

**Fourth Session - Thirty-Eighth Legislature**  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**  
**DEBATES**  
and  
**PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report**  
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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Eighth Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
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## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 18, 2006

The House met at 10 a.m.

## PRAYER

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

## SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

**Bill 207—The Personal Information Protection and Identity Theft Prevention Act**

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Minnedosa (Mrs. Rowat), that Bill 207, The Personal Information Protection and Identity Theft Prevention Act; Loi sur la protection des renseignements personnels et la prévention du vol d'identité, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

*Motion presented.*

**Mrs. Taillieu:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to speak to Bill 207, The Personal Information Protection and Identity Theft Prevention Act as I first introduced it almost a year ago now on May 26, 2005, in its initial form as The Personal Information Protection Act.

This act will offer a made-in-Manitoba solution as to how personal information is collected, used and disclosed. I, at this time, would also like to thank Brian Bowman of Pitblado for all the work he has done on this piece of legislation as he is an expert in the field of privacy.

By enacting substantial similar legislation to the federal PIPEDA we are creating a made-in-Manitoba law which will now be much more user-friendly for businesses in Manitoba and would clarify jurisdiction over personal health information and, most importantly, fill the privacy gap in Manitoba by extending coverage to all Manitobans. This bill addresses collection of biometric data, which is defined as anything that is personal, such as fingerprints, palm prints, iris or retinal scans, facial scans, blood type, DNA and other personal specific data.

Alberta, British Columbia and Québec have all enacted substantially similar legislation, and all three provincial acts provide for more precise rules and definitions than does the federal PIPEDA. This bill also includes a clause that establishes a duty to notify

when personal information collected by an organization is lost, stolen or compromised.

Mr. Speaker, I was listening to a radio program not that long ago when I heard this: Personal information is the new currency. That was a statement made by a law enforcement officer recently as he discussed identity theft as a growing and serious crime, not only in Manitoba, but in Canada. In fact, identity theft is becoming a fast-growing crime in Canada and personal information is the cash here.

Personal information can be stolen from an individual, from a place of employment or another body holding one's personal information. This information is valuable in that it can be sold to others and this information can be used to set up new identities, drain bank accounts, secure loans and provide for a list of documents that other people may need to assume a person's personal identity. It is big business. The public needs to be very aware of what today's technology can do.

Persons working in the public sector are already protected under The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. The federal PIPEDA provides for legislation that provides persons protection of personal information in commercial transactions. But, there is a gap in the laws of Manitoba that do not allow for the protection of people working in the private sector, employees working in the private sector. This is not a new law, although the law itself looks large. It is not a new law, it is simply an extension of laws that are already there in the public sector for commercial transactions. So this is an extension of what we already have.

This bill, The Personal Information Protection and Identify Theft Prevention Act, is intended as a means to better combat identity theft, to provide workplace privacy rights and make it easier for businesses to comply with their privacy obligations.

*Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair*

I think there is much of a public awareness that needs to be happening here. As one person put it, how we have developed in our technology; technology is moving at the speed of light and the understanding of what technology can do is moving

at the speed of a tortoise. So we do need to know of the implications of what the information technology can be accumulated.

It is easy to obtain documents from a variety of different sources and put them together to get enough information to set up new bank accounts and new identities. One of the ways that this has happened in the past is from dumpster-diving, when people actually go and find personal information in dumpsters that has been discarded in an inappropriate manner so that it is available and has been used to set up and drain people's bank accounts.

Another thing I found fairly interesting was the pilfering of people's personal health cards because that PIN number can be used to go to different pharmacies in the city and buy the ingredients for crystal meth, such as ephedrine, which there are limitations on according to PIN numbers. But using different numbers, a person can go to a variety of places and get much more of that ingredient needed.

I want to also talk about an instance lately where there has been a collection of driver's licence IDs photocopied from young people going into night clubs in the city. There is a growing concern, I think, that this data is collected, but how is it protected, how is it used and then how is it discarded? First of all, as I said, it could be discarded in an inappropriate way where someone could get their hands on it. According to some of the young people who were interviewed, they felt, well, this establishment is not going to do anything with my personal information, and that is probably the case, that they are not going to do anything with their personal information. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that personal information is there and available for anybody else to come and pick up. We know that there is a market for personal information.

I know that the minister and the government are interested in this issue. I have met with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger). I know he has expressed some concern in this area as well, and the Minister of Labour (Ms. Allan), we both met. I know there is information on the Web site and I know that identity theft kits have been put out there. I feel that this is a proactive way to just bridge the gap in privacy because, as I say, it is not a new idea, because it is done in the public sector. It has been done for people who are conducting commercial transactions, but there is just that one area that is not covered. I think it would be very proactive and necessary for us to take a very serious look at that.

\* (10:10)

We talk about support for this bill. Have we got support? We do have support. We do have support for this bill, but I think it is one of these things that people have little understanding of and feel that nothing is wrong. I think that what happens is until you have become the victim of a crime such as identity theft and suffer the consequences that follow that, you will not understand what it means to protect your personal information.

I know even in my own household I was throwing out some old bank statements and my husband said, just throw them in the garbage, and I said, no, I cannot do that because I am aware of what consequences could arise from that. But how many people would be just doing that? How many businesses would be just doing that? I think it would be very, very proactive for us to take a very serious look at the implications here.

As we know, just in Manitoba alone in the first three months of 2006, 59 Manitobans reported identity theft to Phone Busters. That is double from the year before. So I think what we are going to see in the next year and at the end of this year are more and more identity thefts. This is costing a lot of money; 11,000 complaints in Canada last year with total losses of \$8 million, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think that I would encourage the government to speak to this bill, to be engaged in this bill. I look forward to working with the government on support for this bill. I think there is a recognition that it is important, that it is not onerous. It is an extension of existing laws to fill the gap. I believe that we can work together to make this happen.

I encourage the government to have a serious look at this bill. If there are amendments that need to be made, because I understand as a private member's bill there is no provision for penalties in this bill as a private member's bill, so I would encourage the government to bring amendments to that and support this bill. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** I do not have 14 copies of my comments today, but I will get them for you shortly. Anyway, I would like to just speak to this bill.

First of all, I would like to commend the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) for her efforts in this regard. I do think identity theft is an issue worthy of consideration. It is a growing activity that we should be aware of.

Before I comment specifically on the bill, I would just like to make the public aware of what can be done. Identity theft is one of those issues that is very helpfully remedied by education efforts on behalf of government, the public, the employers, the nonprofit community and citizens themselves. If people have greater awareness of this issue, they can take many measures that do not require legislation that will prevent themselves from being victims of this type of criminal activity.

In that regard, the Manitoba government has launched a new identify theft prevention Web site. The Web site is available at [www.gov.mb.ca/idtheft/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/idtheft/index.html), or just go to the Government of Manitoba Web site and you will search it through the Department of Finance and through consumer and corporate affairs. You will get yourself there.

This identity theft prevention kit provides a checklist and contact information for organizations that will provide you with resources. There are a number of tips on this Web site that will help you prevent identity theft. Obviously, Manitobans should be very careful in putting information out to the public that can be taken, stolen from them and used for commercial or personal gain at the expense of the individual whose identity is stolen.

There are some other things that have been done. Ministers responsible for consumer and corporate affairs met in Winnipeg in January '04, and we at that time launched an identity theft kit for consumers. That is available for every member of the public. Again, they should go to the Government of Manitoba or the consumer and corporate affairs bureau directly and they can get access to that kit. There is an identity theft kit for business. As well, a discussion paper has been released in '05 seeking comments from consumers and business about legislation to build up interest in what legislative measures could be taken.

Now, what legislation currently exists to protect Manitoba consumers against identity theft? First of all, fraud and impersonation are matters that fall under the federal Criminal Code. The federal government is looking at legislation that will make it harder for people to obtain and use other people's identification. Secondly, under our Consumer Protection Act, and Manitoba was a pioneer in this regard, consumers' liability is capped at \$50. When a credit card is stolen or credit card information is used to make fraudulent purchases, the consumer has a \$50 exposure when their card is taken and used for

making purchases or making financial commitments and the consumer has no knowledge of that. So that was a very forward-looking measure that was brought in by the Manitoba government.

As well, Vital Statistics has taken steps to ensure that critical personal information is protected, and there are fines up to \$50,000 for anyone who may be possessing or using fraudulent documents or using legitimate documents unlawfully. As well, Manitoba Public Insurance, our Crown corporation, is also taking steps to ensure personal information is protected when it will begin issuing a new type of driver's licence which will have many more security features built into it.

Now, if anybody is the victim of identity theft or suspects they are, they should contact their local law enforcement agencies to report the crime. They should cancel all the credit cards or accounts that may have been affected, and they should contact credit reporting agencies, such as TransUnion and/or Equifax. The office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada has also offered advice, and that is available through their Web site as well.

So I just wanted that information to be on the record. It is just common-sense things. If you are having access to your own bank or credit union or financial institution, try to pick a password that is not easily figured out. Try to make sure there is nobody looking over your shoulder when you are accessing a terminal for financial resources. Paper shredders, paper shred some of your information at home. The member opposite has also said be careful what you put into the waste stream in terms of personal information. We do see stories from time to time of material that is found in back lanes or close to garbage facilities that is easily accessible by people for fraudulent purposes. So we should be careful on all those regards.

Now, with respect to the bill, the bill is aimed at private sector organizations and is aimed at protecting personal information held by provincially regulated private sector organizations. The member is correct. The federal Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, commonly known as PIPEDA, has applied to private sector organizations in Manitoba since January 1 of '04.

If Manitoba brought in its own bill, and it was not substantially similar to that which is presently in place by PIPEDA, then there would be a duplication of legislation. Business organization that have to follow two sets of rules. This would create confusion

as well as more red tape and a paper burden for Manitoba businesses. So the bill would have to be substantially similar. The member has identified that.

As well, the bill, if it was brought in, would have to have an independent and effective oversight and redress mechanism with powers to investigate. This current bill does not have that. That is partly the result of the fact that it is a private member's bill as opposed to a government bill, and a private member's bill cannot impose a financial obligation on the government or the Legislature; that has to be a government decision.

So that is one of the failings of the bill. It is strictly a function of the fact that it is a private member's bill. If the government brought in a bill, then presumably they could correct that. Without that bill it would not be considered substantially similar and would cause the duplication. However, even if the bill was brought in with that mechanism, certain organizations in Manitoba that were doing business not only in Manitoba but outside of Manitoba would likely be subject to both pieces of legislation, which would also increase the paper burden and administrative cost for them. So we have a potential problem there where an organization doing business inside and outside of Manitoba may be subject to both pieces of legislation.

\* (10:20)

In that regard we need more support from the business community to have this legislation brought in place in Manitoba. We do not want to be in a position where the business community feels this is an unreasonable imposition on them and an additional cost of doing business that would make their competitiveness less viable inside this province or outside this province.

The other thing is that for a bill like this to succeed or this type of initiative to succeed, and I have discussed this with the member opposite, we need to educate and engage both employers and labour organizations to support this bill as a priority. So far they have not told us that it is a priority. They have told us other issues are more important, such as labour standards legislation, employment standards legislation, such as workplace health and safety legislation.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Two minutes.

**Mr. Selinger:** Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The other issue that was identified in this bill that is an innovative feature was the duty to notify individuals of a privacy breach. I can tell the member opposite I have written to the federal minister with respect to that duty to notify. The federal PIPEDA legislation will be reviewed by a parliamentary committee in '06. I have already registered the concerns of all of us that there should be a duty to notify, and that will be considered as part of the review of the federal bill.

Federal, provincial and territorial ministers will take this matter up again when they meet and look at other legislative options to combat identify theft, including legislative initiatives. There is an identify theft working group which is a subcommittee of the consumer measures committee, which again is a federal-provincial-territorial committee, which was actively working on this file, but we actually believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we need a harmonized approach to this across the country. It would actually be preferable if there was one piece of legislation that applied to the whole country. That would be a more efficient mechanism for doing that. It would provide less red tape, more consistent standards, easier enforceability, easier ability for business organizations to comply. That would be our preferred direction, particularly when you consider that, in the rapidly evolving world of technology, information is not just stored in Manitoba now. Many Manitoba companies, the information that needs protection is often stored in servers or other devices outside the Manitoba jurisdiction. So we would not want legislation in Manitoba that could not protect Manitobans' information that was stored outside of Manitoba.

With those few comments, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for your time.

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to speak to Bill 207 that was brought forward by the Member for Morris.

The purpose of Bill 207 is to fill a gap in the privacy legislation by providing a made-in-Manitoba law which would govern the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by organizations in a manner which recognizes both the right of an individual to have his or her personal information protected and the need of organizations to collect, use and disclose personal information for purposes that are reasonable.

By enacting substantially similar legislation to the federal legislation, we are creating a made-in-

Manitoba law which would be much more user-friendly for businesses in Manitoba, would clarify jurisdiction over personal health information and fill the privacy gap in Manitoba by extending coverage to all Manitobans. So a made-in-Manitoba piece of legislation, contrary to what the member opposite was saying, would make it a lot easier for Manitobans to be protected by a Manitoba piece of legislation.

This is not an onerous bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is providing a gap in protection for workers within the private sector, but we want to ensure that employers are protected as well as employees within the private sector. Presently a lot of employers are not protected by the current legislation, and some businesses might be impacted, but more businesses and employees would be protected.

Why do we need Bill 207? Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member opposite spoke about education and common sense. Actually, when I reflect to the seatbelt legislation, I believe a lot of people do understand and appreciate the importance of seatbelt safety and the concerns for individuals who do not wear seatbelts and the injuries and death that can follow by not using seatbelts. People understand that; there is a common sense piece to that. But until it was legislated, that failed to be a law or complied with. So we believe that this is something that is very serious and needs to have the attention of the Legislature.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, respecting the privacy of individuals is so important we cannot afford to have the gaps in legislation. I believe the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) has done her homework. She has reviewed this extensively. She has had the support and guidance of individuals like Brian Bowman of Pitblado who have met with the minister and shared their concerns and the reasons why they believe there are gaps in this legislation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it has been studied. Recent surveys have found that three percent of adult Canadians, more than 900,000 individuals, were victims of identity theft in 2003. I am sure that that number has grown substantially in the last three years. Many private companies have personal social insurance numbers, bank account numbers for direct deposit, insurance information, pension plan information, personal health information and, of course, signatures.

It is conceivable that identity theft could occur regardless of a commercial transaction, so privacy

legislation should not be limited to collecting and use of personal data as it relates to commercial activity but extend to cover employee information. Why would we not protect people that work in the private sector when we do protect people that work in the public sector and the risks are the same?

The government knows that this is sensitive, and they are sensitive to the need to protect consumers. As the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) indicated in March of 2005 through a press release, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I quote: "Law enforcement agencies have named identity theft as the fastest growing crime that business, consumers and governments face." What is missing here is the protection of employee information. Does this government not feel that all people should be afforded the same level of protection?

I am aware that the Department of Culture, Heritage and Tourism conducted public consultations on The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act as part of a five-year review requirement, but I do not believe that this review has any depth and was only done because it was a requirement. There should be more done to reach out to Manitobans with information. Most of the presenters had concerns about being able to access public information.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the former Ombudsman Barry Tuckett's review respecting privacy states, and I quote: Six out of ten Manitobans believe they have less personal privacy than just five years ago. At least one in two Manitobans, that is 55 percent, believe that it is more likely than not that they will suffer a serious invasion of privacy during the next two years.

It is extremely important for people to take responsibility and protect their personal issues, but there is still limited understanding of the need to protect information about oneself or an employee. Although there is a growing public awareness of technology and the collection of biometric data, many people do not take this issue seriously enough until they become victims. One of the defining features of this bill is the collection of data should not exceed the need for that data. So Bill 207 addresses the issue of biometrics which would only allow them to collect what is necessary.

I am particularly concerned with anything that can be rendered into an electronic form because of all the data matching and linking that can go on with that kind of information. Brian Bowman has been

quoted and has been on record as saying that this is a very serious issue.

The message of Bill 207 is simple, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Do not collect data that is not needed. If you do not need it, do not collect it and, therefore, you will not have to worry. It is simple. It is simplistic and it makes sense.

\* (10:30)

People who feel they do not need to protect personal information because they have nothing to hide are the ideal targets for identity theft, Mr. Deputy Speaker. You may not recognize it, know how to deal with it and will ultimately be destroyed by it. You do not know what people will use data for until you give it to them and they do not know what they will do with it until they have it.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act only applies to public bodies, including hospitals, universities and colleges, but other organizations including employers, frequently have personal health information in their possession, and yet they are not trustees under FIA. Employees' personal information has few protections under Manitoba laws.

There are some gaps even in this law which are significant enough to warrant legislation. Bill 207 bridges the privacy gap and provides the made-in-Manitoba solution. Enabling Bill 207 would decrease regulatory uncertainty for businesses in Manitoba. We would be better served if Manitoba enacted substantially similar legislation that would replace PIPEDA and give clarity to compliance obligations under the FIA and FIPPA.

Bill 207 would give Manitoba employees protection of personal information and health information in particular. The bill is well written, it is by an expert and it is well researched, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is in the best interests of Manitoba and I would encourage the government to seize the opportunity and to pass this bill to committee. Thank you.

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** It is a pleasure for me to stand up and put a few words on the record in regard to this legislation.

As the MLA for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) has said, the minister of consumer and corporate affairs and I had the opportunity to meet with the MLA for Morris

and Mr. Bowman, who assisted the MLA in drafting this legislation, a couple of weeks ago. We had the opportunity to discuss some of the complexities of this legislation.

One of the concerns that I raised with the MLA when we were meeting, and she referenced it in her speech, was the fact that I wanted to know who had been consulted, what stakeholders had been consulted in regard to this legislation, was there consultation with employers and was there any consultation with labour in regard to the legislation?

The MLA said herself this morning in the Legislature when she was putting some of her comments on the record that there is little understanding out there in the community about this issue. It is a complex issue. There are some initiatives that have been taken by our government. We have some federal legislation, but there is still some work that has to be done in regard to understanding how the federal legislation affects Manitoba, and how this proposed legislation would affect and protect consumers. We had a good discussion on the proposed legislation. We had a good discussion with the MLA and Mr. Bowman about consultations.

I made a commitment myself, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to consult with the employers and with labour. I have passed five pieces of labour legislation in this House last year and that legislation was passed unanimously in this House. I have to say that one of the reasons it was passed unanimously or they all were passed unanimously was because of the work that was done ahead of time in regard to consultation with the stakeholders.

I meet with employers, I meet with labour, and I made a commitment to discuss this proposed legislation with the stakeholders because I believe that they do need to understand the legislation. They need to understand the federal legislation in regard to how it is going to affect consumers and protect consumers.

One of our concerns, obviously, is the fact that no other province in Canada appears to be developing private sector privacy legislation, and that is why, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is important that we get it right, that we do the proper consultation and that we do due diligence in regard to developing this legislation. We want to show leadership. We have done that in Manitoba before in regard to legislation. It would be terrific if we could develop this kind of legislation here in Manitoba that would be leading-

edge legislation that would be a model for every other provincial jurisdiction in Canada. That is one of the reasons why we believe that consultation with the stakeholders is so important.

We kind of have, I think, a bit of a disagreement in regard to the approach that we are taking here. We have the opposition who introduced the bill talking about their made-in-Manitoba approach, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we here on this side of the House are kind of talking about a more harmonized approach with the federal legislation. So I think we agree on the basics of the legislation that we do want to protect consumers in regard to this issue that I believe, as the MLA said, is going to become more prevalent in our society because of technology and the use of technology. But we really need to move forward and make sure that we do not have dual legislation, federally and provincially, in competition with each other. That is why we believe that we still need to do some work on this legislation and make sure that when we move forward with it we really have a good understanding of it.

The federal Personal Information Protection and Electronics Documents Act, PIPEDA, has applied here in Manitoba to private sector organizations since January 1, 2004. If Manitoba were to enact private sector information privacy legislation that was not deemed to be substantially similar to PIPEDA by the federal Cabinet, we would have provincially regulated private sector organizations in Manitoba that would be subject to both the Manitoba legislation and PIPEDA, the federal legislation. That, I believe, Mr. Deputy Speaker, would result in dual regulation. I believe that that would create confusion.

Effective January 1, 2004, PIPEDA applied to the private sector organizations in Manitoba that collect user-disclosed personal information in the course of a commercial activity. One of the elements of personal information protection legislation that the federal Cabinet would consider in the determination of whether provincial legislation is substantially similar to PIPEDA is a provision for an independent and effective oversight and redress mechanism with powers to investigate.

Because Bill 207 is missing this important element, it likely would not be considered substantially similar to the federal legislation. In other words, provincially regulated private sector organizations in Manitoba would be regulated by both acts. Once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would have dual regulation, and we are concerned

that that would cause confusion for many Manitoba businesses. The bill lacks an oversight and redress mechanism, and that very fact alone is likely enough to ensure that the bill is, in fact, not substantially similar to the federal act. In addition, there would be substantial costs associated with the province setting up oversight and redress mechanisms.

Regarding identity theft, recommendations for options to combat identity theft, including legislative initiatives, the minister responsible for consumer and corporate affairs, this has been a very, very active file for him. He has had an opportunity at FPT meetings to discuss this as recently as this year in regard to legislative measures, and there are recommendations that have been developed. These recommendations, as the minister has said, are being developed by an identity theft working group, which is a subcommittee of the consumer measures committee, an FPT committee of consumer affairs officials that are working under the minister's direction.

I think that is another reason, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why we want to make sure that we have a harmonized approach to address identity theft. That is the best approach to ensure that Canadian consumers are protected regardless of the location of the business in Canada.

The Consumer Measures Committee issued a consultation paper in July 2005 outlining a number of options to be considered. So I think we would like to take a little while longer, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We appreciate the opportunity to work with the MLA for Morris on the legislation. We appreciate the work she and Mr. Bowman have done, and we will continue to work with them and the stakeholders on this very important initiative.

\* (10:40)

**Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain):** It is certainly an honour to be able to put a few words on the record today in regard to Bill 207, The Personal Information Protection and Identity Theft Prevention Act.

I think it is a very important piece of legislation. Clearly, the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) recognizes that there is a gap in the current legislation in Manitoba that needs to be addressed. I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to read for the record the Explanatory Note, which I think really encompasses the essence of this bill and really shows the issue that is missing in legislation: "This Bill governs the collection, use and disclosure of personal

information by organizations in the private sector. It also establishes a duty for those organizations to notify individuals who may be affected when the personal information the organization has collected is lost, stolen or compromised."

Clearly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are seeing more and more incidents of identity theft throughout Manitoba and, in particular, in the workplace. So the Member for Morris has brought forward a very important piece of legislation to address this very important issue going forward. I do want to address some of the issues the members opposite have raised in regard to the comments on this particular legislation and, hopefully, we will be able to clear up some of the misconceptions that are out there.

This particular issue really caught my attention last week when on the news, and this was an American situation, where it was a classic case of identity theft had occurred in the southern United States. The situation revolved around a bank account. There was a couple that had a bank account in the southern United States in a certain bank, and an individual had somehow found this bank information of this particular couple. What this particular individual did when he ascertained the bank account, he then made up a driver's licence card with those particular individuals' address on it. He used his own picture so his picture was on there, but what he did then was superimpose those people's address on the driver's licence. So it was a classic case of identity theft. Of course, when he had the driver's licence card made up with the person's information on it and his picture on it, and the interesting thing was he was an African-American and the couple that owned the bank account were Caucasians. So there was a substantial difference in identity, but this individual went into the bank and had this piece of identity, a card made up with these people's names on it, and he was able to withdraw a sum of money, I believe it was over \$3,000, from that particular account. Of course, the teller, with having that piece of identity, would naturally assume this was the correct individual with the correct name and everything on it. So, a classic example of identity theft.

Now, I do not know where or how this particular individual found this information but, clearly, we need some form of regulation to stop that particular type of identity theft.

**An Honourable Member:** It could have been found in the garbage.

**Mr. Cullen:** As the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) points out, it could have come through a garbage situation, where they found the information there. It could have been found through a business organization. That is really the intent of this particular legislation, to address those particular situations that come forward.

The Minister of Labour (Ms. Allan) talks about consultation, and I know that the Member for Morris has done consultation on this. In fact, the Canadian Federation of Labour themselves recognize—pardon me, the Manitoba Federation of Labour recognize that there is a gap in this particular legislation. So they recognize it. They are encouraging this particular legislation to go forward.

I recognize the government has indicated that there are some issues that could be addressed. We will hope that the government will address those particular issues and move them forward. We know this particular government talks about consultation when they bring forward legislation, but in reality, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not always the case. We certainly have seen that with some of the regulations they are moving forward in terms of their water protection legislation, in terms of their \$2 levy on the beef producers, very little consultation going forward. They bring forward the regulations or legislation, and then there is quite a bit of negative feedback from the community after the regulations are brought forward. So, clearly, it is an idea that may be new to the government of the day, but they should be, actually, actively consulting Manitobans on particular issues before they bring them forward.

**An Honourable Member:** Tell us more about that \$2 levy.

**Mr. Cullen:** We know the \$2 levy that we have heard 92 percent of farm producers that have completed the survey do not like the \$2 levy. So that was just a point of clarification and clarifying the point that there should be consultation done before legislation and regulations are brought forward.

The other idea that the Minister of Labour (Ms. Allan) put on the record, and I believe the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) alluded to it as well, there seems to be some confusion over how the existing federal legislation may work, as opposed to bringing in the Manitoba legislation that really fills in a void in the current legislation. We have provinces already, and I will name them. It is Alberta, British Columbia and Québec, have all enacted substantially similar legislation. All three provinces' provincial acts

provide more precise rules and definitions than does the federal regulation. So, basically, Bill 207 is incorporating the same issues that have been brought forward by the province of Alberta. Clearly, the province of Alberta recognizes the federal regulation does not fulfill the needs of Albertans, and clearly, Bill 207 tries to address the same issues and some of the gaps that we have here in Manitoba.

So we certainly hope the government will recognize that other provinces are bringing forward very similar legislation. It is not a matter of passing the buck, and I know this government likes to pass the buck and rely on the federal government to do their work for them, but clearly that is not going to happen in this particular case. *[interjection]* The concept here is not to have two different laws. This particular legislation will supersede the federal act, so that we will have a made-in-Manitoba solution here, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I think once a law as this is implemented, too, then Manitoba businesses who do have an issue with identify theft, they will be able to contact the Manitoba authorities so it will be a closer-to-home solution. They will not have to have the extra cost of going to Ottawa to have their case dealt with or their answers addressed, Mr. Deputy Speaker. So, clearly, we would like to have a made-in-Manitoba solution.

With the report that came out yesterday identifying the pressure that small business is under in Manitoba, we recognize that we should be doing all we can to support small business in Manitoba. Clearly, we think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this particular legislation would make it easier on Manitoba businesses, not more encumbering. *[interjection]* Exactly. As the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) points out, it would be much easier for them to comply with Manitoba regulations.

Clearly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need to address identify theft. Clearly, education does play a role in that particular issue. But I think the other thing is, we really need some teeth in the legislation to protect Manitobans from identity theft because we know it is going to be a bigger and bigger issue as we go forward.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, again, I thank the Member for Morris for doing the research on this particular piece of legislation, bringing forward the issue. She knows and understands the issue. We hope the government of the day will pick up the ball from here and carry it forward, as well. There certainly is a role for them to play in this. If they do think there

are some areas missing, we hope that they will address those, bring those forward, bring the amendment forward and we can move on. We will protect the identity, the integrity of all Manitobans. Thank you very much.

\* (10:50)

**Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood):** I am very pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 207, a bill sponsored by the member opposite. I would like to say at the outset that this bill, the privacy legislation, was a federal act brought in a number of years ago. The Filmon government was in power during that period, and the provinces were given, I believe, five years. Well, actually, the bill was phased in in different sections over a period of time, and provinces were given five years to bring in their own legislation. At the time, the province decided to defer to the federal legislation.

The reason that we would do something like that is to have a consistent, national legislation across the country. There is a good reason why we would not want to have national legislation governing the country, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Part of the reason is because of national databases. Like, for example, information currently is stored on computer databases that are often not only outside Manitoba, but are actually stored outside Canada. There are a lot of examples. But with regard to an insurance provider that services a lot of the agencies across Canada, in fact, their server is in Chicago. So all of the personal data for the person's property insurance is actually not only not stored in Manitoba, it is not even in Canada. It is in Chicago. If something were to happen and a hacker was to break into that information, then that information might end up somewhere where it is not.

Now, I believe that those companies have taken a lot of measures to make sure that the information does remain private. But we have seen credit card problems over the last couple of years with, I think, even American Express having a number of their customers compromised and having to inform the customers. As a matter of fact, I think what they did was just reissue the cards and send out new cards to people.

So the attack is from all areas. The attack is on servers, and companies are taking precautions against those attacks. The attacks are at the local level, to the regular, to our constituents, where information is being stolen out of garbage bins and so on. The member mentions that her husband had

suggested he was going to throw documents out, and that is still a problem.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) was very clear in stating that it was important to have public education, that that was as important as having legislation in this particular instance. I mean, we have had legislation for a number of years and still people are not aware that the problem exists. What I did last year was have a series of eight meetings across the constituency, brought in a police expert on the area of identity theft and privacy, matter of fact, we even had the new Liberal candidate for Elmwood showing up at my meeting last year, having a couple of free doughnuts and coffee and listening in on ways that we could combat identity theft and that kind of crime. So you can see the battle has to be fought at all levels. It has to be fought at the local level in your constituencies. It has to be fought at the company levels with the databases.

Now, ultimately, we have to move to a more secure system for storing data. We have to move into smart cards. I can tell you that there have been projects tried over the years. The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is very alert at the moment and is bonding with our former Premier from Ontario, Bob Rae. I just want to inform him that Bob Rae, back in 1991 or 1992, had a pilot project in Ontario to deal with smart cards. They were going to test smart cards in Fort Frances around the border and down east on the border. They were trying to test and see how many Americans were coming up to Canada for free operations. Evidently, there are a number of Americans that do that because they like our health care system and they like the price. The price is right and they cross the border and they bring a health card with them that is not theirs, I guess, and they have their operation. So Bob Rae was planning to develop a smart card system.

At the end of the day, the government changed hands and then Mike Harris took over. Well, what did Mike Harris do? He set up a big operation in Toronto, announced it with great fanfare, rented a big building, hired a lot of staff. He too was going to have a smart card system, much like the Tories did with SmartHealth. They spent a bundle of dough setting up smart cards that were going to cost like \$10 an individual, and at the end of the day, after two years, they wound this operation down and it was not successful. The idea is solid, but the technology was not 100 percent there at the time.

The Mike Harris project was to follow the banks that were going to come through with a very secure smart card system themselves over a period of 10 years. I do want to tell you that bank card theft is a big issue in Canada to the extent that we have international criminals operating in Canada, crossing the country, scamming money out of people's accounts using bank cards. We know that the banks can bring in a smart card, a very secure smart card system. But you know something, to the Member for Morris ((Mrs. Taillieu), who sponsors this bill, in fact the banks find it cheaper to just simply pay out the losses. They find it cheaper to spend a few millions of dollars paying for the people whose cards are compromised, rather than doing the right thing and coming up with a secure smart card system, which by the way they are going to come up with over a period of the next 10 years.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

So that is what we should be doing. Rather than introducing redundant bills which are really not necessary at this time, the member should be out promoting with her constituents the idea that they should be getting shredders, that they should be shredding their information rather than throwing it out. She should be doing this. She should be putting some pressure on the banks to come up with a smart card system. She should be showing some interest in the new driver's licence. I have not heard a question from the opposition about our driver's licence system in Manitoba, as to whether we are on the right track to have sort of a similar system tantamount to a smart card, whereby we would have driver's licence information on a card like that that would be machine readable.

But that is where we are headed. The quicker we can move along to having cards where the transactions are dealt with through iris scans or through thumb prints, and get away from the pin numbers that are really not that hard to break. Pin numbers are driving people crazy. People have all sorts of passwords that they have to remember and what do they do? The just simply write them on the computer. They put the passwords on cards—

\* (11:00)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have one minute remaining.

The time being 11 a.m., we will now move on to resolutions. We will be dealing with the resolution

brought forward by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, Manitoba Roads.

### RESOLUTION

#### Res. 9—Manitoba Roads

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen),

WHEREAS many of Manitoba's roads are in a state of disrepair; and

WHEREAS Manitoba's Highway No. 6 was recently voted one of the most unsafe roads in all of Canada by the Canadian Automobile Association; and

WHEREAS the majority of Manitobans travel over 5,000 kilometres per year on provincial roads; and

WHEREAS poor road conditions are the No. 1 public concern related to road safety issues; and

WHEREAS approximately 30 percent of automobile accidents are fully or partially attributable to the road environment; and

WHEREAS there were over 14,000 bodily injury claims to Manitoba Public Insurance in the last 12 months; and

WHEREAS three quarters of Manitobans support increased funding for our road system; and

WHEREAS over three quarters of Manitobans believe that all fuel taxes should be towards roads and highways; and

WHEREAS Manitoba has over a \$3 billion shortfall for road development alone; and

WHEREAS if the provincial government does not act immediately to improve the already substandard condition of many of Manitoba's roads and highways, all Manitobans face an elevated risk of safety hazards; and

WHEREAS Manitoba has over a \$3 billion shortfall for road development alone; and

WHEREAS if the provincial government does not act immediately to improve the already substandard condition of many of Manitoba's roads and highways, all Manitobans face an elevated risk of safety hazards; and

WHEREAS the most recently available Transport Canada studies show that Manitoba leads

Canada with the highest number of highway accident injuries per 100,000 people.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the NDP government to consider making road development and improvement a priority for the province of Manitoba, and to consider expeditiously moving forward on completing outstanding projects, not only to enhance safety on our roadways for Manitobans but also to support Manitobans' efforts at creating economic development opportunities throughout Manitoba; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the NDP government to consider providing greater transparency and accountability in its process of determining capital and maintenance projects, as well as in its funding of future projects.

**Mr. Speaker:** When moving the motion for the WHEREAS over three quarters of Manitobans believe that all fuel taxes should, the wording is "go." The honourable member used "be." And also the WHEREAS, the next two WHEREASes after that, were repeated twice. Would the honourable member wish to have it recorded as written?

**Mr. Maguire:** Yes, I would, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there agreement of the House? [Agreed]

*WHEREAS many of Manitoba's roads are in a state of disrepair; and*

*WHEREAS Manitoba's Highway No. 6 was recently voted one of the most unsafe roads in all of Canada by the Canadian Automobile Association; and*

*WHEREAS the majority of Manitobans travel over 5,000 kilometres per year on provincial roads; and*

*WHEREAS poor road conditions are the No. 1 public concern related to road safety issues; and*

*WHEREAS approximately 30 percent of automobile accidents are fully or partially attributable to the road environment; and*

*WHEREAS there were over 14,000 bodily injury claims to Manitoba Public Insurance in the last 12 months; and*

*WHEREAS three quarters of Manitobans support increased funding for our road system; and*

*WHEREAS over three quarters of Manitobans believe that all fuel taxes should go towards roads and highways; and*

*WHEREAS Manitoba has over a \$3 billion shortfall for road development alone; and*

*WHEREAS if the provincial government does not act immediately to improve the already substandard condition of many of Manitoba's roads and highways, all Manitobans face an elevated risk of safety hazards; and*

*WHEREAS the most recently available Transport Canada studies show that Manitoba leads Canada with the highest number of highway accident injuries per 100,000 people.*

*THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the NDP government to consider making road development and improvement a priority for the province of Manitoba, and to consider expeditiously moving forward on completing outstanding projects, not only to enhance safety on our roadways for Manitobans but also to support Manitobans' efforts at creating economic development opportunities throughout Manitoba; and*

*BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the NDP government to consider providing greater transparency and accountability in its process of determining capital and maintenance projects, as well as in its funding of future projects.*

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Member for Arthur-Virden, seconded by the honourable Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen),

WHEREAS—dispense?

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

**Mr. Maguire:** Mr. Speaker, I thank you very much for your indulgence. I guess in my over-enthusiasm to get at the fact that we need to fix the roads in Manitoba, I was trying to put emphasis on that point, that there were a great number of Manitobans that are urging this government to get on and fix this deplorable situation that we have in this province.

The road system that we have in Manitoba contributes greatly to the economy of Manitoba, and the road system needs to be fixed in Manitoba so that the safety of all Manitobans travelling in Manitoba

can be maximized. Unless we can convince the government to move forward with this type of a resolution, and I know that the government has indicated that they are spending more money on highways each year, and I commend them for that, and I am sure that the government will be voting for this resolution and moving forward with it as well, because they know that three-quarters of Manitobans want a better road system. They know that our economy depends on having an infrastructure system all over Manitoba, whether it is north, south, east or west, here in the city of Winnipeg and all over.

We need a system of roads in Manitoba, highway structures as well, that will provide the safest opportunity for people to travel, whether it is to town with their kids for school events, whether it is to town for the needs they have from their rural areas or whether it is those who are in town for the many situations they have in their daily lives as well. Whether it is for our heavy transport vehicles that move up and down the highways of Manitoba and across Canada, particularly as they move through Manitoba on our main thoroughfares, those developed by the national highway system as well, where there is some support the government receives on that, not enough, albeit, but receiving some support, be that No. 1, No. 16, and main throughout east and west in Manitoba, and, of course, 75 north-south is a major route here in Manitoba.

In regard to over \$2 billion in increased spending that this government has, with the budget going from somewhere just around \$6 billion in 1999 to well over \$8.3 billion, \$8.4 billion today, we believe on this side of the House that there needs to be a greater priority put on the amount of dollars put into the programming for construction in Manitoba, particularly construction. The reason for that is if we continue at the same rate as we are going, we will be in a position in a few years that if the government does not change their approach, that all of the money going into the highways, construction and maintenance budget today will end up being used in maintenance because the pot holes are going to be so great in this province that it is going to take the whole budget, over \$200 million that they have in the total budget today, to adhere to those needs. Then they will have no new capital budget available for spending and the roads will be just continuing to crumble as they are today.

Mr. Speaker, No. 75 highway is a link that we have to the U.S. border. It is a disgrace that we have seen this winter where fuel tanks actually fell off

trucks while they were travelling on that particular sector. There is a number of other areas throughout the province, No. 2 specifically has had some signs pointing out to the minister himself in a personal nature, that there needs to be a movement on this. I respect the fact that the minister is inundated with hundreds of millions of dollars of more requests than he can fix on a daily basis or a yearly basis, but I go back to the fact that with an extra \$2 billion in this budget, this government has not given a priority to the road building and road construction needs of Manitoba.

It is a bit of smoke and mirrors, Mr. Speaker. I have corrected the minister in Question Period on this and brought forward a concern that I hear from all Manitobans. The government announced an extra \$29.5 million in this year's budget, attributed that to the road and maintenance budget, but at the same time, announced that the budget now was \$129.5 million. Well, that would indicate that last year's budget should have been \$100 million for those areas and, in fact, the government announced and took credit for in the '05-06 budget for \$120 million.

So, you know, if he really did put in, which we know that there were some of those funds, \$120 million that did get lapsed, but they took credit for \$120 million saying this year's is a \$129.5 million. They really only increased the budget by \$9.5 million.

So this is how this government has misled the people of Manitoba. They have really put in only a third of what they have actually stated they have increased the budget by. I do not know whether the backbenchers in the government have had time to take a look at the budget to see that their own minister has only put a third of what he said forward. They should be concerned about that because they have to travel many of these, many of these members travel a long ways on those roads, as well as those on our side of the House, and so, for the safety of those people, it is a great concern.

I know the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) particularly travels up and down No. 6 highway a great many times and perhaps the minister of Swan River uses that road as well. I am sure she would be very concerned by the statements of the Canadian Automobile Association that indicated some year ago that Highway No. 6 was recently voted one of the most unsafe roads in all of Canada.

\* (11:10)

I know that they are trying to do what they can to upgrade that road and many others in the province, Mr. Speaker, but at the same time, there are a great many roads in the province of Manitoba that are unfinished. So, whether it is the twinning of No. 1, whether it is the rehabilitation of No. 75, whether it is the expansion of 59, whether it is the rebuilding of the section of No. 2 that is in dire straits, whether it is looking at how they can better the road system in Manitoba so that we have some more RTAC roads, so that we have a few more bridges done with the new science that is out there today in construction materials to adhere to those, we need to do whatever we can to limit the bodily injury claims and to maximize the economic opportunity that a good, safe infrastructure brings in Manitoba.

So I think that there needs to be a major infusion of funds put into the capital spending of the government today in Manitoba. I want to specifically refer to the fact that while I was transport critic, I pointed out to the government many times that they have not spent the money that they have picked up through some of their own bills that allowed them to use all of the motive fuel taxes and gas taxes on roads.

The heavy construction people have indicated, and the minister had clarified that with them before they put out their documents in the fall, the department did, at least, that they were short of the amount that they spent. I know that they go on at great length about how the previous federal government and the present federal government are not providing the gas tax back to Manitoba. I would concur that we need to make sure that Ottawa realizes that they need to get more of that gas tax that they collected, more of the GST even back into Manitoba, but particularly on the gas tax that the federal government picks up, that they have more of those funds to be put into Manitoba so that we can upgrade those roads as well.

But with \$2 billion and some of the highest transfer payments coming from Ottawa that any government in Manitoba has ever received, I need to remind the government, through this bill, that with their support we can move forward with a greater priority on roads because of the money they have already received. It is just a matter of managing those funds in a more priority basis in the area of safety for roads and economic activity in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

I want to refer to, I guess, the need to expand our roads in the North, the need to expand up the east side of Lake Winnipeg as well. Our winter road materials, as well, need to be looked at. But I am sure that there are other ways of funding those that the government is looking at as well. There needs to be a commitment to the road structure and safety in all of Manitoba. That is I think what we needed to look at through The Gas Tax Accountability Act. The government needs to make sure that it is using the funds that it collected, which it is not at the present time, there is a shortfall there. But they need to look at the amount of money that they are collecting in licences and fees, Mr. Speaker, through the vehicle registration process and driver licensing in Manitoba. If they used those funds alone, they would end up with some \$80 million more money that they could presently put into the roads.

So, if you are looking for a place to find it, we have pointed that out many times. I would be encouraged by the government to take a look at using those funds to increase the funding for the commitment to roads in Manitoba, because if we do not start now, they will continue to be in a further dilapidated state than they already are. I need to remind the government that they need to have—

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

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship):** Am I ever excited about the opportunity to speak about highways in this province, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I really want to say to the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) that he has one of the toughest jobs in the province. Now, I always say the toughest job is being Leader of the Conservative Party. Certainly the Member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Murray) is a testament to that because, as we said, on this side we do not have to attack Conservatives; they do a good job of attacking themselves.

But, you know, Mr. Speaker, next to that, I would say probably one of the toughest jobs, if you are a Conservative, is being the highways critic because they were in government for 11 years and did nothing in terms of Manitoba highways. Add on top of that, if you are the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), you actually had to get up and, you know—I suppose you do not have to, but that certainly is the style of the members opposite—attack the government that is four-laning Highway 1 to the Saskatchewan border, right by the proverbial

birdbath of the Member for Arthur-Virden. It took an NDP government to four-lane Highway 1. So it has got to be pretty tough if you are the Member for Arthur-Virden and you are the highways critic. You would be an ex-critic pretty soon if you get up and say the truth, which is that the NDP has done more for the residents of the Arthur-Virden constituency than the Tories every did in 11 years.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it is also important to note that—you know, members opposite, I am convinced, by the way, a lot of times, that they think the world is flat. Well, we know the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) will probably argue that it is. Their sense of Manitoba is probably summed up by somebody that—I ran into somebody at a social, and you know they actually said—I was listening, they were talking to my wife, this was here in Winnipeg—and this woman, she said: You know, there sure are not a lot of trees up North. Well, my wife said: What? She said: Yeah, I drove up Highway 6. And you know where she drove to? She drove to Ashern, and she felt, I guess, you drive to Ashern and there are no trees, right? Of course, then you drive another 15 minutes and there are trees all the way to Gillam.

But, you know, this is the Tory vision of Manitoba, which is myopic and only extends to maybe 100 kilometres sort of north of Highway 1. Even then, within that little quadrant of rural Manitoba, you know, that quadrant of rural Manitoba where they hold seats, what they do is they play lip service. The Minister of Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) can tell you.

It was not just Highway 1. It took the NDP government to extend farther Highway 59 south in terms of four-laning. Southern Manitoba: I started with that, Mr. Speaker, because Winkler, we have done the Winkler main street. I could go through project after project in southern Manitoba that was left on the drawing board. I remember the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurshou), I invited the Member for Portage to an announcement when I was highways minister. A highway project, I knew some of the history. One of the local residents came up to me afterwards and he said: We have been waiting for that for 40 years. Well, a lot of Tory governments in that 40 years. It took an NDP government to bring it in. So I want to start in their own backyard. If they kind of look beyond their birdbaths, they are going to see a lot of construction activity.

Now I want to deal with other areas of the province where absolutely nothing happened under

members opposite. You know, Mr. Speaker, northern Manitoba, it is ironic the member would put Highway 6 into this resolution. They did nothing on Highway 6 for the 11 years they were in. I can count maybe one or two minor projects. If the member opposite would care to hop in his vehicle, and if he is prepared to take the eight-hour drive, which I am going to be doing tomorrow, I will take him up. He can come with me. Along the way, he will see the construction signs, the major work that is taking place. I can show him.

I will take him on a guided tour of Highway 6. All the work that has been done around the Lunder area, farther up, the Steep Rock Junction, which we did. I will take him farther up, the major work we have done around Grand Rapids, north of Grand Rapids. In fact, just from Grand Rapids south to the Easterville junction. I will keep driving. Some major work being done, the corners on Highway 6, north of Grand Rapids, and then we will get to what was probably the worst paved highway in the province, Ponton north, and I will invite him to see the first section, the second section, the third section that the NDP government has done.

We can even take a turn on the 373, Mr. Speaker, serving the communities at Cross Lake and Norway House, completely ignored under members opposite. You know, they had people protesting, Mr. Speaker, from Cross Lake and Norway House, pleading with the former government to do something about the roads. We took the only section of that road that was provincial standard. We paved it and every year afterwards, we have continued. I see the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) is taking notes from the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) in terms of all the great things that have been done.

Mr. Speaker, I can take the member over into Cross Lake and we will drive over the Netnak Bridge, again built because this was an obligation that was owed to the people of Cross Lake. We can make another detour, go up Highway 391, see some of the work that was done there. I would invite the member to come with me to South Indian Lake where we, as part of the flood agreement that South Indian Lake had negotiated in 1992, a 10-year commitment to build the road. The Tories did nothing; we built it, and the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), I think, and others have dumped on us for building a road into South Indian Lake. I could

take the member on a tour throughout Manitoba and he would see every section of Manitoba where this government has been responding to the transportation needs.

\* (11:20)

Now, Mr. Speaker, I find it ironic the member talks about unspent money and talks about the capital budgets because our government, when we came into government, I checked, you know the Tories were masters at two things when it came to highways. One was not only not spending their budget, they in one year, in 1997, spent \$93 million. This is under the old accounting for highways. They not only did that but when they got money from the federal government, you know what they did, these great believers in our highway system? They pocketed the money and they put it into general revenue.

So when they got money from the federal government, they said thank you very much, stuck it in their pocket, did not apply a single, additional cent to our highway systems. Well, compare that to our records; the Prairie Grains Road Program, the SHIP program, the many federal-provincial programs that we have not only negotiated but where we have made a significant investment in Manitoba roads.

I do want to say on the record, Mr. Speaker, that a lot more needs to be done and I will be interested to see whether the cheerleaders for the new Conservative government are going to hold Stephen Harper, Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his crew, hold their feet to the fire because they sure talked a good line for 12 years in Ottawa, about the need for more federal money on our highway system. We will see how much they deliver. We will see how long the cheerleaders on the opposite side for Stephen Harper, we will make sure they deliver.

Mr. Speaker, I am always struck by the—you want to see the contrast. We do a lot of things better than the Americans but I will tell you one thing they could show us how to do, is how to deal with our highway system: The State of North Dakota gets back double what it puts in, in terms of its road system, from the federal government for state and local roads. You wonder why there is a difference between our highways and their highways, it is because their federal government commits the money back, and we have \$156 million taken out by the federal government. We need it back on our highways.

Now I could get into Stephen Harper, remember his 85-cent pledge a few elections ago.

**An Honourable Member:** Yes. You know they do not want to remember that.

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, there is some selective political amnesia from members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, they were going to deal with this but, you know, the biggest rip-off in Canada right now, and they can shave one cent off it if they want, is the fact that the GST is hauling in billions of dollars for the federal government on the backs of Canadian motorists because they, at the federal level, now are the inheritors of a tax system that is based on, in this case, the cost of sales. The Manitoba system is not a percentage of cost of sales: It is 10.5 cents a litre, one of the lowest in the country.

So we will see if the members opposite and their party in Ottawa are going to fix one of the most unfair aspects of our highway system, and that is the rip-off of Canadian motorists day in, day out, not only with the federal gas tax but by the federal GST. You can cut it by 1 percent all you want, Mr. Speaker, but it still is resulting in billions of dollars going into Canadian coffers.

Well, I also want to extend my discussion about the need for the future vision of transportation in this province. I am very proud of what we put in place in terms of Vision 2020—

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

**Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to rise on a very, very important topic of our infrastructure, namely our transportation network here in the province of Manitoba which is in an absolutely woeful state.

We have seen headlines in the major newspapers of our province here, indicating that the most important economic artery in the transportation network here in the province of Manitoba has been posted at a reduced speed because of the crumbling infrastructure, the surfacing of Highway 75 between Winnipeg and the border. Nowhere in my own personal memory have I ever seen the Department of Transportation label an entire road as one for reduced speed because of its condition. I have seen in different cases when effectively the frost coming out of the ground has heaved some of the hard

surfacing and it has been noted by flags for reduced speed because of bump, but to label an entire road from Winnipeg to the border as one for reduced speed is unprecedented.

Mr. Speaker, I will say that the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) does have a number of points which I will agree with, he being the former Transportation Minister. He is well acquainted with the highway network here in the province of Manitoba, and I will commend the honourable member for coming to Portage la Prairie to make an announcement on improvements to Provincial Road 227 that has been on the books for quite a number of years. But, if I may give the Paul Harvey rest of the story to the honourable Member for Thompson, is that the Provincial Road 227 is yet to be completed. The honourable member, when minister, completed only half of the final portion for upgrade. So, when you only do a portion of a roadway and not complete the upgrade, then really, what have you truly accomplished? Because the road, even though it has been improved on a section, unless you complete the entire roadway, you really have not improved the situation whatsoever because the traffic flow is encumbered by the section that has yet to be improved.

The honourable member also makes mention about the New Democratic Party and their commitment to making a dedicated fund to re-invest the gas tax portion back in the roadways of Manitoba, but that is only a portion of the revenues generated by the motoring public of Manitoba. The gas tax portion, yes, is a large portion of revenue, but is only half of the revenue generated by the motoring public here in Manitoba because one has to look also to the motor fuels, which include propane as well as diesel fuel and alternative fuels, ethanol, biodiesel. That is not included in the New Democrats' re-investment of fuel taxes to the roadways of Manitoba, nor are the revenues generated by drivers licensing or the additional permits and fees that the Department of Transportation levies on the motoring public of Manitoba. All in all, more than \$360 million is raised here in the province of Manitoba and contributed to the Treasury of the government of the province of Manitoba. Yet, we are looking at just slightly more than \$200 million being re-invested in construction and maintenance of the roadways here in Manitoba.

That is, I would say, an embarrassing situation. Yet, if you were truly committed to the roadways

here in the province of Manitoba and the vital importance the roads play in our economic activity in the province, I would say that this government does indeed have their priorities all screwed up because, without re-investment in our roadways here in the province of Manitoba, we are headed for disaster. The minister likes to crow a lot of some of the roadways that they have improved, but I will say that, if you are really looking at the prosperity of our province, first and foremost we have to pay attention to the 4 percent of the roads network here in the province of Manitoba that carries more than a third of our economic activity.

These roads have been identified for the national highways infrastructure as vitally important not only to the province in which they are, but also to the national economic wealth of our country. The Trans Canada Highway, Highway No. 75, Highway No. 10, Highway No. 6, these roads have been identified as ones of vital importance to the economic activity here in the province and, ultimately, the prosperity of the people of Manitoba through the economic activity.

\* (11:30)

I want to also state that this government, even though they want to crow about the budgeting of monies to the infrastructure, namely the highways here in the province of Manitoba, the current records indicate that more than \$37 million have lapsed. Even though the increase in expenditure has been budgeted, the actual increase of expenditure back to the roadways of Manitoba has not taken place. I cite just the most recent year, 2004-2005, that this government lapse was \$15 million in the Department of Transportation that was clearly budgeted and heralded through press release after press release of this government's commitment to the infrastructure, namely roadways here in the province of Manitoba. That is not put into any type of print whatsoever by this government because they are embarrassed.

Last year, in the committee of Estimates, it was identified that if we were just to maintain what we have here in the province of Manitoba, take care of the annual wear and tear, the Department of Transportation would have to invest \$343 million in construction and maintenance just to break even. This year the government, I believe, is counting on expending about \$229 million, \$227 million. Well, on that point alone, we are falling \$120 million approximately further behind than they were the last year. So, Mr. Speaker, it does not take a lot of effort

to comprehend what ultimately is going to take place here in the province of Manitoba in the very short time frame. We are going to see continued degradation of our roadways here in the province of Manitoba.

Now, I know my time has almost lapsed, but, Mr. Speaker, we have to put our money where our mouths are. This government continues to herald the importance of the Department of Transportation yet continues underfunding. I would like to see this government stand and make a commitment today that all transportation revenues generated by the motoring Manitobans are reinvested in the roadways of Manitoba, and then we can hold our head high when looking at the federal government and asking for them to contribute more of their tax monies that comes from the motoring Manitobans.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those words, I want to encourage the government across the way to support this resolution because it is of vital importance to all Manitobans. Thank you.

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Transportation and Government Services):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak. I am indeed proud of this government's record in Transportation since we have been government. I will give you a quick snapshot. In 1998 and '99, a pre-election budget that the former government had, the former Conservative government—I will not say Progressive Conservative because it used to be progressive at one time, now they are Conservatives.

Mr. Speaker, when we take a look at the last Tory budget in '98 and '99, approximately \$173 million. What do we have today, \$257 million this government, \$83 million more per year in Transportation than the previous government spent. So they crow a lot about put more money, spend, spend, spend, one day. The next day it is cut, cut, cut. First of all, we would like to get them to get their message straight as to exactly what they would like us to do.

On that particular note, they have their friends now that are in Ottawa, and with due respect to the new Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure in Ottawa, he has not had an opportunity yet to meet and talk to the ministers of Transportation across the country, but one of the first things on the agenda that there will be is asking the federal government to put more of their gas tax revenues and monies back into the provinces.

Let me give you a quick snapshot, Mr. Speaker. Every year, approximately \$165 million is taken out of the province of Manitoba in gas tax revenues by the federal government. They put back into the province about \$8 million. In total, since we have been government, the federal government has taken over a billion dollars, approximately a billion dollars, out of Manitoba in gas tax revenues. What did they put back into Manitoba: approximately \$70 million since we have been government. It is an absolute shame. Yet, the federal government continues to say that they have a transportation vision. They absolutely do not.

Now, to be fair to the new Minister of Transportation, they are a new government in Ottawa and he is getting a handle on his portfolio, and he is trying to put forward what his vision of the country will be with regard to transportation. I certainly give him that. We have to give that minister of Transportation in Ottawa some time.

But the people I am certainly not prepared to give time, nor are Manitobans prepared to give time, is the opposition. They had their chance in the 1990s to do something. What were we left with: crumbling roads. They put most of their emphasis in southern Manitoba, very little in northern Manitoba. We take as a point of pride the fact that we have not only improved Highway No. 6 and many other highways around Flin Flon and Thompson and The Pas, but northern Manitoba does, to address their point, contribute as an economic force in this province.

You do have Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting. You do have paper mills in northern Manitoba. You do have Inco, with all the metals and the monies generated therefrom contributing to Manitoba's economy. The statement being made, somehow, let us put more money into southern Manitoba because that is where the wealth of the province is being generated, truly shows you the mentality that should they ever, heaven forbid, become the government again, we know where they would be putting their monies. We have seen that, Mr. Speaker, in the past.

I just want to say that, with regard to the dollars that the members opposite have been talking about, in the supplementary schedules and statutory reporting requirements in Public Accounts that have been approved by the provincial auditor, it shows that the gas and motive fuel tax and the monies taken in were approximately \$217 million, thereabouts, as it ended March 31, '05. The Province of Manitoba, the investment we made by our government was

\$299 million, approximately \$81 million more than the motive fuel tax we have taken in. So, Mr. Speaker, we have put not only the money that we gain from motive fuel tax into transportation, but we have put \$81 million more than that into transportation.

With regard to our investment, an unprecedented \$257-million investment we put into this province in transportation: It is an unprecedented amount. Here we have over \$29 million more put into transportation this year than last year. Now, Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you that the staff in the Department of Transportation and Government Services have been working very, very hard under the circumstances that we faced this winter with the freeze-thaw that created real havoc on many of our roads. They worked and they did their utmost not only to ensure that the traveling public would be safe on our highways, but they have also tried to repair and take care of what we know was a real problem.

Let me just say that many of the initiatives, many speakers on this side of the floor have spoken about the new initiatives that we have taken since we have become government. We have had the MLA for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) our first Minister of Transportation and should be credited with many new initiatives that he brought forth. In particular, I might point out just one: the addition of new winter roads in northern Manitoba for the population. When you take a look at Brochet, Lac Brochet, Tadoule Lake, those people were truly isolated and also Granville, to add another. This is just one example of a minister when we came into government trying to address an inequity that had been there for close to 11 years and which we have taken care of.

We have the northeast Perimeter, which we are doing, Mr. Speaker. We have Highway No. 1 to Saskatchewan, which we are addressing and will be completed in the very near future. We have Highway 59 south, which we are twinning. Also we have made a commitment over the next three years to take a look at the most rundown portions of Highway 75 south, our main artery leading to the United States and to Manitoba. What was pointed out by a previous Minister of Transportation, the MLA for Thompson, is a very good one with regard to the comparison that is often made between I-29 and Highway 75 into Manitoba. The members opposite often criticize when you cross the border from Emerson or from Pembina into Emerson into Manitoba what a difference there is. Well, yes, there

is a difference all right. Ninety percent of the cost of that particular highway, I-29, is paid by the federal government of the United States. Ten percent is covered by the state of North Dakota, and here in Manitoba we have to cover it all.

\* (11:40)

What we are asking is a partnership with the federal government as part of their vision to put more of those gas tax revenues back into Manitoba, and I am asking the members opposite who have their friends in Ottawa not to only plead with them but to make the case in a very strong way to get more of those gas tax revenues back to the provinces. In this particular case, Manitoba, they take approximately \$165 million out of this province and give us just a pittance back, around approximately \$8 million. So I plead and I ask the members opposite to talk to every one of their members of Parliament in Ottawa that are of the same political stripe as they are to make a case for not only Manitoba but all provinces.

So, Mr. Speaker, there are many new initiatives that we have underway. We have announced many new projects that are going forward. Now, arguably one could say, you know, there is not enough, but when you are trying to repair something that has taken place over almost 12 years or 11 years certainly in the 1990s that was run down, now we are trying to repair it, including new bridges, roads, and what we are trying to do is address a lot of the challenges that we have with the budget we have. Last year we increased the budget by \$15 million; they voted against it. This year we are increasing that particular budget in Transportation by over \$29 million; they voted against it.

So Manitobans are looking at the MLA for Portage la Prairie, the MLA for Ste. Rose, the MLA for Minnedosa, the MLA for Gimli, the MLA for Turtle Mountain, the MLA for Emerson, the MLA for Morris, all of these MLAs in rural Manitoba should be ashamed of themselves. Fourteen MLAs they have from rural Manitoba, they all voted against the budget that we increased last year, this year, trying to make a difference to Manitobans. On one side they are crowing about how we need more money, on the other side of the coin they argue and vote against a budget that clearly puts more money into Transportation. It is insulting, you know, and rural Manitobans vote for them. It is unbelievable.

I mean, I know the analogy between chickens voting for Colonel Sanders is an appropriate one, Mr.

Speaker. We have often heard it. But I want them to stand up and say, yes, rural Manitoba, we want better roads. But you know what? We voted against the budget that gave more money to roads. I mean, they cannot have it both ways, and we are going to hold their feet to the fire. Every community I go into in rural Manitoba I am going to be pointing out that they voted to an increase in Transportation. Every single community that elected the members opposite voted against Transportation increases.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for Ste. Rose, are you up on a point of order?

**Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose):** I just want to make sure that the minister of highways will allow us to circulate this speech in rural Manitoba.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member does not have a point of order.

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**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable minister, to continue.

**Mr. Lemieux:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I know my time is limited. On this side of the House we feel a real passion for Transportation. We put our money where our mouth is, and arguably, you know, maybe it is not enough, but I would just want to conclude by saying we put a lot more than they ever did and will continue to move forward.

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** It truly gives us an opportunity to speak to one of the most important issues that confronts especially rural Manitobans and indeed every Manitoban and a lot of people who travel through Manitoba, and that is, of course, this resolution on the infrastructure and the lack of attention paid by this government to the needs of the infrastructure program.

What I find so interesting, this Minister of Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton) and this minister of highways have both stood there and flailed their arms like windmills in the wind expounding on the virtues of their budgeting on the Transportation side of the Estimates that are before us now. What I find also most interesting is that the minister would not talk one word about the additional \$100 million that this government is now receiving from federal Treasury funds. That is \$100 million more for transportation and infrastructure than the previous Filmon administration ever received from the then-Liberal administration in Ottawa.

I believe that if you add the \$100 million to the current budget, or subtract that from the current budget, that the minister has just brought forward, I would suspect that there is a lot less provincial dollars in this budget today than there was last year. I think the Construction Association of Manitoba said it best: that this government has lapsed \$59 million in infrastructure expenditures over the last five years that they should have been spending on highways, even just by their own budgeting. They budgeted \$100 million, \$150 million for capital. But what did they deliver: each of the years, on average, \$10 million less than what they budgeted.

Where did the money go? They do not want to answer that. They do not want to talk about the lapsing of the funds. We do not know where it went. Maybe it went into the Premier's (Mr. Doer) personal travel fund. We do not know. We know he has been flying all over the globe trying to promote himself as a person that might be capable of serving on some boards, or those kinds of things. Maybe that is what he is spending all this money on. We know that the Premier took one trip to Washington and, voilà, when he got there, he found out that it was a civic holiday in the United States. Maybe he knew before he went that it was a civic holiday. If he did not, then one would wonder why he would not have at least asked somebody whether the offices in Washington were, in fact, going to be open.

But I think what we have heard from the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) here today is clearly an admission, clearly an admission that he is lax and incapable of convincing his colleagues in Treasury Board that more money should be spent on infrastructure. We can look at all the highways in the province. There was a road bed that construction was finalized in 1999, on No. 1 Highway, and it only needed a topcoat on it. There is still no top on. In six years this government has not found enough money to finish twinning of No. 1 Highway, in six years. You know, if you ever want to talk about a topless administration, maybe the Transportation department is that department, because they simply refuse to put proper tops on roads to ensure the long-term longevity of those roads.

I think, again, you know, the minister is standing here and blaming the federal government, blaming somebody else. That is the model that this government has used for the last six years when they talk to people everywhere. We hear it time and time again, that this government, this NDP government of

Manitoba, blames somebody else. They blame the municipalities. They blame the federal government. They would even like to blame the former Filmon administration which has not been around for six years for having done an absolutely fabulous job of road construction in this province.

One would only need to travel in southern Manitoba to realize that there has been nothing done to our road network in southern Manitoba. One need only to travel down 75 Highway to the United States to realize what kind of deterioration has taken place during the last six years on the main transportation route, our main export corridor. This minister stands here and blames the federal government for not contributing enough. A hundred million more this year was just briefly announced. He never made one mention of a hundred million extra that they were going to get from the federal government to help him build an infrastructure.

\* (11:50)

Maybe he could use just a little bit to at least fix the holes on 75 highway. I mentioned the other day in this House that the Route 75 had deteriorated to the point where the bumpers of the cars even almost wanted to touch the concrete when you hit those holes.

Well, lo and behold, the minister must have given some direction because this morning when I came in, there was actually some patching going on, so they are filling some of the holes and we appreciate that. I commend the department for taking the initiative and doing some repair work.

Lastly but not least, I think it is imperative that this government or any government following, after the next election, will have to pay attention to the infrastructure in this province because not only do we see the infrastructure in rural Manitoba crumble, look at what is happening in this city. Look at what is happening in the city of Brandon and all the other cities. I have not been to Thompson lately but if their streets are as bad as they are in many of our other thoroughfares such as Route 90 and others in this city, it is deplorable and it is a shame that we invite visitors from other countries to come here and drive on our streets and our highways and our secondary road system in rural Manitoba.

Many gravel roads that the municipalities maintain are in much much better condition than the hard-surface roads, or roads that once were hard

surfaced in rural Manitoba. One need only look at—I listened the other day very intently as the Premier (Mr. Doer) talked about 59 highway. Well the Filmon administration actually directed and put in place a plan to four-lane a part of 59 highway. That plan, I understand, is not complete. Where is the plan to do the continuation of that 59 highway? There is none as far as I am aware of. I have not seen anything. I have not seen anything in the Estimates. I have not seen any contracts let yet. I have not seen any design work done on 59 highway that will continue the four-laning.

The Premier gets up in his place and talks about the need for doing a flood route to the United States, and he said maybe we should use 59 highway as a flood route, four-lane 59 highway to the U.S. border. Will Minnesota four-lane its highway? Will Minnesota now also four-lane its highway to do that kind of a routing? Well, again, I think the Premier just picks issues out of the air and puts them forward as maybe ideas but most of the ideas, Mr. Speaker, are never realized.

I think it is important that we note highways such as Highway No. 10, Highway No. 1, Highway No. 75, Highway No. 12 and Highway No. 59, Highway No. 32. All are routes directly into the United States, and you should see the difference from you enter from North Dakota down I-29, come down I-29 and head north on I-29 through the United States. It is like driving on glass, and yet, when you hit the border, the first thing you see is a big sign, be careful, slow down. The maximum speed 70, and those are the kinds of roads we have to travel on—

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

**Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake):** It is a pleasure to rise today on this resolution. It is very poignant for me because I come from that wasteland called the Interlake. When those members were in office, they completely ignored this region for the 11 long, dark years that Filmon was Premier, and I do not think they built a single road in that entire region while the Filmon administration was in office. Oh, but I should make one exception for that, Mr. Speaker. They did do some work on Highway 325 past the Conservative candidate's farm. I know they did some work there. So at least one person's needs were addressed in the Interlake.

They actually mentioned the words "gravel road" also in their speeches from members opposite. A rare

thing to be found in southern Manitoba I know, but certainly north of the city we are no strangers to gravel roads. I have three communities that have very long roads to them. Their only access is one highway. I am thinking of the communities of Matheson Island, of Pine Dock, of Jackhead, north of the Peguis Reserve, Dauphin River Reserve up in the northwest. All of these communities have only one road in and they are long roads, 50, 60 miles to get to them. What did they do when they were in office? They ignored those roads completely. When we came into power, we put in place a community access road, dust control program so that people from these communities now can drive in a much more safe manner given that they do not have to face these clouds of dust.

Now, the Interlake: I want to pay credit to the three successive Transportation Ministers that we have had. Certainly the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the dean of the Legislature knew that this region was ignored completely in the years of Filmon and company. He stepped up to the plate most adequately, I found. In the first couple of years he rebuilt Highway No. 7 from Fraserwood up to the community of Arborg, and that put in place an RTAC standard highway where all vehicles could travel and also worked on Highway 68, that critical east-west route across the Interlake. He managed to access the Prairie Grain Roads Program for that project, and pushed the highway through from Poplarfield to Arborg and then with a little extra effort managed to extend that project all the way across to No. 8 highway. He also worked on Highway 329, a gravel road that needed upgrading, from Riverton west to No. 17, a critical route for our farmers passing through the Mennonite communities of Morweena and also helped the people in the Okno area.

Following in his footsteps, Minister Smith did considerable work on Highway No. 6 including repair of the Steep Rock Junction and resurfacing south of Eriksdale. So for them to suggest that we have not taken Highway 6 into consideration at all is simply false, Mr. Speaker. The Member for Thompson spoke quite eloquently about work done further north, and I would leave that on the record and would add that the latest Minister of Transportation (Mr. Lemieux) has also picked up the ball. He not only committed to but we are beginning the final stage of construction on Highway 68 from Poplarfield to Eriksdale. I think there are seven miles to go on that project which was roughly \$10 million.

So now we have a stable RTAC standard route right across the Interlake, right from Highway No. 8 over to Highway No. 6 in Eriksdale, something that is critical to the transport of goods not just north and south from the rural areas to the city of Winnipeg but across the constituency as well, so that people can trade amongst themselves and they are not tied simply to Winnipeg. So, for them to suggest that we have not done anything, particularly in this region, is somewhat galling, to say the least, to me.

Now, if they really want to do something for the people of Manitoba, they will take their message to Ottawa because now there is a Conservative

government in Ottawa. This is where things have been lacking since we came to office. I know that roughly \$160-plus million a year in fuel taxes taken out of our province every year, Mr. Speaker, accumulated to a tune of almost \$1 billion since we came to office. So, if we got some of that money back here, that would be much appreciated. So, now they are in office, it is time to put their money—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have five minutes remaining.

The hour being twelve noon, we will recess and we will reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Thursday, May 18, 2006**

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