

Fifth Session - Thirty-Eighth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
Official Report
(Hansard)

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authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri, Hon.	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McFADYEN, Hugh	Fort Whyte	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa, Hon.	Seine River	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.
VACANT	Kirkfield Park	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, November 20, 2006

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYER

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 3—The Healthy Child Manitoba Act

Hon. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Minister of Healthy Living): I move, seconded by the Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs (Mr. Lathlin), that Bill 3, The Healthy Child Manitoba Act; Loi sur la stratégie « Enfants en santé Manitoba », now be read a first time.

Motion presented.

Ms. Irvin-Ross: It is fitting that on National Child Day we are introducing a bill that sets out in formal legislation our strategy to work across government departments and with community partners to put children and families first. Bill 3 is based on our belief that all sectors must work together to support families and parents as they raise their children to reach their fullest potential.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

Bill 200—The Personal Information Protection and Identity Theft Prevention Act

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I move, seconded by the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 200, 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 first time.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Taillieu: Mr. Speaker, 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 their personal information that the organization has collected is lost, stolen or compromised. Bill 200 is a step toward identity theft prevention as a very root of identity theft. It's the protection of one's personal information. Identity theft is an increasing crime, a crime of the future, and personal information has become the new currency. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

PETITIONS

Provincial Slogan

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

That the NDP have authorized the spending of hundreds of thousands of tax dollars to promote the new slogan, "Spirited Energy."

That "Friendly Manitoba" is a better description of our province.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to consider supporting the slogan "Friendly Manitoba" over "Spirited Energy."

To urge the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his NDP caucus to make public the total cost in creating and promoting the new slogan "Spirited Energy."

Mr. Speaker, that is signed by M. Quirante, R. Quirante, F. Aviles and many, many other Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with our rule 132(6), when petitions are read they are deemed to be received by the House.

Headingley Foods

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The owners of Headingley Foods, a small business based in Headingley, would like to sell alcohol at their store. The distance from their location to the nearest Liquor Mart, via the Trans-Canada Highway, is 9.3 kilometres. The distance to the same Liquor Mart via Roblin Boulevard is 10.8 kilometres. Their application has been rejected because their store needs to be 10 kilometres away from the Liquor Mart. It is 700 metres short of this

requirement using one route but 10.8 kilometres using the other.

The majority of Headingley's population lives off Roblin Boulevard and uses Roblin Boulevard to get to and from Winnipeg rather than the Trans-Canada Highway. Additionally, the highway route is often closed or too dangerous to travel in severe weather conditions. The majority of Headingley residents therefore travel to the Liquor Mart via Roblin Boulevard, a distance of 10.8 kilometres.

Small businesses outside Winnipeg's perimeter are vital to the prosperity of Manitoba's communities and should be supported. It is difficult for small businesses like Headingley Foods to compete with larger stores in Winnipeg, and they require added services to remain viable. Residents should be able to purchase alcohol locally rather than drive to the next municipality.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister charged with the administration of The Liquor Control Act (Mr. Smith), to consider allowing the owners of Headingley Foods to sell alcohol at their store, thereby supporting small business and the prosperity of rural communities in Manitoba.

This is signed by Brenda Schlag, Garry Schlag, Richard Dunn and many, many other, Mr. Speaker.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Flooding (Waterhen)

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide an update to the House about the flooding in the community of Waterhen. In response to the flooding on the Waterhen River, a state of emergency had been declared in the community of Waterhen on November 16.

Flooding has been caused by frazil ice formations and has required emergency sandbagging. Dikes have been constructed to protect the community centre. In the period between last night and this morning, river levels have dropped nine inches south of Waterhen and half an inch north of the community.

The forecast for above normal temperatures for the next two days may continue the unstable

condition on the Waterhen River. Emergency responders will monitor the conditions very closely until the river freezes. The Waterhen Community Council is managing the emergency with strong support from community volunteers.

Provincial resources include: Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization, the Office of the Fire Commissioner, Parkland Regional Health Authority, the Department of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs and the Department of Water Stewardship.

There are also 26 volunteer sandbaggers from Peguis First Nation, Fishing River Cree Nation and Skownan assisting with water protection in Waterhen.

Water Stewardship has deployed the Amphibex to Waterhen, and it was in operation last week and through the weekend.

Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to be in the community to tour the situation on Saturday, November 14, and I want to commend the community people for how resourceful they have been.

Provincial staff are monitoring conditions to provide flood fighters with the best possible forecast of river levels, and we are working with the volunteers to build dikes and protect homes and properties that may be at risk.

Once there is no longer a flood concern, we will be working with the community to evaluate the flood threat for the upcoming spring. Our government will continue to make every possible effort to support the people of Waterhen.

*(13:40)

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): I would like to take the opportunity to thank the minister for her statement regarding the flooding in the area of Waterhen. I do look forward to working with the new Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick). We are all very concerned about water quality in Manitoba, and we look forward to working with her in the future to have fine water available to all Manitobans throughout the province. We do, of course, share the concerns for that particular region at this point in time.

I do want to thank the volunteers for their ongoing work up there and also the department staff that I know are working quite closely with the residents in that area. We do, on our side of the

House, wish them all the best in the coming days and hope the weather co-operates in their endeavours. Thank you very much.

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

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Mr. Gerrard: As we all know, flooding can be a pretty serious problem in a community, and it is important that anybody who can, can rally around to help.

I would like to say a good word about the volunteers and others who are there trying to make sure that no more damage is done and that everything is as good as it possibly can be for the people in the area who are affected. Thank you.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us Supporters of Early Childhood Development in Manitoba who are the guests of the honourable Minister of Healthy Living (Ms. Irvin-Ross).

Also in the public gallery we have from Selkirk Junior High 30 grade 7 students under the direction of Aiesha Mahmood. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar).

Also in the public gallery we have from Samuel Burland School 50 grade 6 students under the direction of Janice Roch. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald).

Also in the public gallery we have with us today 12 fourth-year University of Manitoba nursing students. These students are under the direction of Linda West.

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

ORAL QUESTIONS

Agriculture Government Initiatives

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, at the outset I just want to

briefly put on the record my thanks to the thousands of volunteers who made the Grey Cup celebrations over the past week such a tremendous success for Winnipeg and for our province.

Mr. Speaker, I know that certainly the political leadership of the province gets their fair share of attention, but it is appropriate, I think, to give attention to those many Manitobans who played such a prominent role in making this such a great success.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier is as follows: After seven years of neglect in agriculture, after failing to respond in a timely and an effective way to the crisis in our beef industry, after the contradictions to the pork industry, after their inaction in getting results for Manitoba grain farmers, after dropping the ball in getting value-added investment and activity in Manitoba with the loss of a canola crushing plant to the province of Saskatchewan, after seven years of neglect and mismanagement in the area of agriculture, why now, on the eve of an election, is this Premier attempting to play politics with the Wheat Board? Why, after seven years of neglect, is he embarking on a campaign of division within rural Manitoba? Why will the Premier not apologize to Manitoba farmers for seven years of neglect? Why will he not lay out for Manitoba farmers, if he has one, his plan for making life better for Manitoba producers?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I also want to pay tribute to the volunteers that again made Manitoba very proud. I want to congratulate the fans. The stadium was sold right out. I understand the last Grey Cup made approximately \$30,000; preliminary reports indicate about \$2.5 million in revenue.

I also want to congratulate Kevin Walters who was the major staff representative on the Juno Awards, who also worked on this event. The event was co-chaired by Gene Dunn and David Asper, and, of course, Lyle Bauer, who was responsible for the selling out of the stadium. But, certainly, a credit to all Winnipeggers, all Manitobans for this great event. Tom Wright, the outgoing commissioner of the CFL, is also a great, great volunteer in his own right. He is the president of the Canadian Special Olympics, and he is an individual who was in Brandon for the opening of those games, and a great person in my view.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite said: on the eve of the election. I just want to confirm the election won't be called tomorrow.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, after seven years of neglect of agriculture that is the best the Premier can do.

What we are asking for today is that after seven years, which includes dropping the ball for the wheat industry; missing an opportunity for value-added agriculture by losing a canola crushing plant to Saskatchewan; failing our grain farmers in terms of making policy changes to the programs that provide long-term hope and opportunity for young grain farmers in Manitoba; after sending contradictory issues to the pork industry in terms of policy where, on the one hand, we've got \$28 million for a massive corporate operation in Winnipeg while we clamp down on smaller rural operations; after seven years of failing within his areas of responsibility in the area of agriculture, he wants to pick a fight in an area of federal jurisdiction.

Why will the Premier not today take the opportunity to apologize to Manitoba producers? Lay out for those producers his plan, his government's plan, to make amends for seven years of neglect.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I would suggest the member opposite take a trip to Ste. Agathe. There is a canola crushing plant there. I also know that if he got out of the city of Winnipeg, he might go west on the highway. There is a Simplot potato processing plant located there. Members opposite said it would never happen; it did happen. There are developments on hemp processing, and a review is going on in that area. The Food Development Centre has been revitalized, and new investments in that centre. The whole issue of functional foods and nutraceutical foods, faculty members from across Canada are now coming to the Richardson school of nutraceutical foods that we put money in.

Members opposite, when they were in government, said no to the University of Manitoba, no to functional foods, no to nutraceutical foods. We know this is a \$100 billion industry in the next couple of years. The connection between medical research, agriculture and healthy foods will be developed and pioneered at the university. Here in Manitoba we are going to lead as we always have. Where has the member been?

*(13:50)

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the Premier wants to take credit on the functional foods initiative for a project that was initiated by Mr. Enns, the former Minister of Agriculture under the last government,

and it seems shameful, this self-satisfied attitude, when it comes to agriculture in Manitoba.

I can tell the Premier that I was in Souris on Saturday morning. I've spent time in rural Manitoba. I can tell you that I've been in rooms across Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, and I look forward to spending time in the Ste. Rose and the Emerson constituencies in coming nights where thousands of Manitobans are joining the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba today because they want to see this government removed from power after seven years of neglect. Manitobans by the hundreds are joining our party, and they're coming out to meetings because they want to send a message that they cannot tolerate another term of waste and inaction from this NDP government.

Why will the Premier not today stop looking backwards, stop trying to take credit for things that were initiated by other governments? Why will he not today apologize for trying to deflect Manitobans on to issues within federal jurisdiction? Why will he not lay out today his plan for the future of agriculture in Manitoba? For the future of agriculture, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doer: Well, Mr. Speaker, the member opposite, the one and only person who has hired Don Orchard to be his futuristic guru and hatchet man in constituencies, that's looking way, way backwards. Let the member be accountable for that.

Secondly, why is the member opposite standing up for the government of Alberta that's against the Canadian Wheat Board, who is spending a million dollars to destroy the Canadian Wheat Board in that province? Mr. Speaker, this member is saying that we shouldn't have a position on issues of federal jurisdiction or shared jurisdiction that affect Manitoba and Manitoba producers. He's not fit for the job. Has he got no position on the disease lab, for example? Does he have no position on CF-18, because that's a military contract?

We don't need a member in this House standing up for Alberta. We need people in this House standing up for Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

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

Canadian Wheat Board Government Position

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): On a new question, Mr. Speaker. The

Premier knows that our position, and I have written to the Prime Minister of the country and we have indicated to the Prime Minister of Canada our party's position, that farmers should have the say. The Prime Minister listened. They're having a plebiscite on barley. They're not moving ahead with wheat.

There is no action, there are no changes being made to the marketing of wheat in this country, Mr. Speaker. Now, the Premier, and I know he spends a lot of time south of the border, and maybe this is where this is coming from. Now he is attempting to play U.S.-style wedge politics in rural Manitoba. They deserve better. He owes producers an apology for his attempt to divide Manitoba producers. There is no need for a plebiscite when there's no changes being proposed for wheat, when there's no changes being proposed. He should apologize for Manitoba producers for spending tax dollars on a plebiscite that's not required, for dividing Manitoba producers. He should come back from California. He should talk to Manitoba producers, he should lay out his plan to fix agriculture in Manitoba.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Well, Mr. Speaker, we now see the Alberta surrogate in full, inconsistent flight. On the one hand, in his first set of questions, he asks us not to interfere in a federal matter. In his second set of questions, he says: I wrote the Prime Minister and asked the Prime Minister to have a vote only on barley. Two out of three barley producers are in the province of Alberta. So here we have confirmation that the member opposite is a surrogate for the position in Alberta. He's absolutely inconsistent about being involved with the federal government, and he's doing the bidding of Stephen Harper instead of the farmers here in Manitoba.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, I know the Premier has a keen interest in history. He is obsessed with the 1980s and the 1990s. I don't know if he thinks he is still running against Gary Filmon and Sterling Lyon, but if we are going to talk about history then let's at least get the facts right.

The facts are as follows: The federal government was proposing to move ahead with changes to the way wheat and barley were marketed in Canada. On the basis of that position, we wrote to the Prime Minister to call on the federal government to have a plebiscite before making those changes. The federal government listened. I know that the Prime Minister doesn't return the Premier's phone calls, which is why he needs to prance around the province trying to play politics on issues that are outside of his

jurisdiction, but the issue is this. The federal government responded by saying that we would like to move ahead on barley, but before we do we will have a plebiscite. That was the right thing to do.

We are not moving ahead with changes to the way wheat is being marketed. Now, the Premier, in order to play politics with Manitoba producers, in order to waste taxpayers' dollars on a needless, divisive plebiscite for a non-existent proposed change to the way wheat is marketed, is playing politics with Manitoba producers. The reason he is so passionate about this issue, Mr. Speaker, all of a sudden this new-found passion for agriculture that the Premier has is because he thinks he has a nice little U.S.-style wedge issue that he can use to drive votes in rural Manitoba by pitting farmers against each other.

When I was in Souris on Saturday morning, producers in Souris said to me: Let's not lose sight of the bigger picture; let's do what is best for producers. Let's enact policies that expand opportunities for producers and increase their income. This focus on a phony debate over a non-existent proposal demonstrates a government that has completely lost touch with rural Manitoba. Will the Premier apologize to producers for attempting to divide them on an issue unnecessarily, and will he, today, lay out proactively his plans to do things within his jurisdiction to make life better for Manitoba producers?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, it wasn't former Premier Lyon that wrote about a single desk for the Canadian Wheat Board. It wasn't the former premier who argued that we should remove the single-desk feature of the Canadian Wheat Board. It was you, sir. You are the ones that are now proposing the same position as the province of Alberta.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the issue isn't wedge. It is whether the Conservatives are going to speak with weasel words, or are they going to take a stand. We're in favour of the single-desk marketing system for the Canadian wheat producers, the Canadian Wheat Board. Where do you stand?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I would like to remind honourable members that we have a lot of guests up in the gallery here. They came all the way down to hear questions and answers, and I think they should have the right to hear the questions and answers. I

think a little better decorum is wanting here, so I ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, the contradictions between the Premier's positions on these issues are absolutely unbelievable as he attempts to talk out of both sides of his mouth. On the one hand he says, let the producers decide; on the other hand, he says it is single desk or nothing. What does he stand for? What does he believe in? If he believes in giving producers a vote, he shouldn't take the position of jamming one position down the throats of producers.

He should listen to what producers are saying, as we are. What we know today is that there are many producers in Manitoba who would like marketing choice. There are other producers in Manitoba who want to retain the single desk for marketing of grain. There is a diversity of opinions. It is a divisive issue in our province, Mr. Speaker. So the answer to that is to resolve it through a fair process that gives farmers a voice through a plebiscite, and that is the position we have consistently taken.

Now on the one hand the Premier says, let the farmers decide. On the other hand he says, it's single desk or nothing. Which one is it?

* (14:00)

Mr. Doer: We've always stated that the vote of the wheat producers in western Canada would determine, in our view, the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. We've already had the majority, if not all, of the producers in Manitoba voting for pro single-desk vision of the Canadian Wheat Board. We have new elections taking place right now, so the issue here isn't wedge. When we go to meetings and we are asked our opinion by the Prime Minister-of-the-day on the Canadian Wheat Board, or by other provinces, we have to say what side we're on on this issue. Do you have the view of Alberta on eliminating the single desk? Mr. Speaker, leadership requires one to state their positions. That doesn't mean that the farmers shouldn't and must vote, but it also means that leaders should lead, and we lead by saying we support the single desk; but we also say we will lead by allowing the farmers to decide the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. It is not an inconsistent position to lead.

Agriculture Government Initiatives

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture has continued to urge the federal government to call a vote on the CWB and let

the farmers have a voice in deciding the changes to the Wheat Board.

Mr. Speaker, will the minister explain why the voice of farmers was not equally important when farmers called a plebiscite on implementing the mandatory compulsory \$2 checkoff on Manitoba cattle sales. What about that?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, the member is wrong again.

The cattle producers came to us and they said, will you hold a plebiscite, or will you make the checkoff refundable? That's what the producers said. I have quotes here from the Manitoba Cattle Producers where they said they were happy with the results of going to a voluntary checkoff.

So, Mr. Speaker, the Manitoba Cattle Producers asked for two things. They said either hold a plebiscite, or go ahead and make it refundable. We listened to the producers. Members opposite are not listening to producers when it comes to the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, issues related to the Wheat Board fall under the federal jurisdiction, including their decision to call a plebiscite on barley marketing in the new year. Will the minister stop playing divisive politics with an issue that is not provincial responsibility and finally get on with addressing the problems that Manitoba farmers face since she ignored seven long, dark years?

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the member to talk to his leader. If he thinks that this is federal policy, why did his leader write to the Prime Minister to ask for a vote? Why would he do that? I don't tell the member who we're listening to.

Mr. Speaker, we are listening to producers. We are listening to farm organizations. The farm organizations are saying that the Wheat Board is our organization, and we are the ones that should have a say. Farm organizations have asked for a vote on wheat and barley. If the federal government won't give it to them, and I believe the federal government should listen to producers, we will give them a voice.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture is on public record with regard to wheat remaining under the sole jurisdiction of the CWB. He has indicated a plebiscite will be held on barley before any changes are made.

Will the Manitoba NDP government abandon this wrong-headed decision to waste tens of thousands of taxpayers' dollars on a plebiscite that has nothing to do with the mandate and responsibility of the provincial government and which has no legal effect, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I would never regret giving our producers a voice. It is what the producers asked for. When the farm organizations from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta did a study, they said that they want producers to have a say on the future sales of wheat and barley. It is a very simple question. That's what the producers want. That's what I've asked the Minister of Agriculture to put forward, a vote to tell us whether or not farmers should have a say.

The members opposite should remember their position on the Crow when they were so happy to get rid of the Crow because it was going to help farmers. It didn't help farmers. We are speaking out to give farmers a voice on the single best powers of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Highway 15 Bridge Replacement

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, last week the Manitoba Floodway Authority announced that the PTH 15 bridge, or the Dugald bridge, was not going to be replaced even though the bridge is in need of repairs. It is in need of repairs for safety reasons and increased traffic flow.

Will the minister live up to his government's commitment to Springfield and replace PTH 15 with a four-lane crossing of the floodway?

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation): I am pleased certainly to tell Manitobans that currently we have a 1-in-90 flood protection, and we are going to have by this coming summer a 1-in-300 year flood protection for Manitobans. By 2010, we will have a 1-in-700 year flood protection.

Mr. Schuler: In 1997, a new twin bridge over PTH 59 south was built for \$8 million dollars. Now, in 2006, the same PTH 59 south bridge is being replaced again for \$18 million. Thus we have, and it is a good thing you are sitting, Mr. Speaker. This government is replacing a new bridge, yes, with a new bridge. Yet, PTH 15 which is unsafe and out of date, basically, gets a new coat of paint. Where is the logic in this?

Mr. Lemieux: I am pleased to answer the question by responding this way. Just a couple of days ago we announced our new capital budget for 2007. We just announced that the Letellier Bridge, for example, Mr. Speaker; millions and millions and millions of dollars that was necessary, that was left to crumble in the 1990s by members opposite. They wouldn't do a single thing with regard to bridges in this province or highways, and we are doing it with a \$4 billion, 10-year capital program.

Mr. Schuler: Mr. Speaker, taxpayers want a bang for their buck. Instead of having a new bridge replace an unsafe and out-of-date bridge, this NDP government has replaced; yes, a new bridge with a new bridge.

Will this NDP government now do the right thing and replace PTH 15 bridge, as was originally promised, a bridge that is 44 years old and doesn't have the luxury of being replaced by a new bridge like PTH 59 south was? Will they do the right thing, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Lemieux: First of all, the Highway 15 bridge is not unsafe. It is absolutely safe. With regard to the bridge over Highway 59, it is now at a 1-in-700 year flood level, as opposed to before. So, Mr. Speaker, we are very much aware of the different structures in this province, and we are also aware of what our engineers have told us with regard to the studies that they've done and looked at with regard to the hydraulics related to flooding. We are very much aware of all these stats and the information provided to us, and we made decisions based on that.

Members opposite continue to talk about bridges and roads. The reason why we referenced back to the 1990s, they truly let the infrastructure crumble in this province. They raised gasoline taxes by one and a half cents, and then raised gas taxes, again, by a cent, Mr. Speaker, and did nothing with those funds that they raised.

* (14:10)

Physician Shortage Specialist Retention

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, Winnipeg is short approximately 100 medical specialists, and the former Minister of Health has admitted that his government does not do a very good job of retaining specialists. Manitoba is now losing two more expert doctors. Becky Adams and several MS patients have contacted us because they are very upset that they are about to lose Dr.

Maria Melanson, head of the MS Clinic, to the United States.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health: Why was she not able to retain this MS specialist, and where are Dr. Melanson's 1,500 patients supposed to go?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): I am very pleased to address this question raised by the member opposite. First of all, I would like to correct for the record some misinformation, perhaps, that the member opposite put on the record regarding specialists. I think it is really important to know that we have in Manitoba 150 more specialists than back in 1999. I think that's important to know. I think it's important to know that we have 42 orthopedic surgeons, seven more than 1999. We have 104 anesthesiologists, Mr. Speaker, nine more than in 1999; 30 cardiologists, 14 more than in 1999; 24 neurologists, 8 more than 1999. I think it's very important when we talk about commitments to doctors.

Wait Times Sleep Apnea Testing

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, this government is short almost 100 specialists, and to those MS patients that answer was no comfort to them at all.

Mr. Speaker, waits for sleep apnea testing have reached critical levels. In June, over 3,300 patients in Manitoba were waiting for sleep apnea testing, and some of them are forced to wait almost 8 years.

Can the Minister of Health tell us why her government allowed this wait list to grow to such an unacceptable and dangerous level? How is eight years of a waiting list for sleep apnea testing better care, sooner?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Again, Mr. Speaker, to continue on with my answer concerning growing doctors and bringing doctors to Manitoba, this is a priority of our government. Let it be said, of course, that it was, in fact, this government that established the MS Clinic at the Health Sciences Centre in 2001. It was this government that added four drugs to the Pharmacare formulary to ensure that patients with multiple sclerosis were going to get the coverage that they need.

I would support, certainly, what the member opposite is saying about Dr. Melanson's patients and her patients caring for her very deeply. We regret

that Dr. Melanson has made the decision to leave. We can assure those patients, however, that the WRHA has secured a neurologist to take care of her patient load.

Physician Shortage Specialist Retention

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): Mr. Speaker, we wrote to the Minister of Health in August; we sent several letters. We have still not had an answer back on any of those letter regarding Dr. Melanson, who is an expert in her area and is not easily replaced. Now, Dr. Meir Kryger, the medical director of the Sleep Disorders Centre, a world-renowned expert on sleep disorders; Harvard has tried to hire this doctor because of his expertise. Tomorrow he is leaving Winnipeg. He is moving to the United States for a new job. He got tired of fighting this government for the kind of resources that he needs.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health to explain why she was not able to retain this sleep disorder expert. Is she going to lose any sleep over losing this specialist?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): At the risk of making a joke about people that are having illnesses with sleep, I'll tell you something, Mr. Speaker, that does give me sleepless nights. It's the notion of members opposite not making health care a priority, of saying in public that, well, you know, there's a lot of money spent on health care; we give up.

There's a lot of concern that I have about a leader of an opposition who wants to take a calculated risk with Manitobans' future when it comes to health care. What we know is that when members opposite don't make health care a priority, they fire 1,000 nurses; we lose over 200 doctors; we lose seats in our medical school; our medical infrastructure goes to shambles. I certainly lose some sleep over that, and Manitobans do as well.

Hog Barns Moratorium

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, the NDP government's proposed moratorium on hog barns is set to move forward on Friday. Manitobans have heard nothing from this issue from the Minister of Agriculture.

Can the Minister of Ag indicate how long this pause she has mandated is to last?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): Mr. Speaker, it is absolutely crazy that the leaders opposite have abandoned their responsibility when it comes to water as much as what this Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) has done. Water for generations in our province has been—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Struthers: I know they are touchy about this, Mr. Speaker, but they should listen. Water in this province for generations has been absolutely paramount in our ability to move forward. In building communities, in building farms, in building families, it is essential. So to abandon their responsibility in protecting water in our province is absolutely despicable.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, millions of dollars have been invested in hog barns built in this province with environmental protection foremost in the minds of Manitoba producers. To give some sense of certainty, when will the Minister of Agriculture's environmental assessment begin?

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Speaker, since 1999, we have been moving very swiftly, working very hard, to make sure that we put in place regulations and rules that protect Manitoba's water. We are so confident in the work we have done we have asked the Clean Environment Commission to take a good, thorough look at the whole water protection plan that we have put together. We are confident that our plan will pass inspection. We are confident that Manitobans want us to be transparent. We are confident that Manitobans support any government, any MLA, that wishes to protect water in our great province.

Mr. Eichler: We will give the minister another chance. Mr. Speaker, the final decision on the hog moratorium for Manitoba producers is set to take place this Friday. Will the Minister of Agriculture make her position clear to all hog farmers regarding the length of the moratorium? Can the minister indicate what consultation she has had with the hog producers in preparation for this moratorium and the environmental assessment?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Again, Mr. Speaker, I would invite the member opposite to do a little bit better research before he puts his question forward.

Mr. Speaker, there is not a moratorium. There is a pause. I can tell the member that we have been in

discussion with the specific referral to the Clean Environment Commission. I can tell the member opposite that the agriculture industry has been very involved as we develop phosphorus regulations, as we develop water quality management zones, and I can tell him we met with them this morning to talk about all of these issues.

Canadian Wheat Board Plebiscite

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, the future of the Canadian Wheat Board hangs in the balance. The ramifications for Manitoba are huge. I know the Premier has some sort of unseen plan of his own for a plebiscite on wheat, one lacking any real binding standing. Surely the Premier realizes that his vote carries far less weight than a proper federal plebiscite under the Wheat Board Act.

Is the Premier prepared to do more than just hold a provincial plebiscite in defence of the farmers' right to vote? Is the Premier prepared to bring opposition leaders on board for an all-party delegation led by him to Ottawa to demand with one voice that Mr. Harper respect the democratic rights of all wheat farmers to a proper vote on their future?

* (14:20)

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Well, hopefully, Mr. Speaker, we can deal with the resolution that is on this in the Order Paper. Hopefully, we can speak with one voice. Hopefully, we can vote as a Legislature.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Hopefully, there are two major issues here. One is supporting the already elected producers that are pro single desk. The resolution is before the Order Paper here today. Hopefully, we can have a vote and, hopefully, people won't filibuster the resolutions because they do not want to be wedged into making a decision, Lord forbid. I think that would add a lot more strength to our views. If we can get one voice from this Legislature, certainly we believe the federal minister has heard us calling on a federal vote. He has called a vote only for barley, which, of course, two out of three barley producers reside in Alberta. This is why we believe, so far, the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) and the federal Conservative government has an Alberta-centric position rather than a position

that is consistent with the majority of wheat producers in western Canada.

Mr. Gerrard: What is very clear is that the lower level meetings between Ag ministers and a provincial-pseudo plebiscite aren't going to do it. We have a federal government so openly hostile to the Wheat Board that it is prepared to sacrifice the democratic rights of Manitoba farmers to get what it wants.

Mr. Speaker, that kind of co-ordinated attack on Manitoba farmers calls for unity from this Legislature. I am glad the Premier today is prepared to reach out to find a way for Manitobans to speak with one voice in defence of the rights of wheat farmers.

Will the Premier support my call today for an emergency debate this afternoon to hammer out a unified position in defence of Manitoba farmers?

Mr. Doer: Well, Mr. Speaker, I hope the member opposite will support a resolution that is on the Order Paper; properly put on the Order Paper a few days ago to be properly able to be debated as early as today. It requires people to go yea or nay to the single desk. There is a second resolution calling on the national government to have a plebiscite. Certainly, we would like the federal government to have that, but we are not sitting on the picket fence like some members. We have a position.

Multiple Sclerosis Diagnosis and Treatment

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise with my concerns about multiple sclerosis and the situation which I first raised on Friday. What is clear, I wrote to the minister some time ago with concerns about Dr. Melanson and the future of multiple sclerosis. Dr. Melanson has told me and others have told me that she asked repeatedly for support and was not able to get it from this minister.

I ask the Minister of Health: Why did she repeatedly refuse to support to Dr. Melanson's call for better treatment, better facilities and better clinic space for the people who need it for multiple sclerosis diagnosis, prevention and treatment?

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): While the opportunity to once again query the member opposite about his proposed conflict of interest that he raised some days ago, I will let that pass, Mr. Speaker, and certainly speak to the member opposite concerning issues on doctors, issues on multiple

sclerosis and work that the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority has done in assisting Dr. Melanson in endeavouring to stay here.

We certainly do support the work that neurologists in Manitoba are doing with their patients. In fact, we have tangible support in that regard in the establishment of the MS clinic in 2001.

Again, Mr. Speaker, as we work with the doctors in our region to ensure that appropriate diagnosis, treatment, assessment and counselling occurs, we—

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

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Winnipeg Wrestling Club

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to congratulate the three young athletes from the Winnipeg Wrestling Club who competed in the Frank Harchenko Memorial Cup. The competition took place in Bydgoszcz, Poland, and our athletes, Kyle Garner, Elizabeth Sera and Aislynn Torfason, along with Erica Wiebe from Ontario, represented not only Canada but North America.

They left for Poland September 24, 2006, and began the week with a training camp being run by the Gwiazda Wrestling Club. The training camp was punctuated with a dual meet between Canada and Poland, and Canada was victorious four to three.

Kyle was the first to compete on September 30. He placed seventh over all, a great accomplishment at his first international competition. It was also Elizabeth's first international competition, and she placed eighth overall against competitors from Norway, Poland and Russia. Asslin won a silver medal, Canada's first in the competition, and Elizabeth won all her rounds, earning her a gold medal. Together, the girls' combined results earned them fifth place in the team rankings.

Throughout the two days of competition, the hot commodities were the pins and T-shirts the Canadian athletes had taken with them to give out. Mysteriously, the team's water bottles and lanyards also disappeared. Due to the amazing results and the excellent conduct and sportsmanship displayed by the team, the Winnipeg Wrestling Club has not only been invited back to Bydgoszcz but also to two

Russian tournaments and a couple of tournaments in other cities in Poland.

We can be proud to have such excellent athletes representing Winnipeg and Canada internationally. I would like to congratulate Kyle, Elizabeth and Asslin, who is one of my constituents, for their hard work in the competition and for their conduct and sportsmanship. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Words of Appreciation

Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman): I thank you very much Mr. Speaker. I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to you, Sir, and say thank you to an institution that I have come to respect and cherish. I, too, believe in the democratic process, but I cannot condone collusion within the democratic process. I will elaborate on this at a later time.

En tant que député, j'ai réussi à travailler avec tous les partis politiques pour le bien de toutes les communautés que j'avais la responsabilité de servir comme élu, et j'en suis fier.

Translation

As an MLA, I was successful in working with all the political parties for the benefit of all the communities I was elected to serve, and I am proud of that.

English

I especially want to thank the Premier (Mr. Doer) for his kind words about me in the Legislature and also for always providing me with the air time that I needed to discuss all the different issues that arose in the Carman constituency and abroad. To the Leader of the Conservative Party, you, sir, will recall our commitment on both sides pre-your-leadership when we met at the Pancake House, and I have fulfilled my commitments.

To my colleagues on both sides of the Legislature I sincerely want to express the privilege that I have had working with most of you on behalf of all Manitobans.

Et rappelez-vous toujours que si vous avez un rêve, il faut le protéger et ne jamais laisser personne dire que vous ne pourrez pas le réaliser.

Translation

And always remember that if you have a dream, you must protect it and never let anyone say that you cannot achieve it.

English

Finally, to those of you who have sent many words of encouragement, I would like to tell each and every one of you right now that I have not reached any conclusion at this point in time on the future, and many options right now that are being made available to me. I want to thank each and every one of you for those who gave me the time. Thank you.

Polish Gymnastics Association Sokol

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, in September 2006, the Polish Gymnastics Association Sokol celebrated their 100th anniversary in Winnipeg. The word "sokol" is Polish for a falcon which symbolizes strength.

The Sokol organization was originally formed in Poland 130 years ago to train young people to fight oppression and the occupation of their land. Poland has a rich and vital history, and Sokol's 19th century founders recognized the importance of passing on traditional knowledge and customs to younger generations.

* (14:30)

In 1906, a group of Polish immigrants brought Sokol to Winnipeg. It maintained an important connection to Poland, its traditions and its language. It also helped newly-arrived Poles settle into their new country. At its home at the corner of Manitoba and Parr, the association offered a broad range of educational, cultural and sports programs.

On September 15, Sokol presented a gala concert at the Centennial Concert Hall that featured many of the talents developed throughout the organization. This outstanding and professional level of performance—rich, colourful and dazzling—offered a program of challenging and enjoyable pieces that reflected the performers' pride in their Polish culture and heritage.

The Sokol Ensemble, consisting of both choir and dancers, truly shone, as did students and alumni from the School of Dance. Guest artists, SPK Iskry Polish Dance Ensemble and Maria Nnapik, Polish soprano, received well-deserved and enthusiastic response from the capacity audience.

Sokol's centenary celebration continued into the next evening with a banquet at the Sokol Hall. A highlight of the evening was a presentation of a

white-gold falcon pin and Polish medal from the Sokol association in Poland to Mr. Marian Jaworski, president of the Sokol Association in Winnipeg. Mr. Speaker, I ask that all members of this House join me in congratulating Sokol on their 100th anniversary and commending their members and supporters for their efforts. *[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker, do I have leave to finish the last sentence?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member has leave.

Mr. Martindale: Their work in the promotion of the Polish language, culture and history has made a lasting impact on the Polish-Canadian community and an invaluable contribution to Winnipeg and Manitoba.

Marcel Odiel Taillieu

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak of my recently deceased father-in-law, Marcel Odiel Taillieu, who died peacefully on September 30, 2006, at the age of 86. He was a man of great character, of great accomplishments and one who enjoyed life and lived it to the fullest. A farmer, contractor and businessman, work was both his life and his hobby. His motto was, "A man does not cease to work when he gets old; a man gets old when he ceases to work."

Although his school education was minimal, he was an avid reader, a brilliant businessman and a strong political supporter to those he believed in. Although successful in everything he pursued, farming always remained his passion.

Marcel was born and lived on Des Meurons Street in St. Boniface, where he attended Provencher School. Later he and his mother moved to a small farm at Lilyfield in the R.M. of Rosser. He attended Lilyfield school and lived there until his mid-teens.

From there he moved to his present location on Roblin Boulevard in Headingley, where his mother and stepfather, Maurice, started the Assiniboine Jersey Farm on which they raised registered Jersey cattle. In 1943 Marcel married Alida Claeys, and they took over the farm from his parents.

In the late 1940s, when farming became unsustainable, Marcel went land clearing with one small tractor, an International TD9, and then a TD18; that was the beginning of Taillieu Construction Ltd.

His accomplishments over the years were many: founder of Taillieu Construction Ltd. in 1961; councillor and deputy reeve of the R.M. of Charleswood, 1954 to 1964; member of the Greater Winnipeg Town Planning Commission, 1954 to 1964; member of the Manitoba Trucking Association since 1952; member of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association since 1951, and president from 1969 to 1970; member of the Manitoba chapter of the American Public Works Association, and president in 1971; chairman of the Manitoba Development Corporation in 1987 to 1991; chairman of the Manitoba Housing Authority, 1992 to 1995; vice-chairman of the Manitoba Transportation Board, 1996 to 1997.

In 1992, he received the Governor General of Canada, the Commemorative Medal for the 125th Anniversary of the Confederation of Canada in recognition of significant contributions to compatriots, community and to Canada. He was instrumental in the formation of the R.M. of Headingley in 1993, of which he was very proud.

It is a tribute to Marcel and sons Wilf and Roger that, in 2006, Taillieu Construction had 22 employees each with over 25 years of service.

Marcel was proud to call former Premier Duff Roblin, former Premier Sterling Lyon and former Premier Gary Filmon friends. I believe he would also call some of the current government ministers friends as well. He had the ability to make friends wherever he went. His idol was Henry Ford, so he made it a point to go and meet Henry Ford Jr. Because he spent many of his winters in Palm Springs, he decided he should meet some of the locals, and so he counted Bob Hope, Leslie Nielsen and Sonny Bono amongst his friends.

He will be remembered as a man of great generosity to family, friends and community, and for his many accomplishments in business, politics, farming and life. He enjoyed a great many friends. He was large in everything he did. He was a great story teller, a mesmerizing personality, a charmer. He inspired and gave great loyalty, and we shall miss him very much. Thank you.

Denis Rocan

Mr. Tim Sale (Fort Rouge): Monsieur le Président, permettez-moi de dire quelques mots concernant mon grand ami le député de Carman, un homme très courageux, très passionné dans ses croyances concernant cette Assemblée législative.

Translation

Mr. Speaker, allow me to say a few words about my good friend the Member for Carman, a very courageous man, very passionate in his beliefs concerning this Legislative Assembly.

English

Denis, the Member for Carman (Mr. Rocan), has been a passionate worker for his constituents. On many occasions he approached many of us representing concerns. He is one of those people, Mr. Speaker, who believes in this Assembly and the traditions, the values, the history, the precedence in this Assembly.

When he was Speaker, he occupied your position, Mr. Speaker, with tremendous courage and absolute impartial rulings, which some of us might have regretted from time to time, as well as some of the members of the then-government.

He has taken leading positions in supporting the needs of the people of his constituency for economic development. He celebrated their success in gaining the first wind farm in Manitoba, for example, Mr. Speaker, and worked with them to make sure that that dream came true.

He also has defended the French language passionately in this Legislature when he believed people were being inappropriately dealt with or, perhaps, even made fun of because of their inability to speak our beautiful second language appropriately, and I certainly share that problem, Mr. Speaker.

So I want to thank him for his years of service, for his courage and for his passionate belief in this Assembly, its precedents, its traditions, which I think he treasures as much as you do, Sir.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of urgent public importance. I move, seconded by the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that under rule 36(1) the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely the immediate

future of the Canadian Wheat Board as it affects Manitoba and the decision of the federal government to deny Manitoba wheat farmers their right to a fair and transparent vote on the future of their wheat marketing system.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for River Heights and seconded by the honourable Member for Inkster that under rule 36(1) the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely the immediate future of the Canadian Wheat Board as it affects Manitoba and the decision of the federal government to deny Manitoba wheat farmers their right to a fair and transparent vote on the future of their wheat marketing system.

Before I recognize the honourable Member for River Heights, I believe I should remind all members that under rule 36(2) the mover of a motion on a matter of urgent public importance, and one member from the other parties in the House is allowed not more than 10 minutes to explain their urgency of debating the matter immediately.

* (14:40)

As stated in *Beauchesne's* Citation 390, "urgency" in this context means the urgency of immediate debate, not of the subject matter of the motion. In their remarks, members should focus exclusively on whether or not there is urgency of debate and whether or not the ordinary opportunities for debate will enable the House to consider the matter early enough to ensure that the public interests will not suffer.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I rise on this matter of urgent public importance, because I think that it is clear to all members of this House that the future of agriculture and the future of the Canadian Wheat Board is very important. I believe there is also a need for a vote by farmers on the future of wheat marketing by the Canadian Wheat Board, as well as for the barley market.

Let me make the case why this is of urgent public importance. The Canadian Wheat Board has provided major benefits to farmers. Numerous studies have shown that the Canadian Wheat Board has provided increased income for farmers. There are, clearly, major increased benefits to the city of Winnipeg and its ascent as a centre of the grain industry, the people who are employed not only in the Canadian Wheat Board, but in a variety of other industries which are here, in part, because of the

Canadian Wheat Board. Because of the Canadian Wheat Board location in Winnipeg, we have an increase in employment here, in tax revenues, and we have the benefits of the development of new technology in a variety of ways which can be used to monitor grain production around the world, and which can be used to build the grain industry and related industries here in Manitoba. There are clearly also major benefits in terms of the Port of Churchill because the Canadian Wheat Board has been a major marketer through the Port of Churchill and has helped to make sure in recent years that the Port of Churchill is viable.

As Liberals, we certainly believe that the Canadian Wheat Board can be improved, and we believe that farmer-elected directors are proceeding with improvements in a steady fashion, for example, improving the development of processing industries on the Prairies, as well as improving development of the nutraceutical and functional food industries, which were mentioned earlier.

I would correct the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) and tell him that I was, as a person who had been working in both the medical and food industries, talking about nutraceuticals and functional foods long before Harry Enns even knew what the terms meant.

I would also correct the Premier (Mr. Doer). The Premier cannot boast very strongly of his own efforts to help the nutraceutical and functional food industry—

An Honourable Member: What has that got to do with the Wheat Board?

Mr. Gerrard: It has got a lot to do with it when the placement of the OlyWest hog plant in the St. Boniface Industrial Park is creating a major headache for Vita Health, one of the industries which is positioned to grow as a result of the development of nutraceutical and functional food industries here.

Mr. Speaker, it is time to have a debate on the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. It is time to see if there are ways in which we can bring all parties together, and have a group of political leaders from each of the parties search for a common ground and move toward the development and the implementation of an all-party task force to meet with Prime Minister Harper and to convince him that it is time to have a vote on wheat as well as on barley.

Clearly, all of us would recognize that industries, whether it is the farm industry, whether it's the businesses which depend on the Wheat Board, or the many associated grain-related industries need some stability in the vision of what's going to happen in the future. Right now, there's a great deal of instability, depending on the future of the way that the vote goes on barley, and what happens in terms of the marketing of wheat. We need the stability of knowing that the Canadian Wheat Board will continue to market these two grains, or, on the other hand, that the Canadian Wheat Board will no longer have a monopoly market, a single-desk market. There needs to be a clear way ahead so that businesses and farmers can plan. Clearly, for both businesses in Winnipeg and farmers, there needs to be this clear horizon of what's going to happen. We don't want this uncertainty to linger any longer at the moment, and the faster we can resolve this issue, the better we are. Clearly, whether we're dealing with businesses in Winnipeg or the future of the Port of Churchill, we need a decision.

We also need a much better view from the Conservatives, I presume, of what will happen if the Wheat Board no longer had a monopoly. The cooked-up four-week plan that was presented to the federal government clearly didn't give much of a vision of what would happen without a single-desk Canadian Wheat Board, and if the Conservatives are not going to support a single desk, then they should be there with what will happen in Manitoba, how Manitoba should adapt and what will happen to things like the Port of Churchill.

Clearly, this debate is badly needed today. I believe this resolution states it fairly. The federal government has denied a vote on wheat at the same time as barley. That's the essence of one of the components of this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I urge that all parties agree that we have a debate, a full debate on this resolution, and that we can build a consensus of party leaders to be able to go to Ottawa and present a unified position to Prime Minister Harper. Thank you.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): I was trying to defer to my friend, the Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak). I notice he didn't want to get up and speak which is probably the first time I've ever seen him not want to speak on a particular issue. I look forward to his comments as well after.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I find it somewhat passing strange that the independent Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) brings forward this resolution. I'm going to speak specifically to the issue of urgency. When I heard that the matter was coming forward—his colleague from Inkster brought forward a notice on this—I went to my file, and I looked to see other areas that the independent members may have brought forward as matters of public importance.

I wondered, for example, if they'd ever brought forward one on the sponsorship scandal. I know at one time there was a very, very significant—I would say it is still significant here in the province but also throughout Canada, whether or not they'd ever raised that particular issue about going to the federal government, having all three leaders go to Ottawa to try to deal with the sponsorship scandal and get to the bottom of that mess. Yet, Mr. Speaker, I couldn't find one, and I would rely on the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), if, in fact, he did file such a matter of urgent public importance and wants to raise it and correct the record, I'd be happy to be admonished by him and to see that corrected version.

I looked further. I didn't see any sort of a matter of urgent public importance on the issue of the long-gun registry when they were going to farmers, when his colleagues in Ottawa were going to farmers and saying, you need to register all of your hunting weapons that you use as tools on the farm. He was no great defender of farmers at that time because I couldn't find a matter of urgent public importance on the issue of the wasted long-gun registry, Mr. Speaker.

But I thought maybe this was sort of a, I don't want to use the term "converted on the road to Damascus", as used sometimes, but I thought maybe this was a more recent sort of conversion for the member. So I looked to see if there was any sort of matter of urgent public importance on Bill C-9, the issue that today is being discussed in Ottawa where the Liberals there, together with their NDP cohorts, who, I know, are supported by this NDP government, are gutting legislation to make Manitoba safer. Would he raise that issue there? Well, he wouldn't raise that issue there, and I wonder why.

What's the connection, Mr. Speaker? I think it has to do with the fact these are federal issues. I'm not sure. Perhaps in Ottawa today they're adjourning their debate and putting aside their business to discuss Manitoba issues, but I doubt it. I doubt it

because what we have here today from these Liberal members and I suspect coming in the future from the New Democrats in the afternoon, is a diversion, a diversion not to deal with the real issues that Manitobans are being faced with, that Manitobans are being affected with.

* (14:50)

We heard in Question Period, Mr. Speaker, discussions about health care and the loss of specialists. Instead of debating that issue which may, in fact, be a matter of urgent public importance if the member wanted to raise it, instead of debating that issue, instead of the New Democrats, the government, be onside in debating that issue, they want to have this great big diversion, to go down some sort of other trail.

I suspect that the Government House Leader (Mr. Chomiak) will say that this isn't urgent because there is further debate that might be happening this afternoon. It sort of speaks to the fact that even they didn't seem to think this was urgent. This Legislature sat in darkness for almost five months because we couldn't get the Premier (Mr. Doer) to come back and debate issues that are important to Manitobans here in the Legislature.

He was often in California. Instead of dealing with the issues that are in Assiniboia, he wanted to go talk to the people in Anaheim. Instead of dealing with the issues in Lakeside, he was talking to people in Los Angeles. Instead of dealing with people in Sanford, he talked to people in San Francisco, and instead of dealing with people in St. Norbert, he went and talked to people in San Diego. That was the priority of this Premier, and now, today, the Government House Leader, I am sure, will say, we need to deal with this particularly today, when they did nothing before. They haven't done anything for seven years, in fact, Mr. Speaker, seven years of neglect for the farm industry, and now all of a sudden they wake up.

When the Premier was in California, we called and said, let's have the Legislature come back. We could have dealt with issues that Manitobans really could be affected by here, and farmers. We couldn't reach him. Maybe we should have put a message in a bottle and thrown it into the ocean and hope that it washed up on the shores of California to try to reach him, to get him to come back to Manitoba to deal with this issue.

Yet we will see this afternoon this strange sort of machination that is going on now with the NDP, where they want to have a plebiscite but determine the outcome of that plebiscite. Perhaps instead of the New Democratic Party, they should be called the "selective democratic party". They're trying to select where it is that they can have their own way, Mr. Speaker, and I think that that is very, very troubling when we deal with issues here in Manitoba.

What a contradiction to try to say we're going to have a voice for farmers and then try to predetermine the outcome, to try to put words in those farmers' mouths, to try to put a position into those farmers. That's not respectful to democracy, (a), but it certainly isn't respectful to farmers, (b), and I would caution the members opposite on that.

Clearly, Mr. Speaker, we won't support this resolution. If the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) wants to run federally, I know he'll have that opportunity soon, and perhaps the Premier will, as well, at some point, have that opportunity, but this is clearly an issue that is being dealt with on the federal side which doesn't rise to the issue of a matter of urgent public importance.

I would say to the member opposite, the Government House Leader, caution him on the type of a division that he is trying to bring into rural Manitoba with this sort of maneuver, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I don't have to talk at great length with respect to this issue, but I just want to start out by saying how tragic and how mighty and how fallen the old Progressive Conservative Party has become.

Mr. Speaker, there was a time in this Chamber when the old Progressive Conservative Party would stand up for something. They would stand up for rural Manitoba. They would stand up for farmers, but not this bunch, not the new slick right-wing extremist Conservative Party. They only stand up for Bay Street. It's pretty evident from their comments today who they stand for.

The leader of the independent party I think inaccurately, talked about one Harry Enns. Harry Enns, Mr. Speaker, would almost be rolling in his grave, if he was in his grave, if he could hear the comments of the members of the old Progressive Conservative Party who've now become the Conservative right-wing party. It is pretty sad to see

how far that party has fallen—how far that party has fallen.

Mr. Speaker, on the substance of the issue, we have had a resolution on the Order Paper since Thursday. It's now Monday. That's five or six days since a resolution has been on the Order Paper to deal with this substantive and important issue. We admit, we agree with the Liberal Party, this is an important issue.

Mr. Speaker, it's not just, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) tried to indicate, a federal issue. Good heavens, the Leader of the Opposition tried to say that we had no business being in the business or talking to farmers. What would the old Progressive Conservative Party have to say about that? It's hard to believe but this new slick right-wing, we're-going-to-talk-about-wedge-issues, GOP-type party has a whole different kind of approach to the issue. These right-wingers don't care about the issues. They don't care about the farmers; they don't care about the farm; they don't care about the farm gate. All they care about is the market and their friends on Bay Street.

There has been a resolution on the Order Paper since Thursday. We've had opportunity in Throne Speech debate to discuss this issue and, in fact, it was mentioned. We talked about these issues in the budget. The member has an option of agreeing with it, but more important, Mr. Speaker, the advantage of delaying with this in the House, dealing with our resolution, that it will come up next is we can vote on the issue. We can take a position. The Manitoba Legislature can take a position to Ottawa.

We won't have the weasel words. We won't have the wedgie. We won't have the old, oh gee, oh, the Alberta party wants us to do this; Stephen Harper wants us to do this; we can't do anything; we are not going to do anything; we can't do that. We have to vote. That's what this Legislature puts you here for; to vote, to take a stand, to take a position, not to weasel your way out. We have got the chance this afternoon. We have a chance to vote, to make a decision, to support farmers, to support the Wheat Board.

You don't have to do that. You can vote against it but at least you'll take a position. You can't say, oh, Stephen Harper doesn't want us to say anything on this. We can disagree. You can disagree with your federal cousin. You can do it. Don't worry, you can disagree with them. They're not always right. I agree

with some of the things they're doing but I don't agree with all of the things they're doing.

I agree with some of the things but not all the things, and I think what they're doing on the Wheat Board is wrong. We have the chance in the resolution that's coming forward to talk about it. You have a chance in the Throne Speech debate that is going on, you have a chance to vote to make a difference, to make a statement that can go all-party to Ottawa and say this Legislature supports single-desk selling. This Legislature supports the farmers of western Canada having a say in the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. We want a voice, we want a vote and we can vote on that and send that resolution to Ottawa.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I suggest this matter couldn't be more appropriately debated. The next item that comes up after Orders of the Day is two government resolutions on this very point. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I thank the honourable members for their advice to the Chair on whether the motion proposed by the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) should be debated today.

The notice required by rule 36(1) was provided. Under our rules and practices the subject matter requiring urgent consideration must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if the matter is not given immediate attention. There must also be no other reasonable opportunities to raise the matter. I would also note for the House that rule 36(5)(d) also specifies that the motion shall not anticipate a matter that has previously been appointed for consideration by the House or with reference to which a notice of motion has been previously given and not withdrawn.

On today's Order Paper, a government motion is listed that deals with the subject matter of calling on the federal government to hold a fair producer plebiscite on the future of the Canadian Wheat Board's monopoly. Therefore, the matter of urgent public importance filed by the honourable Member for River Heights is in contravention of rule 36(5)(d) and is, accordingly, out of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I am wondering if you were to canvass the House and request for leave for us to go ahead and have the urgency of debate given the fact that there might be the will of the Chamber to do that.

Mr. Speaker: I have already made a ruling and my ruling stands.

* (15:00)

ORDERS OF THE DAY GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, pursuant to rule 45(2), I am interrupting debate on the Throne Speech today to call government business, and that would be the government resolution listed on the Order Paper calling for support of the Canadian Wheat Board single desk.

Mr. Speaker: Under government business, the Government House Leader has requested that debate on the Throne Speech be waived. We will deal with the resolution dealing with CWB single desk.

GOVERNMENT RESOLUTIONS

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers), that

WHEREAS all elected farmer directors from Manitoba on the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) support maintaining the single desk; and

WHEREAS the federal government is calling for a single-commodity plebiscite on barley but not on wheat; and

WHEREAS the voices of wheat producers should be heard on the fate of the single desk; and

WHEREAS the benefits of the single-desk CWB for grain producers are well known; and

WHEREAS the view of the Manitoba Legislature on the single desk of the CWB should be known at this critical juncture.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba make clear its support for the Canadian Wheat Board's single desk.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food, seconded by the honourable Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers), single desk,

WHEREAS all elected farmer directors from Manitoba on the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) support maintaining the single desk; and

WHEREAS the federal government is calling for a single-commodity plebiscite on barley but not on wheat; and

WHEREAS the voices of wheat producers should be heard on the fate—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Ms. Wowchuk: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank my House Leader for putting this forward so that we could, indeed, have this very important debate on the single-desk selling powers of the Canadian Wheat Board for wheat and barley. I hope that we can come to consensus and agreement on how important the single desk is for the producers of this province.

Mr. Speaker, the single desk is very important in the world market for wheat and barley, particularly for wheat. It provides a consistent brand for our wheat, and this brand is recognized around the world for its high quality and for its consistency of supply.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

But, more importantly, people have to recognize that many studies have been done, and studies show us that the Canadian Wheat Board's single desk delivers a premium for our farmers. This premium is estimated to be in the range of \$10 to \$13 per tonne over what farmers could earn in the open market. When you think about the amount of wheat that is grown in this province, in western Canada, that is a significant amount of money. In fact, if you look at it, it does mean millions of dollars for our producers. For Manitoba alone, this is \$36 million in additional income to the farm economy each year. In western Canada, the premiums can exceed over \$300 million every year. I don't know how the members opposite could not recognize this as a significant benefit for our producers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Canadian Wheat Board provides farmers with market power, and that is the one place where farmers have strength. They don't own the grain companies. They don't own the transportation system, but, through the Wheat Board, farmers have the ability to set price. If we move away from the single desk, what farmers become is price takers.

As well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to recognize the elected board of directors where farmers, since they have been elected to that board, have direct control over marketing systems. Again,

this is very important and many changes have been made to the Wheat Board since farmers have been elected to that board for the betterment of business for our producers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Canadian Wheat Board acts as an advocate for our farmers on issues such as transportation, grain handling and international trade. The price pooling which is very important for producers is a very important tool that will be lost, and this is a tool that will help our farmers manage their risk.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, despite what members opposite have said, and what the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) referred to, that this would deter value added, I say to you that the Canadian Wheat Board does not deter value added. In fact, there have been many changes made by the farmer directors to allow further value added. I say to the members opposite, look across the border at South Dakota where they have an open market and look at how much value added they are doing there, and what we're doing in this province. In fact, the amount of value-added processing in western Canada has gone up, while it has gone down or may remain stagnant in the U.S. where there is an open market system.

We all know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the federal government wants to remove the Canadian Wheat Board's single desk claiming that the Canadian Wheat Board will be able to survive without the single desk. This is absolutely false if people try to say that the Wheat Board will survive in an open market. Without the single Wheat Board, the wheat won't be able to compete with the elevator giants that are out there, because they have no assets. They don't have elevators; they don't have port terminals. This is not what farmers are asking for.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you look at what is happening with the grain handling systems, grain companies are joining together to become bigger companies. For example, Agricore United holds about \$1.5 billion in assets, owns about 83 country elevators and over a million tonnes in terminal capacity at Vancouver, Prince Rupert and Thunder Bay, and they are looking at how they can get bigger so that they can have a bigger share of the market. When the Wheat Board hasn't got these kinds of assets, it would be impossible for the Wheat Board to compete, and there would be no reason for the grain companies to sell terminal capacity to CWB in an open-market environment.

I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that even the government's own task force report acknowledges that there is no such thing as a dual market. As such, the Canadian Wheat Board opponents—people like to say that, listen, you can have a dual market. In reality, if the single-desk selling ability of the Wheat Board is lost, there will be only one thing. If the single desk is gone, it will be the open-market system that will be out there. I want to remind the members opposite, they say, yes, the Wheat Board can continue the single desk—[interjection] The loss of the single desk will be a tremendous loss for our producers. They will lose revenue. They will lose their recognition in the world market. In fact, a company like Warburton's, who has contracts under the Wheat Board to buy wheat from farmers, has said that they will look elsewhere. They will look at Australia if the single-desk selling is lost.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we also have to think about what the loss of a single desk will do to the city of Winnipeg; what will it do to the Port of Churchill and, indeed, those will be big losses. We have to think about the Port of Churchill, our one port in this province where hundreds of dollars are saved for producers when they are able to ship through the northern port and, because there are no private companies at the Port of Churchill, it is only the Canadian Wheat Board that sells through this port.

* (15:10)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, farmers in Manitoba have consistently supported the single desk by electing pro-single-desk directors to the board. Our government has made it very clear that we support the Wheat Board here, and I've heard members opposite say they support the Wheat Board. The Wheat Board cannot exist without the single desk.

Members opposite say we are invading into federal territory here, that we shouldn't be touching this issue. Well, I say to you that I will listen to the producers of Manitoba, and I can tell you that the producers of Manitoba represented by KAP, producers from Saskatchewan represented by APAS and NFU, and Wild Rose producers all came together. They said what they wanted was the ability to maintain the single desk. They have said that clearly. Members opposite say we shouldn't be talking about a federal issue. Well, that's very interesting, because if you will recall, BSE is a federally reportable disease; BSE is a federal responsibility. But, when there was an issue with

BSE, members opposite didn't hesitate to call on us to talk to the federal government, and we have done it. We stood beside our producers, we put millions of dollars into the beef industry and we called on the federal government. So I don't apologize one bit for talking about an issue. I will tell the members opposite as well. They say we can't get involved in this. The provincial government has always been involved.

I think if we check the record there has been a united position on the Canadian Wheat Board from all members of this House in previous times. So I would ask the members opposite to look very carefully at what they're saying, and I would say to them in this case think about the value of the single desk. Think about what it does for the producers. Think about the power that it gives producers in the marketplace. Think about what the single desk does to give Canadian wheat recognition around the world. Think about those directors who producers have elected because they support the single desk. I would urge all members in this House to recognize how important the single desk is, and others have said, let's send a united message to the federal government that indeed this is what farmers want. If they're going to hold a vote, let all of the farmers, and let them not get by. They'll say, oh, we're just going to deal with barley now. You know that once you've seen the divide off like this, you're weakening it. We know clearly that the federal government has said that they want to end the single-desk powers of the Canadian Wheat Board. We have to stand up beside our farmers.

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am pleased to rise on what is a very important issue for many, many Manitobans. We know that in the history of our agricultural economy over many decades the Canadian Wheat Board has played an important role in terms of aggregating wheat and other grains and selling it into world markets. We know that over time the Canadian Wheat Board has evolved in that role as an advocate for our grain producers here in Manitoba and elsewhere in western Canada. And over time the board has taken steps which we all acknowledge to bring about additional flexibility and choice for our producers in terms of the way their grains are marketed. We know that that role has been an important one historically, and the minister makes the case today for a continuation of the same role that the Wheat Board has played in the past. But we all know that times change and markets

change, products change, and the way the world economy evolves has gone through significant changes. In the face of those changes a debate has emerged across western Canada and throughout the country as to the ongoing role for the Canadian Wheat Board.

The issue has been taken up at the federal level, and the federal government has put forward a position on the future of the Canadian Wheat Board that is supported by some producers in our country and has raised concerns on the part of other producers. But we know that at the end of the day this is not an issue that should be decided in Ottawa by Ottawa bureaucrats. It's not an issue that should be decided by Winnipeg politicians. It is an issue that should be decided by Manitoba and western Canadian producers.

The problem that we have with the government's position on this issue is that, on the one hand, they say they favour democracy, let the producers decide. On the other hand, they say: But only if they agree with us, only if they decide that they are in favour of a single-desk system for selling wheat. Well, the world is changing, and I know that members opposite cling to old ways of doing things. They have trouble getting their heads around the fact that the world markets are changing and that new opportunities may open up for producers across Manitoba.

If we take a look, as one small example, there's a family well known to the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) who operates in his constituency, the Pizzey family involved in taking flax and processing flax into value-added products that go to products across our continent. They take flax and they make it into health foods. They take flax and they make functional foods. They make pet foods. They employ 52 Manitobans working within their operation within the constituency represented by the honourable Member for Russell. This is a great example of a family that has landed on an idea. They found markets for their products. They find opportunities to buy grains from producers and pay those producers a fair price for those grains, and then turn around and make good products that sell on markets both here in Manitoba and across our country.

This is just one small example of the renaissance that's occurring in rural Manitoba as more and more Manitobans embrace opportunities to develop products, to add value to those products that are grown on our lands and that are raised in our rural

communities to add value, to create jobs, to produce revenues for governments and to generally benefit their communities, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it's happening everywhere.

For that reason, there is new thinking coming into our province around the future of agriculture, and that new thinking is bringing about a changing perspective on the evolving role of the Canadian Wheat Board. What we have today is recognition that the Canadian Wheat Board has played an important role historically in marketing grain on world markets, but also a recognition of the fact that the world is changing, and members opposite seem to be completely oblivious of the changes that are occurring throughout our rural landscape. It's no wonder that Manitobans from across our province, and particularly our rural community, are joining the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba in record numbers, in hundreds and the thousands.

I would provide the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), and any other members of the New Democratic Party who are interested, a ride. We'll offer them a ride to Emerson tomorrow night to witness the hundreds of Manitobans that are going to come out and elect a new Progressive Conservative candidate in the constituency of Emerson. The Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), who has done such an exemplary job of giving voice to our agricultural producers in Manitoba, will be present, and I offer the opportunity to members opposite to leave the Perimeter, to travel to rural Manitoba and listen to those hundreds of Manitobans who are joining our party and who are looking to change, change to the old ways of doing things that are represented by the members opposite who continue to live in the past when it comes to the changes going on in our agricultural economy.

*(15:20)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I invite members opposite to join me as we travel to Ste. Rose on Wednesday night to join those hundreds of Manitobans who have joined the Progressive Conservative Party that will be coming out and gathering together, looking for a change in terms of the government of Manitoba. We'll be joined by the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) who will be there, who has been such an articulate and an eloquent voice for producers in Manitoba. The Member for Ste. Rose, like so many other members of our Progressive Conservative caucus, has kept up with changing times in rural Manitoba, and that is why they don't buy into the old

socialist rhetoric that comes from members opposite when it comes to the marketing and the production of grain in our province. They've kept up with changing times. They want to see young Manitobans have the same kind of opportunities that they had in rural Manitoba: the opportunity to innovate, the opportunity to change with the times, the opportunity to look to the future with strength and optimism. That is why there is such a great debate taking place across our province and through rural Manitoba. That is why they are wrong to be jamming down the throats of rural Manitoba the idea their commitment, their dogged determination to not change with changing times by saying that we should all adopt the position of a single desk for marketing grain in Canada.

I say it's time for a debate to take place, and it is time to do what's right. It's time to allow the producers to have a final say on changes to the Canadian Wheat Board. And so we are the only party in this Legislature that is consistent in terms of our position on this issue. If we look at the history of how this issue has evolved over the past weeks and months, the federal government came forward with a proposal to make changes to the Canadian Wheat Board. In response to those proposals, I wrote to the Prime Minister of the country before the minister came out with her proposal for a provincial plebiscite. I wrote to the Prime Minister of the country and laid out our perspective on the issue of marketing grain, and we said that at the end of the day it should be the producers that decide. In response to that letter, what did the federal government do?

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

They listened, they listened to what we had to say; they listened to the concerns and the opinions and the positions taken by thousands of producers and organizations that represent those positions across the country and they changed their positions. They evolved, and what they said was that we will have a plebiscite on the marketing of barley before we make any changes. We'll table any changes to wheat. We're not going to proceed with any changes to wheat, but we would like to put a vote to producers of barley to give them a voice before we move ahead to make changes to barley. It was the right thing to do, and we thank the federal government for listening to producers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we are in a situation where changes to the way wheat is marketed have been put

off and what we are saying is, what we are saying to the federal government on this important issue is: Have a plebiscite; let the producers decide the direction of reform when it comes to the marketing of wheat in Canada. Those are consistent principled positions. We are not going to play politics with rural producers, and I know that the members opposite want to do everything they can to distract attention away from their neglect and mismanagement of agriculture over the past seven years. They have a newfound passion for agriculture after seven years of bungling their response to the mad cow crisis that almost devastated our beef industry. After sending contradictory messages on the pork industry, after failing to take steps to bring about appropriate changes to federal grain programs, and after dropping the ball on an opportunity for value-added processing in rural Manitoba with a Canola crushing plant that went to Saskatchewan, they are now saying in light of seven years of neglect and failure, we are all of a sudden going to be passionate about an issue that is within federal jurisdiction.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that this is an important issue. We know that provincial members of the Legislature have a responsibility to take a position on these issues. That's why we're taking a position; that's why we're taking the position of, yes to democracy, no to forcing decisions down the throats of producers. Yes to democracy, and that's why we will vote against this. We will vote against this resolution because they can't have it both ways. They are either in favour of democracy, they are in favour of choice, but they're against it. Let us speak with one voice as Manitobans.

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on this motion, and it is possible, you know, to recognize the fact that Manitoba producers have consistently voted for pro-single-desk governors on the board of governors of the Canadian Wheat Board. It is instructive to note that one of the advisors to the member opposite, one Mr. Jim Downey, ran in Wheat Board elections. Got a lot of media attention, got a lot of media attention. I know he didn't win. *[interjection]* How did he do?

An Honourable Member: He didn't win.

Mr. Doer: Oh, he didn't win. Okay. Because I know a farmer from the constituency of the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) did win. He was pro-Canadian Wheat Board and his name was Mr. Nicholson. He won the election against Mr. Downey. We have had

farmers speak over and over and over again pro the single desk.

Mr. Speaker, the member opposite has the opposite view. He says this is inconsistent. Well, his letter to the Prime Minister that he cobbled together after we called the press conference—and he panicked. Like a deer in the headlights, he panicked—*[interjection]* Well, we will wait and see which way the member votes, if he allows his members to vote.

We support the expansion of marketing choice. Now, if you close your eyes, you can hear the Premier of Alberta. If you listen to the words of Ted Morton in Alberta, if you listen to the words of the Alberta position on the Canadian Wheat Board, aided and abetted by a million-dollars worth of public advertising, it is against the single-desk system of the Canadian Wheat Board.

It is possible, you know, to take a position in principle for a concept that has been supported by Manitoba farmers and still call for a vote and be bound by the vote. For example, we will say we support Hydro being owned by the public for the benefit of the public, Mr. Speaker. That is not inconsistent with saying that the law is there to provide a plebiscite.

Now, members opposite will do the opposite. They will say before an election, we support the telephone system being owned by the people of Manitoba, in 1995 when the member opposite was an advisor. Then the day after the election, the Wellington West brokers move in like vultures, led and abetted by members opposite, to sell the telephone system, and did they allow for a referendum? Did this newfound democratic party call for a plebiscite, a referendum? When the AMM organization said, let us have a vote, what did the dictators across the way do? Nothing. They did nothing. *[interjection]* Oh, the member opposite, I am sure they all got bonuses when she was working for Wellington West. They all did very well. They were all buying Jaguars on the backs of the livelihood of rural Manitobans.

So, Mr. Speaker, (a) the member has an inconsistent position with his speech which does not surprise us, does not surprise us; (b) it is possible to take a position in this Legislature on an important institution for farmers consistent with the previous votes of farmers and also call a national vote. It is absolutely essential because, quite frankly, the wheat-producer voters that we would suggest should

be voting are not just in Manitoba; they are not just in Saskatchewan; they are also in Alberta.

So it is important to take a stand and get off the picket fence. The members opposite are not going to do that. They are too cowardly really. They are going to try to find a way—you know, big tough people. They swagger into coffee shops: Oh yeah, we got a position on this issue. I just won't tell you what it is. I am a big tough farmer. I won't tell you what my position is.

You know, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you farmers want to know where people stand and we don't mind telling them. We don't mind telling them. We know where the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) stands. We know where he stands. He has always been against the Wheat Board. He sits at the right hand of the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) who is sitting on the picket fence. I know the Member for Arthur-Virden isn't on the picket fence on this issue. I know he supports the elimination of the single desk. We know that. He has been saying it for years. There is nothing wrong with that. At least he has a position. I don't agree with it, but why don't you let him vote? Why don't you unchain him and let him have a vote, instead of possibly filibustering this resolution today so you don't have to take a stand.

* (15:30)

We support the single desk at the Canadian Wheat Board because farmers in Manitoba support the single desk at the Canadian Wheat Board. We support the single desk at the Canadian Wheat Board because the Wheat Board headquarters is located here and many other jobs in the grain industry are located here because of that. We support the Canadian Wheat Board because it gives more access to proper allocation of transportation policy through the allocation of cars.

We support the Canadian Wheat Board and the single desk of the Canadian Wheat Board because, Mr. Speaker, it is a position that is appropriate for the Port of Churchill. The Port of Churchill got over 300,000 tonnes of grain this year from the Canadian Wheat Board. The private owner of the harbour and the railway wants to keep the Canadian Wheat Board. The workers in Churchill, whether they're Conservative or New Democrat or maybe Liberal, want to have the Canadian Wheat Board. The Port of Churchill, the city of Winnipeg and farmers have voted for the single desk of the Canadian Wheat Board. They don't want the Alberta position. They

don't want the position of the Leader of the Official Opposition and his caucus, that we support the marketing choices, which is the Ted Morton position in Alberta. They don't want that position.

We think this Legislature should speak. We know members opposite will say one thing in election then do something else. They did that with the telephone system. We know they voted against a referendum for the telephone system a number of times, Mr. Speaker. *[interjection]*

Well, the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) has the opportunity. He can be a person who votes for his convictions or he can be a coward. I say we should vote for the single desk. If the members opposite want to be cowards and not vote, let them be cowards. We have the courage of our convictions, and that's why we should vote on this resolution. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): The Premier (Mr. Doer) is definitely off the track here and so is his Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk). The CWB is in the middle of elections, and the board appointments are in the mix as well. We cannot and should not tie the hands of the Canadian Wheat Board as they get ready to take on their new responsibilities under the act. They have to act honestly and in good faith with the best interest of the corporation, Mr. Speaker. When we look at the Wheat Board, they have a huge responsibility when it comes to research and development, new technology. We have to look at the varieties of wheat, barley, which is critically important to the farmers, and new end-uses are discovered.

I know that the previous member from Lakeside brought in the single-desk marketing on hog marketing within the province of Manitoba.

An Honourable Member: How'd it work out?

Mr. Eichler: Well, it worked out well, didn't it? Obviously it did; we have a billion-dollar industry. What this government does is that it puts a moratorium on the hog barns within the province without good consultation, and this is what they are doing with the Canadian Wheat Board, Mr. Speaker. The government went on to impose a cattle levy without consultation. They made it voluntary after we took them to task on it, and the minister and the government have failed to move forward on any new

initiatives with respect to agriculture. It just ties the hands of the producers without any common sense put forward on this issue. Now they are bringing in a single desk without encouraging opportunity for new investment and value added within the province. If we just had the opportunity for marketing choice, we would see the province of Manitoba grow and prosper the way it should, and that is a free enterprise system that we know as of today.

We will leave it at that, because I know there are some other members who want to speak on it, and we'll let it go to a vote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Yes, there are other members who want to speak on it, but we also want to vote on it so I won't take up too much time here. I'm very glad that we're having this debate, Mr. Speaker, today, because it's time for the members of the opposition to put their thoughts on the record and quit sitting on the fence, equivocating on this issue. They say they support the Canadian Wheat Board in principle, and yet, like their masters in Alberta and in Ottawa—no longer the Progressive Conservatives, just the Conservative Party in Ottawa—is basically dedicating their position to them, and that is to kill this institution that is so important to the farmers of Canada and, in particular, the grain producers in Manitoba here.

There's no doubt that the Canadian Wheat Board has played a fundamental role throughout our history. It provides a consistent brand internationally that is recognized around the world as some of the highest-quality product in the world. This results in premiums that are delivered to our farmers. These are premiums that are captured by the producers, Mr. Speaker, not by the multinational, transnational grain corporations, which the big Conservative parties seem to advocate for instead. *[interjection]*

Well, I am being heckled by members opposite already, Mr. Speaker, and I'm not surprised. They want to know how much wheat I sold. Well, I'm not a wheat farmer, sir. I'm in livestock instead. My wife and I just recently purchased some sheep, although I am very happy to see that there is a very active sheep producers' association that speaks for the producers in this province as well. I realize the value of that. I am no expert by any means, and I certainly defer to experts on that front, as I do on the Canadian Wheat Board.

Now I do have to take some exception to some of the comments made by members opposite, particularly the Opposition House Leader, some of

his scurrilous comments about the fact that the government of the day is doing nothing on behalf of the farmers of Manitoba. That's absolutely ridiculous.

There was some mention made of Harry Enns a little earlier on here today, and that gives me a good example of something that this government did. Harry Enns talked a lot about excess moisture insurance. This is something that this government did as soon as they came into office, Mr. Speaker. It was very timely too because, since then, we have experienced some of the wettest years in the history of Manitoba here. I think it was last year there was a record set for the amount of money paid out to the producers, either in the form of crop insurance or excess moisture insurance. So this government has stepped up to the plate in defence of the grain producers in this province.

In terms of the cattle industry, the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) again said, well, they've done absolutely nothing, but I look at a list of programs here. I count no less than 10 different programs flowing close to \$160 million, money that has bridged our ranchers through some very tough times with the BSE crisis, with drought and so forth, Mr. Speaker. So we have certainly paid attention to the interests of our producers, and we have intervened when farmers were in need. There are many ranchers in business today, I would say, thanks to the actions of this government. So, obviously, the Member for Steinbach is a little bit out to lunch in this regard, but that doesn't surprise me.

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) was making all kinds of references to how times are changing; we no longer need the Canadian Wheat Board. I would suggest that times are changing on his side of the House as well. There are a lot of old farmers, good old Progressive Conservatives that are being changed out as the days roll out here. Either they go gracefully like the former critic of Agriculture, the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), or they go kicking and screaming and fighting, and there is probably more to come on that front. So we can see what they think of the old institutions on that side of the House. They're no longer wanted. The Canadian Wheat Board is a case in point, I would say.

* (15:40)

Now I know that trying to establish decent prices for wheat, Mr. Speaker, is not an easy thing. When I was in university, I wrote a paper on the international

wheat agreements, and one of the things that I learned there was that the hardest thing is to set even a minimum price. To get all the countries of the world to agree to minimum prices for wheat is virtually impossible. So, if these people think that individual producers are going to stand a chance against the four largest grain marketers in the world that market over 75 percent of the wheat out there, then they have another thought coming, because these transnational corporations, whether it's the grain companies or the rail companies, have their own interests at heart. They're not out there worrying about the farmers. That's not where their vested interests lie; their vested interests lie in serving the shareholders of their corporations. We see a prime example of that in the rail companies. There used to be a national rail company in this country, no longer.

But I do give the previous Liberal government in Ottawa some credit because at least they were listening to the farmers to some degree. There was a farmer railcar coalition that was lobbying to take over control of a percentage of the railcar fleet in this country. That's one of the first things that the Conservative government, the new Government of Canada, did when they came into power. They gutted the support for that farmer railcar coalition. They have no interest in farmers maintaining control over their own destiny. They are for big business; they are for the big corporations, and that is that.

The railways, were they doing such a good thing for the farmers? Well, I make reference to the maintenance costs that they were inflating and sticking the bill to the farmers. They were saying that they were spending somewhere upwards of \$4,500 per car to maintain these vehicles, where, in reality, I think it was closer to \$1,500. The bottom line was that was \$40-some million that should have gone to the farmers, instead went to the shareholders of these large corporations. So, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, these companies don't serve the needs of the people.

In terms of value added, these guys, one of their big arguments is that the Wheat Board is inhibiting value-added production in this country, but the record speaks otherwise when you look at barley malting, for example, in Canada here. It's up 75 percent in the 1990s, half a million tonnes of product produced. We have doubled our exports and, when you compare that to the situation in the United States, it's about half of that. So, on malting, I don't think the Wheat Board is an impediment. In fact, I think it's a benefit. The same is to be said as far as wheat milling, up 28 percent, two times what it is in

comparable areas in the United States. A third of this is done on the prairies as compared to when you look at the United States. Less than a quarter, about 17 percent, is the number that I have. Milling is done in comparable areas in the U.S. So, frankly, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Wheat Board is doing just fine as far as value added goes in this country, and I think the argument that it's a detriment is a false one.

I know there are many speakers waiting anxiously to speak on this, but I do know that we want to have a vote on this. So I would conclude by saying that a dual market is a farce, Mr. Speaker. You're either going to have a Wheat Board or it's going to be a total free market. The Wheat Board does not have port terminals. They do not own elevators. You look at Agricore United. It has, it says, 83 elevators across the country. So, without capital assets like that, how can a disenfranchised Wheat Board compete in an open marketplace? That will be to the detriment of our grains and oil seeds' producers.

So I thank you for the opportunity to put a few thoughts on the record. I look forward to a vote on this issue because I want it on the record where these guys on the opposition benches stand. Thank you.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to the government's resolution. First of all, I will indicate that we in the Liberal Party will support this resolution. I would say that, and I will give my reasons for saying this in a moment. We feel that the "BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba make clear its support for the CWB's single desk" should have specifically mentioned wheat and barley and made sure that the resolution was very clear. We interpret it particularly to mean support for the single desk for wheat.

We will support this because we see that over the years the Canadian Wheat Board has provided major benefits for farmers and for Manitoba. Those benefits include better prices for wheat than the farmers would have been able to receive otherwise. They include benefits to Winnipeg as a centre of the grain trade, as a centre for the grain industry and for the economy of Winnipeg, for the employment that has resulted, for the taxes and revenue that come into the provincial government as a result, for the new technology that is developed that positions Winnipeg on a continuing basis as a very important player globally in the grain trade.

We see benefits in maintaining the Canadian Wheat Board in terms of the future of the Port of

Churchill. We see that this has been an important port link for Manitoba, that it has significant potential in the future for commodities other than wheat and that in order to develop that long-run potential, that we see at this point that there is not a clear alternative to having the Canadian Wheat Board maintain its single desk for wheat.

We certainly believe that the Canadian Wheat Board can be improved, and I would add here that when I was a member of Parliament in the federal Cabinet, we made changes to the Canadian Wheat Board to allow the election by farmers of the majority of directors. We made sure that it became, as it has become, a farmer board, a Canadian Wheat Board that is directed by farmers for farmers and in the best interests of farmers.

We see that it is quite important to have a very strong voice in the industry for farmers, particularly with what has happened with Manitoba Wheat Pool, the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, with the Alberta Wheat Pool. These used to be farmer co-operatives. They are no longer, and it is very important that the farmers have a commercial organization which works for them, on their behalf, and for the benefit of farmers rather than for the benefit of anybody else.

Improvements in the Canadian Wheat Board can certainly be made and, in fact, are being made by the farmer-elected board of directors. Those improvements, I would suggest, are particularly in the areas of facility, the ability of secondary industries from seed processing to food processing to a whole variety of other areas in rural Manitoba. We certainly want these secondary industries to develop, and these secondary industries would include industries in the area of nutraceuticals and functional foods.

Clearly, if we are going to develop as a province, then we need the development of these secondary industries, and I know that farmer-elected directors like Bill Toews from Kane, Manitoba, working very hard to look at ways that the Canadian Wheat Board can continue to evolve and make changes as a single-desk marketer for wheat and barley in these areas of food processing.

* (15:50)

A major reason why we are going to support the single desk for the Canadian Wheat Board is that the four-week-long study that was mandated by the federal Minister of Agriculture, Chuck Strahl, is short. It is short not only in terms of the amount of writing, but it is short in terms of the vision for just

how the Canadian Wheat Board will survive without a single desk for wheat. I think that it is very important that there be a clear vision for how the Canadian Wheat Board would survive without a single desk for wheat. Farmers that I have talked to, whether they are for a single desk or for dual marketing, would envision, hope to have, even if the single desk is gone, a role, a major role for the Canadian Wheat Board.

The report which was done on very short notice in very short fashion failed to provide a clear vision for how the Canadian Wheat Board would survive if it no longer had the single desk for wheat and barley. Is the vision here for handling facilities, and have the costs and future for the Canadian Wheat Board been looked at carefully enough? The Wheat Board is somewhat different from the hog board, and certainly what is needed here is much greater certainty that if the Canadian Wheat Board lost the single desk it would be able to survive in a dual marketing system. I think it is a very quick and short report that was done and that what is needed is a much better and clearer vision of just what the Canadian Wheat Board is to become if there was not a single desk.

I think that the future of the Canadian Wheat Board is clearly important. The future of the grain industry is clearly important to all of us, and we should have a very clear understanding of what's going to happen and how the Canadian Wheat Board will survive in a dual marketing situation before we move to get rid of the single desk for wheat. One of the points that is clearly important, and that is this, is that regardless of whether the Wheat Board has a single desk or dual marketing, we need for all the players in the industry a clear vision for what the future is going to hold, that people need to be able to plan, they need to be able to see where things are going, and this applies to farmers, this applies to people in the Wheat Board who are now considering whether they should stay there if dual marketing comes in because they're not sure if the Wheat Board has a future, people who are other players in the industry, the Grain Commission, that it is very important that we know what is going to happen.

That is why we would argue that at this juncture there needs to be clearer decisions made, that we don't need horizons which are murky and cloudy, and that is why we believe that there needs to be a vote, and that is one of the reasons why, at this juncture, because there has not been an adequate presentation of what the role of the Canadian Wheat Board would be in a dual marketing, that the single-desk

marketing and the security of the single-desk marketing for wheat seems the better option right now for Manitoba. That's why we would support this resolution.

I would like to add a couple of comments, stories, as it were, which illustrate the role and the importance of the Canadian Wheat Board. The first story is told by a friend of mine. He was visiting, I think it was China and there were—

An Honourable Member: Paul Martin?

Mr. Gerrard: No, it wasn't Paul Martin. He was looking at ships unloading grain, ships unloading grain at a port, I believe it was in China. On one side of the port there was a grain ship unloading, and there was huge, billowing smoke. It was actually chaff from the grain that was being unloaded. Asked where this comes from, and I think it was from the United States. It certainly wasn't Canada. Then on the other side there was another ship unloading wheat without any chaff, and that was the grain that came from Canada. That was a big difference, and that difference was shown in the value of what we as Canadians were able to get for that wheat because it was higher quality. That value was expressed then in the amount of money that the farmers got because the wheat was of higher quality, and because the Canadian Wheat Board was able to market it for a better price than competitors from other countries who didn't have as high quality wheat.

That is one illustration of why the Canadian Wheat Board has done a good job because it is able to market high quality wheat and deliver it, and do a good job of it. *[interjection]* Absolutely, this is what farmers grow and because there is a system here which includes the Canadian Wheat Board, we end up with a better price for farmers and a better situation for farmers here in Manitoba in terms of better prices.

I will give a second story. This story comes from China. *[interjection]* I am just winding up, but let me finish because this is an important subject. Now, this story comes from China, and it is a story about Canadian Wheat Board negotiators sitting across the table from Chinese negotiators. The Canadian Wheat Board came and, clearly, was interested in marketing wheat. The Chinese said: Well, we've got such a good crop this year that we are not really going to have to buy very much in the way of wheat. Obviously, the Chinese were trying to position themselves to get a good price in saying that they did not really need much wheat, but the Canadian Wheat

Board representatives were able to draw up on the expertise in the Canadian Wheat Board, and they presented to the Chinese representatives: Look, here is what our satellite pictures show. There is a major area in China where you have had a drought and your production of grains is really low this year. We know that you are going to need Canadian wheat.

Right away, the Chinese turned around, and they said: We are going to have to start bargaining seriously. We know that you know that we need your wheat, and we had better start bargaining seriously. That is what happened because we had the Canadian Wheat Board with a lot of knowledge representing Canadian farmers and getting a good price for wheat for Canadian farmers.

Let us acknowledge the marvellous work that the Canadian Wheat Board has done over many years. Let us acknowledge the problems that were there when there was not a single-desk Canadian Wheat Board marketer. Let us acknowledge that we need a stable environment for marketing wheat, and that in the absence of compelling evidence there is an alternative will for the Canadian Wheat Board to do a marketing system which is substantial and which can work in the best interest of farmers.

Then, I believe, at this particular time we should be supporting the single desk for the Canadian Wheat Board and that is the way we will be voting on this resolution, Mr. Speaker.

* (16:00)

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the proposed resolution of the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk).

Do members want me to read the resolution?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: WHEREAS all elected farmer directors from Manitoba on the Canadian Wheat Board (CWB) support maintaining the single desk; and

WHEREAS the federal government is calling for a single-commodity plebiscite on barley but not on wheat; and

WHEREAS the voices of wheat producers should be heard on the fate of the single desk; and

WHEREAS the benefits of the single-desk CWB to grain producers are well known; and

WHEREAS the view of the Manitoba Legislature on the single-desk CWB should be known at this critical juncture.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba make clear its support for the CWB's single desk.

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Formal Vote

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

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

Order. The question before the House is the resolution moved by the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk).

* (16:30)

Division

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

Yeas

Aglugub, Allan, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Brick, Caldwell, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Gerrard, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Martindale, McGifford, Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Reid, Rondeau, Sale, Santos, Schellenberg, Selinger, Smith, Struthers, Swan, Wowchuk.

Nays

Cullen, Cummings, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Goertzen, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Penner, Reimer, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 34, Nays 15.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, I would like to indicate that we'd like to continue the discussion in the House of the second resolution.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, we'll proceed with the second resolution in the name of the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers), that

WHEREAS the Canadian Wheat Board is controlled by a democratically elected board of directors; and

WHEREAS economic analysis has found that the Canadian Wheat Board's overall economic impact on Manitoba includes 3,270 total jobs; over 400 downtown Winnipeg head office jobs; \$126 million in wages; and a \$220-million contribution to provincial GDP; and

WHEREAS the potential loss of the Canadian Wheat Board's shipments through the Port of Churchill would have a devastating impact on northern ports and could rob producers of an affordable shipping alternative; and

WHEREAS 8,000 Manitoba producers seed more than 3 million acres of CWB wheat every year and the loss to the Canadian Wheat Board would negatively impact funding for agricultural research; and

WHEREAS, without the Canadian Wheat Board, farmers would lose their most important advocate in matters of transportation, grain handling and international trade;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call on the federal government to hold a fair producer plebiscite on the future of the Canadian Wheat Board monopoly for both wheat and barley.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food, seconded by the honourable Minister of Conservation,

WHEREAS the CWB—

Dispense?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: WHEREAS the CWB is controlled by a democratically elected board of directors; and

WHEREAS economic analysis has found that the CWB's overall economic impact on Manitoba includes 3,270 total jobs; over 400 downtown Winnipeg head office jobs; \$126 million in wages; and a \$220-million contribution to provincial GDP; and

WHEREAS the potential loss of CWB shipments through the Port of Churchill would have a devastating impact on the northern port and could rob producers of an affordable shipping alternative; and

WHEREAS 8,000 Manitoba producers seed more than 3 million acres of CWB grain every year and the loss of the CWB would negatively impact funding for agricultural research; and

WHEREAS, without the CWB, farmers would lose their most important advocate in matters of transportation, grain handling and international trade;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call on the federal government to hold a fair producer plebiscite on the future of the CWB's monopoly for both wheat and barley.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, now that we know where the opposition stands with regard to the single desk and that they do not support maintaining the single desk of the Canadian Wheat Board, it's time for us to have a discussion and hear whether the members opposite have listened at all to what producers are saying.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

But, you know, the members opposite seemed to have again changed their minds. I'd like to read a comment from December 1, 2005, when the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) said: We're on the side of the House definitely supporting the Wheat Board, and we stand behind them. We know that milk producers and turkey producers and egg producers, we stand beside them as well where there is supply and management issues.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that's very interesting that, in December, the member opposite supported the Wheat Board and supported supply management, and now speaks out against maintaining the single desk. The member opposite doesn't seem to realize that, if you have supply management, it's also a form of single desk. I say to the members opposite that, if

you are against the single desk of the Canadian Wheat Board, I wonder where you're going to go next on supply management.

I would ask the members opposite to talk to their federal colleagues whom they're very much in support of right now in dismantling the Wheat Board, Mr. Deputy Speaker, whether or not the next step is to dismantle supply management. I would say to the members opposite that this is a very dangerous time. When the World Trade talks have been falling apart, when we have other countries all attacking our single-desk selling of the Wheat Board, attacking the Wheat Board monopoly and attacking the supply management, I say to you that I wonder where the federal government is going next, and how true they are to their word that they really do support supply management, because this tells me that, if you do not support single-desk selling, you do not support supply management.

I have another quote here from the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen). The Member for Steinbach says: We should be fighting hard to maintain the Wheat Board, and I quote him on saying: I do want to wish the minister well as she goes towards the WTO trade negotiations in Hong Kong. I hope she will fight hard for the Canadian Wheat Board as well. Well, isn't that interesting? I was going to the Hong Kong WTO talks, and members opposite said fight hard for the Canadian Wheat Board. Make sure it's maintained because it's important. Here in this House today, when they have the opportunity to stand up and say that they will support maintaining the single-desk selling of the Canadian Wheat Board because they recognize the value of it, they flip-flop, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I tell you they are sending a terrible message to our producers.

They're sending a terrible message to our supply management industry because you cannot trust them to stand up for our farmers and be sure that the single-desk selling of the Canadian Wheat Board is maintained, or that supply management will be maintained. I can tell the members opposite this is a concern within the supply-manage industry. Supply management industry is wondering where the federal government's next move is on supply management.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

I would ask the members opposite in this House to give some indication on where they are on that issue, or maybe they haven't had a chance to talk that over with Stephen Harper, but they certainly had a

chance to talk over the Wheat Board. The members opposite say that this is just about barley, nothing is happening to wheat. I would encourage them, Mr. Speaker, to read some of the things that Stephen Harper said before he was—

* (16:40)

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for Emerson, on a point of order?

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Yes, Mr. Speaker, I'd just like to know whether what the minister said is correct, whether she correctly put on the record that she believed the Wheat Board is a vehicle of supply management.

Mr. Speaker: Information that's brought before the House, the Speaker takes as factual. So the honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, what I did say, and the member should listen more carefully, I said that the single-desk selling of the Canadian Wheat Board is similar to single-desk selling that we have in supply management, and if you're against the single desk of the Canadian Wheat Board and taking that marketing power away from producers, I believe that you have to look very carefully at what these members are thinking.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just talk about the reason we are calling for this resolution, and that the producers have a fair say on the future of the monopoly of the Canadian Wheat Board on both wheat and barley. I want to commend our Premier (Mr. Doer) and the Saskatchewan Premier, Lorne Calvert, for showing leadership on this issue because it really does affect our Manitoba producers to a very great degree. I want to say to members opposite that producers have spoken very loudly and clearly that what they want is a fair vote on the Wheat Board, and they want it as soon as possible. That's the message that we have taken to the federal government. I took it to the Standing Committee on Agriculture. I took it directly to the federal minister to say to him: Look, we know what your agenda is. You've said you want to dismantle the Wheat Board, but this Wheat Board belongs to the producers.

An Honourable Member: We didn't say that at all.

Ms. Wowchuk: The member opposite says he didn't say that at all. I hope he read the federal platform and

what the federal government talked about in the election.

But the producers, I have to tell you, Mr. Speaker, are very concerned about this issue, and that's why farm organizations got together. We have the Keystone Agricultural Producers, the National Farmers Union, Wild Rose Producers, APAS. All of these producers came together, and what was the end of their result? These producers looked at the value of the Canadian Wheat Board, and they put out a report on what the value of the Wheat Board was. Then they said: If there are going to be changes, we want the producers to make the decision. That's right; they should be making—the federal government should not be segregating out barley, and then saying, we will deal with wheat later.

Mr. Speaker, if there is going to be a dramatic change in the structure of the Canadian Wheat Board, the legislation says the producers should have the say, and that's what farm organizations have said. Farm organizations have said: Give us a vote. If producers vote to move away from the single-desk selling of the Wheat Board, that will be their decision, but they should not be manipulated by the federal government. That's what's happening right now. The federal government has put in place farmers on the board who are anti-single-desk selling. This has not happened before. The government appointees are usually people with expertise in business, not farmers. The farmers are usually elected to the board. Then the next step is the federal Minister of Agriculture put a gag order on the Wheat Board. The federal minister who is responsible for the Wheat Board put a gag order on the Wheat Board saying they could not put any information out.

So, first of all, there are farmers put on there that are slanted towards anti-Wheat Board, Mr. Speaker. The Wheat Board has been gagged. They're not allowed to talk while the federal minister is out there getting his message and his propaganda about the Wheat Board out. Other people aren't allowed to do that. But the most important thing we have here is that it is the producers that are asking for this, and we have said to the federal government: We want you to hold a plebiscite on wheat and barley. A simple question. Hold the plebiscite on wheat and barley. If you will not hold the plebiscite on wheat and barley, then we will hold that vote for our producers because we believe that in some way our producers have to have a voice. But I want to say to you that this resolution calls on the federal

government to hold a producer plebiscite on the Canadian Wheat Board's monopoly on both wheat and barley.

So, Mr. Speaker, all we're asking is that the federal government live up to its legal and moral responsibility to producers, and if the federal government doesn't do that then I guess we have to give the producers a voice. *[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker, I would say to the members opposite who represent many rural communities to listen to what producers are saying, listen to what Inky Mark, the Member for Dauphin, Swan River, Marquette is saying. Inky Mark who is of the same party as you are said, and I heard him on the radio this morning: Two out of three producers in Manitoba want to see the single desk maintained, and I will take that voice to Ottawa. He is not afraid to stand up for the people of rural Manitoba. I say to the members opposite: What are you afraid of? Why are you afraid to give the producers a vote? *[interjection]*

Well, if the members opposite will support this resolution calling for both a wheat and barley vote, then I would be very pleased to stand beside them to ensure that our producers get that vote. I hope the members opposite will continue in that vein to try to get that vote, Mr. Speaker.

But why? Others will say that we are just trying to play politics here. Indeed, it is nothing about playing politics, Mr. Speaker. We want a plebiscite so that farmers can have a say. Let the farmers decide. How did the Wheat Board get started? The Wheat Board got started because farmers were desperate, because they were being short-changed. It is very interesting. I got a package sent to me today with some of the meetings and some of the votes and petitions that producers had signed at the turn of the century when they were recognizing that they were at the mercy of the grain companies.

I remember stories that my grandfather told about how the small farmers, who didn't have very much grain but had lots of bills, had to sell their grain in the fall, early in the fall, so that they could pay their bills. By coincidence at that time of the year, the price of grain was very, very low, so the poor farmers had to take what they could get because they had bills to pay. Those farmers who were more established and could afford to carry on would wait until the new year, and, by miracle, at that time of the year, the prices were a little better when most people had already sold their wheat.

That is why farmers organized. That is why farmers asked the federal government to put in place the Wheat Board. That is why farmers asked for pooling to be put in place, so they would not have to worry about at which time of the year they sold their grain, they would be treated fairly. That's what this is about. In a time when there are grain companies that are becoming larger and larger and less options for producers out there, members opposite should be thinking about producers who, again, will have one less option.

But, Mr. Speaker, members opposite should be also listening to farm organizations, and what have farm organizations said? Well, Keystone Agriculture Producers today supported Premier Gary Doer and Premier Klein for calling on the federal government to hold a plebiscite.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order.

When addressing other members in the House, ministers by their portfolios and other members by their constituency.

Ms. Wowchuk: I withdraw that comment, and I will go again.

Today's commitment by the Premier of Manitoba and the Premier of Saskatchewan to call for a federal government to hold a plebiscite on the future of the Canadian Wheat Board was applauded by Keystone Agriculture Producers. KAP believed that a plebiscite is morally and legally required before changing the basic structure of the mandate of the Canadian Wheat Board, and that a vote should be held across western Canada on wheat and barley at the same time to resolve the current uncertainty about the Wheat Board's future.

Farmers must have a voice on this important issue. The federal government must call for a plebiscite, and, in the event that the federal government of Canada fails to hold a plebiscite on wheat and barley, it is encouraging to know that the governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan will support the democratic rights of farmers. KAP encourages both provincial leaders to continue their efforts to ensure the future of the Canadian Wheat Board is decided by farmers.

* (16:50)

Mr. Speaker, I will go on one more line. KAP also calls on the federal government to put forward a plebiscite that asks producers to select between

realistic choices. Members opposite, who were part of the organization of KAP, have sat on their boards, should be listening to these people. As I say, it is not just KAP, it is producers across the country who are saying let's have a vote. You could ask two questions: Do you support the ability to market all wheat or do you wish to remove it? Give the producers the same. I just do not understand why members opposite, first of all, would vote against single-desk selling and why they would now hesitate to give producers a say.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to say as well that members opposite have to recognize how important this whole issue is to Manitoba. It is this issue that will shape many things in Manitoba. What will happen to the Port of Churchill, a port that gives cheaper transportation costs to our producers. What will happen to the other institutes tied to the Wheat Board that are located here in Winnipeg?

Mr. Speaker, we don't want the Canadian Wheat Board to be torn apart. The Canadian Wheat Board has served our producers well. We must be sure that the—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

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

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): I apologize for interrupting the member, but I wonder if you could see as we get nearer the hour of five o'clock, if we could seek leave of the House to not see the clock until this motion is dispensed of.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House for the Speaker not to see the clock until this is dispensed with? *[Agreed]*

Ms. Wowchuk: Well, Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased that members opposite want to continue on this important debate because it is an important debate. It is a debate about whether the producers will have the right to make the decision on their institute.

Because what is the Wheat Board? The Wheat Board is our producers. It is their position, their ability to have power in the marketplace. It is their ability through the Wheat Board to get those sales and to have that credibility of a high and consistent

quality. It is through the Wheat Board and the work that they have done that there are special contracts, such as the Warburton contract, that get a prime product.

Now, members opposite will talk about the Wheat Board taking the ability away from value-adding. I would ask them again to do their research on that because that is not true. The new board has made many changes on delivery of contracts and the ability to deliver grain for value added. Many of those things have been done, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you the members should recognize what they said on December 1. On December 1 they said they were definitely in support of the Wheat Board. I say to the members today you should be on the side of farmers. The farmers have asked for a plebiscite. The farmers have asked for a plebiscite on wheat and barley. The members opposite should not support the federal government's little games of sectioning off one part of the Wheat Board without having the debate on the future of the total Wheat Board. So I say to the members opposite: Stand true to your word. If you believe in farmers having a say, then let the farmers have the say. Support this resolution. Call your friends in Ottawa and say: Having a vote on barley is not adequate. We must have a vote on wheat and barley and give the producers a say.

I say to the members opposite as well, Mr. Speaker, they have to think about what it means to eliminate the single-desk selling of the Wheat Board and what this also means in the future for other supply management. Those are very, very serious issues. I say to you farmers considered very seriously what they were doing when the Wheat Board was started. They lobbied. They got the government to listen to them. They put in place legislation that allowed the Wheat Board to come into existence. If there is going to be a change, Mr. Speaker, then we must have the producers make the decision on wheat and barley and make that decision at the same time rather than segregating it off. Thank you very much.

Mr. Eichler: I want to correct the minister when she said that I went on the record as of the first of December supporting the Canadian Wheat Board. We do support a strong and vibrant Canadian Wheat Board. We stand behind that.

The government of Manitoba has continued to threaten to hold its own plebiscite on the future of the Canadian Wheat Board despite recent

announcements by the federal government that a plebiscite will be held on barley in February of 2007.

The NDP's plebiscite will ultimately be an irrelevant issue as it is on wheat, which the federal government has clearly indicated is not up for discussion. In fact, the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) informed producers that those growing wheat next year should plan to market it through the Wheat Board. Why is the NDP government looking to interfere with the farmers' marketing choice?

The provincial plebiscite will have no legal binding with respect to standing and has absolutely nothing to do with the decision-making process by the federal government. It will be nothing more than an expensive taxpayer-funded opinion poll. In all, it is a poorly organized threat. This NDP government has presented no plan for conducting their poll and what their question will be and how to assemble a list of participants.

The Minister of Agriculture went to the committee hearing about three weeks ago, and she appeared before that committee and said that it would cost \$2 per producer. That was 8,000 producers so she said a cost of \$16,000. The following week, during the breakfast with the Premier (Mr. Doer), he went on record as saying it was going to cost tens of thousands of dollars. Who is really telling the real story, Mr. Speaker? It would be nothing but a waste of time and we have to make very sure the question is clear. Obviously, this minister and this government do not understand where they're going with this resolution.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to present the following resolution: I move, seconded by the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen),

THAT the resolution be amended by deleting all the words after the first word "WHEREAS" and replacing them with the following:

the Canadian Wheat Board has been the sole marketer of barley and wheat for western Canadian farmers; and

WHEREAS a strong Canadian Wheat Board should continue to play a role in marketing western Canadian grains; and

WHEREAS in light of changing markets, products, and economic conditions, many western Canadian farmers believe that more marketing flexibility would improve opportunities for

marketing grain and create opportunity for value-added business; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Wheat Board has already taken positive steps to increase the marketing flexibility in response to requests from western Canadian grain producers; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Wheat Board is governed by federal legislation; and

WHEREAS in exercising its jurisdiction, the federal government has decided to hold a plebiscite of western farmers on the marketing of barley; and

WHEREAS the federal government has stated that no changes are currently being proposed for the marketing of wheat.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba make clear its understanding that the federal government has sole authority for changes to the Canadian Wheat Board Act. In recognition of federal authority in this area, we indicate our support for the federal government's decision to hold a plebiscite for the marketing of barley and call on them to hold a plebiscite in advance of any changes to the marketing of western Canadian grain, including wheat.

Mr. Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), seconded by the honourable Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen),

THAT the resolution be amended by deleting all of the words after the first word "WHEREAS" and replacing them with the following:

the Canadian Wheat Board has been the sole marketer for barley and wheat for western Canadian farmers; and

WHEREAS a strong Canadian Wheat Board should continue to play a role in marketing western Canadian grains; and

WHEREAS in light of changing markets, products and economic conditions, many western Canadian farmers believe that more marketing flexibility would improve opportunities for marketing grain and create the opportunity for value-added businesses; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Wheat Board has already taken positive steps to increase some marketing flexibility in response to requests from western Canadian grain producers; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Wheat Board is governed by federal legislation; and

WHEREAS in exercising its jurisdiction, the federal government has decided to hold a plebiscite of western farmers on the marketing of barley; and

WHEREAS the federal government has stated that no changes are currently being proposed for the marketing of wheat.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba make clear its understanding that the federal government has sole authority for changes to the Canadian Wheat Board Act. In recognition of federal authority in this area, we indicate our support for the federal government's decision to hold a plebiscite for the marketing of barley and call on it to hold a plebiscite in advance of any changes to the marketing of western Canadian grain, including wheat.

The amendment is in order.

* (17:00)

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, as I read this amendment, I see that the members opposite are prepared to go with the federal government and ignore the producers of Manitoba.

The members opposite say, In recognition of federal government's authority in this area, we indicate support for the federal government's decision to hold a plebiscite on marketing barley, and call to hold a plebiscite in advance of any changes to marketing of wheat. Well, Mr. Speaker, I tell the members opposite what the producers of Manitoba are saying. The producers of Manitoba are saying that what there has to be is clear direction from the federal government and that they want clear questions developed on wheat and barley marketing.

The farm organization of Manitoba, Keystone Agricultural Producers, has stated very clearly that they support a plebiscite both on wheat and barley at the same time. The members opposite are playing into the federal government's hands here, Mr. Speaker. The federal government, we know what Stephen Harper's agenda is. Stephen Harper has said many times that they want a free market system. Well, by dividing things off and having a separate plebiscite on barley, and then having someday, in the future, another vote on wheat, is not acceptable. Producers have said they want both issues addressed at the same time. I don't know why the members opposite are in such a hurry to support the federal

government's position and not listen to the producers of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, if the members opposite read the resolution that we put forward, it very clearly states that we want a plebiscite based on what the producers have said, and that is to have a resolution on both wheat and barley at the same time. The members opposite want to split hairs. They want to try to find a way to get what Stephen Harper wants. In light of changing markets, products and economic conditions, many western farmers believe that more flexibility would improve opportunities for marketing grain and create new opportunities. Well, yes, if producers feel that way, then give them a vote. But give them a vote on both issues at the same time. Members opposite are not loyal to the farmer; they are not listening to what farmers of Manitoba are saying. They are not listening to what farmers of western Canada are saying.

The members opposite are beholden to their federal leader who wants to destroy the Wheat Board. Read some of the things that he has said prior to being Prime Minister. Read what he has said and what he did. What did the federal minister do and what did Chuck Strahl do, the Minister of Agriculture? This summer he called a meeting in Saskatoon. He called a meeting in Saskatoon and only invited those people who were anti-Wheat Board, the ones who wanted to move to an open market. Then he puts a task force in place, and who does he put in the task force? He doesn't put anybody on the task force who supports the single-desk selling being maintained.

Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister of agriculture to come to Winnipeg and look at the Wheat Board books. He is the minister responsible, meet with the board, look at the numbers and see what the report really does for producers.

An Honourable Member: You don't think he was there?

Ms. Wowchuk: The member opposite says, don't think they were there. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, I talked to the federal minister, and he did not bother looking at the books because he has been given a directive. I can tell you what the directive is that Minister Strahl has been given by the Prime Minister: Get rid of the single-desk selling of the Canadian Wheat Board. That's the direction he has been given, and it doesn't matter what advantages there are for farmers. I asked the federal minister to also look at what other people who were anti-Wheat

Board, anti single-desk selling did when they came on board.

I look at the present chair; when Mr. Ritter came to the board, he said that he thought the single desk should be dismantled. When he had a chance to look at the books he recognized the true value of the Wheat Board in the international market for the Canadian producer, and he has since then changed his mind and has been working to support the single desk.

But at the same time that producer-elected board has been making many changes. You know, it's too bad there's been a gag order put on the producer board and the Wheat Board, because they cannot talk about the true benefits of the Wheat Board because the federal minister has put a gag order on them and said they can't discuss anything about the Wheat Board. At the same time the federal minister hasn't put a gag order on some of the other people who are encouraging the dismantling of the single-desk selling.

So, Mr. Speaker, I look at this and I am quite disappointed that the member opposite would bring forward a resolution that would call for a plebiscite that is in complete contradiction of what Manitoba producers are asking for. Manitoba producers have asked for a joint vote. *[interjection]* The Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) asks how I know, because I am reading from a press release from Manitoba producers, a press release put out by Keystone Agricultural Producers, a press release put out by farmer leaders requesting the government to hold a Canadian Wheat Board plebiscite.

But the members opposite want to play games. They want to be sure that Stephen Harper gets what he wants, and they want to take power away from farmers, the one institute that gives farmers more power in the marketplace; the one institute that gives farmers the ability to set price rather than to be price takers, they want to take away, Mr. Speaker.

A member opposite says, farmers want choice. Well, I ask him what the heck was he talking about when he said this side of the House definitely supports the Wheat Board? Definitely supports the Wheat Board when it suits him. But on the other hand, these members opposite want to see part of the Wheat Board split away because they know that the Alberta producers want barley taken off, and they, rather than thinking about what's good for Manitoba farmers, are prepared to support the Alberta position. The Alberta government that spent over a million

dollars trying to get studies, and even when they got those studies they did not get the full commitment that it was better to have the Wheat Board maintained rather than moving away from single-desk selling.

The members opposite are falling into that trap because they want to support the federal government, not support producers, not to support what Keystone Agricultural Producers have said, when they said the Premier of Manitoba and the Premier of Saskatchewan did the right thing by standing up and saying that they will hold the vote if the federal government won't. We want the federal government to hold a vote. We want the federal government to hold a joint vote, not to play games. The Conservatives, Mr. Speaker, have put forward a resolution here that says that they want a split vote. That is not what our producers—

An Honourable Member: Maybe a split vote.

*(17:10)

Ms. Wowchuk: Maybe a split vote. But they will not stand up and say they support the position of Manitoba farmers, Mr. Speaker, and I say to you that this is not an amendment that I would be interested in.

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. McFadyen: I am pleased to rise and speak in favour of the amendment that's been proposed and introduced by the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), and seconded by the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

Mr. Speaker, the fundamental issue that we have is that we have an incredibly important issue before the Government of Canada today with respect to the future of the Canadian Wheat Board. In determining its position on this issue, we know that there are farmers in our country, as, indeed, there are producers in our province who have a divergence of opinion on this issue. So the question is: What is a fair process for arriving at and resolving those differences of opinion? I would suggest today that the Member for Lakeside has found the right balance and taken a common-sense approach to dealing with the issue of moving forward with the Canadian Wheat Board. It's a common-sense approach that says that if you want to make changes to the way that barley is marketed, have a plebiscite, which is exactly what the federal government is doing. If you are going to move forward with changes to wheat, have a plebiscite to make sure farmers have a voice

before any changes are made to the way that wheat is marketed. But, if you plan no changes with respect to wheat, what is the point of proceeding with an expensive, divisive, politically motivated, cynical plebiscite on the marketing of wheat when there's not even a proposed change to the way wheat is marketed under the Canadian Wheat Board by the current federal government?

So, Mr. Speaker, the amendment today is designed to put forward very clearly the position of the members of this Legislature that we believe in democracy when it comes to changes to the Canadian Wheat Board. We're not going to say, on the one hand, we believe that there should be a single desk, and we're just going to move ahead regardless of your perspective, and we believe in democracy speaking out of the other side of our mouth. We believe to be consistent. We should be consistent in saying that we recognize that there's a diversity of opinion on this issue in rural Manitoba. Let's put in place a fair process for resolving those differences. Let's have a plebiscite where changes are proposed, but let's not run ahead and divide rural Manitoba communities where there's no proposed change to the Canadian Wheat Board.

We know from history, Mr. Speaker, that this issue of the Canadian Wheat Board and matters like it give rise to great emotions within rural communities. But different people have different perspectives on the issue. I know members opposite aren't very well represented in rural Manitoba, so they may not hear very often from constituents who have concerns about unnecessary plebiscites designed to divide communities, and designed to provide a wedge issue to a cynical political party.

So what we're proposing instead is, let's step back, let's deal with the facts as they exist today; let's look at what the federal government is proposing, and let's support them when they say, let's have a plebiscite on barley. Let's say that if we're not making changes to wheat, why would we have an unnecessary plebiscite that divides Manitobans, that costs taxpayer dollars, that does nothing more than allow a government that has a record of seven years of neglect in agriculture to give them a diversionary tactic—they think Manitobans will take their eye off the ball and they'll ignore seven years of neglect, Mr. Speaker. Well, let's give Manitobans credit. Let's give our producers credit for being intelligent people who know a political ploy when they see one. I can tell you that, in spending time in Souris just this past weekend, and in communities like Dauphin, Swan

River and other communities around our province, the Interlake, over 500 Progressive Conservatives gathering in a hall in Arborg who want change in the Interlake, let's listen to what those people are saying. The motion and the desire on the part of producers is to look at agricultural policy in an all-encompassing way.

Let's look at what the government is doing, has done, to our hog industry. Let's look at what the government is doing to our beef industry, attempting to bring in unilaterally a head tax without consultation and without a plebiscite of producers. Let's not lose sight of the fact that there's more to the issue of our agricultural economy than the Wheat Board.

But, as we look at the question of the Wheat Board, let's proceed in a way that is measured, responsible, that takes into account the views of producers, that recognizes that there are differences of opinion on this important issue. Let's also recognize the fact that we're not in the 1930s anymore, as much as members opposite may wish and may think that we make Wheat Board policy on the basis of 1930s conditions. The world has changed since then. The Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) goes on at some length about the circumstances in the 1930s that led to the creation of the Canadian Wheat Board, and we all know what that history is. We also know, Mr. Speaker, that in the intervening 86 years, in the intervening 80-some-odd years since the Wheat Board was established, times have changed, that new products exist. There are new opportunities and new markets for Canadian produce, and there are new opportunities to create jobs just like those jobs created in the constituency of Russell, where people are using good ideas, applying ingenuity and looking for opportunities to create jobs, wealth and opportunities for Manitobans.

Let's recognize all of those things, Mr. Speaker. Let's have a debate about the future of the Wheat Board. Let's let farmers decide before changes are made. That's the intent of this resolution. That's where our party stands, and that's why I'm pleased to offer my support for what is a common-sense, non-divisive resolution brought forward by the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler). Thank you.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, this is a very simple amendment because the position of the provincial government, and the resolutions before this House, is to have one vote on the future of the Wheat Board with barley and wheat. The Tory government in

Ottawa, who has made its position very clear, I would point out to the naivety of members opposite, they have campaigned in the last election on the destruction of the single-desk system for wheat. They commissioned a committee that was quite biased in the opinion of most farm groups, intended to have the elimination of the single-desk system, and they now have structured a vote. They have structured a vote for only the barley producers on the future of barley on the Wheat Board as opposed to the Wheat Board.

Now, anybody in this House that doesn't believe the present Prime Minister is not intent on changing the Canadian Wheat Board for wheat producers is not living in the real world. To act like it's love, trust and pixie dust in terms of democracy when you've got a stated position from the present Prime Minister, you have a stated position from the Minister of Agriculture, you have a stated position from the hand-picked members of the Minister of Agriculture in Ottawa, you have an absolute disdain for debate and muzzling of members in the Canadian Wheat Board located in Manitoba, I mean, what kind of naivety is across the way, or is it just complete surrogate status to the federal caucus? Now, from time to time, all of us should unite with Ottawa, and we have issues of unity with Ottawa, and, Mr. Speaker, from time to time you've got to stand up for the Manitoba interest.

There is a difference between the opinion of farmers in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and those of Alberta. And members opposite are taking the Alberta position right down the line, and they're going to try to fool the media. They're going to try to fool the media and the public, but the bottom line is, you are taking an Alberta-centric position, you are an MLA from Lakeside and you are a surrogate for the Alberta government. I would point out that the Alberta government has spent one million dollars, one million dollars in promoting campaigns against the single-desk concept of the Canadian Wheat Board. And you people don't even want to spend two dollars a vote for wheat producers to have the same vote as barley producers. You don't want the wheat producers to have a vote. The difference between our motion and your motion is you want a barley producer to get an early vote, most of whom live and farm in Alberta, and the people that are wheat producers in Manitoba, you don't want them to have a vote right now. You don't want them to have a vote right now.

* (17:20)

Now we do not want to listen to the Conservatives when it comes to democracy. You know, people do change their minds. There has been a recent big flip-flop on a major financial issue, affecting all kinds of people. People in governments change their mind. People change their mind. Members opposite, many of them campaigned on maintaining the telephone system in '95, and then they changed their mind after that.

An Honourable Member: Buy it back.

Mr. Doer: And then they, Mr. Speaker, sell it for \$13 a share. You stole the damn phone system, that is what you did, and you were part of it. You were in the back rooms. You helped sell the shares, some of which were sold illegally by your brokerage friends.

So you know what, why should a wheat producer living down the road in the Interlake not get a vote in January or February, and the barley producer will get a vote? Why would you want to do that? Well, maybe that is the position of the government of Alberta and the caucus from Alberta.

I could tell you, Mr. Speaker, this is a very simple issue. Either this Legislature can call on farmers to have one vote, the wheat producer and the barley producer together, and we will. We will abide by that vote. But members opposite are trying to cherry-pick the vote. They are trying to create an impression that the Alberta view with barley producers, two-to-one barley producers in Alberta, is the predominant feeling of western Canada.

This is only an issue of undemocratic momentum. That is what it is. It is phoney. It is dishonest and everybody in this House should have the courage to say: Why don't we join and have one vote? Why don't we have barley producers and wheat producers have one vote? That is a simple question. So you want to join the momentum. *[interjection]* The member opposite was part of a government that sold shares and denied a referendum four times. He put it on his Web site. He has taken it off his Web site. I would be ashamed of it, too.

Mr. Speaker, the bottom line is that this is the creative resolution. It is a phoney momentum move, aiding and abetting the government of Alberta. Why are you afraid to have one vote together? What are you afraid of? What are you afraid of Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler)? I want to have a vote. You don't want them to have a vote. You do not want them to have a vote. You have no courage. You have no courage of the farmers in your area. You are

absolutely gutless, and let's have one vote. Thank you.

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): Mr. Speaker, I have just listened to the Premier of this province utter the most foolish rhetoric and uneducated rhetoric that one could ever hear in this Legislature regarding the Wheat Board issue. He is not a farmer, so I can understand that in Concordia and perhaps where he lives in River East, the Wheat Board doesn't matter because he doesn't have to feed his family on what he earns off the land. So that is why he doesn't care. He doesn't care. He is with KAP when it suits him to be with KAP, but where was he when the livestock producers came here? The cattle producers came here and said: Hold a referendum. Where was he? Where was he? He refused.

Mr. Speaker, he is desperate. The Premier of this province is right now politically desperate, so he creates a diversion of the Wheat Board vote so that he doesn't have to face the issues that Manitobans want him to face. Why doesn't he hold the public inquiry on the Crocus scandal? Why doesn't he hold the vote on the cattle issue? Because those are provincial issues, and you need to create a diversion because politically he is running scared. That is the issue.

The amendment to this motion, Mr. Speaker, is very clear. The amendment says that producers should have a vote on barley, and they should have a vote on wheat when the wheat question comes up. At the present time, the only question we have before us is the issue of barley. The federal minister has said there will be a vote on barley.

Now, the Premier, again, uneducated in the grain industry as he is, talks about the barley producers will have the vote, but the wheat producers won't. Well, I want to tell this Premier that the wheat producer and the barley producer are one and the same. My colleague, the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), produces wheat and he also produces barley. He will get the vote. Mr. Speaker, I produce barley. I produce wheat. I will get the vote. So I suggest that the Premier perhaps get himself a little bit more up to speed about what the issues with regard to the Wheat Board are.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this afternoon we saw a resolution come forward regarding a single desk. Why doesn't the Premier (Mr. Doer) take a look at the task force report and what it says, because the task force report talks about a wheat board? It talks about a wheat board existing, but it also talks about

opportunities in our province. I want to talk about opportunities in our province because this Premier, again in desperation, seeing young people leave the province, has now decided that he is going to do what we promised in '99 and in 2003, and that is give a rebate to students who stay in the province. But what are they going to stay for if there are no jobs? The question is the high taxes in our province and the fact that there are no jobs for young people.

Well, Mr. Speaker, if we want to create jobs in rural Manitoba, let's start some value-added processing. Let's start making use of the products that we produce here by adding value to them. But the Premier doesn't understand that. I invite him to come and tour, whether it's Sunridge Forage, whether it's Pizzey's Milling, where people have decided to do something with the products they've produced because those products that they're adding value to are not under the Wheat Board.

Now, I could tell the Premier a story about Glen Pizzey from Angusville who wanted to mill his own wheat. He was forced to take it to the elevator and then take it home again where he could mill it, but he didn't have enough quota and therefore he couldn't mill all his wheat. He had to go and buy the wheat from the Wheat Board then to mill it. He could not mill his own wheat.

Mr. Speaker, there are examples upon examples of this kind. What we have to understand is the world is moving ahead. Why did Ontario do what it did with regard to its wheat board? The wheat board was still in existence in Ontario. Could the Ontario farmers sell directly to the cookie mills, the flour mills, to the markets in the United States and in Québec? No. They would be constrained just like the farmers are in the Prairies.

Now, should there be a wheat board? Yes. I sell my grain to the Wheat Board. I have to today, but I should be able to choose. It's a grain that I produce and the revenues from that go to feed my family. I have young sons who would like to farm, but under the present system the future is very bleak. If these young people were able to sell their product to either the Wheat Board if that's advantageous or to a mill if that's advantageous, then they could extract the most from the marketplace. As it exists today, that can't happen.

So what's wrong with allowing the Wheat Board to operate in an open fashion under an open system where the people who produce the product have the choice. It's not for us to decide in this Legislature

that there should be a single desk or that there should be an open system. That question should be left to the people whom it affects most, and those are the producers in our province and in our country.

Mr. Speaker, the federal minister had said we're going to allow the producers to vote on barley first. Now, right now if you took a poll in Manitoba, I don't know what it would say, but I know that there are barley producers in Manitoba who would like to retain the Wheat Board and there are those who would like to open it up so that they can extract as much money as possible from the marketplace. In my corner of the world barley is a pretty important crop. As a matter of fact, we are known as the beef and barley county of the province because of the quality of barley and the quantity of barley that is produced.

* (17:30)

Now, Mr. Speaker, recent research which has identified the omega in barley as an important component that can be used in functional foods now presents a new opportunity in our province, especially where barley is produced, because why can't there be mills established in rural Manitoba where the barley is produced and then we can sell the extracted product to the further processors.

I go to another example, and the example is, we've heard the example of the Pizzey mill, but I go to the example of Bunge foods and the processing of Canola oil. About 25 years ago, a Canola crushing plant established on the west side of the province. They started to crush the oil, and not refine the oil, but send it out as raw oil. When we were in government, Mr. Speaker, when the Progressive Conservative Party was in government, they helped this company process their oil to a shelf product, one that could be sold in shelves in stores.

Now, Mr. Speaker, if that product were handled under the Wheat Board, we would see Canola being shipped out of this country and processed either in Japan or in other parts of the world. But because it wasn't marketed under the Wheat Board, people sought out opportunities to extract the value-added component of Canola. Today, not only do we have the Canola crushing plant at Harrowby and Altona but, indeed, right throughout this country.

As a matter of fact, unfortunately, because of this government's bungling of issues, we now have Richardson grain from Winnipeg moving to establish a Canola crushing plant in Yorkton, Saskatchewan.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we also have Louis Dreyfus that has announced a Canola crushing plant in Yorkton. *[interjection]* No, those were announcements that were made publicly. There's nobody—*[interjection]*—unless your nose is growing. It isn't anybody else's, because those announcements were made. As a matter of fact, ground is being broken for the establishment of the Canola plant in Yorkton, because I was just there. So we have lost it because of this government's bungling.

Now, how much more opportunity exists in this province. We could become, we should become, a centre for processing our food and our products that we produce in this province. We should be using the Richardson Centre, the Food Development Centre, to help those value-added processors establish. But, Mr. Speaker, I heard a comment that was made by our Minister of Agriculture that indicated that somehow she found a conflict between the producers of our province and the value-added processors. I want to quote what she said. She said, and I quote, "I want to see farmers get a better return." Manitoba Agriculture Minister Rosann Wowchuk told the committee.

Excuse me. I will retract the name of the minister. "I do not want them to be sacrificed for value added." she said. Now can you imagine this? She is saying that farmers are going to be sacrificed for value-added processing. What kind of a statement is that to make to the world from a minister of agriculture who should be encouraging that every product we grow in this province is going to have value added to it so that we create the jobs to keep our youth in this province, to keep industry thriving so we can reduce the tax rates that we pay right now so that we, in fact, can become the opportunity that we owe to our children and to the future of this province.

Mr. Speaker, I say to this Premier (Mr. Doer) and to this Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), shame on you. Shame on you for having such short-sightedness. Shame on you for thinking that farmers somehow don't understand the issues, and they will not vote correctly. Allow them to take this matter into their hands, vote as they should, vote as they think they want this industry and agriculture to expand in this province, and allow them to make the decision.

The amendment to the resolution that was put forward today is one that talks about opportunities for Manitoba. It talks about the fact that producers do

have a right to vote. It talks about the fact that the Wheat Board has a value in this province, and it talks about giving producers, the people whom it affects most, the right to vote on this important question. First of all, on barley, and as a matter of fact, when and if wheat is going to be changed from its present status, Mr. Speaker, then producers will be able to vote on it as well. If this minister and her colleagues have the courage, they will support the amendment to the resolution, and I look forward to seeing how the minister and her Premier are going to vote on this important resolution.

It's not that agriculture is not important to the province of Manitoba, it is. But the decision for whether or not there is going to be a vote is in the hands of the federal government. Now, we can play with this all we want, but we're just playing politics, and we're causing a divisiveness between farm communities, farmers and their neighbours. That's what is happening in this instant. The minister knows it, but again, they're running scared. They've seen the polls and they're creating a diversion.

Rather than dealing with issues that they should be here in the province of Manitoba—deal with the livestock issue; deal with the hog issue; deal with the Crocus Fund. You know, step up to the plate in that regard and the producers will do what is right when it comes to voting on the question of barley and when it comes to voting on the question of wheat. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for St. James. *[interjection]* The honourable Member for Arthur-Virden.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, it's my pleasure to stand before the House and put some words on the record in regard to the amendment that we have put forward on the government's decreed resolution that they have in the Order Paper today.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

There are a lot of contradictions in this Order Paper presentation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, a lot of contradictions in the government's own wording, and I'll get into those in a minute. But I want to just say that the reasons why we voted against the single desk is very, very clear. This is the same group that, when I was on—and I want to point out that I did spend eight years on the Canadian Wheat Board Advisory Committee. I was the elected farmer in western Manitoba for two full terms in those areas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, while we continue to bring in new choices in the board marketing system, there were those in the Farmers' Union and, of course, the fellow that ran against me at that time in 1994, Mr. Nicholson, who is still there on the new board, who indicated that if there were any choices in the board for farmers to price their grain within even the monopoly it would be the end of the board. The sky would fall and there would be no more opportunity for farmers. Well, that was in 1994.

In 2002, the last time this member was elected, I looked at the front page of the *Co-operator* in January, the farm paper in Manitoba, and he was taking credit for all of the choices, if you can believe it, that the farmers now had. He was actually taking credit for the choices that the farmers had within the board monopoly system. These are the same people today that are saying, well, if we give farmers a vote, they won't know what they're voting on. They don't know how they should manage their own affairs in the future so we can't do that, we have got to maintain the monopoly.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that was a very pertinent point back in the early '30s, prior to the droughts of the '30s, when the grain companies were having difficulties to survive. The board was formed as a means of trying to protect the grain handling system in the prairies, and there was good reason for some of those choices at that time because there wasn't the information technology available on farm sites at that time. You couldn't deliver a wagonload of grain to an elevator and expect to get much for it when they knew you had no other choice in where to go with that grain. Today, those farmers know what the price of that product is before they ship it, and they may ship it all the way across the prairies in trucks in an effort to maximize their returns. They have that ability to do so on all of the grains they have, except for wheat and barley, for domestic processing purposes. We have got to keep in mind that farmers already have the choice in how they sell feed barley and feed wheat. They don't need to go through the board to do that.

* (17:40)

If you want to look at how the mothballed party viewed this process back in the '70s, this NDP government, the NDP in Manitoba at that time, was the same government that said, can't take feed barley across into Saskatchewan, it will be the end of the monopoly. Well, we've been doing it for 25, 27, 28

years, and it was brought in by then-federal minister Otto Lang.

So these are the changes that have evolved over time. My forefathers had a very good right to want to keep the monopoly the way they had it. The young people today that are out there in our industry looking for change and the opportunity to market their product are being educated today with commerce degrees, with plant science degrees, with soil science degrees. Some of them are coming back with commerce degrees, and they have probably a better understanding because of the tools they have available to them today to be able to market this product more on their own. They also realize that as the margins have shrunk, and I farmed for 33 years, from where they were in the late '60s to today, in the '70s to today, they have seen these margins dwindle, and it's very much important that the farmers become more involved in the processing of grain on the Prairies.

We live, and I've made this speech in the House before. Equidistant from Vancouver and Montréal and New Orleans, we are the area that needs to have processing the most in Manitoba and we have a system today, the government of the day, by bringing in the resolution to saying we are going to take away the opportunity for farmers to process that product more on their own provincial grounds than on their own farms. I just want to put the magnitude of this on the record. Thirty-seven bushelled acre, possibly a tonne to the acre, is the average of wheat production in Manitoba this past year. The cost of moving that tonne of wheat or barley to ports is in the neighbourhood of \$50 to \$70 per acre on these terms. Those are dollars straight out of farmers' pockets which they have no choice, no opportunity to control.

So the farmers that are out there today asking us, as the opposition, to make sure that we look at different opportunities within a structure that the board is involved in for sales, to be able to access value-added process. Our predecessors set up a very good process of value-added co-operatives, new generation co-operatives that really this government has shelved and not gone forward with in giving the farmers the opportunity to use more. We've got a government that professes to have more investment in ethanol and support biodiesel and support all of these areas. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know they don't have any problem with feed wheat going into an ethanol plant, but they have a big problem with quality wheat going into a flour mill, a flour mill

right here in Winnipeg or a flour mill like the Pizeys have for flax on their farm at Rosburn.

We have a number of innovative people around Manitoba who would be able to create jobs, keep our young people on the farms. Some of these jobs are being created by the young people that are there. I've got constituents in my area, coming right out of college, who are using new technologies in marketing sunflowers. They're going into organic sunflowers. That's a new opportunity for them. They're looking at a flax plant in Brandon that's got Omega 3 production of flax. These are wonderful opportunities that are being taken by constituents in my southwest region of the province. We need to give the farmers out there today the opportunity to get into dollars that are being put into the processing business, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I guess, if you will, by the large processors who have the capitalization to be able to create more of those processing businesses on the Prairies.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just have to say that the minister's own resolution—I don't know who she got to do the math on this one, but she is indicating that there are \$220 million of contribution to the provincial GDT by having the Canadian Wheat Board's overall impact on Manitoba. In her first speech—that is the one on keeping the single desk—she indicated that the single desk was probably relevant to returning \$10 to \$15 extra on a tonne of wheat per farmer. Well, let's say that's right, and I have no doubt that there are people within the board's present system who are very good marketers because I was there; I've seen them work. But if you take \$10 to \$15 and divide that into \$220 million of benefit, you'd have to have 15 million to 22 million acres of crop in Manitoba to do that or a million metric tonnes.

Now, in the next WHEREAS, it states that we've only got three million acres of Canadian Wheat Board grains in the minister's own statement in all of Manitoba. So you'd have to have 70-million acres to produce that 15 to 22 million metric tonnes. I mean, her math just doesn't add up. This government has no idea of what they're talking about when it comes to their own resolution. So why in blazes, No. 1, would we ever vote for this resolution because of their own errors in development? You mean, is she saying that all of the wheat and barley wouldn't get any value at all in Manitoba if there was no Wheat Board monopoly? That's ludicrous. That's just ludicrous. There would be a value, and I agree if there was a benefit it might be in—let's take the minister at her

word and say that there was a 10 dollar to 15 dollar benefit, then it would be far less than that because we're probably looking at maybe 30 million to 45 million because of the number of acres. Not 220 million contribution.

Now, if she is saying that she doesn't want the farmers to have some of the value-added opportunities of that 220 million, if that's what she is including in there to get that number, then I think that's wrong, Mr. Deputy Speaker. The farmers need to have a more integrated system to be able to get some of the value-added dollars that are in this industry today in Manitoba as they do in Canola, as they do in forage seed production in forage, as they are in beef, as they are in hogs and other areas. I guess another question that I would have to ask is would the minister be putting this resolution forward if the Canadian Wheat Board was able to sell all grains as the federal minister's Wheat Board panel recommended to him? I doubt that she'd be wanting to have a vote on putting Canola in the board if the Wheat Board itself or the minister made the decision that other crops should be there as was recommended by the committee. The committee also recommended that a board should be able to handle a purchase of elevators. It should be able to purchase terminals. It should even be able to, perhaps if you carried that to an extrapolation of the meaning of the intent of the panel's report, it might even be able to invest in value-added processing in the Prairies.

But this minister, she has a very callous view of value-added processing. One minute they want to expand ethanol, they want to expand the livestock industry. They are taking credit, or getting credit for the expansion of the pork industry in Manitoba when we know full well that that came because of the Conservative initiative to provide open marketing of hogs in Manitoba with the pork marketing board's ability to sell within that structure, Mr. Deputy Speaker. And I think that to take that away is a discredit to the farming community in Manitoba. There are a couple of other areas that are important to note today, and that is that we now have oat processing, and it is actually being expanded. I was on the Wheat Board advisory committee, and I know oats were removed from the board by the minister at that time. We've got oat processing in all three prairie provinces now, and it's being exported to the U.S. in the form of flour and other products and that creates more jobs for us here in Manitoba. This minister is seemingly against that by going further in saying that, you know, she is not having a vote to put

oats back in, and I don't know if she would ever want to do that or not. But we know that those oat mills are here because of the decision that was made by a futuristic-looking government at that time.

*(17:50)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not here to say that all is a hundred percent in that open market. I know that there are opportunities amongst our young people to use the hedging opportunities that are there in the grain companies today. They can go and look at the pricing options, and you know, all the board has done is develop what the pricing options are that the grain companies are already using and at a basis level backed up in Minneapolis. I remember making the presentation when I was a wheat grower president to the board in regard to providing farmers with that choice so that they could have the opportunity to back those prices up in Minneapolis, while same as our flour mills had at that time in Manitoba. So it is very, very important that we look at equity and equality for each producer in Manitoba because they run their farms differently. They do not run them in a collective manner, and I want to make sure that the minister looks at the choices. The hypocrisy of her position today is that she's got her first resolution saying: Have to have a single desk; oh, but, by the way, we'll only give you a choice if you vote for a single desk. I mean, we'll have that plebiscite, a fair producer plebiscite.

The minister federally has already asked for a vote on barley. He is already going to provide farmers with that opportunity. There has been some discussion about the Alberta vote. When I was a farm leader on the Prairies, and I might challenge her to just check and see how many total numbers of farmers there are who grow barley in Manitoba and Saskatchewan compared to Alberta, because I daresay that Manitoba and Saskatchewan might actually have more barley producers than Alberta does because of the size of the farms in Alberta in some of those areas. So I guess I would look at that and see if the minister's done any homework on that.

She's also said in this resolution that the loss of the Canadian Wheat Board would negatively impact funding for agricultural research. Well, I know the fine work that the Grains Institute does, because I have been there as well. The Grain Commission needs to make changes with regard to the types and quality of wheat that we do allow in regard to KVD in Manitoba, kernel visual distinguishability. Those changes are coming, but to make the case that the

Canadian Wheat Board would negatively impact funding for agricultural research, it may be, but most of the agricultural research was cut by the federal Liberal government in their tenure of government from 1983 until this past January. So, at the very best, there has been an extreme impact on agricultural research, and it did not have a lot to do with the work being done by the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just want to say that the hypocrisy of telling farmers that they have to have a single desk, or then saying that we are going to give you a plebiscite on this issue is undermined by the fact that this government's credibility has already been undermined by the fact that they didn't give farmers, at first, a choice on the checkoff on cattle sales in Manitoba, the \$2-per-head that they had. The fact that they covered up the idea that it could actually be up to 10, 20, who knows what the number is? It was open-ended in their legislation.

The hypocrisy of not allowing 33,567 Crocus investors to be involved by supporting them through an independent public inquiry is just ludicrous. The government has recently made other changes in regard to a freeze on hog barns in Manitoba when they have no science and no true information, other than their ability to say that they are going to prove these farmers guilty without any basis. We are very much in favour of an environmental process, environmental review on these agricultural industries, and we are not afraid of them, as the pork producers have said themselves. But for the minister to stand in the House today and say it is not a moratorium, it is just a pause, continues to show the contempt for Manitoba farmers, and I think that that's going to—I mean, if this is their agricultural policy, then I guess they have to live with that, but it's certainly not selling well in Manitoba.

At least I just want to put on the record as I sit down, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the fact that this minister has so little confidence in the people at the Wheat Board is astonishing to me. Having spent eight years on the board's advisory committee, I know the good work they can do. I know that farmers would continue to contract grain with the board. I know there is not a grain company out there that could afford not to have a contract to handle a half million, a million, or two million tonnes of wheat or barley at any particular time, or our other grains if they were to choose to market those down the road. The margins in that handling system are not such that they could afford to turn their back on a

half million or five million tonnes of wheat or grain that would be handled by the board today, and these are strictly competitive forces that actually may bring down the handling charges to some sectors of our industry today.

But the bottom line is we are the furthest from port. As I made this speech in December of 1995, in Brandon, we need to process every bushel of raw grain we can in Manitoba, right here. We should not be exporting it off-shore unless we are doing it in containerized units such as, particularly, a fine example of that would be the Warburton contract that we would continue to do because that company has dealt with—okay, when they first came to Manitoba dealt with, specifically, a particular grain company, but then went to the board and asked the board for their export permit.

I also want to make sure that the minister knows about the hypocrisy of her position in standing up for Manitoba farmers by saying you have to sell through the monopoly, but farmers in the rest of Canada don't. We have farmers in all of the other parts of Canada, who are not in the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board today, being able to sell their grain, their wheat and barley into foreign markets and across Canada without having to pay any more than the administration fee for the export permit that the Canadian Wheat Board, which is based here in Winnipeg, handles on behalf of the federal government.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, unless the federal government has taken that responsibility back in the last short while, I would say to the minister, does she believe that it's right that the farmers in this area should pay the buyback process that they are forced to buy on a per-tonne basis which is much higher than just the simple administration fee to fill out the paperwork. It puts our farmers in a jeopardized position. It puts them in a position where they cannot market their own product, where they cannot add value on their own farms.

I want to close by saying I think it's absolutely imperative—and I don't think this is a debate, that this issue should be debated by either side of the House because we know that value added, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is where farmers are going to be able to make money in the future. We know that we're better off to save that \$60 or \$70 a tonne. It doesn't mean that the farmer's going to put it all in his pocket, but we're much better off if we can haul our grain to a neighbouring farm or a neighbouring town or another

area of Manitoba to have it processed right here and save some of those export dollars. I've always said to the railroads that the biggest concern I have is—that you said why are you not paranoid about the Crow benefit changing, Mr. Maguire, and all of the issues that we could maybe have as far as control of the industry around that? My answer was: My goal as a farmer is not to have to use you. It's to be able to process all of the product that we grow on our farms here in Manitoba locally and export a finished product.

So I want to say that the reason I support the amendment as put forward is because, of course, the federal government does have a say. Even Mr. Goodale, the former Minister of Agriculture, would indicate that the federal government has an authority to be able to make changes to the board. Otherwise the change that's there that he's saying you need a plebiscite or that farmers should have to have a say wouldn't be there because it was only in the last few years that that minister, the former federal Liberal minister, put that in the act. That wasn't there under the original Wheat Board act, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and it wasn't there in 1949 when oats and barley were put into the board as well. It was only put in there in the '90s, if not even more recent. Well, no, it was in this century—in this millennium, I should say.

So I'm saying that the federal government does have a role in that area, and all we're doing by bringing this amendment forward is recognizing that. We are also recognizing and supporting the federal government going ahead with its plebiscite on barley, and we're saying that if there were to be any changes in the marketing of western Canadian grain, perhaps a future discussion with farmers should take place as well.

So, having said that, I will close with the comment, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I want to say that I very much support the amendment brought forward by the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) and the discussion that's been given by our leader and other members who will speak to this amendment as well. Thank you very much.

Mr. Nevakshonoff: Thank you for the opportunity once again today to rise and discuss this issue. It's been very enlightening, I have to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to see these individuals opposite finally show their true colours. There has been a lot of obfuscation on that side of the House. They were in support of the Canadian Wheat Board but in support of the open market as well. I think the whip has

finally snapped in Ottawa. Their political masters, the Prime Minister and Mr. Strahl, have dictated to them what their position is going to be, and they've finally been forced to come clean and put their true position on the record which is the demise and dismantlement of the Canadian Wheat Board.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

That is what we're talking about here. They can dance around and talk about value-added production all they want, but the bottom line is that it's the big business agenda. It's dictated by an ultra right-wing government in Ottawa, and it caters to the needs of the huge grain corporations, the transnationals. These aren't even multinational. These are transnational corporations with a set agenda which is to take over the production of food completely in this country, and these guys are going to be a part of it.

* (18:00)

Small farmers that are today protected by the Canadian Wheat Board, that have an entity that is marketing truly in their interest, not in the interest of the shareholders living off in some distant land, but the farmers themselves. That's what's under attack here and it's led by the most right-wing government in the country, the Government of Alberta.

So let's not beat around the bush here. We know what's happening and who's controlling the agenda. Now before they start criticizing the how many acres of wheat do I grow, like they attempted the last time, I don't. I'm not a wheat producer, but I represent a lot of wheat producers. I represent a lot of them and I talk to them and they talk to me. They phone me and they chose me through a democratic process to come here to speak on their behalf, and I bloody well will speak on their behalf and what I think. So, no, I'm not a wheat producer. I own a small farm and I say small, but I live in the country and I represent these people. So, on that basis, I'm here today.

Now if they want to listen to the voice of farmers, why don't we make reference to the farming organization in this province, the Keystone Agriculture Producers? They're the ones who represent the farmers. They're the ones who speak for the farmers, and they're bang on with our government and the government of Saskatchewan here. The Keystone Agriculture Producers applauds the governments of Manitoba and Saskatchewan for standing up for producers, and that's the voice of the farmers.

So there you go, ladies and gentlemen, and what are they asking for? What are they asking for? They're asking for the federal government to obey the law. It's written right in the Canadian Wheat Board Act that any attempts to dismantle it, which is underway right now, is to go to a plebiscite. It's not half a plebiscite: maybe we'll do barley now, maybe we will do wheat sometime in the future; we will manipulate it and corrupt it to the point where we might actually be able to subvert it and win a vote. They know that's not the case now. That's why they're not putting wheat to the full question now. They're just going with barley, which is in Alberta, which is where all their friends are.

Quite frankly, the Conservatives put their real agenda on the record a long time ago. They said, we don't need a plebiscite. The election was the plebiscite. We said we were going to do away with the Wheat Board during the election campaign. Therefore, that was the plebiscite. Well, people didn't just vote on the Wheat Board during the last election, and quite frankly, they didn't do all that well in the last election. They don't have a majority in this country. They have a very weak minority, and it's getting weaker as the days go on and people can discern the true agenda of the ultra right-wing in this country.

But that's what they're telling us. Oh, we won the election, technically, so we don't need a plebiscite, so there you go. That was the Minister of Agriculture and Agrifood Canada saying that the law of the land, the Canadian Wheat Board Act, which calls for a plebiscite, no ifs, ands or buts, no maybes, it's on the record there, it's written into law. All we're asking is that they respect the law and that's what the farm lobby groups, the Keystone Agriculture Producers, in this province are calling for as well, so I have to support them. I support my farmers and the farm organizations in our province as well.

Now the Interlake, the constituency I represent, is an area that particularly needs the Canadian Wheat Board because we're a long way from the ports. We're a long way from the big grain terminals, and the Canadian Wheat Board doesn't own any terminals or any elevators so we need it as a marketing agency. It might be okay for some of those big farmers in southern Alberta. They're pretty close to the ports in comparison to us here, but my people are a long way away from the port and that's why, almost to a man, they speak in opposition to the Tory agenda to privatize. A lot of them are small

farmers, too, Mr. Speaker. They don't farm 5,000 or 6,000 acres like some of the farmers opposite here.

The Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) has a huge farm, as does, I am sure, the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner). They want to get bigger. As a matter of fact, I remember several years ago here the Member for Emerson was telling us about how all of his neighbours were going out of business, and how he was magnanimously going over there and sympathetically buying up their land for them, doing them a big favour, right? Basically, putting them out of business, and he gets bigger; that's the Tory agenda, right? All these small farmers, they don't care about them. They are just cannon fodder as far as they are concerned. They're there to be gobbled up. They don't have the clout that these guys do. They don't own their own elevators, or things like that.

I know some big Conservative farmers in my constituency actually bought the elevators from Agricore. So that guy is well positioned. He is well positioned to market grain. That is one out of the 50 or 100 wheat producers in the area, mind you. The rest of them are out of luck, right? The rest of them have to haul all of their grain all the way to the South Lake's terminal just outside of Winnipeg because there are no more grain elevators in the immediate area. There are no more rail lines in the immediate area anymore either, Mr. Speaker, because big business took them over. Big business took them over, knocked down all the little country elevators, pulled out all the branch lines, and now it is only the big guys that can afford to haul their grain, to buy the B-trains and this and that. So that's their agenda. The rich get richer and the poor farmers are out of luck. The quickest way to knock them off is to do away with the single-desk selling of wheat in this country. That is exactly what they are doing.

They make reference to the cattle checkoff. Well, the government didn't give the producers a vote on the checkoff. Well, according to The Farm Products Marketing Act, I think it is called, there is no call for checkoffs there. There is no call for plebiscites there. There are all kinds of checkoffs in this province on a wide range of commodities. There were no votes called there. But that is in the act. That is the law. So we are conforming to the law. Why don't the Conservatives conform to the law in terms of calling for a plebiscite on the Canadian Wheat Board? So that is the difference there.

Why didn't the previous Conservative government have a plebiscite when they did away with the single-desk selling of hogs in this province? They didn't. They gutted it, no vote there. A lot of producers were opposed to it. Harry Enns himself will admit that good Conservative hog producers were entirely opposed to it because that disenfranchised the vast majority of them. When you did away with the single desk, all those small farms went out of business. Now it is the big producers with supply contracts to the processors, those are the ones that ended up on top, and all those family farms out there, Mr. Speaker, were dust in the wind. A few of them managed to hang on in rural Manitoba. They get jobs working in the hog barns for \$9 or \$10 an hour, but that doesn't substitute for owning your own land, owning your own farm and producing your own grain. There is a big difference between an independent family farmer like that and somebody who just works for one of the big rich farmers instead.

* (18:10)

So let's not fool ourselves here. We know what the Conservative agenda is. It is the corporate takeover of the production of food in this country. This is the major component of it, trying to split off the barley producers from the wheat producers, and off you skate. We are not fooled by that. The people of Manitoba are not fooled by that, and we are going to proceed on the advice of Keystone Agriculture Producers. If the Conservatives in Ottawa don't want to conform to the law and hold a vote on this, then so be it. We will hold our own vote here in Manitoba, as will our neighbours in Saskatchewan. We will give farmers their voice. We will give them the opportunity to tell us, the politicians, what they really think about the single-desk selling of wheat in this country. Thank you.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): Well, Mr. Speaker, after what we just heard about the Interlake manifesto, I would like to read the last line in the proposed amendment under "BE IT RESOLVED": In recognition of federal authority, that it is their "decision to hold a plebiscite for the marketing of barley," and call on them "to hold a plebiscite in advance of any changes of marketing western Canadian grain, including wheat."

I don't know what about that the Member for the Interlake does not understand, but you know it may have something to do with the type of thinking that went on when balanced budget was instituted. The

former Member for Radisson said it was one of the most dangerous pieces of legislation we ever had to deal with, and the Member for Inkster said it would not correspond with any economic theory known to personkind.

So, having said that, I think that ranks right up there with the comment that we heard from the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk). You know, not only is she the Minister of Agriculture, she's the minister of rural development. She went to Ottawa on our behalf and she said: "I want to see farmers get a better return. I don't want them to be sacrificed for value added." At the same time, Laura Rance, who may not be the biggest advocate for corporate farming, writes under the headline that, "Savvy producers promote choice in marketplace."

Well, I don't know how the Minister of Agriculture intends to correlate that thinking, but to me she is also sitting in a position where she was prepared to tell cattle producers, of which I am one, that we don't need a plebiscite about a checkoff. She was going to ram that down the throats of the cattlemen of this province. She was going to have a checkoff and have it directed to her pet project, which was an honourable enough project, but the duplicity of taking that approach to a checkoff for cattle, and then not being prepared to deal with this amendment.

Mr. Speaker, federal law is what the Wheat Board operates under. We have to recognize that in this debate. Remember when this Premier stood in his place about four years ago, and subsequently a number of times, and said, we are all elected in this Assembly, therefore we can set the hydro rates right here? Remember when the Premier pointed that out? Well, I think that thinking is still prevalent in this Legislature when we're talking about putting a plebiscite in place for something that hasn't yet had a proposal put in front of us as agricultural producers.

The thing that the barley producers in this country and, particularly, in this province have faced over the last few years is not exactly a resounding endorsement of the market that they've been operating in. Barley has been at an all time low in the recent half decade that we have been trying to move barley in this province, and the reason for that is we are part of a world economic structure on marketing our food stuffs. When the farmers in this province look for an opportunity for value added, I would only point to one example of which I have been the benefactor of, and something that caused a great deal

of grief for a previous federal minister of agriculture, and that was when Charlie Mayer, as Minister of Agriculture, indicated that they didn't think the oats should be continued to be marketed as the sole propriety of the Wheat Board in this country.

We now have a situation where this province produces the finest milling oats in North America, competes on the international market, supplies oats to the biggest milling plant, probably in North America, which is situated in Portage la Prairie. An operator in my community, in McCreary, is able to market oats across North America in a fashion that none of us ever dreamed possible. Thousands upon thousands of bushels, hundreds of truckloads, three and four truckloads a day leaving McCreary, Manitoba, to markets across North America because we were allowed to compete. We were allowed to value add. There's that phrase that I am afraid this minister has not quite grasped, the rationale of modern agriculture when we are talking about value added. I think her and the member from the Interlake have been probably consulting each other too much on what they think is best for marketing grain in this province.

Bottom line, Mr. Speaker, and I intend to keep my remarks as brief as I can so my colleagues can have the floor. The bottom line: We are involved in a diversion tactic by the current Premier (Mr. Doer), a diversion to try and strike farmer against farmer, farmer against community worker, farmer against developer who wants to do value-added investments. Rural Manitoba doesn't need that kind of a divisive situation today. What we need is to debate how we can move forward, providing the opportunities in this province that young people are demanding. That, I think, puts it in perspective about why we are even having this debate in the Legislature this afternoon.

We are having this debate because the government of the day has failed miserably in its agricultural policy, and they would like nothing better than for us to have this debate, create a debate in rural Manitoba that doesn't reflect upon their freeze in the development of the hog industry, which is one of the brightest parts of the rural economic opportunity right now. They don't want to talk about the tax load that they have only started to deal with in any specific manner. Sticking to a rebate doesn't exactly strike a warm and cuddly feeling to those who look at their tax bill and realize they are still subject to the whim of government about whether or not that tax load will, in fact, be imposed.

Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, I would simply remind the government that they are not going to be able to divert the minds of the agriculture producers into a petty debate which is better directed towards the federal government at this particular juncture, and in the end, they want to make sure that they have a voice in where their future is and where they will be marketing their products.

Mr. Penner: Mr. Speaker, I, too, just want to put briefly a few comments on the record regarding this debate and the resolutions and, specifically, the amending resolution that we put forward this afternoon. I want to read:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba make it clear its understanding that the federal government has sole authority for the change of the Canadian Wheat Board Act. In recognition of federal authority in this area, we indicate our support for the federal government decision to hold a plebiscite for the marketing of barley, and call on it to hold a plebiscite in advance of any changes to marketing the western Canadian grain, including wheat.

*(18:20)

Now, having said that, I also want to put this on the record: That most of my neighbours, most of my colleagues in the organization today called KAP, and many other farm organizations, know my stand on the Canadian Wheat Board. I have been a strong supporter of the Canadian Wheat Board, but I am equally as strong a supporter of the constitutional right of every farmer or every individual in this country to be able to make the choice of where and when and how, with whom they want to do business. That has not, and is not, the case, and that's where this current NDP government in this province and I differ greatly. I believe it is imperative that there be a clear choice given to farmers as to what choice they have in where and when they choose to market their commodities.

The Wheat Board has done a pretty fair job of marketing a commodity; as a matter of fact, two commodities: malting barley and wheat. I find it some days somewhat disconcerting when people that have very little knowledge about the agriculture situation, the economic situation, today and the marketing opportunities that are prevalent today that were never prevalent 20 or 30 or 40 years ago. Today, I can sit down at my computer and get all the markets from around the world at an instant. I can press that same computer button, and I can sell my

grain in that same instant, right out of my house, out of my home. Historically, during the '30s, '40s and '50s, even up to the early '80s, that simply was not possible. So there have been vast technological changes that have been brought about that make today's agriculture producer much more informed, and with capabilities and capacities that they never had before.

Now, we live in a province where diversity has become the norm instead of the exception. When I first was elected in this province, we had virtually no choice in how we marketed our oats. That happened after I was elected in this area. Since then, we have built a very, very large oat milling plant at Portage la Prairie in this province. We built another oat milling plant at Emerson, Manitoba: Emerson Milling. Between those two operations, we sell most of our oats in a processed manner out of this province of Manitoba. Those two facilities employ significant numbers of people. Those people were never before employed. The only employment that we had was to dump the oats in a pit, to load it in boxcars and ship it. That has changed.

Why are we still doing the same thing to our wheat? Why are we growing it, boxing it and shipping it, where? To Ontario and Québec to be milled, when we here in Manitoba grow the best milling-quality wheat anywhere in the world. Yet, do we mill it here? I think we have a great opportunity to attract that whole milling industry to Manitoba. If we make the choice, if we take the initiative, if we go and approach those millers, because many of those mills are old and are out-of-date, so I think the opportunity for Manitoba to become a major miller of bread wheat and bread flour is real.

I take the Canola industry. When two farmers at Altona met during the early '30s and said, you know we've got to do something because these—I should say that these farmers had started sunflowers in the late '20s and early '30s. They said: We have to do something to be able to put these sunflowers on the market. So what did they do? They built a little crushing plant at Altona. J.W. Siemens, father of Ray Siemens who later on became the president of CanAmera Foods, he and a group of farmers, neighbours, and my dad included put \$10 each in a pot and started raising enough money to build a small crushing plant in Altona. What have we got today? We've Bunge and the Harrowby plant, which are two of the major crushing plants in western Canada now, crushing Canola. They didn't stay with sunflowers. As a matter of fact, sunflowers weren't

accepted as well, or the oil wasn't accepted as well for a while, so they turned to soybean; they imported soybeans, crushed soybeans, and therein lie the opportunities that we have in this province.

If we only allowed ourselves as governing bodies, or as legislators, to take a positive view of the opportunities that we have in the marketplace today on not only wheat, but all the other commodities such as cattle, hogs, chicken, eggs, turkeys, bison, dry beans, soybeans, Canola, sunflowers, oats, barley, corn, flax, grass seed, alfalfa and flour mills. Virtually all of them are marketed outside of a marketing board. They're all marketing privately.

And here we are as legislators today debating whether our farmers have the ability to market the one commodity that's in discussion here today, and that's wheat. Have they got the ability to search out markets in the world? Have they got the ability to build industries, to develop a secondary processing industry in this province? Well, I have enough faith in those farmers and the rest of society in Manitoba to say, yes, I believe we do. There are tremendous opportunities here.

Does that mean that we should do away with the Wheat Board? Absolutely not. When Harry Enns, the then-Minister of Agriculture, decided that he would put an end to single-desk selling of pork, of hogs in this province, what did the NDP say then? They virtually said the world would come to an end if we did that, that the hog industry would suffer and die, that the hog board and the marketing board would disappear in this province. Well, what I found interesting is that today's president of the Keystone Ag Producers was at that time a member of the board of directors at Manitoba Pork. I got a call at that time, because I had been the former farm leader in this province. I got a call from Manitoba Pork and they said, can we meet with you privately, Jack. I took Denis Rocan, my colleague in this Legislature, the Member for Carman with me. He was not then the Member for Carman; that's why I said Denis Rocan. I took him with me to this meeting, and by the time we left that meeting we had decided that Manitoba Pork could constitute itself into a co-operative that would sell hogs for those farmers who didn't want to market themselves, and they would pool the results, the marketing results, as they had in the past.

What happened? Today, Manitoba Pork, I understand, and I stand to be corrected here, but I am

told that Manitoba Pork today sells twice as many hogs as they did then, plus we have major processing industries now in this province that employ thousands of people over and above what we did before. Did the sky fall, as the NDP would want the people of Manitoba to believe? Just the opposite. The tree grew and it keeps on growing, and the industries grew.

Does Manitoba Pork exist under a competitive kind of system? Absolutely they do. Go ask them today. Would they ever want to revert to just a single-desk sell? Go ask them. I think you'd be surprised, and those members sitting in this House who are governing today need to rethink their positions on what we want to do with value added.

I was shocked and amazed when I read the little article in the paper that said the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) would not sacrifice her wheat growers for value added. Well, value added has always added value of money in the pockets of farmers beyond the farm gate, and she's concerned that we might have to sacrifice them? Shame on our minister. That clearly indicates why our cattle producers were in the kind of situation they were in when they were left to fend for themselves during the crisis that we faced when the borders were closed.

An Honourable Member: Oh, Jack.

Mr. Penner: Totally on their own they were. The minister says, oh, Jack. Well, I'll tell you, let's analyze what happened. The farmers, the cattle producers had to come on bended knee to beg this minister and her government to do what? The first indication was, well, we'll give you I think it was \$10 or \$15 a head as support to buy feed. I think that was one of the first processes.

* (18:30)

Then they nicked and dined, and nicked and dined, and niggled till those farmers were at wits' end. Had it not been for the border opening, I would believe that we might have lost the major portion of our cattle industry in this province.

The NDP said: We will build an industry; we will build the processing to ensure that this kind of situation will never confront our cattle producers again. Well, let me ask how many cattle processing plants have we seen built by the NDP government? There are absolutely none because they are afraid that we might have to sacrifice the individual producer for value added. That is what the minister says: We might have to sacrifice the individual

farmers. And she said: I am not going to do that. Nobody has asked her.

Look at the dry bean industry. The dry bean industry came about when we lost our sugar beet industry, because the Americans decided that they would cut the quotas that we were allowed to export for sugar. So we lost our sugar industry. What did we replace it with? Dry beans. How many dry bean plants were built in Manitoba under the previous Conservative administration? Had this NDP government—and I was told this the other day by my local bean processor. He said, had this NDP government been in place when we started developing this bean industry, I'm afraid we would not have built a plant.

I know the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) says, you're full of beans. And very proud to be full of beans, because I do love beans.

However, I am going to conclude by saying that farmers today are astute enough to be able to search out the markets, to look for markets. Off our farms today trucks travel regularly, B-trains and other trucks, picking up the produce that we produce on our farm, and we export it as far as California and some of it even into Mexico. Do we do it ourselves? Yes, we do. Do we need an intervener, a board in-between, because we do not know how ourselves? We are beyond that.

Do we need to keep the Wheat Board? I think we should, the same as we insisted on keeping the Hog Marketing Board. I think the potential for growth is immense if we would do that. Allow the vote to happen, but establish at the same time the recognition of the constitutional right of an individual to make choices on their own, and where and when to market. I think, Mr. Speaker, that you will be totally amazed and shocked at the growth that you will see and the secondary industry and how we develop jobs in the province of Manitoba and bring our young people back to Manitoba out of Alberta and British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I have been waiting with anticipation for hours now to see members of the government stand in their place to speak in support of a resolution that they brought forward because it was important enough to set aside the normal business of the Legislature, namely the Throne Speech, to debate an issue around support for farmers, Mr. Speaker. Yet we have heard, and I do

not know how many hours we have been debating this resolution, three members of the government side of the House stand in their place and speak about how important it is to support the farmers in the province of Manitoba.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I'm going to wait, and we will continue to debate, but I challenge members of this government to stand up for the farmers in the province of Manitoba and put some comments on the record. This issue has been before the Legislature, before Manitobans, in the public. We've had the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) and the Premier (Mr. Doer) standing up, talking about how they support and stand up for the wheat producers and the barley producers in the province of Manitoba, and yet, Mr. Speaker, we find members of the government visibly absent from any debate and discussion on this very important issue. So, again, I challenge members of the government side of the House to stand in their place to make their comments known, or maybe it is because they don't even understand what the Wheat Board is or what role it plays for Manitoba farmers in this province.

Mr. Speaker, there are many, many on our side of the House that have experience in the agricultural sector. I have listened with great interest to the comments and the discussion that we've had today. Many of them have put forward very reasonable arguments on why the amendment that we have put forward would address the needs and the issues of Manitoba farmers, grain growers.

Mr. Speaker, we also have seen a government speak out of both sides of its mouth on this issue. On the one hand, they want to dictate, the great dictators of what is best for Manitobans. They want to dictate that a single marketing approach through the Wheat Board is the only way to go. That's on the one hand. On the other hand, they say there should be a plebiscite, and we should give farmers a say. Well, passing strange that elected members of the Legislature on the government side that are elected from the city of Winnipeg or from the north, who don't understand the agricultural production in the province of Manitoba, can sit like puppets and pander to the Premier's hidden agenda. I say it is a hidden agenda when he continually tries to deflect away from the real issues in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we've seen it time and time again. You know, it used to be Devils Lake, and every time there was an issue that was controversial like the

Crocus Investment Fund that the Premier wanted to escape, the next thing you'd see are headlines on the front pages of the paper that the Premier was going to save us from foreign biota in Devils Lake. It wasn't an issue that he could address, or he could fix, or he could solve on his own, and this is another one of those issues that he can't solve. It isn't within provincial jurisdiction, but he continues to try to deflect away from what the real issues are here in our province.

Mr. Speaker, why doesn't he stand up for the 34,000 Manitobans who lost money because of the bungling of the Crocus Investment Fund? Why doesn't he stand up for those people who lost over \$60 million and call a public inquiry? Why is he afraid to put his hand on the Bible and tell the truth about what he knew when? Why, when we've got crisis after crisis in our health care system, isn't he looking to try to have debate on the issues in health care that are very important for the people in the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Speaker, we have a Premier who is trying to deflect away from the issues in Manitoba by interfering in something that is clearly federal jurisdiction. So I would say that I support the amendment that has been put forward by some very thoughtful insight by members of our caucus, those that have understanding of the Wheat Board marketing system and know that things need to be changed.

We can't be living back in the 1930s and saying what was good for farmers then is necessarily good for farmers now. Our farmers have grown. They have common sense. They have an understanding of what needs to happen, but we've got a government that is out of touch with reality. It is looking to the past and not to the future, Mr. Speaker, and, as a result, we have the kind of doublespeak that we see in both of these resolutions that have been brought forward today.

*(18:40)

Mr. Speaker, it is shameful. You know, farmers can see through what this government is trying to do. We even have an editorial in the *Free Press* today that sees through what this government is trying to do. It's time that we got on with the business of managing what's in the best interests of Manitobans. It's time that we got on with debating the Throne Speech, and it's time that this government got in touch with reality, got in touch with the agricultural community and did the right thing, supported our

amendment and got on with trying to govern and deal with the issues that impact Manitobans, that they have some ability to influence or impact right here in this Legislature.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to put a few words on the record in regard to the amendment brought forward by our party. It was a pleasure to listen to the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson). I think she's hit the nail on the head here exactly. It's nice to see that an urban member has an appreciation for the Canadian Wheat Board and all that the Canadian Wheat Board stands for.

Unfortunately, the members opposite are lacking in knowledge of the Canadian Wheat Board, following their leader down a blind trail. I think we know where the NDP stands on rural issues in Manitoba. Basically, what they are doing here is political maneuvering to avoid the real issues that are on the minds of rural Manitobans, in fact all Manitobans. Clearly this is just a policy and a program to deflect from the real issues out there in rural Manitoba.

We should be debating some of the serious issues, real issues. We have an inadequate CAIS program that farmers are fighting and struggling with. The Throne Speech alluded to a \$10-million increase in funding for the CAIS program, but there is no real mention of really getting back and understanding the basic problems with the CAIS program. That's where we should be. We should be debating serious, real issues like that.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

We should be talking about our rural economy. Our rural economy is struggling, as we know, and the members talked at length about value added. Those are the kinds of initiatives that will keep rural Manitoba going, in fact foster development all across Manitoba, including the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it's time that the NDP have a look at where they're headed. They've got two different agendas on the Order Paper today, one where they want people to have a vote, the second one where the resolution says that they want a single desk in regard to the Canadian Wheat Board. We're just asking where is it? The NDP want to have it both ways.

What we're saying as a party is that the people of Manitoba want a choice. They want a choice in where they market their grain. They want a choice in

how they market their wheat. They want a choice of how they market their barley. Our view is to give the farmers a choice in how they can do that. The Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) went on at length about the different commodities that are being administered and marketed through the private sector. There is no board in place to market those particular commodities, and what we've seen over the years is a move away from wheat so that farmers have a choice of where to market their different commodities. So we've seen a real shift away from growing wheat and barley because they have the option then to market their grain in a different way. So, clearly, Manitobans want a choice when it comes to marketing their grain.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we've seen this sort of political manoeuvring in different areas. We've seen the government come out and take away some of the issues in regard to the environment, in fact where they've just come out with what we'll call a moratorium on the hog industry here in Manitoba. So it certainly brings more uncertainty towards agriculture and to the economy of Manitoba.

I want to quote from the *Brandon Sun*. It was actually a letter to the editor appearing in yesterday's paper. I'm just going to quote a portion of this particular letter to the editor. It's an exact example of what we're dealing with here today in terms of these NDP resolutions. I will quote from this particular letter to the editor: In closing, I would simply note that the most charitable interpretation of this government's action here is that it represents nothing more than a political parlour trick, a cynical sleight of hand which is explicitly designed to defuse the hog issue until after the upcoming election.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is clearly what we're seeing when this resolution is brought forward. The Canadian Wheat Board, the NDP are trying to take the real issues off the table and deflect from the real issues that we should be debating in the House. It's deplorable, and I think Manitobans are starting to see through what this NDP government is doing, what their agenda is.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you very much for your time, and I'll turn it over to my colleagues.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I, too, wish to make a few comments on the record. I'd like to thank the Member for Turtle Mountain for his good points that he's made, and I'd like to build on that. There are 57 members of the

Legislature in Manitoba, and we have been elected to debate provincial issues.

I'd like to point out to members opposite and, in particular, to the Premier that there are 300-plus members of Parliament that have been elected to go to Ottawa and deal with federal issues. I would suggest the way this government is going and the way they've screwed up in the last couple of months that they would focus a little bit more on what's going on in Manitoba and worry a little less about what's going on everywhere else.

You know, we're still waiting for a resolution. This group of governing MLAs next is going to come up with resolutions trying to tell the Soviet Union how they should run their affairs, how Mexico should run their affairs, how Japan should run their affairs, how Europe should run their affairs, anything, anything, but focussing on what's going on here at home.

In fact, I'd like to point out one issue, perhaps, that we could be focussing on, and that is the issue of an unsafe, crumbling bridge that is 44 years old, was never intended to take the traffic that it has got, and it's been declared unsafe by the government's own civil servants. What does this government do? I'm glad you're sitting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because I'm going to tell you. They tore down a bridge built not even 10 years ago, a brand-new bridge, shiny and clean and sleek. It's a beautiful bridge.

An Honourable Member: And safe.

Mr. Schuler: It is a safe bridge, and it's twinned, and it is meant to take traffic for another 30, 40 years, and they tore it down. There's even a picture in the government brochure where they happily describe this bridge being torn down. They're happy about it. They tore down a new bridge, but it gets better. Guess what they built in its place? Another new bridge.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I'm glad you're sitting down because, in place of a new bridge, they built a new bridge, a new bridge. Can you imagine? We have bridges in Portage la Prairie where you have to get off No. 1 highway, drive through Portage la Prairie, go through the entire town. I was there. Huge semi-trucks weaving their way through traffic to get around the broken down bridge, and what does this government do? Designs one of the newest bridges—

An Honourable Member: And tears it down.

Mr. Schuler: –and replaces it. Can you imagine? That is the length and breadth and depth of this NDP government, and we have to tolerate it day in, day out. We drive on pathetic streets, on roads that need roadwork, on streets that shake the gas tanks off the semi-trucks, and this government finds the newest infrastructure, rips it down and builds exactly the same thing in its place. That's called NDP infrastructure, and Manitobans know it's time for a change.

Why are we not debating these issues, Mr. Deputy Speaker? Why are we not debating Crocus? Thirty-three thousand Manitobans bilked out of their life savings by an incompetent government that should have known better, that should have been on watch, that should have been standing on guard. Instead, what do they do? They tell federal politicians how they should debate their issues, how they should deal with their boards and commissions.

I have advice for them. I have good advice for them. Worry about Crocus. Don't worry about the Wheat Board. You've got enough in Crocus to last you a lifetime. Instead, what are they doing? They're worrying about the Wheat Board; create a diversion. It's shameful, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (18:50)

I am going to give one more example, and then I am going to allow more of my colleagues to speak because, clearly, there isn't the guts nor the jam on the other side to get up and speak to this issue; they know they are wrong on it.

They want to talk about democracy. They want to talk about democracy and votes. I remember the school board amalgamation where punitively they went after school boards in River East, Transcona and in Sunrise School Division. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the parents went to court and wanted their voices heard, and what did this government do? Undercut all of those parents and passed the law that said no matter what the courts rule, it is irrelevant because the Legislature will be supreme on that, and the parents stood in tears because they weren't even allowed to speak. They weren't allowed to be heard on their school division, and who did they hurt in the end? They hurt the children. Where the school divisions are supposed to be primarily about their children's education, did they care about democracy? Did they put anything to a plebiscite? Did they have the guts or the jam to stand up and say we will let the people vote on this? Not one of them stood up and stood for that, not one.

Then they stand in this House and try to give us a lecture on how voting should or shouldn't be done. Even worse, they try to tell the federal politicians how they should be running their boards and commissions, when they can't even run a Popsicle stand with any kind of integrity. We need no lessons from those on that side. In fact, the guillotine is waiting for them, and that will be the next election because Manitobans are going to look at this kind of nonsense and are going to say: We elected 57 MLAs to go to the Manitoba Legislature and deal with the issues at hand in the province of Manitoba and not be debating hour after hour on things that concern federal politicians.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we should be here debating a Throne Speech and then moving on to legislation, neither of which they even want to debate. They are not even getting up and talking about this issue. Shame on them, and I suggest that they look at this amendment and agree with it.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I am astounded, as are many members on this side of the House, that we are the ones standing up here today where members opposite sit there and bury their noses and don't even pay attention to what is being debated here because they really don't care. They really don't care.

I want to commend the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) for speaking up. She is a sitting MLA from the city of Winnipeg, as are many of the people from the other side of the bench, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but none of them has an appreciation of anything to do with the Wheat Board.

We have experts on this side. We have the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) who stood up and told us all the intricacies that he knows about the Wheat Board and about farming issues. We have the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) who has brought forward this amendment to this resolution. We have the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) who is an expert in areas of the Wheat Board. And the Member for River East who has a knowledge and has a willingness to debate this issue, where no one on the other side—how many of us stood up on this side in a row now to talk about this issue?—they don't even want to stand up and talk about it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Wheat Board in its day was appropriate, but today things need to change. We need to embrace that change, and we need to allow farmers the choice where they want to market their wheat, where they want to market their barley. We know they have a choice where they want to

market their hogs. We know that they want and they should have a choice on the future of their organization.

I have spoken to farmers about this issue. They want a choice. It should be their choice. I have to put this in perspective for some of the urban members. If you were going to sell your house and you had to market it through one housing real estate board and you didn't have the choice where you were going to sell your house or who you were going to sell it to, maybe then you would understand that choice is important to you. How you want to deal with your own property, the rights of property, and how to deal with your own property is what farmers want, and they want to have that ability.

What this government is doing is they are just distracting from all of the failures that they have done in the last seven years. I think they're tired and they're out of steam. I don't know why because they haven't done anything in seven years. But they've bungled the BSE crisis. For two years producers were stuck with cattle that they could not find slaughter capacity for, and the industry struggled. We see contradictions from this government in the pork industry. On the one hand, they support a \$28-million incentive package to promote the hog industry and the hog processing plant in the city of Winnipeg. On the other hand, they put a moratorium on hog producers in the province.

I've spoken to a young person, a young hog producer from the Rosenort area who came to this country a year ago to purchase a hog operation. He said he came to this Legislature; he jumped through hoops to make sure that he would comply with all the regulations that this government has put in place to harm the farmers in this province. He did all of that. Then he went into his business and, one year later, now he is saying, what am I going to do? What am I going to do? Now, they're telling me I can't expand my business. What does that mean for my son who wants to take over the business from me? What does this tell people who want to come and establish industry in this province? On one hand, they say one thing; on the other hand, they say another, and it's like this with this particular issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I've spoken to another farmer in the Elie area who says, why can I not sell my wheat to the flour mill that's right down the corner from me? Why can't I do that freely? He wants choice of where he's going to sell and market his product, his property. This

government is just stalling and deflecting from the issues of the day. As we've heard before, we have federal politicians to deal with federal jurisdictional policies. We have members of the Legislature here in this province to deal with issues that we can deal with in this House, the issues of the day, as we mentioned, the Crocus Fund, the child welfare system. We have issues to talk about today, but this government has no agenda. They're stalling their own agenda. They won't debate their own resolution. They don't have an agenda because they're stalling their own legislation. They won't let us get on with debating the Throne Speech. They've proposed legislation, but they won't even get on to that, so when are we going to debate that?

* (19:00)

They're just going to go and stall for three weeks, these lazy socialists, all they want to do. There are burning issues that we need to debate in this province and this government refuses. Instead, they want to deflect away from the issues that are important that we can deal with in this Legislature. We don't have the jurisdiction. It's within the federal jurisdiction, so there is no real point to this except political pandering at its absolute worst by this government. They are embarking on this because they want to pit farmer against farmer. They want to pit neighbour against neighbour. What is the purpose of that? What is the purpose of that?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I said, farmers want choice. We want them to have a say. We want to listen to the farmers. We want to get on with debating the issues that we can reasonably deal with here in this Legislature, in this province, which fall under provincial jurisdiction. I say: Let's get on with this business, and let's support this amendment. I support this amendment. Let's all support this amendment. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I, too, would like to put a few comments on the record regarding the resolution that has been put forward by my colleague, and simply indicate right at the outset that the members opposite, the government has indicated that we are not in support of a Canadian Wheat Board. Yes, we are. We are supporting it, but I think, as my colleagues have so eloquently already indicated, that we're looking at enhancing—enhancing. We are not looking at taking away but rather enhancing the work that they in fact could be doing.

But I do find it interesting that the members opposite have been constantly talking, and the Premier (Mr. Doer) today was talking, about democracy, about the opportunity for giving producers the opportunity to make a decision. On the other hand, though, he got up and he said—and I think *Hansard* will clearly indicate this tomorrow—that we need to allow democracy to take place. However, we say it to be single desk or nothing.

Now, this was the Premier speaking. I don't understand that. That's a contradiction. When he goes ahead and he indicates, and he said, it's single desk or nothing, when before that he had indicated that there should be a vote given to those producers that are out there, that they in fact would be able to indicate their desire. So, when we talk about democracy, I think we need to be very careful what we are saying.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also am speaking today as a producer, one who has been involved with the Canadian Wheat Board, with exporting, with value-added industry, for a number of years. I just want to give the example of, and I think it was the Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), who indicated a while back that, when oats were taken out of the Wheat Board and allowed for another market to take place, at that point the price of oats was 34 cents a bushel. Within a few months, it jumped and it was well over a dollar. Of course, the rest, you could say, is history.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

But what has happened is that there has been value added to that product, and today we have Can-Oat in Portage, which is a large, large processor of oats adding value to the product, exporting it. Emerson Milling company is another one doing the same thing. So we see that this does work. On the other hand, it's also interesting to hear the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) talking, and she's really scared about adding value to product. I don't understand this. She's been out, in fact, saying that. So I find it interesting that, on the one hand, they think they're giving the people a say in what they're producing. On the other hand, they're really afraid of the end result.

Mr. Speaker, just to put this into context, just to give you an illustration of how right now the Canadian Wheat Board is operating—and this is specific to the value that producers get for their product—let's take all the teachers. I think this is something that the Minister of Education (Mr.

Bjornson) would understand. About 12,000 teachers are in the province of Manitoba.

An Honourable Member: 14,000.

Mr. Dyck: Okay, 14,000. Thank you. I stand corrected. But he would also be able to possibly give me the answer as to the total dollars that are spent in education. *[interjection]*

All right. So now take that, and that would be not only salaries. That would be everything else, right? So take the salaries that are out there. You divide 14,000 into the salaries. Now, that's what every teacher would be earning; they would all be on the same level throughout the province of Manitoba. Now, so whatever that average would be, if that's \$50,000 a year, then that would be the average. Each teacher, each principal, each administrator would get the same dollars.

Now, what we're going to do is we're going to pay them 60 percent of that salary. Right now we'll pay them 60 percent, and then at the end of the year, if there's a little bit of money left over, maybe then we'll pay a little more. But that is what you've got to be satisfied with now. *[interjection]* The Minister of Education doesn't understand. He doesn't listen too well.

The point I am making is this is the way the Canadian Wheat Board operates. They say that this is the price that everyone will get. We will give you 60 percent and then at the end of the day if a little money is left over, then that's what you will get. I'll give you another example. The Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) doesn't understand the one about the teachers. Let's take the one of 57 MLAs in the province here. We know that there are 57 MLAs. We know what the total value of the salaries is, including the Premier (Mr. Doer). What we would do now is we would take the total salaries, divide that by 57, and that's what everyone would get.

The point is, all I am doing is drawing a parallel to what's taking place with the Wheat Board. I am saying that we should add value to this, that there should be incentive to it. I just believe that it is important that we recognize the fact that what they are debating and what we are looking at are certainly different. But, again, I would just like to indicate to the members opposite and encourage them to look at our resolution.

The resolution simply says, and I will read it.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba make it clear its understanding that the federal government has sole authority for changes to the Canadian Wheat Board Act. In recognition of federal authority in this area we indicate our support for the federal government's decision to hold a plebiscite for the marketing of barley and call on it to hold a plebiscite in advance of any changes to the marketing of western Canadian grain, including wheat.

This is what they're going to be voting against. On the other hand, they have said this is exactly what they want to see, so I don't understand it.

Now, the last point I want to make is that certainly it's a diversionary tactic by the government to put their resolution on the table today. It is certainly not within their jurisdiction to debate this issue. *[interjection]* Well, the minister indicates that it sure worked. Yes, certainly. We are debating the issue here, but we should be looking after the issues that are current, the fact that this government on Crocus, that they have dropped the ball totally. This is what they should be concentrating their efforts on.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to put a few comments on the record, and I would encourage members opposite to vote for this resolution. I believe it is the one that they believe is the one that should go forward. Please, I would encourage you to do that. Thank you.

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): I would like to speak in support of the amendment put forward by the MLA for Lakeside. In his resolution amendment he supports the choice for producers to make a decision which affects their livelihood, and I think that producers, to allow them to have a vote respects their choice and respects their rights to produce a quality product and to sell it in the best interests of their own business, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, playing politics by calling for a provincial plebiscite on the future of the Canadian Wheat Board shows this government's desperate need to try to draw attention away from seven years of provincial neglect of the agricultural industry. I have been a representative of the Minnedosa constituency now for three and a half years, and I would say that during this period of time I have seen this government do very little to provide supports for the agriculture sector. I would say that they've sunk to a new low by deciding that after all these years that they know best, that they know how to best represent the views of the constituency. *[interjection]* They

will. I believe that. The Member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson) says the voters will decide, and, you know, they will decide. They will decide and I think that some people won't mind seeing the door hit them on the back on their way out of the Chamber on the other side of the House.

* (19:10)

There are producers in this province who would like the marketing choice, and there are others, Mr. Speaker, in this province who would like the single-desk market for their grain. There is a diversity of opinions and it is a divisive issue. I believe that this government, to take the stand that they have, shows how little they really do know or appreciate about our agriculture producers.

The inappropriate meddling of the Wheat Board issue just shows that the NDP would prefer to play politics with the farmers' lives than work toward improving their lives. In talking to the producers in my constituency they are still recovering from this government's inability to lead in the area of the BSE. Cattle producers are still recovering from the devastation and lack of leadership from this government in the area of helping producers continue on and continue to have a quality of life and to continue to thrive in an industry that they believe in.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP's plebiscite will ultimately be irrelevant to the issue of the vote. They are demanding a vote on the wheat which the federal government has clearly indicated it is not up for discussion. So, for the government to be putting these resolutions forward with really not a clear understanding of what they are asking, continues to show this government's inability to understand and appreciate the agriculture producer. In fact, the Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk) informed producers that those growing wheat next year should plant and market it through the Wheat Board. I guess I question the minister's comment because I believe that she is dictating and appears to be interfering with the farmers' marketing rights.

A provincial plebiscite will have no legal standing and contributes absolutely nothing to any decision making by the federal government, Mr. Speaker. So again, they are playing politics with the issue, and if the members opposite would spend some time in rural Manitoba, they would hear from the producers that this is not something that is going to be an easy decision. But it has to be their decision and it's not the provincial government's right or responsibility to decide whether it is a single desk or

whether there is a marketing option. Again, hearing from the constituents in my riding, the cost of this plebiscite is offensive. The Premier has indicated it would cost as much as tens of thousands of dollars to do a provincial plebiscite. To me, and to my constituents, this is a complete insult when the provincial government can't even offer programs of support in any fashion and can throw money around to do a political spin or a political opinion poll and not consult with the producers in a more meaningful way.

If the NDP government is intent on spending money on behalf of farmers, why doesn't it spend it on assistance for farmers for once rather than waste it on redundant legally irrelevant opinion polls? I think that statement speaks volumes to this government's way of doing business in this province.

Earlier today, Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Doer) talked about the plebiscite and he said: Here in Manitoba we are going to lead as we always have. Well, yes, we're seeing that clearly. They're going to dictate; they're going to make the decisions without consultation, which is a continual means of operating by this government. And they'll continue to do what they think is best even though it is offensive and definitely against the best interests of Manitobans.

Through the spring session, Mr. Speaker, I want to remind the government, that we had asked for a vote on whether to collect the mandatory \$2 per head cattle checkoff and the NDP government refused. So it would appear that they pick and choose when they believe that farmers have an opportunity to have an opinion or to have a vote on what's in their best interest. At that time, based on results outside of this government's opinion poll, 92 percent of Manitoba cattle ranchers asked for a vote on the cattle checkoff, and the government said no.

An Honourable Member: They asked for a choice.

Mrs. Rowat: The minister is saying they asked for a choice. Well, yes, they asked for a choice, but this minister ignored their request for that. She ignored their request to have a vote. So, you know, she speaks out of both sides of her mouth, and I believe that this minister really should have learned from her experience.

You know, I heard a saying the other day where it said that as you grow older, you don't necessarily grow wiser, you just get older, and I guess the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) should take heed. For all the years that she's served in this

Legislature, she has obviously just gotten older. She hasn't gotten wiser. She hasn't gotten stronger in her vision, Mr. Speaker. She has just gotten older, so I think that she may take heed and pay attention that respect and wisdom do not come naturally to her.

An Honourable Member: Unlike some of the other members, right?

Mrs. Rowat: Yeah, right. The NDP government, obviously, is doing its own little politics here, Mr. Speaker, and I believe that, in talking to the agriculture marketing group out of the Souris area, they spoke about a number of things on the weekend. Val Tufts and Gary Racher are two individuals who operate very successful farming operations, and it is from years of—[interjection] Absolutely. The Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) knows them well, and they discuss situations where, you know, obviously, the people who believe strongly in marketing choice have actually put themselves in a situation where they have actually tried to sell the grain on their own, believing that that is what they need to do, and have gone to jail for that. They believe so strongly in choice that they have put themselves at risk and their farming operations at risk, because they believe in that choice. Obviously, this government fails to understand that.

Also, the local economic development groups within the Westman region have spoken about options or possibilities that have gone to the wayside because they haven't been given the option of purchasing grain directly from producers, and how, you know, the possibility of a pasta plant in the Westman region had to be just put to the wayside because of the lack of options available in buying grain locally, Mr. Speaker.

So there are a number of issues, and it is a divisive issue. I believe that this government, by taking a stand in putting farmers against one another, again shows that they're a cynical bunch, Mr. Speaker, and it is obviously going to have to be decided on in the upcoming election. I believe that this Premier (Mr. Doer) had indicated today that he wanted to confirm an election won't be called tomorrow, but I encourage him to. If he is going to call any type of vote, that is the vote he should call. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I thank the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) for allowing me to put just a couple of words on the record with respect to this issue, Mr. Speaker. I know that there

are other members that are looking forward to putting their comments, including the Member for Steinbach, on the record, so I'll keep my comments brief.

*(19:20)

Mr. Speaker, I am appalled at this government for so many different reasons. Not only did they bring forward two obviously conflicting resolutions that are printed on the same page in the Order Paper today, it is unbelievable that they would not only do that, but now, after they say that this is such an important issue that should be debated, no one on their side of the House is getting up to debate this very important issue at all. I think it's appalling, Mr. Speaker. I think that members opposite, if they see this as such an important issue, if they see this as a resolution that should be passed before this House, then you would think that they would at least get up and speak in favour of their own resolution. But they don't. They don't because they realize, they know that this issue is out of their jurisdiction. They know that this is a federal issue, but what they're trying to do is play politics with farmers in our rural communities. They're trying to play politics with this extremely divisive issue, and I think it's absolutely appalling that members opposite would take this opportunity in the Manitoba Legislature to play politics with farmers' lives. I think that is absolutely atrocious.

On the one hand, the first resolution that we debated here today in the Manitoba Legislature took a very, I'll say dictatorial top-down approach of Big Brother. I know best; I know better than the farmers about how to sell my wheat, barley and so on. That's what they say: We know best; we know what's right. I quote right from the resolution: "make clear its support for the CWB's single desk." Well, if that's the case, then the next resolution, well, what does it say? Oh, but we better give the farmers a say.

Well, Mr. Speaker, you cannot have it both ways. You either take the dictatorial approach or you take the more democratic approach which is something that we on this side of the House are very much in favour of. We believe that the farmers should have a say, and we have said that clearly in our resolution. I'd like to make it clear right now that if members opposite choose to vote against our resolution, they are choosing to vote for their dictatorial top-down Big Brother approach to this very important issue.

I say shame on them, Mr. Speaker, because that is not what's in the best interests of the farmers in our communities. I say shame on them and I encourage them to do the right thing and support our resolution.

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, I had a bit of a difficulty getting up there because my colleague from Tuxedo wanted to speak. I tried to rush up because she's a difficult act to follow. She has put on the record some very, very good points.

You know, I'm always proud to be a Progressive Conservative but probably never more so than tonight as I have listened to the comments and the very valid arguments from a different perspective, some different areas, in saying why it is that we should support this amendment.

I would say to the members opposite, to the government, that you don't have to. You don't all have to follow a line with the lead duck there, the Premier (Mr. Doer), trying to follow along. You can actually have some of your own thoughts and some of your own ideas because soon, probably not too far in the distance, we'll be out on the campaign trail, and you might actually have to have some of your own ideas. You might actually have to tell your constituents what you stand for.

We know that there's a lot of members opposite who are going to be campaigning against strong Progressive Conservatives who have strong ideas about the future, who don't look 70, a hundred years back, to how things used to be done but who are progressive and looking to the future about how things should be done in the future because that's what it's about.

I would say, in particular, to the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith), the Member for Brandon West should be concerned about the formidable vision that he'll be seeing in the next election. He needs to stand up for his own constituents and say, I won't just be a yes man for the Premier; I'll actually say what I believe for my constituents.

I say as we near the vote on this amendment, there's a great deal of irony. *[interjection]* Well, I used to say things about the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale). I know that I kind of converted him at the last crime meeting I had in his constituency, where his constituents were saying there's no justice in this province and they looked over at the Member for Burrows and said he's part of the problem. So I think we're already in good stead in that constituency based on what I saw just a couple

of weeks ago when I visited his riding and talked to his constituents.

But I would say there's a great deal of irony here as we approach this vote, and it will be very interesting to see what the members do. First of all, it's sort of ironic that they're stalling their own Throne Speech, and perhaps I shouldn't be surprised because of the nature of that Throne Speech and how little there was for real Manitobans. Perhaps I shouldn't be surprised that they don't want to debate that Throne Speech as we go forward, but you know they're also selling legislation.

When we started off this little blip of a session, Mr. Speaker, we only had about seven days to debate legislation. I remember at one point, and it must have been in June or something, where the Premier was saying there are important pieces of legislation like the whistle-blower legislation, and now he doesn't want to debate it any more. He certainly doesn't want to talk about Crocus. We know he's been dodging and deflecting like a bug on a windshield trying to avoid getting hit on that one.

But more clearly we know that with only seven days to debate legislation they burnt one day. Fifteen percent of the days to debate legislation have now been set aside to deal with federal issues. If it wasn't for us and the willingness to go later tonight, they would have probably burnt tomorrow too, and then 30 percent of the days to deal with legislation would have been gone.

It is strange that a government is so ashamed of its own record, so ashamed. I understand why the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) is ashamed; she's got a lot to be ashamed about. But I would say to those members opposite that they shouldn't be, you know, at this stage of the game so ashamed they don't want to debate their own legislative agenda, that they'll stall their legislative agenda. But there are other ironies. You know, you turn on the TV and hear ads about "Spirited Energy," and one of the ads talks about how in Manitoba our people can do anything. It doesn't say anything about, well, only if we sort of keep them restrained, only if we have a monopoly in place.

On the one hand, it talks about the ability to go out, Manitobans to compete in an open market, but here in the Legislature it's a different story. What an irony. On the one hand, when they're saying one thing with ads that they're spending millions of dollars on, but they're arguing for something completely different. Completely different.

The Minister of Agriculture should ask herself about other ironies, the contradictions. I say to the Minister of Agriculture, on the one hand, they put on the Order Paper a move for a plebiscite, but then they turn around and they say we're going to actually tell you how you should vote. Well, what kind of a vote is that? What sort of a democracy is that where the government says this is how you should vote but let's have that vote. That's not a voice at all. That's not a voice at all and that's certainly not what farmers deserve, but now, of course, they're asking—we're going to find out I'm sure in a few minutes whether or not this government will vote against this motion or this amendment for a plebiscite. Are you going to vote against a plebiscite? We're going to find out.

An Honourable Member: They were for it before they were against it.

Mr. Goertzen: They were for it before they were against it, and we're going to find out very clearly in a few minutes. We'll watch as minister after minister stands up to see if they're going to vote down on the plebiscite. If they vote against that plebiscite, we'll clearly go into rural Manitoba and to areas of the city and say this is a government that didn't want to give you a fair voice in the future when the changes happen. They didn't want to give you that voice. If these members vote against that plebiscite, I would say, shame on you. We'll find out where your democratic voice is, and we're going to find out very soon. The minister will have to defend whether or not she actually believes in the voice of farmers, yea or nay, no more weasel words, up or down, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this resolution and to the amendment.

First I'd like to pay a short tribute to the Canadian Wheat Board and the role it has played in the Manitoba economy and the role it still plays. The Canadian Wheat Board is important in what it has done in marketing barley and wheat from Manitoba farmers, and it's also been very important in contributing to the employment in the economy and the grain industry in Winnipeg as well as in rural Manitoba and, of course, in Brandon and other cities around the province too.

* (19:30)

It is our view that allowing Manitoba producers to have a vote on both wheat and barley at the same time is the best solution, and there are several reasons for this. First, we see that what the Leader of

the Opposition has said is being somewhat disingenuous when he says that the removal of a single-desk marketing capacity for wheat for the Canadian Wheat Board is not on the table. No, it's been proposed by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Agriculture in the last election. Removing the single-desk marketing capacity for wheat from the Canadian Wheat Board has been recommended by the federal Conservative government's four-week task force.

Removing the single-desk marketing capacity for wheat from the Canadian Wheat Board is on the table. Indeed, it is creating some significant uncertainty for those involved in the grain industry in Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, I would argue that we need to remove this cloud of uncertainty from the industry. We should give producers the ability to vote on wheat as well as on barley, and the two votes should be at the same time to remove the present uncertainty from the grain industry in our province. Until these issues are voted upon and the future is clear, whether it's one way or the other way, this uncertainty will hang over the industry.

Uncertainty is bad for business. Let me give you an example, and I would speak now to the huge uncertainty which has been created by the present NDP government in the hog industry. The uncertainty in the hog industry is great because we have a situation where we have a government which was working very hard in promoting the expansion of the hog industry and then, all of a sudden, recently has announced it wants a moratorium on construction of new hog barns. There was no warning. There was just all of a sudden a stop, an edict, an end to the expansion of the hog industry, and I know many in the hog industry who are very upset at the NDP government. They see this as the dumbest thing that the NDP government has done, and they have done this and it is dumb because it's creating uncertainty in the industry. People who are ready to invest and build hog barns, or invest in other ways in the industry now are very unsure about what they are going to do because of the uncertainty created by this NDP government. Indeed, I suspect quite a number will now move their investments into Saskatchewan because the NDP have created this uncertainty in the hog industry.

I note that the uncertainty in the hog industry is particularly great because we have no idea when the moratorium will be lifted, or indeed if it will ever be lifted under this government. They've given no time line as to when it might be lifted—in six months, a

year, two years, three years, who knows. At the pace which they move, there is a lot of uncertainty, and it is not helping the people in the hog industry. Yes, the government should have made sure that the environmental issues were being well looked after. Yes, the government should have made sure that there is much less phosphorus going into Lake Winnipeg, but you didn't need to put a moratorium on the hog industry to do this. There should have been much better approaches to the hog industry. Indeed, the fact that a moratorium was put on speaks to the abysmal failure of this government's policies with regard to environmental management in the hog industry, or at least as people perceive them in the hog industry. All of a sudden, with this about-face with this moratorium we have a situation with uncertainty. And so we feel in the wheat and grain industry, in the barley industry, we should have the uncertainty removed as soon as possible, and that is why we believe we should have the vote on both wheat and on barley together, and let's remove the uncertainty.

The uncertainty is not just in terms of farmers, it is in terms of the future of the Canadian Wheat Board, it is in terms of the future of many other businesses which relate in some way to the grain industry. It is uncertainty with respect to the future of the Port of Churchill. Let's get the vote done, let's get decisions made one way or the other, and let's get the uncertainty removed, this cloud removed from the future of the Canadian Wheat Board and of the grain industry in Manitoba.

As Liberals, we agree with some of the things that the Conservatives have said about the bungling by the NDP. We agree that the presence of an NDP government has been a detriment to the development of business in Manitoba. We are quite concerned about some of the anti-business attitudes of the NDP and the anti-value-added attitudes of the Minister of Agriculture as she'd expressed them recently. We in the Liberal Party are very strongly in support of the development of value-added industries.

That, of course, is why we are encouraged when we hear from Wheat Board directors like Bill Toews, who'd been elected by farmers, that he and other directors are aggressively pursuing changes to the Canadian Wheat Board within the single-desk mandate in order to promote the development of value-added industries. We see that value-added industries—and, we believe, that value-added industries can grow and develop rapidly in Manitoba

within a system where the Canadian Wheat Board still has a single-desk marketing capacity for wheat.

We agree with Bill Toews that the Canadian Wheat Board with its single desk has to be aggressive in how it promotes value added, because such value-added opportunities are important. They're important for farmers, they're important for rural communities, and they're important for all of Manitoba.

But we come to a bottom line. We have supported the single desk for wheat because we believe, at this point, it is the best option. But it must be farmers who decide. Farmers must be able to vote, and farmers, we believe, must be able to vote on both wheat and barley. That is our position. Farmers should vote on both wheat and barley at the same time. Let's clear the uncertainty.

I would add one more comment. You know, the NDP in calling for this vote are pretending to support the great supporters of democracy. If so, why did the NDP not support a vote by cattle producers on the levy of \$2-a-head that they were proposing, a mandatory levy? The NDP, when it comes to provincial issues, don't seem to support democracy very well, but when it's a federal matter, they're all for a vote. We recognize that the NDP are pretty hypocritical, but, in spite of this, our view is that democracy should be supported, whether it is federal or provincial. We should be supporters of democracy because it's a very important way of making decisions, a very important way of involving farmers or others in decision making and to get better results for all people in Manitoba.

So that, Mr. Speaker, is our position. We see that we should have the vote soon on both wheat and barley, and that the vote should be at the same time because that would be the optimum that can be achieved.

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

An Honourable Member: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the proposed amendment of the honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler).

Do the members wish to have the amendment read?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, okay.

THAT the resolution be amended by deleting all of the words after the first word "WHEREAS" and replacing them with the following:

the Canadian Wheat Board has been the sole marketer for barley and wheat for western Canadian farmers; and

WHEREAS a strong Canadian Wheat Board should continue to play a role in marketing western Canadian grains; and

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Some members have asked to have the amendment read and those members should have the right to hear the amendment, so I ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

WHEREAS in light of changing markets, products and economic conditions many western Canadian farmers believe that more marketing flexibility would improve opportunities for marketing grain, and create the opportunity for value-added businesses; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Wheat Board has already taken positive steps to increase some marketing flexibility in response to requests from western Canadian grain producers; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Wheat Board is governed by federal legislation; and

WHEREAS in exercising its jurisdiction the federal government has decided to hold a plebiscite of western farmers on the marketing of barley; and

WHEREAS the federal government has stated that no changes are currently being proposed for the marketing of wheat.

* (19:40)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba make clear its understanding that the federal government has sole authority for changes to the Canadian Wheat Board Act. In recognition of federal authority in this area, we indicate our support for the federal government's decision to hold a plebiscite for the marketing of barley and call on it to hold a plebiscite in advance of any changes to the marketing of western Canadian grain, including wheat.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Formal Vote

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Official Opposition House Leader): A recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

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

The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler).

Division

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

Yeas

Cullen, Cummings, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Goertzen, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Penner, Rowat, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu.

Nays

Aglugub, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Brick, Caldwell, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Gerrard, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Reid, Rondeau, Santos, Smith, Struthers, Swan, Wowchuk.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 15, Nays 30.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: We will move on to the main motion moved by the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk). Are there any speakers?

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker, it's a privilege to be able to speak here in this House about such an important issue for farmers in Manitoba and, of course, when you look at the resolution that the government has

brought forward, I wanted to add a few things to what I'd said earlier about this resolution and that is the one particular issue that is so pertinent to it is the misfacts that they've got in their own resolution, and I just have to make the comment that when you've got—

An Honourable Member: NDP math.

Mr. Maguire: Yes, NDP math.

—a claim of \$220-million contribution to the provincial GDP from a single-desk monopoly, Mr. Speaker, and yet the minister claims that there's only \$10 to \$15 a tonne benefit from having the monopoly, then you'd have to have this 15 to 22 million tonnes of production a year in Manitoba alone. Now, you can't get that from the fact in her own resolution. She says there are 3 million acres of Wheat Board grains. Well, you know, this is pretty tremendous math all right. If that was true, 220 million benefit and around three million tonnes at a tonne to the acre of wheat, 37 bushels an acre, last year's wheat production average, you would have a \$73 a tonne benefit in Manitoba, not a \$10 to \$15 a tonne benefit. Now, that is assuming that there is a \$10 to \$15 a tonne benefit. So why would anybody vote for something that's this misconstrued in its relation to mathematics in Manitoba?

* (19:50)

Now, you know, of course, we will give her the benefit of the doubt, and maybe there is some spin-off on this, but even these numbers are wrong because there's a much bigger benefit than \$220 million in Manitoba. All she has to do is go back and look at any statistical handbook about Manitoba's production. After all, she is the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), so it is from her department. I'm assuming that she dug these up because I know the people in her department. They would never do this. They have a much better understanding of the issues of dollars and cents and agriculture than to come up with these numbers and put them before Manitoba farmers.

It is such a hypocritical position for this government to be in to vote in favour of a single-desk resolution as they did in the first one and then say: We're going to have a plebiscite, but the only real answer you can have is to have a single desk. Well, you've determined that this government's biased in the fact that the only way that you can see a future is with your blinders on and go back to 1930,

like the minister pointed out in her opening comments, when the Wheat Board was formed. I've already gone into the good reasons why the board was formed, Mr. Speaker.

I believe that, as we have changed over time and as farmers have now got access to, basically, freedom of information that's out there today on their Internet sites as well, they don't load grain in a wagon box, haul it five miles to an elevator and take what they can get for it at that time anymore. They market the product on their home site, even if it is wheat that's going to the monopoly, Mr. Speaker, even if it is wheat that's there today because they can't afford to take this product that they're spending hundreds of dollars an acre in production and dare take it to an elevator that they don't already know what they're going to get for it. That means that there is some negotiation even today in monopoly grains because they deal with the company as to whether or not that company will give them a break on the freight rate, maybe they'll give them a break on the handling charges, maybe they'll give them a break for doing business with them on their fertilizer supplies, for a certain volume of product that'll come into their elevator. There are all kinds of loss leaders that are out there today in a competitive marketplace that the grain companies are already working with the Wheat Board in relation to the volume of exports and the volume of grain that that elevator company is going to buy from that particular individual farmer.

Mr. Speaker, so with all of these competitive issues out there in the marketplace today, it's so ironic that the board would say: We don't want to give farmers any more choices. Or that the government, I should say, of the day in Manitoba saying: We don't want to give farmers any more choices. We want them to have a single desk.

An Honourable Member: Let the producers decide.

Mr. Maguire: Mr. Speaker—

An Honourable Member: Exactly.

Mr. Maguire: The irony of this is, Mr. Speaker, we just voted on a resolution, a fine amendment from the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) that indicated that farmers should have a choice. Farmers should have a plebiscite. Farmers should decide, and the Minister of Agriculture in Manitoba voted it down. She voted it down. She and her government, I'm sure at her advice, voted against farmers having a plebiscite on barley in Manitoba and any future changes to wheat.

As I said in my earlier comments, would the minister be wanting a vote on other grains if the government of the day federally had already decided to put them in the board? I doubt it. We wouldn't be here. We wouldn't be here. She wouldn't be here.

An Honourable Member: Explain it to her.

Mr. Maguire: Well, if you have to explain that one to her—it's such an ironic situation to be in when farmers out there today, young farmers are getting education, they're going to university, they're getting degrees in commerce, degrees in business management, degrees in soil and plant science, degrees in marketing, Mr. Speaker, and then the government of Manitoba is telling them they can't market their own grain. Shame.

My predecessors in this House, and I am proud of the fact that they brought in new-generation crop legislation in Manitoba that this government has shelved. That's the sad part; they've shelved it. They're not allowing farmers out there today the opportunity to move forward with these opportunities under this kind of legislation that's available today, and they're not allowing them—they give lip service, mind you, to saying that we'll build all the ethanol plants you want. Of course, they're stalling on some of those issues as well, trying to hold progress back in those areas or we'd have more of them already built in Manitoba. But, of course, Mr. Speaker, that, as I said earlier, is from the fact that these companies only deal in feed wheat and feed barley, as the former federal Liberal Agriculture Minister, Otto Lang, opened it up in the late '70s, because he saw the vision that you need to get rid of the red tape from one province to another in relation to the trade in grain.

So, fortunately, today we're in a situation where farmers can actually haul grain across. Actually, if you owned land on both sides of the border at one time, you couldn't take the grain from Saskatchewan to Manitoba to market it in your own elevators. That, thank goodness, has changed. That anti-democratic view of how you can do business in Manitoba has been shelved in previous governments, Mr. Speaker, and that's 30 years old. This is 30-year-old history.

Mr. Speaker, this government today is saying that those farmers out there today, the young farmers—and I'm respectful of the farmers that are 70 years old out there today as well, 65 to 70 years old. I'm very respectful of their view and their right to be able to continue to use a strong Wheat Board because I want to put it on the record that this side of the

House knows that the Wheat Board will be there long after the grain companies and the farmers of today are probably gone. I have every confidence in the board's ability, with some of the players that they have in that institution, to be able to be competitive in world markets, to be able to offer contracts to farmers, so that the farmers will continue to want to contract with the board. But it has to be with the opportunity for farmers to be able to have a choice in how these grains are marketed.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has said, oh, they put this big right-wing, if you will, pro-choice group together from the federal government to put a panel in place to come down with a decision that was already made. I don't suppose if you would've taken a poll for one instant that this Minister of Agriculture would have ever thought that that committee, if it had the views that she is saying it has, would have ever allowed for the opportunity of other grains to be marketed by the Wheat Board other than wheat and barley, and it did. It would have never given that institution the opportunity to buy elevators or to buy infrastructure at the coasts to move grain into ships. It would have never allowed them to buy ships, which it does. It would have never allowed them to buy rail cars, which it still does. It would have never allowed them to get into value-added processing, which it does, if she'd just take the time to read it, as opposed to the Wheat Board's own view and maybe that of some of the groups that are out there today as well that indicated, well, we need to have a monopoly or we'll do our own thing but we need a billion and a half dollars from the federal government.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is why we will be voting against this resolution that the minister has here that calls on the federal government to hold this fair producer plebiscite. We're voting against it because of the hypocrisy of this government. One minute you've got to have a single desk and the next minute the only way you can go is to have a plebiscite as long as it's in our favour.

So, Mr. Speaker, this is consistent with a number of other things that the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) brought up earlier, and maybe I have mentioned a few of them as well. Our leader mentioned them and many of my colleagues have mentioned them in the debate today as well. The \$2 tax on cattle was such a hypocritical position and then, oh, they gave farmers a choice.

You know, the idea of land-use planning back in Bill 12, I think it was, that we debated through the summer two years ago, gave municipalities the right to have land-use planning in Manitoba. They brought in the toughest phosphorous regulations in Manitoba. They brought in tremendous regulations around manure management distribution in Manitoba. With all of these things in place, the toughest legislation anywhere which farmers are abiding by, they came out and said we can't build any more barns in Manitoba, but it's just a pause. It's not a moratorium.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) can't talk out of both sides of her mouth as she's been doing in this House for seven years. She's got to come to the point where she's willing to speak on behalf of farmers and represent them in Manitoba. She's got to do a better job on the CAIS program. She's got to do a better job on the crop insurance reviews that she needs to do.

* (20:00)

For these reasons and the hypocritical numbers that are in her own resolution, I believe you could go on and on for hours on this, but I think we need to bring this to a close. We need to make sure that farmers of Manitoba know that this minister is also against value-added industries in Manitoba. With all the lip service she's been giving, I just have to quote from the *Farmer's Independent Weekly*, a comment in the November 16 issue where she said: I want to see farmers get a better return. Well, who doesn't, Mr. Speaker? There isn't one of us in this House who doesn't want to see farmers get a better return.

But she goes on to say—and this is before the House of Commons Agriculture Committee of Canada: "I don't want them to be sacrificed for valued added." Well, I would have a concern as she might have meant in this statement. They might have had a concern that these industries could take advantage of farmers, but I would say to you today that these farmers today, whether they're senior farmers or whether they're the young farmers coming out of college, have a handle on the value of their industry to their farm and what their investment is in that farm, or they wouldn't be farming any longer.

Mr. Speaker, this is a hypocritical view of the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) to go out and say we are going to add value. We are going to do it through biodiesel. We are going to do it through ethanol. We are going to do it through wind farming, which would be a benefit to farmers on a lease basis for even the windmills in Manitoba. This minister

continues to blow wind and blow smoke at the farmers in Manitoba because she is saying, I don't want these poor farmers to be taken advantage of.

You know, Mr. Speaker, knowing full well a number of the farmers that were named by my colleague from Minnedosa tonight in this House and others around the province that all of my colleagues know, and I think even from a number of the members of the government side of the House who have been trying to get value added in some of their areas and probably having a hard time doing it, winning those debates even in caucus, that this minister's comment before the House of Commons Agriculture Committee does not represent the issues of rural Manitobans in this province. We may even have to ask for her resignation at some point if she doesn't come to the view of how you can actually help these farmers get into these industries and capture some of that value added beyond their farm gate because the future in agriculture today is very well managed in the production efforts of these farmers, whether it is in grain or livestock.

But, Mr. Speaker, this government does not know how to allow farmers, or even put tax incentives or incentives in place to allow farmers to invest in the industry beyond their farm gates. So, with those few comments, I just want to close debate on this issue, or at least end my comments on it, and we will be voting against this resolution because I think there is just no issue—[interjection] The Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith) is going on in his seat tonight as well, and there's a new flax plant being built. It just broke the ground on the east side of Brandon, in Brandon East; the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) is here in the House tonight as well.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Brandon West hasn't had an initial thought in regard to new investments in that area in regard to value-added industries for agriculture. I'm not saying that there aren't new things happening in Brandon, but I'll tell you, he has not come forward as a trade minister in this province, somebody that's supposed to be in charge of competitiveness as well. I mean, how could he possibly support that there is only one way to sell grain in Manitoba when he knows full well that—[interjection] If he had any confidence in the participants at the Canadian Wheat Board, if he had any confidence in the Wheat Board's managerial ability to extract the best dollar for farmers, as I do, then he would not be sitting in this House saying the

only way to go is to have a monopoly and a single desk.

So, with those words, I am going to end my comments, and I urge all members in this House to vote this resolution down.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, the custom in this House is usually one where, when members of the opposition speak, the next turn goes to the government side, but as we saw in the debate earlier on the amendment to this resolution, the government is afraid to stand in its place to speak on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, it seems like the Member for Brandon West, the Minister of Competitiveness, has lots to say, from his chirp from his seat, but he cannot stand up in his place and put anything on the record because, of course, he has very little to put on the record.

Mr. Speaker, something else that was quite appalling a minute ago was the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) who said that she called for us to support a plebiscite. Now, I don't know whether she can't read or whether she can't hear, but if she had read the amendment to the resolution, it calls for a plebiscite on barley and to support the federal government in terms of their call for a plebiscite, and also to have a plebiscite on wheat when that issue arose.

So, Mr. Speaker, I don't know what kind of game this minister is playing, but it is not one that farmers will look at with any kind of respect. If this is what we have for leadership from this government on the issue of agriculture, it is no wonder that our farmers are in difficulty in Manitoba because there is no leadership. There is no guidance. There is no advocate for the farmers in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, our side of the House will continue to advocate for the best interests of farmers. We will continue to speak out on issues on behalf of farmers because that is who sends us here to speak on their behalf. When a resolution like this comes up, I am proud that most of the members on this side of the House spoke to the amendment on this resolution. I want to thank them for that.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, we are also speaking on the resolution itself, which we don't see the government speaking to. If you agree with the resolution, then why don't you stand up and put a few remarks on the record to substantiate why you agree

with the resolution. But you have no argument, you have no position.

When I look at the Member for Dauphin, the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers), who has a number of farmers in his area, in the next few short months he will be going out there to ask for their support, yet he can't point to a single page in *Hansard* where he has stood up in this House and spoken on this resolution or in resolutions that relate to agriculture, Mr. Speaker. Yet he is supposed to be going out there and saying he is the advocate for the farmers in the Dauphin area. Well, we'll tell the farmers in Dauphin exactly what this member has been doing other than sitting in his seat, occupying a space.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution, as I said before, is nothing but a diversion. The Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) and her Premier (Mr. Doer) have admitted by addressing this issue that they have failed in addressing provincial issues as they relate to agriculture. Where is the minister when it comes to changes to the CAIS program? Where is the minister when it comes to addressing the issue of the livestock industry?

She sat by today and could not answer the questions that were posed by the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) regarding when the moratorium on hog production is going to start and when it is going to end. There were three straightforward questions. When will this moratorium—which she said: Oh, it is not a moratorium, it is a pause. Call it what you will. The Member for Lakeside asked a simple question: When will this pause begin? She could not answer the question. Then he said: When will the pause end? She could not answer the question. [*interjection*] Let's not get into that. It's late at night, I know.

Mr. Speaker, farmers in Manitoba are looking for leadership. They are not getting it from this government. But they are getting it from the opposition party here. We have talked to farmers all around the province. There are farmers who support a single desk. There are farmers who want an open choice. If we were to talk to the younger agricultural producers in this province, they would tell you that they want to exercise every opportunity they can for marketing their products. That means that they are looking for options other than what we have today. Those options may include a more open process, a more open Canadian Wheat Board.

* (20:10)

The minister says she wants farmers to vote. What are they to vote on? What is the question when she doesn't put up the alternative? If people have to make a choice, they need an option. The task force did exactly that. They spoke to all of the interest groups in agriculture, and they put the options before the people. So, if farmers are going to vote, at least allow them to see what the option is so that in fact they have a choice to make. Simply putting out a question to producers whether or not they want a monopoly is not a fair question. It is not a question that producers are looking for. They want to see what the government has put in front of them as an alternative.

This government, Mr. Speaker, has no ideas, has no options. It simply wants to hang on to what is old and what is the status quo. The status quo will not do today. Farmers are speaking out, and they're saying that they need to have a choice. They want to be involved in the choice. They want to make the decision for themselves, as they should, and this government is not listening to them.

Now, Mr. Speaker, we heard the Premier get up in his spot and with great gusto he went on a tirade, but in his tirade there was little substance in terms of what he was saying. It was just single desk, single desk, single desk. That is the farmers' union position. That is this minister's position, and, unfortunately, some members on the Wheat Board have no other view than that. But there are options and we should allow those options to be studied by farmers and then to allow those farmers to make an intelligent decision based on the information that's before them rather than rhetoric and propaganda that has been put out by this Premier and this minister because all they put before the farmers is propaganda, half-truths as we've seen in this resolution, half-truths in terms of what this minister has said in front of the Standing Committee on Agriculture.

It shows very clearly that she's not interested in value-added processing, Mr. Speaker, to give opportunity to our young people because she says that that will come at the cost of farmers. That is baloney. That is hog wash. She is misleading farmers in this province, as is her boss, the Premier of our province.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'm proud to stand here today, and I will stand on every occasion I can and I will tell the people the truth about what goes on in this Legislature about the minister's stand, about her Premier's stand. Of course, everybody else on that

side of the House is silent. Where's the minister of highways who represents the LaVerendrye constituency that has agriculture in it. Where is the Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade (Mr. Smith) who represents Brandon West where there are farmers. Oh, yes, Mr. Speaker. He hasn't got anything to say in his place and that is sad.

So I think Manitobans will hold this government accountable, and they certainly will tell them where the truth has to be in the next election. They will also tell them where to go which means to the opposition ranks, and I look forward to that.

Mr. Speaker, we cannot support this resolution, but the amendment to this resolution that was presented was sensible. It was straightforward and it supported the agriculture producers in Manitoba.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk)—[*interjection*]

I've already started putting the question, but if there's agreement we could let the member speak and then I'll put the question. If there is agreement of the House?

Is there agreement of the House?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: No? Okay. It's been denied.

The question before the House is the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food.

Is it the pleasure of the House for me to read the motion?

An Honourable Member: No.

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, okay.

WHEREAS the CWB is controlled by a democratically elected board of directors; and

WHEREAS economic analysis has found that the CWB's overall economic impact on Manitoba includes 3,270 total jobs; over 400 downtown Winnipeg head office jobs; \$126 million in wages; and \$220 million contribution to provincial GDP; and

WHEREAS the potential loss of CWB shipments through the Port of Churchill would have a devastating impact on the northern port and it could rob producers of an affordable shipping alternative; and

WHEREAS 8,000 Manitoba producers seed more than 3 million acres of CWB grain each year and the loss of the CWB would negatively impact funding for agricultural research; and

WHEREAS without the CWB, farmers would lose their most important advocate in matters of transportation, grain handling and international trade;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call on the federal government to hold a fair producer plebiscite on the future of the CWB's monopoly for both wheat and barley.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Formal Vote

Mr. Chomiak: Yeases and nos.

Mr. Speaker: Yeases and Nays.

A recorded vote having been called, call in the members.

* (20:20)

The question before the House is the motion moved by the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk).

Division

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

Yeas

Aglugub, Altemeyer, Ashton, Bjornson, Brick, Caldwell, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Gerrard, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McGifford, Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Reid, Rondeau, Santos, Selinger, Smith, Struthers, Swan, Wowchuk.

Nays

Cullen, Cummings, Derkach, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Goertzen, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Rowat, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 31, Nays 14.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hour being past 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, November 20, 2006

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