

Second Session - Thirty-Ninth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

Official Report
(Hansard)

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authority of
The Honourable George Hickes
Speaker*

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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.
BLADY, Sharon	Kirkfield Park	N.D.P.
BOROTSIK, Rick	Brandon West	P.C.
BRAUN, Erna	Rossmere	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
BRIESE, Stuart	Ste. Rose	P.C.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CULLEN, Cliff	Turtle Mountain	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.
GRAYDON, Cliff	Emerson	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
HOWARD, Jennifer	Fort Rouge	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.
MARCELINO, Flor	Wellington	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.
PEDERSEN, Blaine	Carman	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SARAN, Mohinder	The Maples	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELBY, Erin	Southdale	N.D.P.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
SWAN, Andrew, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.
<i>Vacant</i>	Elmwood	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, September 8, 2008

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYER

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Speaker's Statement

Resignation

Mr. Speaker: I have a statement for the House.

I must inform the House that Jim Maloway, the honourable Member for Elmwood, has resigned his seat in the House effective September 8, 2008. I am therefore tabling his resignation and my letter to the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council advising of the vacancy created in the House membership.

PETITIONS

Long-Term Care Facility—Morden

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I wish to present the following petition.

The background for this petition is as follows:

Tabor Home Incorporated is a time-expired personal care home in Morden with safety, environmental and space deficiencies.

The seniors of Manitoba are valuable members of the community with increasing health-care needs requiring long-term care.

The community of Morden and the surrounding area are experiencing substantial population growth.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to strongly consider giving priority for funding to develop and staff a new 100-bed long-term care facility so that clients are not exposed to unsafe conditions and so that Boundary Trails Health Centre beds remain available for acute-care patients instead of waiting placement clients.

This is signed by Janice Enns, Erika Dyck, Cheryl Warkentin and many, many others.

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

Cancer Treatment Drugs

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Colon cancer is the second leading cause of death.

Colon cancer affects both men and women almost equally.

Avastin and Erbitux are two drugs that have been shown to work and offer hope to patients who suffer from this disease.

CancerCare Manitoba is offering Avastin to patients on a case-by-case basis, claiming the cost to be too much to give all patients the prescribed treatment.

Consequently, patients and their families are often forced to make the difficult choice between paying for the treatment themselves or going without.

The CancerCare Manitoba Act stipulates: "The objects of the corporation are the conduct of a program of diagnosis of, treatment of and research in"

The principles of the Canada Health Act under the criteria list, universality: One hundred percent of the insured residents of a province or territory must be entitled to the insured health services provided by the plans on uniform terms and conditions.

Several other provinces are providing access to these two drugs for colon cancer patients.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Premier of Manitoba (Mr. Doer) and the Minister of Health (Ms. Oswald) to consider providing CancerCare Manitoba with the appropriate funding necessary to provide the standard of care treatment, Avastin, to all colon cancer patients.

To request the Premier of Manitoba and the Minister of Health to consider accelerating the process by which new cancer treatment drugs are added to the formulary so that more Manitobans are

able to be treated in the most effective manner possible.

Signed by Kim Legary, Gerry Ilchyna, Sue Bryner and many, many others.

Education Funding

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Historically, the Province of Manitoba has received funding for education by the assessment of property that generates taxes. This unfair tax is only applied to selected property owners in certain areas and confines.

Property-based school tax is becoming an ever-increasing burden without acknowledging the owner's income or owner's ability to pay.

The provincial sales tax was instituted for the purpose of funding education. However, monies generated by this tax are being placed in general revenue.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth (Mr. Bjornson) consider removing education funding by school tax or education levies from all properties in Manitoba.

To request that the Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth consider finding a more equitable method of funding education, such as general revenue, following the constitutional funding of education by the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by Sophie Begal, Bill Begal, Gilles Girardin and many, many, many others.

Pharmacare Deductibles

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The NDP government has increased Pharmacare deductibles by 5 percent each year for the past seven years, with the curious exception of the 2007 election year.

As a result of the cumulative 34 percent hike in Pharmacare deductibles by the NDP government, some Manitobans are forced to choose between milk and medicine.

Seniors, fixed and low-income-earning Manitobans are the most negatively affected by these increases.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the Premier (Mr. Doer) of Manitoba to consider reversing his decision to increase Pharmacare deductibles by 5 percent in budget 2008.

To request the Premier of Manitoba to consider reducing health-care bureaucracy, as previously promised, and to consider directing those savings into sustaining Pharmacare and improving patient care.

This is signed by Jean Jurek, Don Timmerman, Ruth Timmerman and many, many other seniors, Mr. Speaker.

* (13:40)

Lake Winnipeg Improvement

Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo): I wish to present the following petition, and these are the reasons for this petition.

Manitobans are deeply committed to protecting the environment, particularly the province's countless lakes, rivers, streams and other bodies of water. They expect the same leadership role from their provincial government.

Since taking office in 1999, the NDP government has made countless announcements and promises about cleaning up Lake Winnipeg.

The repeated NDP government announcements related to Lake Winnipeg have not translated into meaningful improvements to the health of the lake.

This is seen in the repeated issuing of advisories for Lake Winnipeg beaches.

It is also seen in the continued proliferation of algal blooms on Lake Winnipeg.

Deterioration in the quality of Lake Winnipeg will adversely affect the commercial and recreational fishing industries and the tourism sector.

Given the costs involved, there also needs to be a full debate over the merits of requiring the City of

Winnipeg to remove both nitrogen and phosphorus at its waste-water treatment plants.

Manitobans are increasingly frustrated with the NDP government's rhetoric and recycle promises on Lake Winnipeg, and they have lost confidence in the government's ability to rectify the situation.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to stop the rhetoric and to consider working in conjunction with all stakeholders to finally develop meaningful strategies that will result in measurable improvements to the health of Lake Winnipeg.

To urge the provincial government to consider fulfilling its commitment to provide one-third of the funding towards the upgrades to the City of Winnipeg's waste-water treatment plants and to take the needed steps to stop the combined sewer overflows.

To urge the provincial government to consider publishing a detailed annual report that outlines the improvements it has actually made to the health of Lake Winnipeg so that all Manitobans can see the results of their efforts.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by Albert Wilson, Mike Tomhil, Simon Green and many, many others.

Power Line Development

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

These are the reasons for this petition:

Manitoba Hydro has been forced by the NDP government to construct a third high-voltage transmission line, Bipole III, down the west side of Lake Winnipegosis instead of on the east side of Lake Winnipeg, as recommended by Manitoba Hydro.

The line losses created by the NDP detour will result in a lost opportunity to displace dirty coal-generated electricity, which will create added and unnecessary greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to an additional 57,000 vehicles on our roads annually.

The former chair of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee has stated that an east-side bipole and a UNESCO World Heritage site can co-exist, contrary to NDP claims.

The NDP detour will cut through more forest than the eastern route and will cut through threatened aspen parkland areas, unlike the eastern route.

Former Member of the Legislative Assembly, Elijah Harper, has stated that east-side communities are devastated by the government's decision to abandon the east-side route, stating that this decision will resign them to poverty in perpetuity.

The NDP detour will lead to an additional debt of at least \$400 million related to the capital cost of line construction alone, to be left to future generations of Manitobans.

The NDP detour will result in increased line losses due to friction leading to lost energy sales of between \$250 million and \$1 billion over the life of the project.

The added debt and lost sales created by the NDP detour will make every Manitoba family at least \$4,000 poorer.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to abandon the NDP detour on the basis that it will result in massive environmental, social and economic damage to Manitoba.

To urge the provincial government to consider proceeding with the route originally recommended by Manitoba Hydro, subject to necessary regulatory approvals.

Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by Kevin Tutthill, Kel Smith, C. Cehapma and many, many others.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Standing Committee on Crown Corporations Sixth Report

Ms. Marilyn Brick (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Crown Corporations.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Crown Corporations presents the following as its Sixth Report.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense?

Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on CROWN CORPORATIONS presents the following as its Sixth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions:

- November 7, 2007
- August 28, 2008

All meetings were held in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2005
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2006
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2007
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 29, 2008 (by leave)

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the November 7, 2007 meeting:

- Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK
- Mr. JHA
- Ms. KORZENIOWSKI
- Ms. MARCELINO
- Mr. MARTINDALE
- Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF
- Mr. SWAN
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DERKACH
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Mr. MAGUIRE

Your Committee elected Mr. MARTINDALE as the Chairperson at the November 7, 2007 meeting.

Your Committee elected Mr. JHA as the Vice-Chairperson at the November 7, 2007 meeting.

Committee Membership for the August 28, 2008 meeting:

- Ms. BRICK
- Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR
- Mr. FAURSCHOU
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Ms. HOWARD

- Ms. KORZENIOWSKI
- Mr. REID
- Hon. Mr. SWAN
- Mrs. TAILLIEU

Your Committee elected Ms. BRICK as the Chairperson at the August 28, 2008 meeting.

Your Committee elected Ms. HOWARD as the Vice-Chairperson at the August 28, 2008 meeting.

Officials Speaking on Record

Officials speaking on the record at the November 7, 2007 meeting:

- Ms. Marilyn McLaren, President and Chief Executive Officer
- Ms. Shari Decter Hirst, Board Chairperson

Officials speaking on the record at the August 28, 2008 meeting:

- Ms. Marilyn McLaren, President and Chief Executive Officer

Reports Considered and Passed

Your Committee considered and passed the following reports as presented:

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2005

Reports Considered but not Passed

Your Committee considered the following reports but did not pass them:

- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2006
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 28, 2007
- Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the fiscal year ending February 29, 2008

Ms. Brick: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Ms. Howard), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on
Social and Economic Development
Sixth Report**

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Your Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development presents the following—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on SOCIAL & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT presents the following as its Sixth Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions:

- July 21, 2008
- July 22, 2008
- July 23, 2008
- July 24, 2008

All meetings were held in Room 255 of the Legislative Building.

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 45) – The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de retraite des enseignants**

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the July 21, 2008 meeting:

- Mr. ALTEMEYER
- Hon. Mr. BJORNSON
- Ms. BLADY
- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Mr. CALDWELL
- Mr. DYCK
- Mr. HAWRANIK
- Mr. JHA
- Mr. MARTINDALE
- Mr. SCHULER
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS

Your Committee elected Mr. ALTEMEYER as the Chairperson at the July 21, 2008 meeting.

Your Committee elected Ms. BLADY as the Vice-Chairperson at the July 21, 2008 meeting.

Substitutions received during committee proceedings at the July 21, 2008 meeting:

- Mrs. STEFANSON for Mr. BOROTSIK
- Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS for Mr. JHA

Committee Membership for the July 22, 2008 meeting:

- Mr. ALTEMEYER (Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. BJORNSON
- Mr. BOROTSIK
- Ms. BRICK
- Mr. BRIESE
- Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK
- Mr. DERKACH
- Ms. HOWARD
- Ms. MARCELINO
- Mr. SCHULER
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS

Your Committee elected Ms. BRICK as the Vice-Chairperson at the July 22, 2008 meeting.

Substitutions received during committee proceedings at the July 22, 2008 meeting:

- Mr. FAURSCHOU for Mr. DERKACH
- Mr. DEWAR for Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK

Committee Membership for the July 23, 2008 meeting:

- Mr. ALTEMEYER (Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. BJORNSON
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. FAURSCHOU
- Ms. MARCELINO
- Hon. Ms. McGIFFORD
- Mrs. MITCHELSON
- Hon. Mr. RONDEAU
- Mr. SARAN
- Mr. SCHULER
- Ms. SELBY

Your Committee elected Ms. BLADY as the Vice-Chairperson at the July 23, 2008 meeting.

Committee Membership for the July 24, 2008 meeting:

- Mr. ALTEMEYER (Chairperson)
- Hon. Mr. BJORNSON
- Ms. BLADY
- Ms. BRICK
- Mr. CULLEN
- Mr. DEWAR

- *Mr. GOERTZEN*
- *Mr. HAWRANIK*
- *Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS*
- *Mr. MALOWAY*
- *Mrs. MITCHELSON*

Your Committee elected Ms. BRICK as the Vice-Chairperson at the July 24, 2008 meeting.

Substitutions received during committee proceedings at the July 24, 2008 meeting:

- *Mr. FAURSCHOU for Mr. CULLEN*
- *Hon. Ms. MELNICK for Ms. IRVIN-ROSS*
- *Mr. SCHULER for Mr. GOERTZEN*
- *Mr. SARAN for Hon. Ms. MELNICK*
- *Ms. MARCELINO for Mr. MALOWAY*
- *Mr. BRIESE for Mrs. MITCHELSON*
- *Hon. Mr. CHOMIAK for Ms. BLADY*

Public Presentations

*Your Committee heard the following 111 presentations on **Bill (No. 45) – The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de retraite des enseignants:***

July 21, 2008,

Brian Paterson, Private Citizen
Marvin Krawec, Private Citizen
Pat Bowslaugh, Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba
Leslie Porteous, Private Citizen
Ken Malcolm, Private Citizen
Pat Hamm, Private Citizen
Blaine Johnson, Private Citizen
Adam Grabowski, Private Citizen
Lana Rinn, Boyne Chapter Retired Teachers of Manitoba
Georgina Dyck-Hacault, Private Citizen
Kyle McKinstry, Private Citizen
Shirley Augustine, Private Citizen
John Sushelnitsky, Private Citizen
Pam Stinson, Private Citizen
Joan Johnston, Private Citizen
Audrey Myers, Private Citizen
John Carley, Private Citizen
Alex Krawec, Private Citizen
Lynne Taillefer, Private Citizen
Wayne Hollier, President of Neepawa Area Retired Teacher's Association
Patrick Lacroix, Private Citizen
Gary Hooper, Private Citizen
John Warkentin, Private Citizen
Guy Hansen, Private Citizen

July 22, 2008,

Patricia Gendreau, Private Citizen
Marcel Gauthier, Private Citizen
Roger Legal, Private Citizen
Guy Gagnon, Private Citizen
Denis Clement, Private Citizen
Jean M. Taillefer, Private Citizen
Norma Lacroix-Gagné, President of the French Chapter of RTAM, the Éducatrices et Éducateurs manitobains à la retraite
Antoine Gagné, Private Citizen
Denis Bisson, Private Citizen
Lucien Loh, Private Citizen
Alfred Phaneuf, Private Citizen
Raymond Bisson, Private Citizen
Huguette Rempel, Private Citizen
Al Nickel, Private Citizen
David McAuley, Private Citizen
Pat Isaak, Manitoba Teachers' Society
Mariette Ferre, Private Citizen
Tom Ulrich, Private Citizen
Richard R. Benoit, Private Citizen
Anne Monk, Private Citizen
Karen Boughton, Private Citizen
Keith D. Boughton, Private Citizen
Wayne Hughes, Private Citizen
Dan Turner, President - River East Transcona Teacher's Association

July 23, 2008,

Jean Todd, Private Citizen
Deanna Dolff, Private Citizen
Laurena Leskiw, Private Citizen
John Nelson, Private Citizen
Paul Olson, Private Citizen
Terence Clifford, Private Citizen
Bernice Stebbing, Private Citizen
Brian Ardern, Private Citizen
Dr. Jacqueline Stalker, Private Citizen
Roland Stankevicius, Private Citizen
Marjory Grevstad, Private Citizen
Lyle Beattie, Private Citizen
Bill Johnston, Private Citizen
Brian Head, Private Citizen
Beverly Reeves, Private Citizen
Barbara Teskey, Private Citizen
Donna Miller, Private Citizen
Inez Striemer, Private Citizen
Iris Nowakowski, Private Citizen
Jean Ogren, Private Citizen
Kay Arnot, Private Citizen
Peggy Prendergast, Private Citizen
Lorraine Forrest, Private Citizen

Tom Forrest, Private Citizen
Maizie Walton, Private Citizen
Jake Peters, Private Citizen

July 24, 2008,

Barbara McDole, Private Citizen
Sharon Fischer, Private Citizen
Deedee Rizzo, Private Citizen
Maggie Keller, Private Citizen
Georgina Jarema, Private Citizen
Norman Grywinski, Private Citizen
Linda Asper, Private Citizen
Aubrey Asper, Private Citizen
Karen Wiebe, Private Citizen
Warren Ogren, Private Citizen
Patricia Grafenauer, Private Citizen
Jo-Anne Irving, Private Citizen
Ian MacIntyre, Private Citizen
Gregory Giesbrecht, Private Citizen
Phyllis Hunter, Private Citizen
Edith Doyle, Private Citizen
Philip Zubrycki, Private Citizen
David Bertnick, Private Citizen
Sandra Johnston, Private Citizen
Monique Ting, Private Citizen
Bob Thompson, Private Citizen
Albert Labun, Private Citizen
Valdine Johnson, Private Citizen
Edward Mann, Private Citizen
Lorne Ferley, Private Citizen
Jackie Wardell, Private Citizen
Ivan Pokus, Private Citizen
John Petrinka, Private Citizen
Bob Preston, Private Citizen
Ken Miller, Private Citizen
Clarice Gilchrist, Private Citizen
Dale Lund, Private Citizen
Dick Marshall, Private Citizen
Ruth Livingston, Private Citizen
Mary Barzey, Private Citizen
Lea Mansell, Private Citizen
Ursula Schindel-Ditchburn, Private Citizen

Written Submissions

Your Committee received the following 158 written submissions on **Bill (No. 45) – The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de retraite des enseignants:**

Albert E. Parsons, Private Citizen
Alice Sklar, Private Citizen
Arnold Reimer, Private Citizen
Asa L. Reid, Private Citizen
Barry Reilly, Private Citizen

Bernice & David Lewis, Private Citizen
Bertha Norberg, Private Citizen
Betty McLachlan, Private Citizen
Bohdan Danelak, Private Citizen
C.E.Darvill, Private Citizen
Clair Davies, Private Citizen
David P. Giesbrecht, Private Citizen
Dennis Wrightson, Private Citizen
Doreen Poersch, Private Citizen
Doreen Sage, Private Citizen
Doris Griffiths, Private Citizen
Dorothy Kilburn, Private Citizen
Ed and Andrea Hammond, Private Citizen
Edward Sklar, Private Citizen
Elizabeth Hilken, Private Citizen
Ellen Walker, Private Citizen
Frank Prouten, Private Citizen
George Novak, Private Citizen
Gloria Penner, Private Citizen
Henry Tkachuk, Private Citizen
Ingrid Humphries, Private Citizen
Irene Sulik, Private Citizen
J.M. Klassen, Private Citizen
Jack and Elizabeth McLachlan, Private Citizen
Jake Warkentin, Private Citizen
Janet Sirrell, Private Citizen
Jean Anderson, Private Citizen
Jerry Baltesson, Private Citizen
Jim Reid, Private Citizen
Joan Grey, Private Citizen
John Ehringer, Private Citizen
John Quayle, Private Citizen
Joie Van Dongen, Private Citizen
Josef Segal, Private Citizen
Julia Mackay, Private Citizen
K.M. Ferg, Private Citizen
Larice Sych, Private Citizen
Laurette Chabbert, Private Citizen
Lawrence & Louise Mydyski, Private Citizen
Leona Tomchuk, Private Citizen
Leota Nelson, Private Citizen
Leslie Wrightson, Private Citizen
Lorraine Shirley Romanetz, Private Citizen
Madeline Coopsammy, Private Citizen
Margaret D. Kaspick, Private Citizen
Margrose Madak, Private Citizen
Marlene Frayer, Private Citizen
Maureen Recksiedler, Private Citizen
Michael Czuboka, Private Citizen
Neil Goertzen, Private Citizen
Norma & Rob Somers, Private Citizen
Phil Shaman, Private Citizen
Renate Schultz, Private Citizen

Rhonda Grist, Private Citizen
Richard Kulbacki, Private Citizen
Robert Lussier, Private Citizen
Robert Lussier, Private Citizen
Robert M. Swayze, Private Citizen
Robert Ramsay, Private Citizen
Roger E. Gateson, Private Citizen
Roland Otto, Private Citizen
Roméo Lemieux, Private Citizen
Ron & Isabel Hayes, Private Citizen
Ron Rayner, Private Citizen
Rosalie Bornn, Private Citizen
Roy Richmond, Private Citizen
Suzanne Ouellet, Private Citizen
Theresa Chartrand, Private Citizen
Valerie Davies, Private Citizen
William Gallinger, Private Citizen
Astrid Michal Kuprowski, Private Citizen
Beverley Finlayson, Private Citizen
Bill Cann, Private Citizen
Donna & Vance Birnie, Private Citizen
Dorothy Strachan, Private Citizen
Frances Fraser, Private Citizen
Frances Kogan, Private Citizen
Frank Basiuk, Private Citizen
Gary Lally, Private Citizen
Georges Driuwe, Private Citizen
Helen McCarthy, Private Citizen
Ian Heather, Private Citizen
Irene Legg, Private Citizen
James Reginald Schmall, Private Citizen
John Carroll, Private Citizen
Kristina Ellis, Private Citizen
Marilyn Huska, Private Citizen
Mary Chalmers, Private Citizen
Matt Kawchuk, Private Citizen
Maurice Noel, Private Citizen
Muriel Gamey, Private Citizen
Pat Trottier, Private Citizen
Robert Finlayson, Private Citizen
Sharon Orr, Private Citizen
Steve Pawlychyn, Private Citizen
Syl Didur, Private Citizen
Tony Balian, Private Citizen
Victoria Olchowecki, Private Citizen
W. A. Fraser, Private Citizen
Aimé Campagne, Private Citizen
Annette Hercus, Private Citizen
Connie Newman, Private Citizen
Doug Adams, Private Citizen
Elizabeth Bryan, Private Citizen
Ellen Hamlin, Private Citizen
Helene Merrell, Private Citizen

Irene Belanger, Private Citizen
Jacqueline Kilburn, Private Citizen
Joan Lawrence, Private Citizen
Kathy Knight, Private Citizen
L. Dueck, Private Citizen
Margaret Ambrose, Private Citizen
Merle MacFadyen, Private Citizen
Muriel Gamey, Private Citizen
Paulette Hughes, Private Citizen
Ray Cooper, Private Citizen
Shirley Case, Private Citizen
Victor Nehe, Private Citizen
Yvonne Collins, Private Citizen
Barbara Cummine, Private Citizen
Carolyn Lintott, Private Citizen
Corrina Kroeker, Private Citizen
Daniel Kiazyk, Rolling River Teachers' Association
Denis Fontaine, Private Citizen
Don & Tanis MacDonald, Private Citizen
Dorothy Troop, Private Citizen
Edith Furdievich, Private Citizen
Edward R. Belliveau, Private Citizen
Elizabeth Ilott, Private Citizen
Eugene Yarish, Private Citizen
Evelyn Tycholiz, Private Citizen
Gerry Sankar, Private Citizen
Gordon Henderson, Private Citizen
Jag Malik, Private Citizen
Jamie Krutkezych, Private Citizen
Janice Yon, Private Citizen
Jean Tully, Private Citizen
Judy Olmstead-Coss, Private Citizen
Kelly Turner, Private Citizen
Kenneth B. Tully, Private Citizen
Linda Puttaert, Private Citizen
Margaret Hamilton, Private Citizen
Margaret Milton, Private Citizen
Maria Nickel, Private Citizen
Matt Turner, Private Citizen
Orah Moss, Private Citizen
Peter Isaak, Private Citizen
Phil Maclellan, Private Citizen
Rhea Chudy, Private Citizen
Roslyn Roberts, Private Citizen
Tom Carlyle, Private Citizen
Tracy Fyfe, Private Citizen
Wayne Watson, Private Citizen

Bills Considered and Reported

- ***Bill (No. 45) – The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act/Loi modifiant la Loi sur la pension de retraite des enseignants***

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment.

Mr. Altemeyer: I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

Standing Committee on Agriculture and Food First Report

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Chairperson): Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the First Report of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Food.

Madam Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Agriculture and Food presents the following—

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Your Standing Committee on Agriculture and Food presents the following as its First Report.

Meetings

Your Committee met on the following occasions in Room 255 of the Legislative Building:

- June 6, 2008
- June 7, 2008
- June 9, 2008 10:00 a.m.
- June 9, 2008 6:00 p.m.
- June 10, 2008
- June 11, 2008
- June 12, 2008

Matters under Consideration

- **Bill (No. 17) – The Environment Amendment Act (Permanent Ban on Building or Expanding Hog Facilities)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement (interdiction permanente visant la construction ou l'agrandissement d'installations réservées aux porcs)**

Committee Membership

Committee Membership for the June 6, 2008 meeting:

- Ms. BLADY
- Mr. BRIESE
- Mr. EICHLER
- Mr. McFADYEN
- Hon. Ms. MELNICK
- Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF
- Mr. PEDERSEN

- Hon. Mr. RONDEAU
- Ms. SELBY
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

Your Committee elected Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF as the Chairperson at the June 6, 2008 meeting.

Your Committee elected Ms. BLADY as the Vice-Chairperson at the June 6, 2008 meeting.

Your Committee elected Ms. BRICK as the Vice-Chairperson at the June 6, 2008 meeting.

Substitutions received during committee proceedings at the June 6, 2008 meeting:

- Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS for Ms. SELBY
- Ms. SELBY for Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS
- Ms. HOWARD for Hon. Mr. RONDEAU
- Ms. KORZENIOWSKI for Ms. SELBY
- Ms. BRICK for Ms. BLADY
- Mr. GOERTZEN for Mr. McFADYEN
- Hon. Mr. SWAN for Ms. HOWARD
- Ms. BRAUN for Ms. KORZENIOWSKI
- Ms. MARCELINO for Hon. Ms. MELNICK

Committee Membership for the June 7, 2008 meeting:

- Mr. EICHLER
- Mr. GRAYDON
- Ms. HOWARD
- Mr. MAGUIRE
- Ms. MARCELINO
- Hon. Ms. MELNICK
- Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF (Chairperson)
- Mr. SARAN
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS
- Mrs. TAILLIEU
- Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK

Your Committee elected Ms. HOWARD as the Vice-Chairperson at the June 7, 2008 meeting.

Your Committee elected Mr. CALDWELL as the Vice-Chairperson at the June 7, 2008 meeting.

Substitutions received during committee proceedings at the June 7, 2008 meeting:

- Mr. MARTINDALE for Ms. MARCELINO
- Ms. MARCELINO for Mr. MARTINDALE
- Mr. PEDERSEN for Mr. GRAYDON
- Mrs. ROWAT for Mr. MAGUIRE
- Mr. ALTEMEYER for Mr. SARAN
- Mr. GOERTZEN for Mrs. ROWAT

- *Mr. McFADYEN for Mrs. TAILLIEU*
- *Mr. CALDWELL for Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK*
- *Hon. Mr. SWAN for Hon. Ms. MELNICK*
- *Mr. SARAN for Mr. ALTEMEYER*
- *Mr. DEWAR for Ms. HOWARD*

Committee Membership for the June 9, 2008 10:00 a.m. meeting:

- *Mr. CALDWELL (Vice-Chairperson)*
- *Mr. DYCK*
- *Mr. EICHLER*
- *Mr. GOERTZEN*
- *Ms. HOWARD*
- *Mr. McFADYEN*
- *Hon. Ms. MELNICK*
- *Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF (Chairperson)*
- *Ms. SELBY*
- *Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS*
- *Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK*

Substitutions received during committee proceedings at the June 9, 2008 10:00 a.m. meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. RONDEAU for Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK*
- *Hon. Mr. LEMIEUX for Hon. Mr. RONDEAU*

Committee Membership for the June 9, 2008 6:00 p.m. meeting:

- *Hon. Ms. ALLAN*
- *Mr. BOROTSIK*
- *Ms. BRICK*
- *Mr. BRIESE*
- *Mr. EICHLER*
- *Mr. JENNISSEN*
- *Hon. Mr. LEMIEUX*
- *Hon. Ms. McGIFFORD*
- *Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF (Chairperson)*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS*

Your Committee elected Ms. BRICK as the Vice-Chairperson at the June 9, 2008 6:00 p.m. meeting.

Committee Membership for the June 10, 2008 meeting:

- *Ms. BLADY*
- *Mr. CALDWELL*
- *Mr. DERKACH*
- *Mr. EICHLER*
- *Mr. GRAYDON*
- *Ms. HOWARD*
- *Hon. Mr. LATHLIN*

- *Mr. MAGUIRE*
- *Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF (Chairperson)*
- *Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS*
- *Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK*

Your Committee elected Ms. HOWARD as the Vice-Chairperson at the June 10, 2008 meeting.

Your Committee elected Mr. ALTEMEYER as the Vice-Chairperson at the June 10, 2008 meeting.

Substitutions received during committee proceedings at the June 10, 2008 meeting:

- *Hon. Ms. OSWALD for Hon. Mr. LATHLIN*
- *Mr. ALTEMEYER for Ms. BLADY*
- *Ms. MARCELINO for Mr. CALDWELL*
- *Mr. MARTINDALE for Ms. HOWARD*

Committee Membership for the June 11, 2008 meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. ASHTON*
- *Mr. EICHLER*
- *Mr. GRAYDON*
- *Mr. JHA*
- *Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Hon. Mr. MACKINTOSH*
- *Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF (Chairperson)*
- *Mrs. ROWAT*
- *Ms. SELBY*
- *Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS*
- *Hon. Ms. WOWCHUK*

Your Committee elected Ms. SELBY as the Vice-Chairperson at the June 11, 2008 meeting.

Your Committee elected Ms. HOWARD as the Vice-Chairperson at the June 11, 2008 meeting.

Substitutions received during committee proceedings at the June 11, 2008 meeting:

- *Mrs. STEFANSON for Mr. PEDERSEN*
- *Mrs. TAILLIEU for Mr. GRAYDON*
- *Hon. Mr. LEMIEUX for Hon. Mr. MACKINTOSH*
- *Hon. Ms. IRVIN-ROSS for Hon. Mr. ASHTON*
- *Hon. Ms. McGIFFORD for Mr. JHA*
- *Ms. HOWARD for Ms. SELBY*
- *Mr. DERKACH for Mrs. ROWAT*

Committee Membership for the June 12, 2008 meeting:

- *Hon. Mr. ASHTON*
- *Ms. BLADY*

- Ms. BRICK
- Mrs. DRIEDGER
- Mr. EICHLER
- Mr. FAURSCHOU
- Ms. MALOWAY
- Hon. Ms. MELNICK
- Mr. NEVAKSHONOFF (Chairperson)
- Mr. PEDERSEN
- Hon. Mr. STRUTHERS

Your Committee elected Ms. BRICK as the Vice-Chairperson at the June 12, 2008 meeting.

Your Committee elected Ms. BRAUN as the Vice-Chairperson at the June 12, 2008 meeting.

Substitutions received during committee proceedings at the June 12, 2008 meeting:

- Mr. DERKACH for Mr. FAURSCHOU
- Mr. REID for Ms. BLADY
- Ms. BRAUN for Ms. BRICK
- Mr. SARAN for Mr. MALOWAY
- Hon. Mr. BJORNSON for Hon. Mr. ASHTON

Public Presentations

Your Committee heard the following 263 presentations on **Bill (No. 17) – The Environment Amendment Act (Permanent Ban on Building or Expanding Hog Facilities)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement (interdiction permanente visant la construction ou l'agrandissement d'installations réservées aux porcs)**:

June 6, 2008 meeting,

Karl Kynoch, Manitoba Pork Council
 Ruth Pryzner, Private Citizen
 Robert McLean, Keystone Agricultural Producers
 Shannon Martin, Canadian Federation of Independent Business
 David Wiens, Dairy Farmers of Manitoba
 Ab Freig, Puratone
 Richard Bergmann, Private Citizen
 Beerd Hop, Private Citizen
 Garry Tolton, Private Citizen
 Herm Martens, RM of Morris
 Garry Wasylowski, Private Citizen
 Fred Tait, Hog Watch Manitoba
 Martin Unrau, President of Manitoba Cattle Producers Association
 Hank Enns, Manitoba Corn Growers Association
 Weldon Newton, Private Citizen
 Sheldon Stott, Hytek Limited
 Bryan Ferriss, Private Citizen

Graham Starmer, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce
 Sam Gross, Private Citizen
 Ben Hofer, Private Citizen
 Ray Timmerman, Private Citizen
 Roland Rasmussen, Reeve, R.M. of Cartier
 Dawn Harris, Private Citizen
 Aaron Hofer, James Valley Colony
 Mike "Spurs" Waldner, Cool Spring Colony
 Ron Friesen, East-Man Feeds
 Ken Waddell, Private Citizen
 Nathan Gross, Private Citizen
 Doug Redekop, Kelly Farms Ltd.
 Art Bergmann, RM of St. Anne
 John Preun, Manitoba Pork Marketing
 George Matheson, Private Citizen
 Jeff Friesen, Private Citizen
 John Kroeker, Penner Farm Services
 Kurt Siemens, Manitoba Egg Producers
 Paul Neustaedter, Steinbach Chamber of Commerce
 Scott Dick & Cliff Loewen, Agra-Golds Consulting Ltd.
 Johannes Waldner, Better Air Manufacturing
 Brent Byggdin, Private Citizen
 Marty Seymour, Private Citizen
 Andrew Dickson, Private Citizen
 Garry Wollmann, Private Citizen
 Darryl Herman, Private Citizen
 Tom Hofer, Private Citizen
 Bill Harrison, Private Citizen
 Bill Matheson, Private Citizen
 Harry Siemans, Private Citizen
 J. Neil Dobson, The Feed & Livestock Industry
 Colin Craig, Canadian Taxpayer's Federation
 John McDonald, Private Citizen
 Herb Schultz, Animal Nutrition Association of Canada (Manitoba Division)

June 7, 2008 meeting,

John Morrison, Concerned Citizens of the Sturgeon Creek Watershed
 Kurt Stoess, Private Citizen
 Jacob Hofer, Private Citizen
 Claude Lachance, Private Citizen
 Richard Taillefer, Private Citizen
 Jason Falk, Hespeler Hog Farm
 Allan Steinke, R.M. of Victoria
 Sieg Peters, Private Citizen
 Ron St. Hilaire, Private Citizen
 Tom Greaves, Private Citizen
 Dennis Kornelsen, Private Citizen
 Mike Maendel, Private Citizen
 Jamie Hofer, Private Citizen
 Ian Kleinsasser, Private Citizen

Jake Hofer, Private Citizen
Terry Hofer, Private Citizen
Andy Gross, Private Citizen
Dwayne Hofer, Private Citizen
Joe Dolecki, Private Citizen
Larry Maendel, Private Citizen
Peter Wipf, Maxwell Colony
Cameron Maendel, Private Citizen
Dan Van Schepdael, Synergy Swine
Perry Mohr, Private Citizen
Gerald Siemens, Siefert Farms Ltd
Denny Kleinsasser, Private Citizen
Arnie Waldner, Private Citizen
Tom Waldner, Private Citizen
Brian Klassen, Nutricycle Inc.
Ray Wipf, Private Citizen
Victor Kleinsasser, Private Citizen
Ron Klippenstein, Private Citizen
Michael Wurtz, Private Citizen
David Wurtz, Private Citizen
Bill Vaags, Private Citizen
Peter Wipf, Private Citizen
Sandra Trinkies, Private Citizen
Doug Cavers, CAO RM of Hanover
Stan Toews, Private Citizen
Chris Maendel, Private Citizen
John Bannister, Private Citizen
Alan Bell, Superior Agri System
Don Kroeker, Private Citizen
*Professor Don Flaton, Chair of the National Centre
for Livestock and the Environment at the University
of Manitoba*
*Peter Hombach, President, Environmental
Technologies & Export Initiatives Association*
Mike Teillet, Private Citizen
Diana Ludwick, Occupational Health Centre
Brian Siemens, Private Citizen
David Gsell, Private Citizen
Joe Marshall, Private Citizen
Betty Siemens, Private Citizen
Ernie Siemens, Private Citizen

June 9, 2008 10:00 a.m. meeting,

Adrien Grenier, Private Citizen
Paul Grenier, Private Citizen
Marcel Hacault, Private Citizen
George Camara, Camara Ent.
Joe Van Schepdael, Van Schepdael Farms
John Nickel, Private Citizen

June 9, 2008 6:00 p.m. meeting,

Dave Hunter, Private Citizen
John Allen, Private Citizen

Dennis Thiessen, Private Citizen
James Hofer, Private Citizen
Olayinka Brimoh, Private Citizen
Nathan Baer, Airport Colony
Lyle Peters, Private Citizen
Glen Koroluk, Beyond Factory Farming
Arian DeBekker, Morris Piglets Ltd.
Garry Verhoog, Private Citizen
Joel Grenier, Private Citizen
Gordon Siemens, Castlewood Farms
Stan Siemens, Private Citizen
Bennett Hofer, Private Citizen
Steve Hofer, Private Citizen
Ken Rempel, Private Citizen
Leonard Maendel, Private Citizen
Ron Johnston, Paradigm Farms Ltd.
Lyle Loewen, Private Citizen
Henry Holtman, Private Citizen
Christine Waddell, Private Citizen
Lara Forchuk, Private Citizen
Harvey Dann, Private Citizen
Dennis Stevenson, Private Citizen
Ted Neufeld, Private Citizen
Brendan Penner, Border Rock Farms
Paul Wurtz, Private Citizen
David Hofer, Private Citizen
Rena Hop, Private Citizen
Marinus Hop, Private Citizen
Don Winnicky, Private Citizen
Rickey Maendel, Private Citizen
Kathy Neufeld, Private Citizen
Dwayne Friesen, Private Citizen
Peter DeJong, Private Citizen
Shane Sadorski, Private Citizen

June 10, 2008 meeting,

Evan Penner, Private Citizen
David Waldner, Private Citizen
Steven Waldner, Private Citizen
Steve Penner, Pioneer Meat
Laura Waldner, Private Citizen
Adrian Gross, Private Citizen
Marie Hofer, Private Citizen
Kelvin Waldner, Private Citizen
Sheldon Waldner, Private Citizen
*Doug Martin, South Interlake Land Management
Association*
Gerry Martin, Private Citizen
Raymond Funk, Private Citizen
John Waldner, Private Citizen
Melvin Penner, Private Citizen
Dave Van Wallegem, Private Citizen
Christopher Tokaruk, Designed Genetics Inc.

Curt Plaitin, Private Citizen
Paul Maendel, Prairie Blossom Colony
Reuben Waldner, Private Citizen
Titus Baer, Private Citizen
Dwayne Wollman, Private Citizen
Jack Penner, Private Citizen
Jonathan Maendel, Private Citizen
Blair Cressman, Private Citizen
Edwin Hofer, Miami Colony Farms Ltd.
Jeremy Maendel, Private Citizen
Tom Leppelmann, Private Citizen
Martin Gross, Iberville Colony
Brad Schnell, Private Citizen
Rika Koelstra, Private Citizen
Christine Kynoch, Private Citizen
Michael Sykes, Private Citizen
Raymond Cherniak, Private Citizen
Julie Baird, Private Citizen
Jim Peters, Silverfield Farms Inc.
Edward Hofer, Private Citizen
Judith Hamilton, Private Citizen
Michael Sheridan, Private Citizen
Dan Klippenstein, Private Citizen
Phillip Hofer, Private Citizen
Julianna Klippenstein, Private Citizen
Menno Bergen, Private Citizen
Darcy Pauls, Private Citizen
Neil Cutler, Private Citizen
Fergus Hand, Private Citizen
Matthew Klippenstein, Private Citizen
Jason McNaughton, Standard Nutrition Canada

June 11, 2008 meeting,

Daniel Wyrich, Private Citizen
Justina Hop, Private Citizen
Jeff Bond, Private Citizen
Waldie Klassen, Manitoba Chicken Producers
Doug Sisson, Private Citizen
Aaron P. Hofer, Private Citizen
Ken Foster, Private Citizen
Greg McIvor, Private Citizen
Greg Fehr, Mayor, Town of Niverville
Scott Penner, Private Citizen
Gordon Dyck, Private Citizen
Harold Foster, RM of Bifrost
Ed Peters, Private Citizen
Arnold Waldner, Private Citizen
Mark Lanouette, Private Citizen
Ian Wishart, Private Citizen
Carol Clegg, Private Citizen
Orville Schinkel, Private Citizen
Jason Hofer, Private Citizen
Leon Clegg, Private Citizen

Dave Jolicoeur, Private Citizen
Chris Latimer, Nutrition Partners
Peter Provis, Sheridan Hauser Provis Swine Health Services Ltd.
Karen Wittenberg, Associate Dean Research for the Faculty of Agricultural Food and Sciences
Mark Peters, Private Citizen
Dennis Robles, Private Citizen
Dennis & Christopher Kozier, Private Citizen
Dr. Laurie Connor, Private Citizen
Dave Wall, Private Citizen
Geoffrey Downey, Private Citizen
Eric Klassen, Private Citizen
Michael Hofer, Private Citizen
Wally Driedger, Private Citizen
Albert Maendel, Private Citizen
Kenneth Maendel, Private Citizen
Mike Maendel, Private Citizen
Leonard Friesen, Private Citizen
Wendy Friesen, Private Citizen
Robert Kleinsasser, Suncrest Colony
Reg Penner, Private Citizen
Galen Peters, Private Citizen
Lauren Wiebe, Topeaka Farm
Rolf Penner, Private Citizen

June 12, 2008 meeting,

Madisson Stott, Private Citizen
Mike Van Schepdael, Genesis Inc
Jacob Waldner, Private Citizen
Isaac Hofer, Private Citizen
Lyndon Waldner, Private Citizen
Peter Waldner, Private Citizen
Miles Beaudin, Private Citizen
Kevin Kurbis, New Standard Ag
Martin Sharpe, Little Saskatchewan Feed Yard Group
Rick Friesen, Private Citizen
Les Routledge, Private Citizen
Edward Maendel, Private Citizen
Rick Bergmann, Maple Leaf Foods
David Sutherland, Private Citizen
Levi Bergen, Private Citizen
Susanne Richter, Private Citizen
Dave Hildebrandt, Private Citizen
Fred Fast, Private Citizen
Jacob Rempel, Private Citizen
Matthew Waldner, Private Citizen
Larry Friesen, Devon Ridge Farms
Norm Paisley, Pro-Ag Products Ltd.
Dickson Gould, Private Citizen
Vicki Burns, Private Citizen
Blaine Tully, Private Citizen

Bill McDonald, Winnipeg Humane Society
 Greg Muench, Private Citizen
 Tracey Bryksa, Private Citizen
 Xavier Temple, Private Citizen
 David Grant, Private Citizen
 Brian White, Private Citizen
 Mike Radcliffe, Starlight Colony
 Peter Mah, Private Citizen

Written Submissions

Your Committee received the following 47 written submissions on **Bill (No. 17) – The Environment Amendment Act (Permanent Ban on Building or Expanding Hog Facilities)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement (interdiction permanente visant la construction ou l'agrandissement d'installations réservées aux porcs)**:

Harold Froese, Private Citizen
 Denise Trafford, Private Citizen
 Joe Leshyshyn, Private Citizen
 Joshua Waldner, Private Citizen
 Syed Abu Rehan, Private Citizen
 Ashley Trinkies, Private Citizen
 Lorena Ewart, Private Citizen
 Auke Bergsma, Private Citizen
 Kelly Fargher, Private Citizen
 Elaine Henrotte, Private Citizen
 Cheryl Kennedy Courcelles, Private Citizen
 Randy Tkachyk, Private Citizen
 Mack Waldner, Private Citizen
 Alvin Gross, Private Citizen
 Paul Gross, Private Citizen
 Kevin Toles, Private Citizen
 Richard Sukkau, Private Citizen
 Lindy Clubb, Private Citizen
 Bonnie Nay, Private Citizen
 Aaron Gross, Private Citizen
 Jonathan Gross, Private Citizen
 Claudette Taillefer, Private Citizen
 Darren Bates, Private Citizen
 David Waldner, Private Citizen
 Henry Rosolowski, Private Citizen
 Hugh Arklie, Springfield Hogwatch
 Sandra Klassen, Private Citizen
 Josh Waldner, Private Citizen
 Brent Manning, Private Citizen
 Ernie Sirski, Manitoba Canola Growers
 Conrad Gross, Private Citizen
 Clint Miller, Private Citizen
 Andy Cardy, Private Citizen
 Denise Trafford, Private Citizen
 Joshua Waldner, Private Citizen

Dr. Colleen Marion & Dr. Brad Chappell, Private Citizens
 Andrew Waddell, Private Citizen
 David Hedman, Private Citizen
 Janet Honey, Private Citizen
 Louise Hedman, Private Citizen
 Michael Andres, Private Citizen
 Jake & Lorraine Wiebe, Private Citizen
 Lydia Falk, Private Citizen
 Ben Ginter, Private Citizen
 Estelle Thornson, Private Citizen
 Randy Rutherford, Private Citizen
 Irvin Funk, Private Citizen

Bills Considered and Reported

- **Bill (No. 17) – The Environment Amendment Act (Permanent Ban on Building or Expanding Hog Facilities)/Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement (interdiction permanente visant la construction ou l'agrandissement d'installations réservées aux porcs)**

Your Committee agreed to report this Bill without amendment on a recorded vote of yeas, 6 nays 4.

Mr. Nevakshonoff: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: I'm pleased to table in the House the reports of members' expenses for the year ended March 31, 2008, in compliance with section 38(1) of the Indemnities, Allowances and Retirement Benefits regulations.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

Tribute to Soldiers Killed in Afghanistan

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I have a statement for the House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today with a heavy heart to acknowledge the loss of six Canadian soldiers who served their country with honour and distinction in Afghanistan. These six soldiers served with the 2nd Battalion Princess Patricia's Canadian Light Infantry based at CFB Shilo. The loss of these men is deeply felt here in Manitoba and throughout the provinces where they grew up.

On behalf of the House and all Manitobans, I would like to pay tribute to the lives of

Corporal James Arnal of Winnipeg, Master Corporal Josh Roberts of Saskatchewan, Corporal Andrew Grenon of Ontario, Corporal Mike Seggie of Winnipeg, Corporal Chad Horn of Alberta and Sergeant Scott Shipway of Saskatchewan.

The men and women of our armed forces willingly put their lives on the line every day so that we may all live in a better world. These six exemplary citizens will be remembered for the differences they made here at home and overseas. As Manitobans, we do not take the peace and freedom we enjoy in Canada for granted. As Winnipeggers, both Corporal Arnal and Corporal Seggie knew this. They were committed to upholding these same ideals in Afghanistan, and we are very proud of their bravery.

We will remember all six of these men and the examples they have set, and we will always stand beside our troops and their families. On behalf of all members of this House, I extend my deepest condolences to the families and friends of these soldiers.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask that, following the tributes from other members of this House, we stand for a moment of silence to mark the lives of Corporal James Arnal, Master Corporal Josh Roberts, Corporal Andrew Grenon, Corporal Mike Seggie, Corporal Chad Horn and Sergeant Scott Shipway.

* (13:50)

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): I want to thank the Premier for the words he's just put on the record and for the appropriate request that this House mark these sacrifices with a moment of silence.

We certainly know what sort of danger is faced by the men and women in uniform and out of uniform representing Canada and other countries within Afghanistan and in the Middle East. We know that much progress has been made on this mission to date, that the Taliban regime has been removed from power, that there are important infrastructure projects under way to provide clean water and an adequate standard of living to many people in that country, that children are in school, including girls, which was not previously permitted under the former regime.

Much work remains to be done. There is much instability that remains and elements of the old regime which are not prepared to give up power easily who need to be dealt with forcefully. We're

grateful for the Canadian troops who are making those sacrifices on behalf of both the people of Afghanistan and the people of our country who know that instability and human rights abuses in one part of the world are harmful to us here in Manitoba as much as they are directly harmful to those in the country involved.

So I want to just acknowledge them for their sacrifices, pay tribute to and extend our condolences to the families and friends of those who have been lost and support the Premier's request that we have a moment of silence. Thank you.

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

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, each day, many of us, when we listen to the news first thing in the morning, listen with concern and worry lest we hear of the death of another brave Canadian soldier in Afghanistan. It is terrible when it happens but we recognize the contribution that the soldiers have made. Corporal James Arnal, Master Corporal Josh Roberts, Corporal Andrew Grenon, Corporal Mike Seggie, Private Chad Horn and, most recently, Sergeant Scott Shipway, each of these men have contributed enormously to the effort to improve conditions in Afghanistan and we owe them a great debt.

I want to extend on behalf of the Manitoba Liberal Party our condolences to the families and friends of these lost soldiers.

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement for a moment of silence? *[Agreed]*

Please rise for a moment of silence.

A moment of silence was observed.

Agricultural Crisis

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

Mr. Speaker, I know that all members are very concerned about the situation facing our farmers at the present time. This has indeed been a very difficult time for our livestock producers across the province who are dealing with a one-in-150-year water level as well as droughts in other parts of the province. They have been severely affected by the

flooding and other adverse weather conditions which have put enormous pressure on their families, their communities, as well as businesses in their area.

Due to the flooding in the Interlake and Westlake regions, livestock producers across the province are experiencing critical shortages of hay and other feed supplies. Many producers will be very low on feed supply that is needed to carry their livestock through the winter and will need to purchase feed or reduce their herds. There are several programs where producers can access cash to help purchase these supplies.

I recently announced the Manitoba Forage Assistance Program to assist producers with the extraordinary cost of hauling hay and other feed supplies into their communities. The program has been developed as a federal-provincial AgriRecovery initiative. Also, the Production Insurance program offers coverage for both tame and native hay compensating producers for up to 80 percent of their loss in yield. Producers can also apply for an advance to AgriStability, as well as withdraw funds from AgriInvest. The federal emergency cash assistance program that is administered by the Manitoba Cattle Producers is another option for producers to access funds.

I want the House to know that I have written to the federal Minister of Finance requesting that the federal government institute a tax deferral program so producers who have to sell their cattle will not be unfairly penalized during this time of crisis. We recognize that there will be need to work with producers to restore pastures and hayland. Planning is already underway to ensure that programming can be delivered as soon as producers can get on their land in the spring.

As well, Mr. Speaker, over the long term, we need to look at a way to mitigate the impacts on our producers from similar weather extremes in the future.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Thank you, Madam Minister, for the statement. We have seen significant rainfall, not only in the Arborg, Gypsumville, Fisher Branch, Ashern area in the range of 385-474 millimetres of precipitation since June, the highest since 1951.

I had the opportunity to attend a meeting with the mayors and reeves at Eriksdale, an emergency meeting that was called to address this serious issue and the lack of leadership shown by this government. We are very concerned on this side of the House in regard to the program that was laid out by the Province of Manitoba in conjunction with the federal government. A number of these producers don't have money to buy hay or feed. The transportation allowance is great for those that have the financial wherewithal to buy those feedstocks. They're in short demand. The program has to go farther. It has to be looked at in ways through the AgriRecovery program where it can flow money in a timely manner and, also, an initiative has to be put in place on a per acre basis. Also, the crop insurance program needs to be looked at where the producers aren't forced to take the crop off in order to receive a payout.

So we on this side of the House know the hurt that's out there. It's more than just the Interlake area. It's also on the other side of Lake Manitoba. We've heard from a number of producers over there. In fact, there's a meeting, I would encourage the minister or someone from her staff to certainly be there on Thursday night. I know that the hurt there is widespread as well. Also, in talking to my colleague from Russell, a wheel has not been turned in that area as well. We certainly know that this is a time to get the crop off. Certainly, in past times, we've seen snow in the middle of October, and we need to act quickly and responsibly on this very important issue, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Gerrard: In early August, before the worst of the rains, I was in the northern Interlake and at that time already people in the north Interlake were very, very affected by the heavy water and the heavy rains. There was an astonishing amount of water already coming off the land, filling the ditches and showing up in the rivers. Clearly what we have today is a major emergency. It needs to be treated as such. There are people, farmers, not just hay producers, but with other crops who are being absolutely devastated by the situation and the impact it has on the area. It clearly needs action and support to people who've been hit by this calamity.

I have been arguing for many years that there needs to be much better water management in this province due to the results in part perhaps of climate change and other things which are causing more varied weather extremes, and clearly this kind of a program should have been there. It needs to be there now more than ever, both to have better capacity to store water as well as better to drain water so that we can deal with times and periods like this where we have heavy water events, heavy rain events. Thank you.

*(14:00)

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: I'd like to draw the attention of members to the Speaker's Gallery where the six individuals who are serving on the Manitoba Legislative Internship Program for the year 2008-2009 are seated.

In accordance with established practice, three interns were assigned to the government caucus and three to the official opposition caucus. Their term of employment is 10 months. They will be performing a variety of research and other tasks for private members. These interns commenced their assignments earlier this month and will complete them in June.

They are, working with the government caucus: Ms. Lauren Coutts of the University of Manitoba, Ms. Amy Dhillon of the University of Winnipeg and Ms. Erin Stewart of the University of Manitoba.

Working with the caucus of the official opposition: Ms. Vanessa May of the University of Manitoba, Ms. Julia Wiebe of Canadian Mennonite University and Ms. Katie Szilagyi of the University of Manitoba.

Copies of their bios have been distributed to members. Professor Jean Friesen looks after the academic portion of the internship. The administration of the program is carried out by our Clerk, Patricia Chaychuk. The caucus representatives on the internship administration committee are the Member for Rossmere (Ms. Braun) and the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Fauschou).

I would like to take this opportunity on behalf of all members to congratulate the interns on their appointment to the program and to hope that they

will have a very interesting and successful year with the Assembly.

Also I'm pleased to introduce to the House the students who have been selected to serve as pages at this session. They are beginning at my extreme right: Mr. Matthew Sanche, Mr. Joël Badiou, Ms. Christa Lee, Mr. Moses Jerao, Ms. Katelyn Sohor, Mr. Justin Fernandes, Ms. Stephanie Rozbacher, Ms. Erin Esau, Ms. Gillian Turnbull, Mr. Travis Boehr.

So help me welcome them all.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Economic Uncertainties Government Strategies

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): I just want to say at the outset that it is nice to see the table officers and staff with the Leg Assembly back here again. I know everybody works hard all year round, but it's nice to see everybody back in the Chamber today.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the Premier is that after a decade of robust international economic growth which Manitoba has benefited from, undoubtedly, many Manitobans today from a variety of walks of life are expressing concerns about the economic prospects of the province and in particular their own jobs and their own incomes.

Mr. Speaker, we've had the good fortune of generous transfer payments from Ottawa and high commodity prices which have created a sense of well-being, but we know that these are not the basis for an economic strategy but simply the benefits of being in the right place at the right time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, with layoffs at DeFehr, Air Canada, Motor Coach and Loewen Windows, many families are starting to worry about making ends meet, and after coasting for nine years what we've seen from this government is a series of measures that do nothing to enhance job security but do everything to put jobs at risk and reduce incomes for Manitobans.

I want to ask the Premier: In light of the economic uncertainty that we now face, the job losses to the south and to the east of us, what is his strategy for giving Manitobans some assurance that their jobs and their incomes are secure?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I would note that the Conference Board and many other financial predictors have indicated that Manitoba's economy

grew above the national average last year, projected to grow again above the national average this year. We have over 9,500 new jobs in the last 12 months. We have more jobs, Mr. Speaker, in a number of strategic areas. The member opposite mentions some reductions in jobs. I would point out that there were announcements of job increases in the Standard Aero operation just two weeks ago. There were announcements of additional jobs in Magellan, of course, just a week ago.

Mr. Speaker, there's been a number of announcements of positive economic growth. There's no question the U.S. housing market has resulted in a flattening out of services provided by Canadian producers and producers in Manitoba relying on the housing market. Our own housing market continues to have positive, both values for families and positive growth.

But, Mr. Speaker, we have a strategy. It's called the budget. In the last budget—*[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable First Minister has the floor.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, in the last budget we produced in Manitoba we reduced the small-business tax which represents about 80 percent of businesses in Manitoba. When we started out, it was 8 percent under the former regime. It's now down to 1 percent, I believe, and I think we have the lowest small-business tax in Canada. There were further reductions in terms of the costs of education for homeowners, condo owners and apartment dwellers.

There were again, very importantly, more investments in training and skill development in our province. In fact, a lot of companies that are meeting with us right now indicate that our training regime and our apprenticeship and training programs that were only promised by one political party 18 months ago are paying off very, very strong dividends.

So we are performing above the national average. We are concerned about what's going on south of us with the situation in the foreclosures in the U.S. market. We're worried about other countries as well, Mr. Speaker, but Manitobans—and I want to congratulate Manitobans—are still having a very positive work ethic and a very, very positive economic situation.

But, certainly, our budget prepares us for the future as well as we're enjoying some of the successes of today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McFadyen: Mr. Speaker, I know the Premier is very, very pleased with himself and his government in terms of where he thinks we are right now. There are many Manitobans who are expressing concern to all of us, Manitobans from all walks of life who are thinking about whether they'll have their job a year or two years from now.

The Premier has done a good job of memorizing selected economic statistics. He hasn't done such a good job of laying out a strategy for the future when we have the highest income taxes west of Québec, Mr. Speaker. On top of that, we have a politically motivated and unscientific attack on the livestock industry in Manitoba under Bill 17. We have Bill 38 which is going to increase deficits and debt and increase taxes for Manitobans and kill jobs.

They've increased fees and charges in that last budget that he was just making reference to, including vehicle registration fees and a range of other costs for Manitoba families. Water rates are going up dramatically in Winnipeg along with hydro rates for the whole province, Mr. Speaker. He's about to waste at least \$640 million on the hydro line to nowhere.

Will the Premier acknowledge, will he acknowledge that in the face of a decline in building starts, a decline in manufacturing sales and a decline in exports from this year compared to last year, that we could be heading into choppy waters? Why is he up there celebrating and popping the champagne cork when what Manitobans are looking for is not political, politician answers but leadership to head off what could be challenging times?

* (14:10)

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I would point out that the economic predictors—well, the actual economic growth last year was the second highest in Canada, above the national average. The predictions again in this 2008 year are again the second highest in Canada. The two-year total will be above all provinces in western Canada in terms of GDP growth.

I also would point out, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite, when he was doing one of his sky-is-falling questions last June, he stood in this House and said, there will never be an internal trade agreement. I predict that there will never be—I being the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. McFadyen)—an internal trade agreement in Canada. Québec will say no to that internal trade agreement.

Well, internal trade is important for the province of Manitoba. Labour mobility is important for the people of Manitoba. The member opposite was wrong. We announced an internal trade agreement in Québec at the premiers' meeting. All 13 jurisdictions signed on.

Will the member opposite stand up and say his sky-is-falling predictions were wrong and it's good for Canada and good for Manitoba to have an internal trade agreement in this country?

Mr. McFadyen: I know that his job creation strategy on internal trade is employing 100 percent of defeated NDP candidates. This is what they announced this morning, Mr. Speaker, the most blatant case of political patronage that we've seen in some time.

Now, an agreement on selected areas of the labour market is not an internal trade agreement, Mr. Speaker. He continues to dig in his heels on western free trade. The economic growth base in Manitoba was so low to start with that showing above-average growth in the last two years because of higher than average transfer payments and high commodity prices is nothing to be proud of. We've got building starts down, manufacturing sales down, exports down, not the hint of a strategy coming from members opposite.

Mr. Speaker, when we look at head office jobs in Manitoba, we know that Standard Aero, Meyers Norris Penny and Agricore have already moved their jobs out of Manitoba. Can the Premier confirm today the news that another Manitoba company, a company that's been an institution in Manitoba for decades, HBM&S is on the verge of moving their head office out of Manitoba?

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Hudson Bay head office of the CEO is located in Toronto. There are head office jobs here in Winnipeg. Mr. Palmiere is located in Toronto. We're very pleased that they've had record exploration in Manitoba in the last three years, a considerable amount of exploration in the Flin Flon, Snow Lake and related areas. We're very pleased that the company that the member opposite is talking about has also identified new ore body, zinc ore, in northern Manitoba. There will be some 300 people required to be working in that mining area.

When I met with the CEO, he was very, very positive about the exploration policies, the mining policies in Manitoba for purposes of this exploration

and development. It's very important because the zinc smelter is one of the finest environmental smelters anywhere in North America, unlike some of the challenges that exist at the copper smelter in northern Manitoba that's affected by federal legislation under their climate change plan, Mr. Speaker.

Of course, we are trying to make sure that the people that are working now at the copper mine in Flin Flon and the people that could be working and trained to work in the zinc smelter, we're working with the company to make sure that those 300 jobs will be filled by people in northern Manitoba, good jobs, good economic growth in northern Manitoba based on good policies of exploration in the province of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

Bill 38 Government Intent

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance should be concerned, very concerned. All economic indicators are pointing to a downturn in direction. A financial hurricane has been brewing for months. It's been a category one. It's kind of heading into that category four. The only solution that this Minister of Finance has is to repeal the balanced budget legislation. He believes there is no need to live within your means as long as you can borrow more money.

The summary net debt this budget year will increase by \$500 million for Manitobans, one-half a billion dollars. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, Saskatchewan will pay off \$2.2 billion of their debt. Why is this Finance Minister so out of step with other western Canadian provinces?

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, since the member has shown up at the Legislature, he's been forecasting an economic downturn, and we all know that if you forecast something long enough over the full range of an economic cycle, you have a chance of getting the dart to hit the board once.

The reality is, Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba our economy is growing at about double the Canadian average. The reality is that for several years since the late 1990s the Auditor General has been demanding that Manitoba modernize their balanced budget legislation and we are doing that. The legislation will be more rigorous legislation. No longer will you be able to sell off Crown corporations to balance the

budget which is the only way the members opposite balanced the budget in the 1990s.

Mr. Borotsik: Well, Mr. Speaker, he didn't answer any questions. I guess his solution is simply to continue to borrow money.

By the way, Mr. Speaker, economic growth is GDP. In Manitoba we have the second-lowest GDP per capita anywhere in the country, so no matter what the increase is we have a long way to go in this province to maintain any kind of GDP growth in the other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister's spending is out of control. The Finance Minister's appetite for debt is putting Manitoba in the poorhouse. The revenue streams we know of right now are starting to dry up, but, most of all, will the minister admit that Bill 38 does away with balanced budget legislation and allows him only to hide his fiscal mismanagement from hardworking taxpayers of Manitoba?

Mr. Selinger: Mr. Speaker, the member is actually completely wrong in what he's saying. The Auditor General made it very clear that it's not a good idea to leave the pension liability off the books which they did for 11 years. The pension liability is being put on the books. The pension liability is being addressed. The general purpose debt is being reduced at \$110 million a year.

The accumulated deficit is down by over \$2 billion. The debt-to-GDP ratio has been reduced and improved by 30 percent, from 32 percent to 20 percent.

Mr. Speaker, the amount of money that we're spending in each budget on the debt has gone from 13.5 cents on the dollar to 6.5 cents on the dollar. The members opposite wish they had a record like that.

Interlake Flooding Declaration of Disaster Zone

Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, to this government that is so completely out of step with what regular Manitobans are saying, the minister who claimed that Crocus was strong when he knew it wasn't is saying the economy is strong today. He knows it isn't and one of the things it's creating is economic anxiety. It's a very serious situation impacting many Manitobans in the Interlake region of the province and areas west of Lake Manitoba, areas that I've had

a chance with some of my colleagues to visit after the last short while as a result of the heavy rainfall.

Now, at the same time as we certainly would not blame the government for bad weather even as they might like to take credit for good weather, we will say, Mr. Speaker, that it is their job to make sure that they're there for Manitobans when disaster strikes.

There were over a hundred people in a hall in Eriksdale on Saturday night and more than a dozen Manitoba municipalities represented there looking for action from this government, the declaration of a disaster and support for the repair of infrastructure, support for producers who are having difficulty feeding their livestock and support for families who are on the brink of economic disaster.

Will the Premier (Mr. Doer) indicate today, will he declare the affected zones a disaster area and will his government demonstrate the level of commitment that the people of this region of the province are looking for today?

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, the situation in the Interlake is a serious situation and that's why we have been there. That's why we have been meeting with producers and municipalities, and that's why, when we were there on the 22nd of August, we announced to the producers that we would put in place an assistance program to help them move their feed supplies into the area.

The members opposite keep talking about declaring the area a disaster. I want to tell the member opposite that, in fact, under Agriculture we do have the AgriRecovery program, and there is no need to declare a disaster. In fact, the terms say that as soon as you are being made aware that there is a disaster, the program kicks in, and that's what happened. We called the federal government, talked to the federal minister. He said it was a—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

* (14:20)

Mr. McFadyen: I hope the minister will take the next 30 seconds to read her briefing note to get the facts right about what it means to declare a disaster.

The AgriRecovery programs apply to some producers but not all producers. It doesn't deal with all of the other impacts on residences and municipal infrastructure and other areas where there's been a significant amount of damage. So to declare in the House today that they've solved the problem—they've

said they've met all the needs—runs directly in the face of what all of the producers, municipal leaders and business people from the region were saying on Saturday night, many of whom expressed their disappointment and concern about the lack of government presence in that region of the province over the past short while.

Now, I will quote somebody who I don't always agree with but I agree with him on this point. The Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) said, it's like death from a thousand cuts and this last heavy rainfall is like a knife to the heart for many farmers.

That's what the Member for Interlake said. Why isn't he getting anywhere with his colleagues in Cabinet? Why isn't he able to get action from this Premier (Mr. Doer) and this government to meet the needs of these people, many of whom are suffering gravely as a result of this disaster?

Ms. Wowchuk: If you look at the AgriRecovery program that is under the APF, in order for the AgriRecovery to take place, for a program to develop, you have to declare or invoke that there is a disaster. That's what we've done. We've talked to the federal minister. We talked to the federal government. We've put in place AgriRecovery, which will flow money to people. We've taken other steps, Mr. Speaker, that will make it easier for people to access money through AgriStability, through AgriInvest and the advance through the program.

So there are programs, Mr. Speaker, and I will assure the member. He should get clear his facts. The meeting was Saturday morning, not Saturday evening. I—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Interlake Flooding AgriRecovery Program

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): It's the minister that needs to get it correct. We're talking about one program versus another program. We'll try to explain it to her.

Mr. Speaker, in many parts of the province we have a crisis in our ag industry and rural communities. Farmers who can't afford to buy hay are forced to sell off their herds. Grain farmers are unable to get their crops off. Rural homes have been flooded and roads washed out, yet the Province has not declared a disaster. We need leadership from this government and we need it now.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Agriculture tell this House why it's been so slow to act on the AgriRecovery program? Rural Manitoba needs leadership and they need a sustainable program today.

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): When I visited the Interlake on the 22nd, I told them that we would be putting a forage assistance program in place, and that, then, signals to the federal government that there is a disaster situation. We made the announcement before the federal government was ready to do it. The federal government has joined with us. It will be a 60-40 program, sharing the cost of moving feed or moving their livestock to where they need to go.

There are other programs that are available, long-term programs that are in place such as AgriStability, AgriInvest, advance programs. There are ways for people to access money. Some people will have to make a decision to reduce their livestock and that's why we're also talking about a deferral in income tax, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Eichler: Back in July, I wrote the Minister of Agriculture to ensure that the AgriRecovery program was in place to deal with excessive rainfall which we had already received. Producers were asking for leadership from this government and did not receive it. Shame on you, Madam Minister. Cattle and grain producers had some very lean years, and very bad weather is adding to their burden.

Mr. Speaker, my questions for the Minister of Agriculture are these: What steps are being taken to address this very serious issue and why have there been delays in the AgriRecovery program? Answer the question, Madam Minister.

Ms. Wowchuk: Again Mr. Speaker, I will say to the member, either he doesn't understand or he's not listening. AgriRecovery is in place. I announced the program on the 22nd. The federal government signed on to the program and made their announcement this last Friday, a week after we announced it. AgriRecovery was signed at the agriculture federal-provincial-territorial meeting at the beginning of July when this situation arose.

We triggered the program and are using it. We're using it for the movement of hay and livestock, and we'll use it in the spring to help people restore their croplands and look at what other kinds of assistance

can come out of AgriRecovery. The program is up and running.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, I was at that meeting on Saturday between the mayors and reeves from the Interlake and the northwest parts of the province. It was very clear these R.M.s were not happy with the government's lack of leadership. In fact, they called on the Premier (Mr. Doer) to come up and have a look. A motion was passed asking the Province to declare these areas a disaster and to develop a sustainable program for our rural communities to deal with the flooding, including those homes that have been flooded.

Mr. Speaker, under the Disaster Financial Assistance arrangements, the provincial and federal governments can provide dollars to affected areas. When is this government going to take a leadership role, offer something meaningful to these rural areas, declare it a disaster, then provide the necessary funding?

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I didn't wait until this week to [*inaudible*] the situation out. I went out one day after the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk). I met with municipalities all throughout the Interlake, and there's not one person who's seen what's happened there who doesn't realize the severity of what's happened and the fact, as the Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff)—I'm glad the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) is finally getting the sense to quote the Member for Interlake when it comes to issues affecting farmers in this province in the Interlake. It took him awhile, might be the number of agricultural questions he asks on a regular basis.

We're aware of that, Mr. Speaker, and our EMO staff has been working with the affected municipalities. DFA does indeed cover noninsurable losses in terms of homes and municipal infrastructure, and we've already started to provide that coverage. I want to say on the record very clearly that this government is prepared in terms of emergencies. We didn't wait until this past weekend to get out to the Interlake.

Emergency Room (Viriden) Closure

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Viriden): Well, Mr. Speaker, rural Manitoba is also in a health crisis. Viriden's emergency room closed on June 30, just 20 hours after two cyclists were injured in a fatal

accident on No. 1 highway. Melita's ER was closed at the end of July.

On August 12, I facilitated a public meeting. Though the minister didn't show up, over 600 citizens came and expressed their frustration. They were told that no doctors would be available in this vicinity until February 2009. This is unacceptable, to quote the mayor of Viriden, Mr. Speaker, for a community in the heart of the oil industry and in the midst of harvest.

Will the minister tell these exasperated citizens when she plans to provide full-time doctors for Viriden's emergency room? Next February is not acceptable.

Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I can certainly assure the member opposite that, of course, we've had numerous meetings with the people of Viriden, with the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority, and we know that recruiting doctors to rural and to northern environments is even more challenging than for urban centres. We know that this is not a Manitoba-specific issue, that it's a national and, indeed, international issue.

Very clearly, it's about increasing the number of doctors and nurses that we have in our health-care complement. That's exactly what we're committed to do. We're moving in the right direction, but there's more work that we need to do with rural Manitoba and we're committed to do it.

Mr. Maguire: Well, she may claim she's moving in the right direction, Mr. Speaker, but citizens know she's going backwards.

One health-care worker described the Viriden situation as, and I quote, sitting on a small time bomb. It's only a matter of time before something does happen.

Well, Mr. Speaker, there was a fatal collision on June 29, 20 hours before the Viriden ER was closed. Viriden is in the heart of Manitoba's oil industry. Harvest is the farmers' busiest season and Enbridge has hundreds of workers building a pipeline as we speak. Of course, No. 1 highway and CPR's main rail line run right through Viriden. This community needs an emergency room.

I ask the minister: If she can't do her job and provide full-time doctors, will she at least provide locum services for these emergency rooms so they can open immediately?

* (14:30)

Ms. Oswald: Mr. Speaker, and once again, I'll remind the member opposite that clearly the issue here is about recruitment of doctors. We agree that the emergency room in Virden, other emergency rooms in rural Manitoba, need to be opened and we're working diligently to do just that.

We know that we, just last week, Mr. Speaker, saw our investments paying off in having the largest class in Manitoba history begin their journey through medical school. This is in sharp contrast to an opposition that made a decision a decade ago to cut those spaces in medical school.

Curious strange, Mr. Speaker, that we hear crying about a lack of doctors. When they had their hands on the steering wheel, they cut those spaces. Shame on them.

Mr. Maguire: Well, Mr. Speaker, this minister's been in charge, or her government, for some 10 years in regard to health care in Manitoba. They didn't fix it with \$15 million in six months. Everybody knows that the budget in health care has gone from \$2.1 billion to \$4.1 billion, and it's worse than it ever was.

Mr. Speaker, there are 17 emergency rooms closed in rural Manitoba. Is this simply because it's not the minister's priority?

Ms. Oswald: Well, actually, Mr. Speaker, I think he's quoting his own leader when he's suggesting health care is a priority or not.

I can tell the member opposite that we know that every year since we've been in office, since 1999, we have seen a net increase of doctors. We know that there are 288 more doctors in Manitoba today than there were in 1999. Of course, this has happened, Mr. Speaker, at a time of intense international competition.

So while we know that of those 288, 105 of them are proudly serving in rural Manitoba, we recognize that we have challenges with temporary suspensions of ER services, and we need to continue to work with our regions, with the Faculty of Medicine, with the College of Physicians and Surgeons to build that complement of doctors. Again, this is a sharp contrast from a net decrease every year in the '90s.

Independent Prosecutor Policy Taman Inquiry

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): Mr. Speaker, this summer's inquiry into the tragic death of Crystal Taman and the subsequent botched investigation and

prosecution of the man responsible left many unanswered questions.

According to the Department of Justice policy, an independent prosecutor is important in cases where a reasonable person might assume that someone, like a police officer, accused of a crime would receive special treatment from the Department of Justice because of their relationship with the department.

Can the minister confirm for Manitobans whether, in fact, the need for an independent prosecutor in the case of Crystal Taman was to ensure that there would be no perception that the accused police officer would get any preferential treatment?

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The independent prosecutor policy was put in place in Manitoba in 2005. After the matters of the Taman situation came to light, we asked retired Justice Ruth Krindle to look at the situation of the independent prosecutor policy, and quoting from her report: Manitoba's policy on independent prosecutors is clearly as comprehensive and rigorous as that of any other Canadian common-law jurisdiction and far more so than most.

In fact, Krindle found that many other jurisdictions do not even have written independent prosecutor policies. She did make recommendations to improve the policy further, and the Province has implemented these recommendations, including changes to victim services.

And, of course, we'll consider any findings that are coming out of the soon-to-be-released report by Justice Salhany.

Mr. Goertzen: That was well-read, Mr. Speaker, but, simply, it wasn't an answer to the question.

During the inquiry this summer, it was revealed that the prosecutor who was supposed to be acting independently from the Department of Justice had nearly 50 contacts with high-ranking officials in the minister's department. This was prior to asking for a plea bargain to be entered and a conditional sentence given to the police officer responsible for the death of Crystal Taman.

Since an independent prosecutor is supposed to assure Manitobans that nobody is getting special treatment, does the Minister of Justice feel that this level of co-operation between his department and the independent prosecutor was appropriate?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, not only did we call for a judicial inquiry into all of the circumstances surrounding the events but, independent of that, to assure the public and the department, the Province, we, in the interim period, asked a retired justice to review that policy to ensure, in the interim period or in the long period, that it was an appropriate policy.

Having done that, we're awaiting the reports of the Taman inquiry, Mr. Speaker. I suggest to the member that he perhaps wait until the report comes out, and then we can discuss the details, rather than taking parts of testimony and parts of evidence that were put forth before a judicial inquiry and trying to make a political point of it in this Chamber.

Mr. Goertzen: This is a Minister of Justice that has sat on the facts for too long, Mr. Speaker, nearly 50 contacts between the independent prosecutor and the minister's department. There was a memo dated July 13, 2007, that indicated that senior prosecution staff in the minister's department were made aware in advance of the plea bargain and the conditional sentence for the death of Crystal Taman, that that was one of the options being considered. Senior staff in the minister's department said that they wanted to sleep on it and later met to discuss it. Eventually they agreed with the offer and the conditional sentence.

Does the Minister of Justice believe that these events have instilled confidence in Manitobans about their justice system, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, we called a judicial inquiry. We had the prosecutors testify. We had everyone involved testify publicly and have asked a report to come forward. The member's cherry-picking some points out of testimony and trying to make political points in the Chamber on an issue that's of value to all Manitobans.

I think that's degrading, inappropriate. Notwithstanding wanting to make political points, we put all of the evidence before a judicial inquiry and asked them to recommend back to us. How more open can a government be?

Health Care Services Wait Times

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, in Manitoba today there are huge problems in health care: closure of many rural emergency rooms, a shortage of physicians in many parts of Manitoba, wait times of up to two years to see a specialist for certain orthopedic procedures and, as one Manitoban described to me recently, confusion, disorder,

frustration and a long wait when he took a close family member to the emergency room.

Mr. Speaker, I ask: Why has the Premier not called for more help from his buddy Stephen Harper? Why is the Premier not ensuring that health-care services are available promptly when they're needed?

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I won't be asking for any help from my buddy the honourable Member for River Heights because when he was in Cabinet, he and his colleagues reduced the budget to the Province of Manitoba the equivalent of closing down every rural and northern hospital in Manitoba. So it's easy to feign indignation in this House and tie it to the federal election, I suppose.

He had a choice. He had an option. He could have chosen to not reduce the funding for Manitoba's health care, particularly rural and northern Manitoba. He chose to cut it. He was in Cabinet. He could have taken a principled stand and withdrawn from Cabinet if he didn't agree with the principle of cutting that money; \$245 million was cut in the '95 federal budget before the 1997 election.

So, Mr. Speaker, we'll call it like we see it with federal parties and federal cabinet ministers and federal prime ministers. We sometimes support what they do and sometimes we don't, but we'll have nothing to do with the ideology of the government of the day. We'll have everything to do with what's in the best interest of Manitobans and Manitoba patients.

Mr. Gerrard: Mr. Speaker, the Premier just has his facts wrong as he often does. Too bad. In addition to the confusion, frustration and long waits in Winnipeg's emergency rooms, I met an elderly lady recently who spent five terrible days and nights in the hallway in a city emergency room.

Instead of spending his time travelling around the world and snuggling up to Stephen Harper, this Premier should be standing up for the people of Manitoba. This Premier has been here for nine years and it's about time that he kept his promise to make sure that the ongoing assault on the dignity of the seniors in this province ends and that the people get proper care when they need it.

* (14:40)

Mr. Doer: Well, Mr. Speaker, I'd like to challenge the member: What fact was wrong with the '95 federal government budget that reduced health-care

spending? Tell me what fact was wrong and put it on the record.

Secondly, if somebody, a patient, has stayed that long in the hallway, that's unacceptable. Please give us a name. I'm not sure whether—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I need to be able to hear the questions. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

Mr. Doer: Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and we would be more than eager to examine and investigate the circumstances under which the member is talking about, the hospital, the various components that are involved.

When the member opposite talks about orthopedic surgery, I've heard from lots of people that are getting very quick turnaround now with hips and knees compared to what happened in the past.

We're putting more investment in the Seven Oaks emergency ward that's just opened. There's going to be a new emergency ward opening up shortly in Concordia.

We agree that there is a shortage of doctors that's a serious challenge for us in Virden. There was a serious challenge in Brandon which has been met with more emergency room doctors and other specialists.

We accept the responsibility of providing health-care services to people as close as we can to their own home and as quickly as we can. That's why the announcement to go to medical school, now up to 110, is so very, very important. That's why having 1,700 more nurses practising all across Manitoba is very important.

We're concerned about the gaps. We're concerned about gaps particularly in northern and remote areas in Manitoba. We acknowledge there is still work to do, but if there is a situation with a patient that spent, quote, five days in the emergency hallway of a hospital we certainly want to investigate that.

Particularly, there's a situation now where every morning all patients that remain overnight and can't get a room or can't get a discharge plan are supposed to be evaluated. Rooms are supposed to be made available. A plan is supposed to be made available. I believe that doctors and nurses are doing an excellent, excellent job in that regard, but if there is a

gap or if there's a failure we have a responsibility to investigate it. But, rather than just talking in generalities, I'd like to look at the specific circumstances, Mr. Speaker.

Beverage Containers Return Deposit Policy

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, the need to move towards refundable deposits on drinking containers like Coke and Pepsi is very real. In fact, if the Minister of Finance wanted to demonstrate some real leadership, we could be the ninth province in Canada to bring in a refundable deposit. So we look at the neighbouring province of Saskatchewan and we will see that they get 104 percent return rate; 5 percent is coming from Manitoba. They are now starting to look at fining Manitobans that are wanting to recycle aluminum cans.

The time to act is now, and we ask the Minister of Finance to demonstrate some leadership on this issue and say to Manitobans that we're serious about the environment, we're serious in taking action, and move towards refundable deposits.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): I'm glad the member raised an issue about recycling. If he has any constructive ideas, including deposits, we're willing to look at them. We have reviewed the recycling program in Manitoba. We understand that on a broad cross section of materials Manitoba has a higher rate of collection, a more efficient system than the deposit system in Saskatchewan. We're willing to look at it but our blue box program, which has been funded and I believe started under a previous government, is considered to be one of the more efficient programs.

The only thing I would ask the member is that we have a report here where the provincial Auditor in Saskatchewan says they have the worst system of keeping track of money in the country because they're not following full summary budgets like we are in Manitoba, and I would just ask the member to find out whether the revenues that they're collecting are actually included in the budget.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

National Grandparents' Day

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James): I wish to take a moment to recognize National Grandparents' Day, which was yesterday, September 7, 2008. As a

grandparent with five grandchildren, I gladly took time this weekend to spend with my family.

I also know that in a fast-paced world that's often not easy to do. The goal of Grandparents' Day is to recognize the value and wisdom of grandparents and to acknowledge the important role of bridging generations.

That happened yesterday on the steps of the Legislature in a profound way when a local Winnipeg group, Grands 'n' More, gathered to raise awareness and mobilize support in Canada for Africa's grandmothers and the orphans of AIDS. They were there as part of a national day of action organized by Canadian Grandmothers for Africa, an organization of the Stephen Lewis Foundation. Grands 'n' More Winnipeg works to ensure that promises made to the orphans and grandmothers of Africa are kept, promises to do what we can to relieve their burdens and alleviate their suffering.

I can think of no better way to remind ourselves of the importance, the vitality, the energy, the wisdom and dynamism of grandparents than to remember that we are still working to change the world. To all those who are building a legacy and bridging generations, whether it is working in international development, working to end elder abuse, staying active, mentoring or caring for the next generation, I say Happy Grandparents' Day. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Good Neighbours Senior Centre

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Earlier today, on this very day 15 years ago, the Good Neighbours Senior Centre in northeast Winnipeg signed their charter and officially became a non-profit organization that would serve seniors in our community.

Mr. Speaker, I was glad to be part of a government at that time when we worked with the Good Neighbours and the seniors in northeast Winnipeg to ensure that they became the great organization that they are today. Governments don't lead in those circumstances. It's volunteers and people in the community that have a vision. They bring forward that vision, articulating what needs are there. It's government's role to provide assistance and support to make that happen.

So, Mr. Speaker, I commend those visionaries, those leaders within our community 15 years ago, or more, who worked diligently to try to ensure that seniors in our community had a place to go, a place

to grow. They truly have grown. We now have a thousand members of the Good Neighbours Senior Centre and over 40 programs that they deliver to seniors in our community on an ongoing basis.

They are growing. They are moving to a new home at the new Bronx community centre. I just want to say to all of those, past and present, that are involved in the Good Neighbours Senior Centre, congratulations, hats off to you, you're the ones that have made it happen. To the board, to the volunteers, to the staff and to all of those that are involved, I just want to say thank you, Mr. Speaker, on behalf of all of us here in the Legislature for a job well done. Thank you.

National Firefighters Week

Ms. Erna Braun (Rossmere): Mr. Speaker, I rise to recognize National Firefighters Week, September 6 to September 12. This is a week that asks us to remember the dedication of firefighters across Canada. I echo the words of our Premier (Mr. Doer) when I say that Manitoba firefighters represent a unique group of highly dedicated men and women who routinely place the safety and needs of others before their own.

I am therefore proud to be a part of a government that has consistently supported firefighters. Manitoba made history when it amended the Workers Compensation Act in 2002 to reflect medical and scientific studies that show a strong association between the dangerous working conditions experienced by firefighters and the occurrence of certain diseases.

These amendments made Manitoba the only Canadian jurisdiction to have a law presuming that certain diseases: primary site brain cancer, bladder or kidney cancer, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma or leukemia, are caused by firefighting. Other provincial jurisdictions have since introduced and passed similar legislation.

This tremendous achievement did not go unnoticed and our Premier was the first politician in over a decade to address the International Association of Fire Fighters convention that year.

Manitoba's leadership on this issue continues. Just last month the United Fire Fighters of Winnipeg president, Alex Forrest, won election as a trustee to the International Association of Fire Fighters.

* (14:50)

Mr. Speaker, I want to take this time to say thank you to those who choose this profession as a way of life.

I also want to take a moment to give thanks to the families of firefighters.

It is also a time to remember with solemn reflection and honour those who have sacrificed and lost their lives in the line of duty. We have experienced a number of losses this year and the family and friends of those firefighters remain in our hearts and in our prayers.

To the firefighters across this province, I wish to say thank you. Thank you for the bravery that you show, thank you for the volunteer hours that you devote in addition to your job and thank you for being a part of our community.

Bill 45

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, I rise today because there is a bill under debate in this House that will have a grave impact on many Manitobans that committed their lives to educating youth and, instead of respecting and appreciating their effort, the government of Manitoba, the NDP government, has instead chosen to ignore them.

Bill 45 is an attempt not to deal with the problem effectively, Mr. Speaker, but appears to be more an attempt to make a problem go away.

How can this government unveil Bill 45 to retired teachers who see the pittance in pension increases not even match the NDP increases on their Pharmacare deductibles?

I am convinced that under the current drafting that this legislation is not going to solve the problem and will not allow retired teachers to live comfortably. This is an attempt to merely stop people from complaining. This is an attempt to paint over a crumbling foundation. Mr. Speaker, members on this side of the House are not fooled by this quarter-loaf attempt at a solution, and I assure you neither are retired teachers.

I challenge the members opposite to think of their favourite elementary school teacher living with a pension that is not adequate, forcing them to scrape by as we all benefit from their instruction. For shame, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is a win-win solution at hand that will allow Manitoba's retired educators to live with a pension that we owe them for their life's work.

I encourage the members opposite, the NDP government, to admit their mistake, withdraw Bill 45, hold meaningful consultations with all stakeholders and develop a solution that is right for all retired teachers.

In fact, there's an article from September 3 of the *National Post*, and the headline is "Wages battle to stay ahead of inflation." It goes on to say how difficult it is for many people, just even with their wages, to stay ahead, and yet the retired teachers get no COLA and are expected to be satisfied, Mr. Speaker. Shame on this government.

Celebration of the Birthday of Buddha

Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to inform all members of a unique cultural event held in my constituency last May at the Trappist Monastery Provincial Park in St. Norbert.

On May 31, I attended a special party to celebrate the birth and teachings of the Buddha. This important cross-cultural community celebration brought together a gathering of Burmese, Sri Lankan, Japanese, Laotian and Canadian Buddhist groups. The event highlighted the work of Insight Meditation Services and the Dharma Centre in fostering peace and promoting a better understanding of the teachings of the Buddha. The evening began at the Peace Pagoda and featured talks, meditation, traditional and contemporary dance and musical performances, as well as a personal tour of the St. Norbert Arts Centre, meditation centre and grounds.

Adjacent to the Trappist Monastery Provincial Park is the home of a thriving artistic community at the St. Norbert Arts Centre. The choice of hosting the celebration of the Buddha's birthday at this location was not accidental. The Dharma Centre of Winnipeg has been working hard on ensuring the upkeep and maintenance of the Stupa, which is a very important religious object located at the Trappist Monastery Provincial Park.

The St. Norbert Arts Centre itself has been working co-operatively with the Dharma Centre of Winnipeg and has been dedicated to the promotion of a cultural and artistic expression, education and environmental stewardship. The members of the St. Norbert Arts Centre have been working hard at ensuring the site is maintained as a location that fosters peace, tranquility and an opportunity for spiritual awakening. I have often participated in the activities of the St. Norbert Arts Centre and have

witnessed the richness and diversity of the programs on hand.

Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate the organizers of the May 31 celebration that recognized the importance of the life of the Buddha as a prophet of God who advocated for peace and non-violent resolution to conflict. Thank you.

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I'd ask leave to immediately distribute amendments in the House to Bill 45, those that were filed with the Clerk's office.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave has been granted.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, in accordance with rule 36(1), I move, seconded by the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese), that the regular scheduled business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, mainly the flooding and excess moisture conditions that are creating severe challenges in several regions of Manitoba, including a negative impact on agriculture, the local sector, local governments, businesses and citizens.

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing the honourable member for the Interlake, 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.

As stated in *Beauchesne* citation 390, urgency in this context means the urgency of immediate debate, not of the subject matter of the motion. In their remarks—order, please—the member 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 interest will not suffer.

The honourable member for the Interlake.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Speaker, I'm the member from Lakeside.

Mr. Speaker: For Lakeside, I mean.

Mr. Eichler: I noticed you referred to me in recognizing me as the member from Interlake.

Mr. Speaker: Okay, I'd like to correct it on the record that the honourable member that has the floor is the honourable Member for Lakeside.

Mr. Eichler: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We have been witnessing tremendous weather-related challenges in certain areas of this province, and flooding and excess moisture over the past number of weeks and months have had a significant impact in regard to grain producers, livestock producers, rural businesses and citizens alike.

I know that the Interlake has been widely affected along with areas on the west side of Manitoba as well and beyond. In fact the recent provincial government press release even pointed out that the extent of the problem was noted, that even the Interlake has not received this much rain in this sort of time frame since 1951.

I refer back to the meeting that was held in Eriksdale. I want to read on the record, Mr. Speaker, in regard to the resolution that was passed, moved by Lorne Park, seconded by Colin Bjarnason:

WHEREAS the whole Interlake and areas of western Lake Manitoba are a disaster area; and

WHEREAS many farmers are at the point of bankruptcy; and

WHEREAS existing Agriculture safety programs do not address the revenue loss incurred by excessive rainfall beginning June of 2008 until the present day.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the provincial and federal governments declare the affected area as a disaster zone;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the provincial and federal governments take responsibility and work with agriculture producers on immediate and adequate assistant programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the provincial and federal governments work toward a more adequate drainage system; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that local councils be allowed to respond in a reasonable time with regard to drainage issues which includes permitting the provincial government and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans.

This motion was passed and sent in by Boyd Abas who was acting as Chairperson for the proceedings that particular day, Mr. Speaker.

Also, the Member for Thompson, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ashton) had talked about a disaster program, in fact, that it was in place, and we went through the press releases. I'd like him to go on record to outline exactly what he meant by that because in his recent press release as of September 2 in which he outlines Emergency Measure Organization is working with the local governments to assess the impacts of rain and provide advice as requested.

* (15:00)

So it's a significant difference between providing advice and providing actual dollars for those people that are not covered under the AgriRecovery program. I know the minister outlined very clearly that she did declare a disaster area in order to access those dollars for those producers under the AgriRecovery program. But at this meeting in Eriksdale we talked to councillors and reeves. People brought up issues whereby roads were washed out, basements were flooded. There's also a compensation package under the disaster financial assistance program that would cover off drowned baled hay, for example. Relocation of corrals will also be covered under that which is not covered under the AgriRecovery program. So we think there's significant reasons that we'd ensure that, in fact, it does be declared a disaster area.

Also, Mr. Speaker, the fact that it be declared a disaster and the federal election being called also alleviates the problem where the federal government can talk about this particular situation. We know that in fact that the federal government can't play politics with this if it is called a disaster, they respond to the response of the disaster and deal with that issue alone. So it's significant enough to make sure that the message is clear to both the provincial government and municipalities and also the federal government.

What we see is some of the challenges that we are facing in the result of this heavy rain is loss of feed supplies for our cattle producers as well as long-term damage to forage crops. We know that the number of producers just don't have the cash flow. We've had five tough years of which the cattle producers have not been able pay back a number of the loans. In fact, I know the minister in Estimates has verified the fact that a number of those loans are still outstanding. Some of them are in the amount of

\$50,000 plus interest. It's a substantial amount of money and we need to ensure that these producers don't go in debt more. They can't incur any more debt. So it's very important that we can't go on ad hoc committee or ad hoc programs that won't be sustainable for the industry.

Also, heavy losses on the crop side where producers have been hoping for a sound crop in light of the recent improvement in grain prices. What we've seen is a number of producers go out, try to buy rice tires, special units, in order to try and get on the field. When you look at the crop insurance side of things where we don't have to have take that crop off in order to estimate the damage, what we can do to look at, is the amount of significant value that's there. A lot of the crops are down. Growth is coming back up through those crops. We know that they're not going to be of any value.

So we ask that the minister and her staff, go out and meet with those producers in order to be able to set up a program that would be workable so that they can trickle those payments. In fact, we look back in 2005, during the flood then. In fact, a number of producers never received their insurance payment until the fall of 2006, some almost a year later. So it's significant that these producers get money in a timely manner and that's how it works under the AgriRecovery program. They get the money within a six-month period as opposed to a year and a half, which is substantially different.

Mr. Speaker, we think it's significant enough that we set aside the debate today in order to deal with this significant issue, also municipal infrastructure such as roads and culverts. We heard from a number of municipalities on Saturday as a result of the overland flooding, the result of the roads and the earth and just being a big sponge and the roads have been torn out, washed out, basements, as I said, have been flooded. So a significant issue even for the infrastructure as far as that's concerned.

Also, the water table is high. I notice the minister has gone on record as a result of water testing for those municipalities and districts that are affected by the overland flooding but it's much broader than that as well. Also, the water table in the province of Manitoba has had a significant impact. I would ask her to amend that to include all water testing for anybody within the province of Manitoba to have their water tested to ensure that we do have safe drinking water within all our areas of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, also I want to outline the fact that I did write the minister in July to bring to her attention, due to the amounts of heavy rains that were brought forward at that point in time, we had a number of people—in fact, if we look back at *The Western Producer*, the *Manitoba Co-operator*, the ag reviews, *The Interlake Spectator*, a number of the papers made significant appeals to the government in regard to making sure that there was a program in place rather than having to rush and make through a make-up program in order to make sure that it was ready for these producers as they move forward.

Also, I pointed out that the federal government negotiated a deal with Saskatchewan in June to help producers in that province affected by drought, which is also an undesirable farming challenge, which I know the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) has significant impact in his area with regard to drought earlier this year. So we need to have these programs in place that are bankable, that are sustainable, in order to make sure that all producers and municipalities are, in fact, protected. We also will ask whether the provincial government was examining other programs to help deal with this situation, and we've heard nothing to date other than the forage program.

Obviously, drainage is poor and as a result, water is still standing in the fields and has contributed to a number of damages. As rainfalls continue and flood losses damages continue to accumulate, what we've seen is that livestock producers have called, and I've got calls as far away as Sifton. As I said earlier in my response to the minister's statement in regard to flooding, even people in the Russell area haven't turned a wheel. There's a time of need. There's a time of crisis that we need to deal with here in a very timely manner.

Also, the ripple effect, Mr. Speaker, the equipment dealers are also seeing orders cancelled. In fact, the Arborg dealer, one of the dealers up there, told me that five combines have already been cancelled as a result of not being able to have the sustainability that they need. We have fertilizer dealers that are calling farmers already asking to book for next year. Seed dealers are calling asking them to book for next year. There's an uncertainty out there, and we need to reinstate the confidence of those financial institutes for the people that loan money, for the people that are out there, in order to try and reinstate the confidence in that particular situation.

Also, we've seen that the leadership that has been brought forward, obviously, it hasn't "resolated" out to the municipalities because it's important that they understand exactly what the Province is doing. If, in fact, they've declared this and there's no need for a disaster area to be declared, then obviously that message hasn't gotten through to those people, obviously hasn't gotten through to the federal government. The MP for Dauphin, Mr. Inky Mark, has written the Premier (Mr. Doer) a letter, actually, as of Saturday, asking the Premier of this province to declare those areas a disaster. So, with that, I ask your leave for this MUPI, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, by virtue of the rules in this Chamber—[interjection]

Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Of course, the matter of urgent public necessity must be demonstrated in the comments of the member, and, in fact, when I listened to the member's comments, I was a little bit surprised why the member wasn't actually praising the government for moving so quickly on dealing with this matter, with the ministers having been out. The member said it in his own statement so I, in a non-partisan way, think that we recognize that this is a once-in-a-lifetime situation that occurred, and the government has been out and has been doing everything possible.

I think it's worthwhile that we debate this matter so, by leave, we're agreeing with members opposite that we will consider this matter, and, by agreement I'm suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that two members of the official opposition, two members of our side, and a member of the third party speak on this matter to deal with the issue because we believe in a non-partisan fashion in all of Manitoba and in rural Manitoba. That's why we've been out there meeting with producers and others, and that's why we want to talk about this issue to allow all the public—perhaps some in the city aren't aware of some of the serious ramifications—and how much work the government has done to deal with the situation and will continue to do in that area. So I think we have leave of the House to deal with this matter.

* (15:10)

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable members for their advice to the Chair and whether the motion proposed by the honourable Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) should be debated today.

The notice required by rule 36(1) was provided. Under our rules and practice, 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 this matter.

Ordinarily, this matter would be ruled out of order on the basis that there are other opportunities available to raise the matter which include questions in question period, members' statement, grievances and the possibility of resolutions coming forward as opposition day motions or during the consideration of private members' business but, given that there appears to be a willingness to debate the matter today despite the procedural shortcomings, I shall put the question to the House.

Is there agreement to debate the motion for a matter of urgent public importance and also, the debate will be two government members and two official opposition members and one of the independent members. Is that agreed to? *[Agreed]*

Okay, there is agreement. The House will proceed to have a debate on the issue and, as indicated in the rules, the debate expires at the end of two hours. First member wishes to debate.

Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak today to the conditions that are occurring in the Interlake and on the west side of Lake Manitoba, in my constituency toward the north end, involving in my constituency the municipalities of McCreary, the north end of Glenella, Alonsa, Ste. Rose and then up into another constituency, the R.M. of Lawrence. Very serious conditions.

I was privileged this past week to be in the Riverton area and the Arborg area and met with a number of farmers in that area and talked about the conditions over there and saw the real effects of what's going on out there. There are hay bales sitting in standing water, halfway up the bales. A bale of hay becomes a sponge and just becomes a rotten mess once that happens.

There's wheat swath I saw floating on water. I saw swathers going from one end of the field to the other and leaving ruts about a foot deep all the way, with water in them right from one end of the field to the other. The recovery on those fields is not a one-year recovery. It will take a couple of years to get them back into shape.

I also was at the meeting in Eriksdale on Saturday morning where roughly a hundred

producers and municipal leaders gathered to discuss these issues. I'm also aware of another meeting in my constituency on Thursday night in Eddystone which I expect there will be quite a number of producers and municipal people attending too.

The government sits here and says they've got everything in place and everything's rolling along. That's not what the producers out there and the concerned municipalities believe. They hear the promises that this is going to happen and that's going to happen. We're very close, probably four to six weeks away from the cattle coming off pasture. These producers don't have any feed for those cattle or they have a very limited supply for those cattle.

I talked to Alfred Morriseau the other day from Crane River. Alfred has 200 hundred cows; he has a hundred bales of hay. A cow over the course of a winter, if you're going to do a projection, probably needs eight bales of hay which is roughly about four tonnes of hay to a cow. We're starting to hear prices in the neighbourhood of six cents a pound for that hay.

Contrary to popular belief, I think there isn't an abundance of hay in the province. The southwest region of the province was dried out this year and so they're short of hay.

Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

My own area, there was enough rainfall that there's a lot of poor quality hay. There's very little good quality hay, and no producer is going to pay 6 cents a pound for hay to feed to a 40-cent-a-pound cow that is still dropping in price. So what I'm hearing from different producers—one of my producers out there is a gentleman named Kevin Hamil. He's 35 years old. He has 240 cows. He tells me 105 of those cows will be going to a bred-cow sale this fall. Well, he'll be very fortunate if he can get them in there. Ashern Auction Mart, as of the other day, is booked up till January on bred-cow sales. You can't even get them in there till January. How does he feed those cows, those 105 cows till January when he has no feed? He says he has to get rid of the cows. He says he hasn't got the financial ability to access hay for them.

The programs that we've heard announced are not providing any money along that line. I would like to remind the government opposite that in 1999, in the flooded conditions of the southwest corner of this province, very quickly, without federal assistance—

they went after the federal assistance afterwards—the Filmon government announced a \$50-million payout to help those farmers. Now the \$50 million may not have been enough to address all the problems out there, but it certainly showed the government's confidence and the fact that they were standing on the side of those farmers in those areas, and that 's what's needed at this time. These guys are cash strapped. We hear AgriStability. It's not a bad program in my understanding if they get it rolling. All they've done yet is a little bit of transportation money, and transportation money isn't doing much when you can't find the feed.

We heard earlier today, I think in the minister's remarks, talking about AgriStability or AgriInvest, we can access money out of that. I would like to remind you that this is the first year of AgriInvest. None of us have any money in it. There's no money to access out of it because we don't have the money in it. It hasn't built for four or five years. It's very early in the process.

Another issue I would like to raise on these wet conditions is there seems to be very little acknowledgement of some of the Northern Association of Community Councils which have quite a few cattle producers, and they seem to fall through the cracks on some of these programs. In my area, there are quite a number of those and on into the Dauphin and the south end of the Swan River riding where there are fairly major cattle producers. I talked to a young producer out there just the other day. He went out to try and bale. He spent the whole morning out there. He made ten bales, he had his tractor and baler stuck three times, and he's literally having to pull it out every time he moves it.

In the meeting at Eriksdale the other day, the Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) in his remarks talked about things like supply management, talked about trade issues and countervails. I'd like to remind the House that when you've got an emergency situation, when you've got a disaster situation, countervails are not an issue. These people desperately need help. They need it now. They're looking to this provincial government to provide that help. It's not happening. They know that their window of opportunity, their time frame is closing down. Cows are coming off pasture in six weeks. They've got nowhere to go. They're already tapped out. We talk about AgriStability. Since BSE the only thing that's happened to cattle producers' revenues is that their margins have dropped and dropped and dropped, and now they don't have decent coverage

under AgriStability because AgriStability looks after one poor year because the poorest year gets thrown out of the average. As soon as there's two years or three years they go into the average and the margins drop. So these farmers don't have that coverage.

*(15:20)

We've heard quite a bit about cattle producers and feed, and we should not ignore the croplands in this area too. They're not going to get the crops off, and the rules are if there's a crop there, crop insurance does not pay out until such time as a crop is harvested. So, in all likelihood, most of that crop will be ordered to stay there until the spring, and then they will have to try and harvest it and access crop insurance.

I would also remind the House that we had a sharp, sharp increase in input costs this year: fertilizer and fuel. There was some increase in our crop insurance coverages, but those coverages do not cover the input costs. Not only can they not access the money this fall to pay the bills for this year if that crop is sitting out there, when they do access it, it's not going to cover the bills. We're losing young farmers in the north end of my constituency and I'm sure in the constituency of the Interlake. I have phone calls from them every week; there's more and more phone calls coming in. They don't have the wherewithal.

Shortly after BSE, the Province put out \$50,000 loans to them. A huge number of them were unable to pay those loans back. They don't need more loans; they don't need cash advances. They're cash advanced out; they're loaned out. Those loans then became amortized. All of a sudden a \$50,000 loan became an \$83,000 loan over 10 years. They couldn't pay the \$50,000. Now we're tacking interest on to it and saying, you've got to pay \$83,000. That just is not helping these farmers.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. The member's time has expired.

Mr. Briese: Thank you.

Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. Normally, I would begin my remarks by saying it's a pleasure to rise in the House to speak, but today is certainly an exception to that. It's been a deep, dark summer for the people of the Interlake and in other areas of the province, as well with this incessant rain fall that began early on in the summer and has not stopped to the point where

now we are facing one of the worst situations in decades, if not centuries.

This is a one-in-150-year water level situation in the Interlake, and it's indeed caused considerable hardship for the farming community in particular but, even more so, the livestock producers in the area of the Interlake. There is no shortage of livestock production in this region, and certainly it's been tested to the utmost by this experience. I've spent the entire summer talking to farmers, to families and so forth, and I can attest to the pain that people are experiencing out there right now.

It's certainly been a season of disappointment to say the least but what is even more disappointing, I have to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the path that members of the opposition have chosen to take in this, very similar to what occurred back in 2003 at the onset of the BSE crisis. Rather than putting politics aside in a critical moment such as this, they have chosen instead to take a course of disinformation—to use a polite word—in messaging to the people and even going so far as to carry this off in this very Chamber.

I'm referring to this vaunted declaration of disaster that they keep referring to which would automatically trigger all types of mythical payments from the federal government, I assume. It's complete nonsense, to say the least. We know that and they know that. There are members that sat on municipal council here. They know the process. They know that a declaration between one department to the other—the Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives here in Manitoba made contact with the federal Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Foods Canada, and that was the declaration of disaster. That was what initiated the AgriRecovery program. I'm very, very disappointed to say the least in members opposite, and they're laughing across the way here. Well, that's even more disappointing how callous and crass they can be inside this Chamber in regard to this crisis.

But to go out—and I was in Eriksdale for the meeting as well, and that was the tone. They had all their political opportunists out there as well saying the same thing, that unless we declared a disaster that programs wouldn't flow.

We saw the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. McFadyen), the Leader of the Opposition, attempting to mislead us in the sense that he suggested that flooded homes, damaged infrastructure to municipalities that a declaration of disaster, again,

was necessary in order for funds to flow, and that, too, is nonsense, Madam Deputy Speaker.

The Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ashton), the Member for Thompson, was also in the Interlake a week or so ago with me and talked to municipal officials who had damage and made that message abundantly clear to them, that disaster financial assistance programs were in place and were under way. So for them to suggest today that this declaration was fundamental to rolling these programs out, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have to say that this is shameful behaviour on their part. Rather than pull together as a team here to try and look for solutions, they are attempting to put this information on the record, which is not true, to say the least.

Mentions of countervail duties, that a declaration of disaster somehow ties the hands of the President of the United States, George Bush, from levelling countervail duties or tariffs. Come on. This is, Madam Deputy Speaker, it's another attempt to put false information on the record, and I'm really disappointed.

So, rather than pulling together, we can see what their strategy is. They're going to try and spin this. They're going to try and somehow pin the blame on this absence of a declaration, and I really have to say how disappointing that their actions today are, given the state of the crisis that we are in in the Interlake and other areas today.

Now, they've made some reference to programming, to AgriRecovery and so forth, or the deficits in AgriStability and AgriInvest. Well, they should look to their cousins in Ottawa who are now on the campaign trail. When the Liberals were in power, they had the CAIS program, and the Tories were supposed to fix the CAIS program. Everybody agrees that there are problems with it. It's difficult to understand, difficult to apply for programs. So what did the federal Conservatives do? They renamed it. They renamed it. They never changed the aspects of the program at all, really. So that was their solution. Change CAIS to Growing Forward. Call it AgriRecovery, AgriStability, and so on and so forth. But in terms of any fundamental changes or any improvements to the program, I haven't seen it, and so they can take that out on the campaign trail with them when they leave this Chamber today.

There are a number of other assistance programs that are in place that we're looking at. Well, there's the emergency cash advance that's administered by the MCPA which the honourable minister mentioned

in her ministerial statement just earlier. We are looking at things like forage restoration. When we went on the tour with the honourable minister and the deputy minister and two assistant deputy ministers and all of our staff back on August 24th, these were things that producers suggested to us. We've taken them to heart and I know that departmental staff are currently analyzing the possibilities of suggestions such as this.

*(15:30)

I want to give the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) credit for also taking their suggestion to heart that we approach the federal government and ask for tax deferrals on sales of cattle. So that's a good idea. If people have to downsize their herd and partially disperse some of their livestock, why should they be hit with the taxes from those capital gains if the federal government can defer this? It's something that has been done in times past in regard to drought situations, and we've made the request to those in Ottawa to consider it in this particular situation. So, again, we wait on the federal government to respond to this very interesting proposal.

We've looked at things like mitigating the impacts of flood. One of the things that the Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs (Mr. Ashton) talked with municipal councillors about was the impact of beavers on the whole situation. Water levels such as this, beavers are a problem, to put it mildly, and, yet, all we do is respond to them. We have a program in place to encourage people to trap them, but what we're looking at is the cost of removing beaver dams. If we can convince our federal counterparts to take actions in regard to mitigation, as opposed to just reacting to disasters, then that's a good thing as well. Maybe we could use some of that disaster financial assistance capital available to go out and actually remove the beaver dams instead of just the beavers.

One of the things I noticed on the federal press release just the other day, right at the bottom of the press release was some reference made to drainage infrastructure. I have to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, if we were to see Ottawa actually step up to the plate and start to play a role in this very important infrastructure challenge, that would be most welcome, I'm sure, on our part.

There was a time when federal governments played a role in drainage. I look back to—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time is over, expired.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to address the critical situation in the Interlake with a tremendous amount of flooding that is existing now, the catastrophic situation for many farmers, the loss of the hay crops and a great concern for people who are cattle producers, of which there are many in the Interlake, the concerns about other crops and the general widespread concerns about the amount of water that there has been in the Interlake.

It has been building, as we know, during the summer. In August, I was very surprised when I was travelling from Ashern to Fisher Branch to see the huge amount of water beside the road, in the fields, in the marshes, in the streams. Going north from Fisher Branch to Fisher River First Nation, the Fisher River itself was swollen. Clearly, there was a lot of water coming out of the Interlake at that point, and that was before the huge rains that we have had.

When I was there, to exacerbate the problem, there were huge numbers of mosquitoes, making it very uncomfortable for people to be outside and on the beaches on Lake Winnipeg because of the tremendous amount of wet weather and creating breeding grounds for mosquitoes. So it's been an uncomfortable summer for people in the Interlake, as well as a disastrous one.

I went from Fisher River to Arborg talking with farmers in the area, in Arnes and in Gimli, over to Eriksdale, back up to Ashern, and then, later on, Ashern, Eriksdale, Lundar and St. Laurent, again, talking with people in the Interlake about the concern. Clearly, it is a very major concern, and that concern has grown over the last month to the point where it is a complete disaster for many farmers. Certainly, it needs to be addressed.

Let me talk about one example of the sorts of things that have exacerbated the problem. You know, there have been problems on Husavik Road, not far from Gimli, where the drainage hasn't been effective for some 10 years now. This is to the point where even one to two inches in that area is causing problems, and, of course, we've had huge amounts more than that.

The reality here is that, in 2003, the municipality of Gimli applied to Water Stewardship to develop the drainage plan for the Husavik West area, and, as of at least September 5, 2008, they had not received approval for this drainage plan. I don't know where the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick) has been since 2003, where this government has been since 2003, but this is totally unacceptable, to have

these kinds of delays built in which exacerbate a problem which is tragic already.

Certainly, we would have expected far better from the Minister for Water Stewardship and from this government in making sure that there was an effective water management program in place, and that it addressed drainage but also addressed improvements in water storage which are also a very important part of any plan to manage water and make sure that things are being looked after properly.

The disappointment in terms of the people in the farm community who were banking on high prices for crops this year and a good harvest and, you know, very, very hopeful to, all of a sudden, see their crops under water, walking around in the fields—and they're wet. There's just no way that the crops are going to amount to anything, and clearly, there needs to be major effort here to help people in the Interlake with the kind of devastating rains and water that has happened.

Acres and acres, thousands of acres, not just of hay but beautiful Canola crops, cereal grains, alfalfa, and so on. You know, it is very disappointing when this happens, and particularly when it happens in a year when some of the prices are better than they are most years. It is exacerbated for beef producers, for cattle producers. The situation that they have faced in the years since BSE first hit, and the problem, of course, is that cattle producers, many of them, got in quite a hole as a result of the BSE. They were just starting to recover when cattle prices went down, and now what's happened, when it just looked like they might be able to think about the light at the end of the tunnel, all of a sudden, there's this deluge which comes down on farmers in the Interlake, causing horrendous problems for farmers, lack of hay, almost impossible situations to deal with.

We've talked about the ability to market cattle as well as to buy hay, and in spite of, you know, rhetoric, the government has not been able to deal effectively with this. We would have expected a government which would have been more on top of the situation. We would have expected a government which, in 2003, would have acted when they were told about a major drainage problem that needed to be addressed. We would have expected a government that was much more effective in terms of being able to prevent and help prevent some of this damage.

* (15:40)

This government has known, in fact has talked about for quite a number of years, the problem of climate change. There was a report that was done. I would think it would be maybe even eight or nine years ago, Madam Deputy Speaker, on climate change and the fact that with climate change there's going to be much more variation in climate in Manitoba and that we're going to have periods and areas in Manitoba where there are high levels of water, high rains, and that we had better have a plan to deal with that.

Sadly, this government never put in place the plan to at least provide a higher level of protection to farmers who would be in great difficulty because of the high levels of water and of rain occurring as a result of the increasing temperature in the planet and climate change and the changes in rain pattern that will result and were predicted by models which I saw probably almost 10 years ago in the National Institute for Sustainable Development, showing that we're likely to expect some periods of considerably more rain in parts of Manitoba.

It is not just the Interlake which has had a disaster. We've had a disaster in this province with this government, this government which hasn't prepared for climate change in a way that they should have done to make sure that we're much better protected from big variations in rainfall. It is disappointing to many farmers in the Interlake and it is disappointing to many other Manitobans to have a government which has been so ill-prepared and so unready to respond when, as I said, they received a proposal to address even small drainage problems back in 2003 and then never acted.

It is sad. I wish the news were better, but the government's failure to act means that it is all the more important that there is action now. Let's recognize that, when it came to cattle, the level of support provided by this government to cattle producers was much, much less than Saskatchewan next door, and our producers were put at a severe disadvantage even before the rain came along.

The Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) is nodding his head. He knows whereof I speak here and the fact is—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Gerrard: I will conclude and I think it is important that we have some action from this government. Thank you.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The honourable member—*[interjection]*—no, I'm sorry, I thought it was the government's turn but the honourable Member for Emerson.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. It doesn't give me great pleasure to speak to this type of a disaster in this House; however, I think we need to clarify a few things right off the get go.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

We need to clarify that every member in this House has a responsibility to all of the people in this province and I think we are trying to work together as a team. However, there are certain individuals in this House that don't understand what co-operation really is and what it really means.

Mr. Speaker, I want to go back a little bit in history to 2002 when, on my own operation, we endured 14 inches of rain in a 24-hour period. It was an unprecedented rainfall. It did a lot of damage to our crops, to our pastures, to our hay crops. I want to point out that the stress level of operating a farm or a cattle operation or a grain operation is something that, unless you've experienced it, you can never describe it adequately and to the extent of what it does to a family, what it does to their relationships, be that a husband and a wife or the children in those types of families in those types of situations.

In July of this year, it was quite obvious, and it should have been obvious to the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk); it should have been obvious to the Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) that there was not an opportunity to put up adequate forage for the cattle in the northern part of this province. I would suggest that many of the municipalities in the north depend on the cattle operations, for that is what that land is made for. It's made for cattle. It's not a lot of grain land in many of the municipalities there. The municipalities that do have grain land, they have been hit just as hard with the unprecedented rainfalls.

I don't believe that the minister acted as quickly as she could have, but looking back is only going to give us a stiff neck. What I'd like to see the minister do, and she has talked about AgriRecovery. What she needs to do is move this along quicker. She has to say to some of the people that have crop insurance, the people that have grain land that, in fact, we will write that crop off rather than force them to buy what they are doing now.

They're spending thousands of dollars on added equipment to go out and wreck their fields. They're putting dual wheels on their tractors to go bale. They're putting dual wheels on their balers to carry the bale. We heard today that a guy worked for four hours to make 10 bales. You don't know what damage that's done to those fields. That's an irreparable damage that can't be fixed this year, won't be fixed next year and possibly the year after before there's any production, Mr. Speaker.

The same thing will apply to the grain land because I've done that, I've been there, I've been through that and the stress level just goes up, and it goes up and it goes up. The minister, I think, needs to say, our crop insurance program is in a deficit compared to what our input costs are. There's no question about that. She needs to say, look, we'll assess that field. The quality of the crop that's coming off of that field is quality that cannot be sold. It has no market value to it. Maybe it could be used after freeze-up as a salvage crop. She needs to say, boys, stay out of there. Don't make a whole bunch of ruts in that field. You can't go there with a baler after it freezes up, and the crop that you're taking off isn't going to pay for the fuel that you are taking out of there, or that you are using to take the crop off.

So I say to the minister that she has to show some leadership. I say to the Member for Interlake that he should pay more attention to his councils in that area. They've given him some good advice and apparently he was actually disqualifying the advice that was given to him by the people that are there, the grass-roots, elected representatives that know what they really need.

It's been pointed out earlier today that the AgriStability margins have declined in the cattle industry over the past few years, and that's an issue. You can tell me about AgriStability. You can tell me about the CAIS program, but the fact is the margins are pretty low and there isn't going to be a lot of money.

These young people, and I'm going to be a little bit more specific. There was a young person called me on Friday. He was from the Swan River area, from the Minister of Agriculture's area as a matter of fact, and he said, I went through that in 2002, with you, Cliff, he says. In your municipality I went through that, and he said, we want to help some young people. We want to help some young farmers. So he said, I phoned the Minister of Agriculture's

office Friday morning and he went all day phoning someone in the department to find out where he could find a young farmer that could use some help.

He said, I will bale the straw just for the twine and the fuel. All day, and finally at seven o'clock at night he called me and said, what can I do, Cliff? I'm not getting any answers. Madam Minister, I say to you, you need to help these people that want to help someone. You need to find out how to do that. You haven't done that to this point, and that's a disappointment. We need to say that this is a disaster. Let's call it what it is. Not only is it a disaster, it's an emergency disaster. In the cattle industry, there is no question. There's been more tonnes of straw blown away that could have been baled and could have been moved had the minister moved quicker.

Now, what you are doing is you're forcing the boys in the grain industry to go spend thousands of dollars on tracks. Yes, you are. They're bringing in combines from the States with rear-wheel assist and tracks, when they've got brand new combines sitting in their shop.

You're going to force them to go out and make ruts, canals in their fields. You are forcing that by not stepping up to the plate and saying, boys, this is what we can do for you. You have to do that, Madam Minister. I think that it is important that you do it very quickly. We understand in the farming industry what it's all about, and I thought perhaps you did. I'm beginning to lose a little bit of respect.

* (15:50)

The damage to the hayfields, I've indicated what that is, but the damage to the pastures—and in 2002 and 2003, when our cattle grazed in water exactly the way they are right now, and they're doing that all through the Interlake. They're grazing in water and they're punching these pastures full of holes. You can't go in and level those out. It just does not happen. There is no type of insurance for that. There's no type of AgriRecovery for that. I'm sorry, but it takes years and years and years for that ground to be flattened out because it is pasture land. You can't go in there and cultivate it.

Madam Minister, the people need feed. They need some sense of security. They need some sense that you're on their side. Sitting in Winnipeg isn't doing it, and sending the Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) has been an embarrassment not only to your side of the House, but to our side of the

House. We need to do something positive. So you need to say to the grain guys: If the crop is no good, we'll write it off. We need to do that right now. You need to have a salvage program. You need to lay that out. You need to lay out exactly what this freight assistance really is. I haven't seen it. Perhaps you have. Maybe you have got a freight assistance program, but I haven't seen the nuts and bolts of it. I don't think we need to wait until spring. We don't need to wait until spring to write off the crops so that they can collect their crop insurance, because that time they're done. They're toast. Their operating loans are due in the fall. Their payments are due in the fall. They need to have a sense of security from an authority, but you haven't provided that.

I've also pointed out that the grain producers in the Interlake have done all that they can do. We don't want to force them into a situation where they ruin their fields, where they have to buy high-priced propane or natural gas to try and dry a product, a product that doesn't have a market value. I can tell you that the wheat right now is running at 7 percent sprouts or more. It's running at 5 percent fusarium, and it doesn't have a home. It doesn't have a home when you go to the distillers in Minnedosa. They won't take that. It doesn't go to the feed market. They won't take that.

So, Madam Minister, I would ask you, how you are going to deal with this crop that they do take off? If you force them to take that off, what are you going to do with it? What are you going to tell these people?

As far as the drainage situation throughout the total Interlake or throughout all of Manitoba, I have to point out that it really hasn't existed. There hasn't been a whole pile of co-operation by your government—by your government. It has not been—and I have to say that you've been there for nine years now—I have to say that there has been no improvement whatsoever in nine years of any drainage programs. It might well be that the Member for Interlake would like to see the federal government come in and take over all of the drainage program as well, but he has to understand that his paycheque, his paycheque depends on the province of Manitoba, and, if he wants the federal government to take over—

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

Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives): Mr. Speaker, we are discussing a very important topic and, indeed, as you had said, this does not really qualify as a matter of urgent public importance because there are other venues where we could raise this issue. But I think it is important that we get some information on the record about what has been happening.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Tories, instead of trying to work on this and find solutions, they've been trying to make political hay out of it. I wonder if it's because there's a federal election that has just been called last week, but they were pushing that we had to declare a state of emergency. I know that the Member for Interlake, the MP was telling people, well, if the provincial government doesn't declare a state of emergency, declare it a disaster, the federal government won't be able to send any money. Well, in fact, that's not true at all. The Province—it is not necessary to declare a state of emergency or a disaster in order for AgriRecovery to take place. AgriRecovery is the program that has come about out of negotiations with farmers on a safety net program to deal with disasters. We signed that agreement. Somebody says, you know, you don't have the details. Well, this is a program that deals with a case-by-case issue of disaster. There have been several provinces that have used it already, and in no case did they declare a state of emergency or a disaster in order to access the funds. The funds are flowing and the funds will flow. In fact, when I was in the Interlake on the 24th, I told producers that we would have an assistance program, and then—but people had already been working with the federal government to try to find how we would work this program out. As soon as we became aware and the federal government became aware of this situation, the work began. A task team has been put in place and the program is triggered. The program is there. It's spelled out on what we can do and how we can support producers with the recovery program with regard to moving hay, moving livestock, moving feed.

I want to say as well, Mr. Speaker, I'm very pleased that my colleagues, the Member for the Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff), the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the Minister responsible for Emergency Measures and the Member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson) have all been in the Interlake, as have other members been through there to meet with producers to look at the serious challenges that they're facing.

There is no doubt that this is a very serious situation and that we have to continue to work with producers on a variety of issues. And that was why, when we had the announcement on Friday by the federal government, we said there will be pasture recovery. There will be a study done on what work can be done on drainage. Those will have to be done next year.

But, Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with a situation that is one in a 100-to-150-year flood. It is impossible to drain all of this water away. However, I do have to say that had the Conservatives, when they were in power, not cut the drainage budget—in fact, the Member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), his predecessor, Jack Penner, said that it was the Conservatives who made all of the cuts to the drainage budget. Since we have taken office, we have been increasing and increasing the funding to drainage, but you can't make up for all the cuts that were made by the previous administration. It takes a long time to put those kinds of funds to improve and improve drainage. But, even with drainage, it would be very difficult to address the level of water that is there.

Mr. Speaker, the pasture restoration, the investigation into drainage are all important issues. But I heard the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. McFadyen) say, you know, we have to go back to 1999 and have a \$15-an-acre payment. Well, you know, that reminds me of back to the future. Back to the future. Back in '99, there was no program. There was no AgriRecovery. There was no access moisture insurance. We came into office, we put in access moisture insurance. We have been in power where we have made the changes to programs such as AgriStability, AgriInvest, and now AgriRecovery. Those programs are done in conjunction with producers.

So the member opposite is saying that there are no programs. I would ask him to review the programs. Yes, the AgriRecovery program is a program to help with moving the livestock, with moving feed or feed supplement.

I say to you, Mr. Speaker, we have worked with producers, because, when I was in the Interlake on the 24th, they said to me, this is a good program. In fact, the Manitoba Cattle Producers and Keystone Agricultural Producers both put out a release saying that this was a good program. But they did ask us to

look at how they could get supplement in because the feed quality that they had was very poor. We changed the program. In certain areas you can bring grain in. The grain that the member opposite is talking about that has fusarium on it and is low grade, that will not be good for ethanol. Some of this grain will be able to be used for livestock feed.

So, yes, it's a very difficult situation. I wished and it was my hope that everybody would harvest a bumper crop this year and would be able to get over some of the hurdles and the challenges that have been facing the industry for the last few years. But we don't control the weather. We have to live with the weather, as do those people. That's why we have to continue to work and look at what kinds of programs can we put in place. How can we get cash into the producers' hands?

* (16:00)

If you look, Mr. Speaker, and I would invite the members opposite to talk to the federal Minister of Agriculture who has said in the past, he had said, although, when he was running in the election, there was going to be a 100-percent-funding program for disaster assistance from the federal government. He then changed his mind and said, we have to get away from ad hoc on the farm stability side and business risk management. We have to get rid of those programs.

So we have now gone to a stability AgriRecovery program. The Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) said our party supports creating a consistent, long-term, national disaster aid program that will provide farmers with a line of defence when circumstances arise beyond their control in the pursuit of management, and that's what has been put in place here. AgriRecovery is a disaster assistance program that wasn't in place before.

Mr. Speaker, producers can look at other programs. There are insurance programs that many will draw on and there is insurance on hay programs that producers can choose to purchase or not, and some in the region have purchased hay insurance.

There is AgriRecovery, as I said, for the forage assistance. AgriStability is a program where people can get advances in the amount of about 60 percent of their payment, Mr. Speaker. There is the in-term cash advance that the federal government has got, and producers can borrow up to \$400,000 and the first \$100,000 of that will be free. That's borrowed

against their cattle and, when they sell the cattle, they can pay it back.

So the member opposite says they are maxed out, Mr. Speaker. If they have livestock, they will be able to look at each one of these programs to see how they can work for them. We've also instituted the hay listing and the livestock listing. The member opposite talked about an individual from Swan River who didn't know how he could use hay. I wish he would have told him about the hay listing program because, if you list your commodity on that, that's the way you link to other producers. You link to the producer, and the producers then make contact with the individual who has hay.

I'm hoping he will also encourage individuals who might have an empty feed lot and feed on their farm site, that perhaps they will take livestock to their farm rather than moving hay because sometimes that can be more cost-effective.

Mr. Speaker, we do have to look at long-term solutions. We do have to look at restoration of those pastures and hay fields that have been lost by this excess moisture. We will continue to work with that and we will continue to look at drainage to see whether there's anything else that can be done in that area, but I have to say that this is an unusual situation, a flood that is one in 150 years, one that you could not address all of the drainages, but we will continue to work with the producers and our government will continue to look at how we can work together with them in order to maintain their herds.

We will have also requested the federal government to do a tax deferral, should herds have to be reduced. A very challenging time and it is my hope that over the next period of time we will see some better weather—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Ms. Wowchuk: —so that indeed people—

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member's time has expired. By agreement of the House, the debate is now concluded and the House will continue with routine proceedings, so I'm going to be calling for grievances.

Are there any grievances? Seeing none, okay, orders of the House.

ORDERS OF THE DAY
GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

House Business

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, we're going to call Bill 35 for concurrence and third readings, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2008, to be followed, by leave, to deal with amendments to Bill 45. Should there be any time after, we will deal with other matters.

Mr. Speaker: The business of the House will be concurrence, third reading of Bill 35, and is there leave to deal with amendments to Bill 45 once we've concluded second reading, concurrence and third reading of 35? Is there leave? *[Agreed]*

Leave has been granted, so I will call now concurrence, third reading of Bill 35, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2008.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, on House business.

Mr. Speaker: On House business.

Mr. Chomiak: Yes, one other matter. Mr. Speaker, you may recall that on June 10, the House agreed to allow the private members' resolution for September 9, 2008, to be submitted intersessionally to the Clerk's office and to have the notice appear on the Notice Paper for Monday, September 9, notwithstanding rule 331(8).

Therefore, I'm announcing that the private members' resolution to be considered tomorrow, Tuesday, will be one put forward by the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), and the title of the resolution is Adopting Jordan's Principle.

Mr. Speaker: House business, tomorrow morning for private members' resolutions, we will be dealing with the resolution brought forward by the honourable Member for River Heights, Adopt Jordan's Principle. That's for information of the House.

CONCURRENCE AND THIRD READINGS

Bill 35—The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2008

Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 35, The Statutes Correction and Minor

Amendments Act, 2008; Loi corrective de 2008, reported from the Standing Committee on Justice, be concurred in and be now read for a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2008, is before us primarily for the purpose of correcting minor errors in a variety of statutes. My colleague, Mr. Mackintosh, advised of the few minor substantive matters included in the bill at second reading.

I do not have anything further to add at this time. I'll be pleased to deal with any questions the members may have. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. *[interjection]*

Mr. Chomiak: Yes. The Minister of Family Services.

Mr. Speaker: The Minister of Family Services and Housing (Mr. Mackintosh). Very good.

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet): Okay. I move, seconded by the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler), that debate on Bill 35 be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

REPORT STAGE AMENDMENTS

Bill 45—The Teachers' Pensions Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: We will now move on to amendments to Bill 45. First amendment.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): I move, seconded by the honourable Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik),

THAT Bill 45 be amended by replacing Clause 7 with the following:

7(1) Subsection 41(1) is amended

(a) by striking out "seven" and substituting "nine"; and

(b) by adding ", at least one of whom has investment management experience" at the end.

7(2) The following is added after subsection 41(5):

Appointment of member nominated by RTAM

41(5.1) One of the board members must be a retired teacher appointed from a list of nominees provided to the minister by the Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba Inc. *[interjection]*

7(3) Subsection 41(6) is replaced with the following:

Term of office

41(6) In the order appointing a person to the board, the Lieutenant Governor in Council must fix the person's term of office.

Chair and vice chair

41(6.1) The Lieutenant Governor in Council must appoint one of the members of the board as Chair and one as vice chair.

7(4) Subsection 41(7) is amended by striking out "Four" and substituting "Five".

7(5) Subsection 41(8) is amended by striking out "four" wherever it occurs and substituting "five".

7(6) Subsection 41(9) of the English version is amended by striking out "chairman" and substituting "chair".

* (16:10)

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler), seconded by the honourable Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik),

THAT Bill 45 be amended by replacing Clause 7—

Dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Schuler: I appreciate the opportunity to be able to get up and put a few comments on the record in regard to this particular amendment. It is a very important amendment and is one that has been discussed not just in this Chamber, but it's also been discussed throughout the province and really does have a lot of importance and significance placed to it.

But, Mr. Speaker, I don't believe that it is right to just take one member of the Legislature's word for it. Rather it's probably better if we refer to a lot of the presentations that were made at committee. For those of us who had the opportunity to sit at committee—I know the minister was there for a good chunk of it, as was I—it was one of those very telling and career-changing times of a person's political career. The individuals that were coming forward, there was a pattern that was starting to develop. These are individuals that come forward on their own accord, basically write their own presentations, and you can

see a pattern that develop. The retired teachers made a lot of compelling arguments, a lot of the arguments that I will be referencing when we get further on with some of the other amendments.

I do have one individual—and I'll be reading this individual's name—who said, and I quote: To summarize, I ask you to improve your relationship—meaning the government—with RTAM and accept and respect its role as an advocate for retired teachers, to consider the amendments in Bill 45 that do not give a fair COLA to retired teachers and, in particular, to improve the situation of the retired teachers who receive small pensions, the majority of whom are women. Much advice has been given to you in the presentations opposing aspects of Bill 45. There should be room for government to review the amendments in the light of this feedback and modify them accordingly. I wish you well in that process. Thank you, Dr. Linda Asper, retired teacher, and as we know, former member of this Legislature.

I pause, Mr. Speaker, because Dr. Linda Asper got elected the same time I did in 1999 and was a true parliamentarian. I don't think she particularly liked the sharp partisanship of this Chamber. She was one of those parliamentarians who really believed that the process and what we were trying to do here was very important. For her to come forward and to speak against a piece of legislation that was being put forward by her former party, her former government, took a lot of courage but she did it in such a fashion that was not offensive. It was not a turnoff. It was not aggressive or hostile to the government, but rather she makes it very clear, and I want to quote that sentence again, that she asks the government: I ask you to improve your relationship with RTAM.

We believe that the amendment that's in front of this House would be one of those that would actually go a long distance in repairing the relationship between RTAM and the government.

At committee, there were many of the committee members who pointed out to the government that it was unfortunate—basically you had one group of people, one family if you will, coming forward to committee, one part of the family being retired teachers, one part of the family being active teachers. What they were doing was fighting each other at committee and fighting with the government, and that was a very unfortunate position for them to be in.

For those of us who are now through our education process and there are some in this Chamber—the pages who are in the process of getting their education—we all look back at our teachers, those who stood up and sacrificed a lot for our benefit so that we could be here, that we can be part of this process and yet we as a committee believe that it's very important to show respect to retired teachers and give them an opportunity to sit on their board. They're not asking for a majority vote. They're not asking to be the main directors or the driving force behind what goes on at their own pension fund, but rather what they're asking for is that they have a right to sit there, to hear first-hand what's happening to their pension account, to their pension fund and be able to report that back to their members, to be a direct messenger, not to get it second-hand or third-hand or fourth-hand. I think that's what Dr. Linda Asper was recommending to the minister—show respect to RTAM. We believe that this motion does show that kind of respect.

Its time has come that we recognize that retired teachers should and must have a voice at the table, if none other than to put forward their case and the case of all of those men and women. I will be referencing later on a little bit more what Dr. Linda Asper spoke about and that is to do with the women who are being placed into hardship because of their pensions and their declining pensions. It was very telling and it was actually quite shaking for me, my confidence, in the whole pension concept, the whole pension promise, if you will. I've come to the conclusion I will probably be working until my seventies, more than likely, so that I can retire with some kind of a pension. Seeing as what I heard at committee was really, really unfortunate, that individuals who work 30 and 40 years were not going to be realizing a real pension.

I would like to close off my comments on this particular amendment by reading to the minister: Dear Minister, yesterday, I received notice of the increase in my retired teachers' pension cheque. That increase amounted to a grand total of \$7.71. Also yesterday, I received notice that the rent on my small senior's apartment was increasing by \$11 a month. The arithmetic isn't difficult. Landlords, MTS, Manitoba Hydro and oil companies have no compunction when it comes to looking after their own interests. No one in the present government appears to care about the retired teachers of this province. Bertha Norberg from Carman, Manitoba.

I think, for the Bertha Norberg's of Manitoba, who are looking to RTAM to represent their views, I believe, if for no other reason, it is because of the Bertha Norberg's that I would recommend to this House that we pass this particular amendment. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth): I'd like to assure the member opposite that I do indeed have a tremendous amount of respect for teachers in Manitoba, retired and active teachers. The work that we have been doing over the last four years with RTAM has been unprecedented in terms of the number of meetings that we've had, in terms of the requests that have been made and the action that we have taken as a government, first and foremost, appointing a retired teacher to the TRAF board, which would make this amendment unnecessary, Mr. Speaker, as there is already a TRAF board member who had been a member of the RTAM executive. As such, this particular amendment would be redundant.

The member is also suggesting the possibility of increasing the number of seats at the TRAF board table from seven to nine. We don't feel this is necessary, Mr. Speaker, as certainly the board is functioning very well and that the TRAF board has realized rates of return that have outperformed their benchmarks on three-, five- and ten-year averages. So for that reason, I don't feel it is necessary to make the amendments as proposed by the member opposite.

I would also like to ask the member opposite what it is that he truly hopes to achieve here, as in his member's statement, he was suggesting that it would be a win-win-win to withdraw the bill entirely. Well, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I heard a lot of presentations where there were some that were advocating for that particular position to withdraw the bill. But withdrawing the bill at this stage does not do any good to any of the retired teachers to go back to the drawing board and delay the process. Some were suggesting a year, five years or ten years. That will not make any improvements to the COLA, as the legislation currently, as it exists, would continue to produce the dividends that teachers are seeing in their COLA.

So I have to wonder what the motives might be to propose, at one time, to withdraw the legislation entirely, and then to turn around and suggest now that we should make these amendments. I should ask the member if he truly supports making

improvements to the COLAs, because that is what Bill 45 will do. It will bring some stability and sustainability to the pension adjustment account, which, by the member's own admission, was a storm that had been several years in the making, Mr. Speaker. The Member from Springfield recognized that. This is not—and I can quote him directly, if you'll bear me. I believe during the presentations, the Member for Springfield did say: It is very clear that this is not something that's been created in the last six months or eight years. It's been a wave that's been coming at us for some time and here we are. Well, here we are, and that wave will continue to grow if we do not address the needs of the pension adjustment account and do not move forward with Bill 45. So again, I speak against this amendment. Bill 45 will bring stability and sustainability to the pension adjustment account.

* (16:20)

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): I listened to the Minister of Education and can refute about everything that he has to say.

The first part of this debate certainly is about the amendment itself. The amendment is a fairly simple amendment, one that should be agreed to by the government as being nothing but fair and showing the total respect that's necessary of the RTAM members.

This is simply a matter of having a stakeholder, retired teachers who depend on their pensions to have a body in a chair at TRAF that speaks for them, not a member who has been appointed by government who, in fact, is nothing but a puppet and speaks for the government. This is very simple. This is a simple amendment that should quite well be accepted by the government. All RTAM wants is to have the government identify a member of TRAF that is suggested by RTAM to the government. You can make that final choice but it should be the RTAM's list of members who they would like to sit on that TRAF board. Is that so much to ask?

These are people who have put in 35 and 40 years of their labour, depending upon a pension that they've paid for. In fact, paid more than was actually necessary at the time in order to get full COLA. These are people who depend on that pension for their livelihoods, now in their retirement, that should have a say in how their funds are being administered, should have nothing less than a say in how those funds are going to be distributed, whether it be

through the PAA account or through the pension account.

It's not too much to ask that these individuals, these retired teachers be shown that respect, that they should at least have a say in how their pensions are being administered. And the minister to stand here and say that they already have that right, is absolutely wrong. They don't have that right. They don't get to appoint that member to the TRAF board. They don't have the opportunity of speaking to that member and giving their opinions as to how they should be treated not only today but in the future.

Mr. Speaker, you're right. The Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) did say, and rightfully so, that this issue has been in the works for quite a number of years. But what the minister didn't say is, up until 1999, full pension was paid and full COLA was paid. It was paid by the previous government. When this government came in, they decided with a stroke of pen, not even a stroke of a pen, because the legislation is being contravened right now. This minister decided that he was not going to be fair and wasn't going to show the respect that he should have showed to retired teachers, and simply not pay full COLA.

So what did they do? They put in a piece of legislation right now, Mr. Speaker, that speaks to up to two-thirds COLA. No, the RTAM, who have paid for that COLA clause in their pensions, shouldn't have to agree with that. They should be able to stand in committee and say to this minister, Mr. Minister, you're not treating us with that respect and fairness and equity that we want to be treated with.

The minister sat there, and I give him full marks, Mr. Speaker, he sat through a lot of those committee meetings which I was at, and he took it on the chin. But not only did he take it on the chin, he's obviously got some severe divisions between the retired teachers and the current teachers, and that's wrong. That's absolutely wrong because those current teachers are going to find themselves in this position in the not-too-distant future. A lot of those current teachers are going to retire in a very short period of time and they're going to find themselves in the same situation right now of living on a pension that's going to be eroded every year.

Now, CPI is a pretty simple thing. The Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) had indicated by letter that there are costs going up on a regular basis, whether they be rent, gasoline, hydro, Autopac insurance and all those wonderful little costs and fees

that the government likes to throw into their budgets. Those costs are going up, but when you get less than full COLA, you're actually behind. Pharmacare costs—I'm getting help from my colleagues, and they're right because there are literally dozens of fees and charges that have gone up in the last budget that are affecting the pensioners that this minister is suppose to represent and he doesn't, Mr. Speaker.

This amendment is a no-brainer. We should be able to say the stakeholders who have paid for this fund, who are dependent upon this pension, should have a say in how it's administered. And to simply say, then, if they don't matter, it is really a travesty, Mr. Speaker. I hope the minister and certainly this government wears it if they do not vote in favour of this amendment. Thank you.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, we do have a number of issues with Bill 45. I'll comment in detail once we get onto the third reading of the bill.

I did want to speak specifically to the amendment and address some very real concerns with respect to the process. Like many others, having sat through hours and hours of discussion in committee, I found myself in a position in which I was reflecting on, back in June and May, discussions that I had with the minister and others in which I was given the impression that this is a bill that had wide support.

I believe—and I haven't looked—but if you take a look at my second reading comments, I probably would have suggested that in principle the Liberal Party would support the bill going into committee. Mr. Speaker, I did that because I had taken it for granted, I guess, that the government would have done its homework.

I was very surprised, Mr. Speaker, in committee on a couple of points: one—and I understand the process—there would have been an opportunity for the government to have brought in the bill, even for second reading this fall. That's one point. The second one that was totally amazing was—and I believe it was the president of RTAM—in the presentation just before the end, she commented that the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) had meetings and there was one particular meeting where the whole issue of threatening language was used. To this date I have not heard from the Minister of Education saying that that was not the case. Very serious allegations and concerns.

There were two wedges that were caused in Bill 45. One is very apparent between the Minister of Education and his office and an organization that has, I believe, in excess of 11,000 members, and a wedge between RTAM and MTS, both of which, Mr. Speaker, are very sad to see.

Should we be surprised that the Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler) would bring forward an amendment that would ensure that RTAM would have direct representation, not an appointment by this particular minister or any future minister, Mr. Speaker. This particular amendment has been discussed and talked about now for a number of years. The government has an opportunity to demonstrate and show some good will.

I didn't talk to the Member for Springfield prior to coming here today. I had no indication in terms of what it is that he was going to say, but what I found was interesting, Mr. Speaker, is the one person, the one presenter he quoted from is the one whose speaking notes that I brought. I kept a few of them, but from the public presentation, and that was by Ms. Asper and that's the one he chose to quote from.

Mr. Speaker, I quote directly from Ms. Asper: I served as an MLA for Riel from 1999 to 2003 in this government's first term of office. It was very disturbing for me and the NDP member and a worker in the last election to find out that this government fails to support us as retired teachers regarding our pension, specifically COLA, to the extent that RTAM has requested. And it goes on.

It's interesting the Member for Springfield and I focussed in on virtually the same quote, yet we had no discussion because, Mr. Speaker, there were so many powerful presentations that were given in that committee. I believe that the government would be sensitive to some of the things that were being said by allowing this particular motion to actually pass.

The minister says, well, I've appointed a retired teacher to the board. Well, if he doesn't in principle oppose having a retired teacher on the board, why not support this particular amendment?

Let's start bringing the stakeholders together, Mr. Speaker. I think that this would be a positive step in the forward direction and I applaud the opposition for bringing forward this particular amendment. Thank you.

* (16:30)

Mr. Speaker: Any other speakers? Okay, seeing none, is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for Springfield.

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

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: No? All those in favour of the amendment say, yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

* (16:40)

Formal Vote

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, a recorded vote.

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

The question before the House is the motion of the honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler).

Division

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

Yeas

Borotsik, Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Faurschou, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Hawranik, Lamoureux, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Taillieu.

Nays

Allan, Altemeyer, Bjornson, Blady, Braun, Brick, Caldwell, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lathlin, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Marcelino, Martindale, McGifford, Melnick, Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Reid,

Robinson, Saran, Selinger, Struthers, Swan, Wowchuk.

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 19, Nays 31.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the amendment lost. *[interjection]*

Order. For our guests in the gallery, there's to be no participation from the guests. That's either applauding or otherwise.

We will now move on to the next amendment.

Mr. Schuler: Yes, Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

I move, seconded by the honourable Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson),

THAT Bill 45 be amended in Clause 9(2)

(a) by replacing the proposed subsection 49(6) with the following:

Use of Surplus

49(6) If the pension adjustment under subsection 10(7) in any year is calculated using the percentage determined under subclause (b)(i) in the description of I in the formula in that subsection, the amount, if any, remaining in the pension adjustment account after making the adjustment, as determined by the actuary, may be used for determining pension adjustments to be made under subsection 10(7) in any future year.

(b) by striking out the proposed subsection 49(6.2).

Mr. Speaker: It's been moved by the honourable Member for Springfield, seconded by the honourable Member for River East,

THAT Bill 45 be amended in Clause 9(2)—dispense?

Some Honourable Members: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Schuler: Yes, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I will keep my comments very concise.

This removes the 2018 clause totally. There is currently in this legislation a 10-year clause where any surplus that has accumulated may not be used. What we do with this particular amendment is the surplus may be—and let's be very clear with that—may be used in any given year when there is a surplus. It eliminates restrictions which must be, first of all,

gone through by an actuary, and the actuary must determine if that money can be paid out.

I would like to point out to the House that there are people much better at speaking to this piece of legislation than myself, and I am going to quote one of those.

I quote: I would like to have my objection to Bill 45 entered into the record. I retired from my teaching position in June 1990. I also served as the president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society in '73-74. During the '70s, we worked hard to negotiate the establishment of the Pension Adjustment Account, PAA, to protect pensions from inflation. Sixteen point six percent of teachers' contributions were directed to this account and the investment returns were to pay CPI COLA, and the government was to pay the other 50 percent. For several years, a full COLA was paid.

And I move down to the bottom: Please reconsider this bill and provide the retired teacher with what was a legitimately negotiated agreement with the government in 1977. And that is signed by Harvey Kingdon [*phonetic*]. I don't think there is a better person than a retired teacher to make the case for this particular amendment. What teachers are asking for is a fair COLA. What they are asking for is respect and recognition of what they have paid in, and the way that the legislation reads right now, it does none of those.

What we believe should be done is that teachers should be recognized for the fact that they had legitimately, credibly signed on a deal with the government that should not now be withdrawn and reneged on by this current government. We believe that this piece of legislation goes a small way to recognize the legitimate concerns that the retired teachers have put forward during many, many hours of committee.

I recommend to this House that, on behalf of Harvey Kingdon [*phonetic*], and all the other retired teachers, that this amendment be accepted.

* (16:50)

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing the honourable Minister of Education, I just have to remind the House that I forgot to mention that the amendment is in order. Okay.

Mr. Bjornson: I rise to speak against this amendment. The focus of Bill 45 is to provide a sustainable and responsible approach to ensuring an

increase COLA for retired teachers, and this particular amendment contradicts that approach, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite talked about how, up until 1999, the pension paid full COLA. I need to remind the members opposite of the actuarial warnings that had been in place from 1988 onward. I'll quote directly from the actuary who said: The pension adjustments granted since 1984 reflect the full increase in the cost of living. This practice reduces the amount which would otherwise be available to finance future pension adjustments. The objective of the present rate of contribution is to finance pension adjustments which would reflect two-thirds of the increase in the cost of living in a year, up to 90 percent. The current practice is using part of the amounts needed for the future. As a result, the amounts available to finance future pension adjustments will not be sufficient to permit this objective to be realized in the future. June 23, 1988.

Now, as I've told the members opposite many, many times, this continued.

June 7, 1989, the same message was delivered to the government of the day: As a result, the amounts available to finance future pension adjustments may not be sufficient to permit this objective to be realized in the future.

June 1990: As a result, the amounts available to finance future pension adjustments—it repeats it over and over again. The message was lost in the government of the day. They did nothing to increase the contribution rate. They did nothing to adjust the account and, as such, we've weathered a perfect storm where we had a perfect storm coming. We're weathering that perfect storm right now.

Not only that, in the RTAM kit, Mr. Ulrich had submitted an article to the RTAM kit confirming this. It is true that the actuary first warned that the necessity of additional funds in the mid '80s, actually 1984. At that time, MTS was successful in convincing the government to amend The Teachers' Pension Act to provide for retirement at age 55 with a full-formula pension.

The actuary accurately predicted that this change would result in teachers retiring earlier, therefore drawing pensions for longer periods and consequently receiving COLA for longer periods. The actuary recommended a contribution increase was necessary to sustain both the basic account and the pension adjustment account. However, neither

the government nor MTS wanted to increase teacher pension contributions during a period of economic distress, when teachers were receiving minimal salary increases, and both the basic pension account and the PAA were experiencing surpluses. To defer discussion of contribution increases to a later date when, hopefully, economic circumstances would have improved was the result that was agreed to. In retrospect, that agreement may have been unwise.

Here we have a situation where the members opposite now are suggesting that, by the very nature of the bill, to produce some stability and be a responsible approach to funding of the pension adjustment account, now they're suggesting we should use the surpluses.

The actuary had warned members opposite when they were in government, eight years in a row, that they had to make changes, but I guess they didn't want to make a change to reduce the pension adjustment account payouts to two-thirds COLA because perhaps they thought that might be an unpopular thing to do. Perhaps members opposite did not wish to make that adjustment because the fund had been sufficient under that past practice. Even though the actuary said don't do it, the fund was sufficient to provide full COLA and it wouldn't be their problem in the future. Well, it isn't their problem. This is the future. It's a perfect storm. We're dealing with that perfect storm.

Now to suggest to use surpluses for the pension adjustment account speaks to how irresponsible this particular amendment is when the actuary would suggest otherwise. This is designed to bring stability to the COLA account. This is designed to address a number of issues that were raised throughout the '80s and throughout the '90s and never addressed by the previous government.

One of the requests of the previous actuary was to increase the contribution rate to the main account. That wasn't done for 25 years but we're the first government to put in an increase to the main pension account of 1.1 percent. Now, 1.1 percent doesn't sound like a lot, but it translates to an 18 percent increase for active teachers into the pension. We're the first government to do that. But members opposite chose to ignore the warnings. Previous governments chose to ignore the warnings. We accept full responsibility for that, as current government, and this bill, Bill 45, is to bring some stability and it's a fiscally responsible way to do it.

To suggest now that we would perhaps consider using surplus funds is not a responsible suggestion with respect to the COLA account. So, on those few words, Mr. Speaker, I'll stand here and oppose this proposed amendment from members opposite.

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

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler).

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

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Formal Vote

Mr. Hawranik: Yes, a recorded vote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The question for the House is the amendment moved by the honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Schuler).

Division

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

Yeas

Borotsik, Briese, Cullen, Driedger, Dyck, Eichler, Faurshou, Gerrard, Goertzen, Graydon, Hawranik, Lamoureux, Maguire, McFadyen, Mitchelson, Pedersen, Rowat, Schuler, Stefanson, Taillieu.

Nays

Altemeyer, Bjornson, Blady, Braun, Brick, Caldwell, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Howard, Irvin-Ross, Jennissen, Jha, Korzeniowski, Lathlin, Lemieux, Mackintosh, Marcelino, Martindale, Melnick,

*Nevakshonoff, Oswald, Reid, Saran, Selinger,
Struthers, Swan, Wowchuk.*

Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk): Yeas 20,
Nays 28.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the amendment lost.

The hour being past 5 p.m., this House is
adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m.
tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, September 8, 2008

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