised by Mr. Petrinka on behalf of the legions, that the minister is indeed open to a resolution of some nature and that she is either prepared to expeditiously allow this matter to proceed through the courts or is prepared to settle it in some way.

I do not think I can continue simply rehashing the issues. I will leave it at this point and

await the responses of the minister and hopefully in the near future we will see a resolution to this matter. If the minister at any time feels that she needs to have the support or discuss this matter with us in opposition I would be certainly amenable to having that discussion. I am told that the matter has been, the statement of claim I think was filed some six months ago. There is, I think, an obligation for a department to have their statement of facts in by a certain date. I think that has been exceeded now. So I just impress on the minister, once again, to ensure that this matter is preceded with posthaste. Thank you.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I thank the member for his offer of discussion and I undertake to get back to him on the questions that he has raised. I think really all I can do is repeat that I think it is in the interests of all parties to ensure that this matter is resolved.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): My question is to the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs. About over a year ago, the R.M. of Macdonald and the City of Winnipeg came to an agreement on the rezoning of some land west of Brady Road and south of McGillivray, rezoning the land from agricultural to light industrial on the basis of some buffering that would satisfy the needs of the residents, particularly those bordering Brady Road and Whyte Ridge.

I know the minister indicated that she forwarded the proposal to the Municipal Board. I believe that was over a year ago. I am wondering if she could give us an update on where that particular proposal rests with the Municipal Board and when the R.M. of Macdonald can expect a response to this particular rezoning application.

Ms. Friesen: If the member could give me some more specifics, I will endeavour to get back to him on this. There are a number of development proposals, by-law proposals, development plan changes, from the R.M. of Macdonald. I am not sure which one he is specifically speaking of, but he gave the Brady Road address. I can try and find out from staff which one that is and give him a response on where it is.

In general, I should say that our staff have been meeting with a number of municipalities in

the Capital Region. Headingley and the R.M. of Macdonald I know are two of the ones dealing with a number of proposals. There are quite a number of development plan proposals in the area on all sides of the Capital Region, so what we are looking at is how to deal with those and discussing these with the municipalities.

I am not sure if the one the member is referring to is one of those or whether it is in a more formal set of procedures, but I will go to Hansard and get the description that he gave me and try and follow up on that.

* (21:20)

Mr. Loewen: Well, the minister and I have discussed this particular issue before. It is the land immediately adjacent to Brady Road, on the west side of Brady Road, in between Brady Road and the industrial land on McGillivray. So it is right on the southwest corner of McGillivray and Brady Road and extends over. The development proposal that was agreed to by both the City and the R.M. of Macdonald contains some buffering for the communities, and on that basis the City agreed to support the municipality's application to have the land rezoned.

It has been well over a year now since the proposal went forward to the Municipal Board, and quite understandably the municipality is frustrated. The current landowners are frustrated by the lack of response from the minister and from the Municipal Board. If she could look into that particular application and that particular parcel in the very near future and at the very least advise both the—well, if she could advise myself and the R.M. as to where the application stands with the Municipal Board and when they expect to report back to the minister's office and maybe her best estimate of when a final answer can be expected.

Again, people's business plans for redeveloping the land have been put on hold over the last year awaiting a decision. The municipality and the owners of the land went through a fairly extensive process involving the City of Winnipeg so that all three parties could reach an agreement on what would be necessary to satisfy everyone's requirements regarding the rezoning of that land from agricultural to light

industrial. So if she could look into that parcel and get back as soon as possible it would be appreciated by all parties.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I will undertake to do that.

Mr. Loewen: With regard to the Municipal Board, I know the minister has also passed on to the Municipal Board I believe Plan Winnipeg. That was done quite some time ago. The Plan Winnipeg was approved by the City in the fall of 2000, I believe, Mr. Chair, and forwarded to the minister with the City's recommendation that the Province give its stamp of approval. The minister chose to send it to the Municipal Board. I think it would be safe to say there is quite a bit of frustration at City Hall that they are a number of years behind in terms of the schedule that should be adhered to with regard to approval of Plan Winnipeg. I wonder if the minister could give us an update on the process with regard to the approval of Plan Winnipeg and when the City might expect what they would hope would be a positive response.

Ms. Friesen: I believe that the Municipal Board has begun hearings on Plan Winnipeg. I am not sure that they have been concluded yet, but I believe they have begun. On the schedule, I agree with the member that Plan Winnipeg should have been dealt with much more in adherence with the schedule. But I think there are issues here that perhaps he is not aware of. Plan Winnipeg should have been adopted by City Council June 30, 1998. I believe that the previous government had given an extension to Winnipeg at their request in order for further work to continue. I think people would prefer that it be right.

I believe I was also, when I came into government, asked for further extensions. I am not sure whether it was one or two. We certainly granted those because the City of Winnipeg had gone to some lengths to have a number of studies done, particularly on retail issues. Retail, you know, in the last five years has changed enormously. Perhaps there are a number of members, I think, who are very aware of that in their constituencies. The Member for Fort Whyte I am sure is one of them, with the expansion of big box marketing. We are not sure whether this is a long-term phenomenon or whether it is

going to be in the history of marketing a shorter term phenomenon, but surely it is the one of the moment.

The City of Winnipeg, quite rightly, had concerns about that and had commissioned a special study on that and wanted to incorporate the results of that special study into Plan Winnipeg. So it seemed, as the previous government had done, to me that it was certainly appropriate to grant the extensions that they were looking for.

So City Council passed second reading of Plan Winnipeg, 2020 Vision, which I think the Member for Fort Whyte has had a long connection with. They passed it in October 2000 and submitted it to the department in November 2000. There were some provincial concerns with that which were raised with the City. Those are a matter of public record. There were a number of public objections as well. So for those reasons and in part because, you know, we were a new government as well, we did refer it to the Municipal Board for review. I believe those reviews began very recently.

Once the Municipal Board has completed its hearings, it will write a report and recommendations that will be given to me for consideration. At that point the departmental processes will come into view.

The City of Winnipeg Act does require the City to review and re-adopt or replace Plan Winnipeg every five years. So the issue of schedule is certainly something that is of concern, because it will have spin-off into the next five years. This does happen, of course, in other municipalities, as well, not just the city of Winnipeg. The Springfield plan that we were talking about quite recently is one that has been in discussion for certainly more than 10 years and over a number of councils.

So I appreciate the member's concern about the scheduling of Plan Winnipeg, but it is an issue I think which is not the responsibility of the Municipal Board or indeed this particular government but is as a result of issues that the City itself faced and the way in which those requests were acceded to by previous ministers, as well as by this Government.

Mr. Harry Schellenberg, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair

* (21:30)

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Chair, could the minister be a little more specific in terms of timing? I mean, are we looking at sometime in the year 2001, and this is not a date that I am going to hold her hard and fast to, but I think the City, I know from my discussions with a number of councillors, would like to at least have some feel for when the process with the Municipal Board will be completed and when they can expect to move ahead with the process.

So if she could be a little more specific even within the range of three to six months, I think that would be helpful. I do not think that is too much for the City to request.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, the difficulty with making that kind of a commitment is that the Municipal Board is a quasi-judicial body. I think it would be unwise for any minister to indicate to the Municipal Board a timetable for their hearings. They indicated they do give public notice of the beginning of those hearings, and those hearings have begun. I think the Municipal Board is aware that the Government is interested in timely disposition of these issues, but I do not think in any quasi-judicial body, such as the Municipal Board is, that government gives direction as to the specific and tight timetables.

I can say that I think we all hope that it will be dealt with expeditiously, and I understand the concerns of the City of Winnipeg. I must say that I had similar concerns as we dealt with the requests for extensions from the City, and I am sure previous ministers did, too. The issue here is are we going to get it right. The City wanted to include the studies that they had commissioned in Plan Winnipeg, and that is fair enough, I think very appropriate that they should do that and very appropriate that previous governments, as well as this one, should grant the extensions.

So the Municipal Board has begun its hearings. It will conclude its hearings when the presentations have been concluded. The City of Winnipeg, one case I would think, without prejudging any of the issues, is probably more complex than many of the rural municipality issues that it faces, perhaps not more complicated than the Springfield issue which was one

of long-standing and had many different aspects to it and for which the Municipal Board tried to come up with a number of open doors. I cannot prejudge how they are going to look at Plan Winnipeg or how they will deal with the objections and representations and concerns that are presented to them.

I think everyone wants to get this back on schedule, and I think that certainly includes both the City of Winnipeg and ourselves.

Mr. Chairperson in the Chair

Mr. Loewen: Mr. Chairperson, I think it is safe to say that the minister and I share a similar value and that we both agree that the downtown is a vital part of the city, and certainly efforts need to be made at downtown revitalization. We might disagree on methodology, and we can talk about that at length at some time.

I am just wondering if the minister could share with us her thoughts. Quite a bit of Plan Winnipeg is devoted to the premise that downtown plays a significant role in terms of the city of Winnipeg, how we view it as citizens and how outsiders view us. I am just wondering if she has had an opportunity to study the section regarding downtown, particularly Putting Downtown First, and whether she in general concurs what is laid out in Plan Winnipeg in terms of downtown revitalization.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Chairman, I do not have Plan Winnipeg in front of me, and I would not want to comment on the details without that, but I can certainly do that to the member at a later time in writing. I do not believe in the provincial considerations that were discussed with the City of Winnipeg that the issues of downtown were a specific provincial concern, but I can get back to the member on that.

There were a number of provincial concerns which were discussed with the City of Winnipeg and which are a matter of public record. So I can endeavour to ensure that the member has a copy of those provincial concerns.

Mr. Loewen: Well, perhaps I could ask the minister to arm herself with Plan Winnipeg, and maybe we could delve into some of the details of

it tomorrow. Certainly, when I look at Plan Winnipeg and particularly the section 1A, Putting Downtown First, and my interpretation of Plan Winnipeg, and the minister can disagree or agree once she has had a little more opportunity to review the particulars, is that Plan Winnipeg puts a very, very heavy emphasis on the need to revitalize downtown, to make the downtown strong, basically what it should be in terms of the heart of the city. Certainly the fact that it is the first area addressed in Plan Winnipeg, not only in the general comments but also in the specifics, I think gives a very strong indication of the City Council's desire and their staff's desire to ensure that as much as possible is done with downtown revitalization.

Again, particularly where maybe the minister and I will disagree is on the methodology. I would ask her, in the first section 1A, Putting Downtown First, one of the very first bullets is encouraging and supporting the adaptive re-use of heritage buildings and location of government offices and staff in the downtown. I would be curious to know how the proposed True North Project fits into that vision that the City has put forward of revitalizing downtown Winnipeg.

Ms. Friesen: I understand the member would like to discuss these, Mr. Chair, when we have Plan Winnipeg in front of us. So I am quite prepared to do that.

Mr. Loewen: We will get back to that tomorrow, if that is what the minister wishes. It is unfortunate that she is not familiar enough with Plan Winnipeg. She can stand up in this House and rattle off numerous times her support for revitalizing downtown, but once again we see from this Government, when it comes down to specifics they are not very willing to come forward with the details, particularly as it pertains to the True North Project. Quite frankly, I can understand the minister's reluctance to talk about it, given that in 1995 and 1996 she and the Premier (Mr. Doer) were both strongly opposed to providing any public funds for a downtown arena, and for a lot of the same principles that we see in Plan Winnipeg.

Unfortunately, for the citizens of Winnipeg and the citizens of the province of Manitoba, I

count 20 areas that the True North Project directly contradicts the fundamentals laid out in Plan Winnipeg, in particular the section dealing with promoting downtown development, where it talks about heritage restoration and adaptive re-use of heritage buildings, where it talks about mixed land use, compact urban form. Certainly it talks about, encourage the retention and development of unique and important businesses in the downtown. It goes on at some length about encouraging living downtown through the adaptive re-use of buildings, through using mixed residential development. It talks a lot about pedestrian-friendly downtown. We have seen that the arena project not only encroaches on the streets but will shut down pedestrian traffic throughout the city.

Plan Winnipeg talks a lot about safety and the promotion of safety in downtown Winnipeg through creating more pedestrian activity, not shutting down streets. It certainly talks about complying with design principles and the need for openness of space downtown to promote safety. Plan Winnipeg talks about celebrating downtown special features in its heritage, the uniqueness of its character, you know, promoting what is there. Certainly I would hope that everybody in the House would agree, certainly Mr. Neville agreed that the culture and heritage surrounding the Eaton's building was enough to ensure that it was classified. It talks about the promotion of high standards of urban design in the downtown.

* (21:40)

All of those criteria and others are basically going to be shoved aside by this Government's desire to steam-roll ahead with its vision of revitalizing downtown by putting a large, empty structure which will stand in that space, I should note, on a space that is too small for the structure. When the structure is built it will not only encroach upon the street, but it will overhang the street, creating a dark, tunnel-like effect. It will certainly deter the movement of pedestrians throughout the city through what should be our greatest pedestrian walkway, our greatest asset, which is Portage Avenue.

The previous government combined in an effort with the City and the private sector to

spend I think close to between \$7 million and \$8 million expanding the sidewalks on Portage Avenue simply so there would be more room for pedestrian thoroughfare in an attempt to encourage people to live downtown.

So we can get into the details of this tomorrow in concurrence, but I think it is important that the minister understand that the citizens of Manitoba, particularly those that are depending on her Government to assist in the important revitalization of downtown Winnipeg, are dependent on her in particular in her role as minister responsible for the City of Winnipeg, responsible for approving and overseeing the Plan Winnipeg, entitled the 2020 Vision.

I guess I would specifically like to ask the minister: In giving her unbridled support to the True North Project, did she not look at the premises in Plan Winnipeg? Did she not analyze Plan Winnipeg to see in how many locations this project is completely offside from the plan that was put forward to her after approval by the City of Winnipeg in the fall of 2000?

Ms. Friesen: I have undertaken to provide the member with a list of the provincial concerns as they have been publicly stated around Plan Winnipeg. I believe those are the issues that the member wants to discuss tomorrow.

I should also advise the member that since Plan Winnipeg is currently before the Municipal Board, there may be some limitations on what it is feasible to discuss, but it is currently at the Municipal Board, and the provincial concerns on that are ones that are public and that I will make available to the member tomorrow.

Mr. Loewen: Quite frankly, the more we question this Government on the True North Project, the less understanding we on this side of the House have as to why they are in such a hurry to steam-roll this project through, other than they are just scared to death to go on the record and answer any direct questions regarding the project.

They will not answer questions on the financing, and now the minister who is responsible for the overseeing of the development of the city of Winnipeg and is responsible for

ensuring that the City of Winnipeg develops a plan and is responsible for ensuring that the City of Winnipeg adheres to that plan, here she is telling us that her Government has signed off on a term sheet and is rushing ahead without any due diligence, without any public consultations, without due process regarding the True North Project when it is obvious to anybody who looks at Plan Winnipeg and, in particular, its emphasis on downtown revitalization that the True North Project violates over 20 of the recommendations put forward in Plan Winnipeg.

This is a member who while in opposition railed away not only at the then-Conservative government but also at the City of Winnipeg with regard to a lack of planning, a lack of focus on urban sprawl and still rails in this House on a regular basis against the previous government for what she somehow has misinterpreted as a lack of commitment to downtown. Yet this is the very same minister who stands up in this House and tries to defend her Premier (Mr. Doer) for signing a term sheet which obviously goes against what he has said on the public record both in this House and in the media. This is the same minister who while sitting on the board of the then-Forks organization, now Forks-North Portage, paid a great deal of attention and, to her credit, refused to allow any development to take place at The Forks without proper process, without proper regard for the cultural heritage that surrounds that site.

I mean, I have a great deal of difficulty understanding why she is taking such a different approach in this particular case and, in my view, such a negligent approach. Quite frankly, it is laid out in a very straightforward manner from the City of Winnipeg in a report that was filed with her in October, or I guess passed in October of 2000, filed with her department in November of 2000. One can argue with the minister whether or not it should have gone to the Municipal Board. The City might say the minister should have just taken them, they are elected officials, at their word, that this was a valid plan.

If she wanted to send it on to the Municipal Board, that is her prerogative, but in the meantime for her to completely disregard the principles laid out in this plan while at the same time her Premier, the Leader of her party, is

negotiating behind closed doors for over a year, precluding any other adaptive re-use for the Eaton's building and this stalwart defender of heritage, this individual who takes great pride, and quite rightly so, in her work at The Forks. That has been a long, drawn-out process, very painful at times because any development at The Forks has been put through a great deal of public scrutiny. I know this first-hand because I was there, but, again, a complete reversal of her own principles and policy with regard to the True North Project.

I guess I am trying to get some understanding from this minister as to why she is allowing her government to move so quickly on a project that has no deadline. There is no rush to build a new arena in downtown Winnipeg. We can wait a year. The NHL team is gone. There was a period of time when we had a fixed time to build an arena or they would go. We did not meet that. Lots of us tried. Some on the other side fought against it then.

But, regardless, that is past history. The minister may want to blame it on bitterness or try to impugn some motivation to me. Quite frankly, I do not really care. We tried to do what we thought was a good thing. It did not work; it did not work; let us move on with life. But, for the life of me, I cannot understand why this minister is completely ignoring her own gut instincts, is completely ignoring her principles, her past policy decision, and is rushing through the process with regard to the True North Project.

* (21:50)

Again, I would ask her: Has she not taken the time to thoroughly study the recommendations from City Council involving downtown revitalization, and did she not take these recommendations into account before she let her Premier (Mr. Doer) barge ahead, announce the deal and sign the term sheet?

Ms. Friesen: It was a very long statement. I am not sure what the question was, but I think it dealt with timing. I think it also had a number of claims about absence of due process, about secrecy behind closed doors. I mean, we could get into the same discussion that we have had

before about the kind of secrecy that was requested by the member in his initiatives around MEC. When you have a private sector led initiative, there are elements of confidentiality which are different that issues which are particularly public, and I think the member is well aware of those and has raised those questions before and has received those kinds of similar response which is the common sense response. So I think probably we are going around the circle on some of the issues that the member has raised before.

I think it would be a mistake for the member to suggest that due diligence is not being done on this. It would also be a mistake I think to say that this is being done behind closed doors. There is a term sheet which has been tabled publicly in this Legislature, and that term sheet is the one that all parties are working from. As I discussed this afternoon in the debate that was initiated on this, the federal government's procedures do require environmental review. Part of that environmental review is a public discussion and open houses, and those have taken place. The procedures that are required by the City of Winnipeg under Plan Winnipeg and under the by-laws of the City of Winnipeg are being followed. Similarly, those of the federal and provincial governments are.

So, as far as I understand, and if the member has other concerns on this, part of the term sheet that I read into the record this afternoon would be one that would still stand and that all of the appropriate legal considerations and licensing and open houses and environmental reviews that are required by, and for different purposes, each level of government have been undertaken, that due diligence continues.

What we are looking at here is an issue of the momentum for downtown Winnipeg and for the creation of a situation which I think both of us would agree on, one where we do want to see those widened sideways filled with people. We do want to see downtown as a place for many activities, whether it is festivals, whether it is evening activities, whether it is daytime activities. I think we would all of us like to see the return of retail to downtown. I notice that members in their responding speeches this afternoon managed to not hear what I said about

not having one building that would single-handedly turn things around. It is context. It is momentum. It is mass. That is part of what this True North issue is.

I think the goals, as the member has said, that we have similar goals. We want to see a lively downtown. We want to see a downtown that is full of people. It is not something which is going to happen overnight. It is going to happen with both public and private sector investment. I think those are the goals that we are working towards, and I see True North as part of it.

It is not the only thing. It is not the only solution, but it can be part of it. I draw the member's attention to the kinds of things which our Government has been able to accomplish, and I should remind everyone perhaps that we have not yet been in Government for two years, but I think the record on downtown revitalization is a significant one. It is not one that I think anybody would say was yet complete, if indeed such things ever are complete, but I think as a part of a larger context it is certainly worth considering and something that I think that we take some care about.

I have talked before about the Red River College and the conservation of a historic building in the Exchange District, which is leading to, again, not by itself, alone, but the anticipation of several thousand students downtown in that area where they have not been before is something which I think has led to increased anticipation of an expansion of both residential and commercial activities in that area.

We hope and anticipate that it will also bring back retail activities in the area that have not been there for many, many years. Some of these will be in modern form. Some of them may be an adaptive re-use of heritage buildings. We hope, as I am sure the City does, to have the right balance of that, and that will enable us to make the best use of the Exchange District as a

designated historic area, as it has been by the federal government.

So the Big 4 building, also known as sort of the second Ashdown warehouse, and its location as a headquarters for Crocus as well as for a number of arts organizations I think is a very appropriate one. The restoration of that building is one that makes sense. It is on a corner. It is visible and it is part of that historic Exchange District.

So I think the public sector cannot alone bring back retail, but what it can do is to have strategic investment, is to have investment which is sympathetic to the bringing of people downtown. The Royal Winnipeg Ballet, for example, the building that is just off Graham Avenue, is something which does bring people downtown in considerable numbers at the weekend when the office workers have gone home. We want to ensure that kind of activity—just as the public library does as well, another area that I think we are hopeful of some expansion.

So these kinds of institutions in the absence of a retail revival downtown are very helpful, and we hope that they will lead to the restoration of some elements of retail in downtown which, in itself, will then restore opportunities for increased housing and for increased residential occupation downtown. I do not think that is an either/or situation nor is it a chicken-and-the-egg situation, but it is one where we do need to have a number of movements on a number of fronts. It is one that our Government has been—

Mr. Chairperson: The hour being 10 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, the hour being 10 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow morning (Thursday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, July 4, 2001

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