

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

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Speaker*

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**First Session—Thirty-Eighth Legislature**

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

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 23, 2003

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

*At 1:30 p.m., the Sergeant-at-Arms, carrying the Mace in the crook of his arm and followed by the clerks of the Legislative Assembly, entered the Chamber. The Sergeant-at-Arms returned to the main entrance of the Chamber and shouldered the Mace. The clerks took post on the west side of the Chamber, stood and awaited the arrival of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.*

**Madam Clerk (Patricia Chaychuk):** I am pleased to advise the Assembly that I have received from the Chief Electoral Officer the lists of names of members elected to serve in the Thirty-Eighth Legislature, and I am tabling those lists.

*The Premier and the military and civil aides accompanied His Honour to the Chamber in the following order:*

*The civil aide on the right;  
The military aide on the left;  
The Premier;  
The Lieutenant-Governor.*

*At the main entrance, the military and civil aides halted and turned inwards to allow the Lieutenant-Governor and the Premier to proceed through the north doors, where His Honour was met by the Mace.*

**Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Blake Dunn):** His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

*The Lieutenant-Governor then, preceded by the Mace carried shoulder high and followed on his left by the military aide and on his right by the civil aide, proceeded along the west side of the Chamber to the throne. The Premier proceeded along the east side and stood on the floor on the east side of the Chamber.*

*The military aide took up his position on the east side of the throne and the civil aide took up his position on the west side of the throne.*

*The Lieutenant-Governor seated himself on the throne; the Sergeant-at-Arms made obeisance with the Mace and retired to the east side of the Chamber.*

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I am directed by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor to inform you that he will not declare the causes of calling this Legislature until a Speaker has been elected in accordance with the law.

**Madam Clerk:** Please be seated. Members of the Legislative Assembly, pursuant to the Lieutenant-Governor's direction and the rules of this Assembly, it is my duty to call upon you to elect a member to preside over your deliberations as Speaker. Would the Sergeant-at-Arms and the Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms please place the voting booths and the ballot box in position? Would the pages please distribute the list of candidates to all members' desks and place one in each voting booth?

For your information before beginning the election, I will briefly outline the process to be followed as set out in the Rules of the House.

For each round of balloting, members will be asked to go to the blue carpets behind the third row of desks on their respective sides of the House, then file past the Speaker's Chair and down the steps to the head of the Clerk's table. At the table, each MLA will be asked to initial a list to verify that they have received a ballot. Please proceed to the nearest voting booth. In the voting booth, please print or write legibly the surname of the candidate you support on the ballot paper, place it in the ballot box at the end of the Clerk's table and please return to your place. You can only vote for one candidate, so please do not list or rank all of the candidates. Only write the surname of one candidate.

When all members wishing to vote have done so, the House will recess while the clerks withdraw to count the vote. A majority of votes cast is required to elect the Speaker. If both

candidates receive the same number of votes, no name will be dropped from the next ballot. Immediately before the start of the second or any subsequent ballot, members who wish to withdraw will be given an opportunity to do so. When the count of each ballot is completed, a five-minute bell will ring to call the members to the Chamber.

\* (13:40)

The following members have declared their intention to stand for election to the office of Speaker. The candidates are, in alphabetic order, George Hickes and Conrad Santos. In preparation for the vote, the Sergeant-at-Arms will inspect and lock the ballot box.

The list of candidates is on each member's desk and in each of the two voting booths. I will now open the sealed ballots and proceed with the beginning of the voting procedure.

I will now ask those members who wish to cast their ballots to proceed to the blue carpet behind the third row of seating on your respective sides of the House and then file past the Speaker's Chair and to the head of the clerk's table where each will receive a ballot. Each MLA's name will be checked off the list once they have been given a ballot and each MLA will be asked to initial the list. Please then proceed to the voting booth on the side of the table nearest you. Please print or write legibly the surname of your candidate on the ballot paper, then proceed to the ballot box and place your ballot paper in the ballot box.

If there are any members who have not voted and who wish to do so, would you please vote now.

All members having voted, the House will recess to the call of the bells while the clerks at the table count the ballots. The bells will ring for five minutes to recall members to the Chamber when the results of the first ballot are ready to be announced. Thank you very much.

*The House recessed at 1:52 p.m.*

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#### After Recess

*The House resumed at 2:09 p.m.*

**Madam Clerk:** Honourable members, the Member for Point Douglas has received the majority of the ballots cast. Pursuant to the rules, I declare George Hickes, the honourable Member for Point Douglas, elected as Speaker of the Thirty-Eighth Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

*The Premier and the Leader of the Opposition escorted the newly elected Speaker to the Chair and he was invested with the robes of office.*

*The Mace was then placed on the table.*

\* (14:10)

**Mr. Speaker:** Honourable members of the Thirty-Eighth Legislative Assembly, I wish to thank the members for the high honour the House has conferred on me. I leave the floor of this House to take the Speaker's Chair. I leave behind all political and partisan feelings and I intend to carry out the important duties of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly with impartiality and to the best of my abilities.

[Inuktitut spoken]

What I said to you was thank you very much for your support and I will do the best job I can.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the clerks in the Clerk's Office and all the other offices that were involved in organizing the events today. I think we owe them a great round of thank you for a job well done.

*The Speaker then took the Chair.*

*The Premier left the Chamber to meet His Honour in the reception room. The clerks took post on the west side of the Chamber.*

*The Mace proceeded to the entrance of the House to meet His Honour, who re-entered the Chamber accompanied by the aides and the Premier, as on his first entry. The Speaker left the Chair and stood on the floor of the Chamber on the east side. The Mace made obeisance and retired to the east side of the Chamber.*

**Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms:** His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

*The Lieutenant-Governor, accompanied by his aides and by the Premier, entered and took his seat on the throne. The clerks moved to the east*

*side of the Chamber. The Speaker, who had moved to the east side of the floor before the Lieutenant-Governor entered the House, moved to the centre of the floor, doffing his hat.*

**Mr. Speaker:** Your Honour, the Legislative Assembly has elected me as its Speaker. On behalf of the Assembly, it is my duty to claim all the Assembly's traditional rights and privileges, especially the privilege of freedom of speech in debate and access to your Honour when required. I ask you to give the most favourable consideration to the Assembly's proceedings.

*The Speaker then moved back to the east side of the House.*

**Mr. Mackintosh:** His Honour is confident that the Assembly's proceedings will be conducted with wisdom and prudence. In addition, His Honour grants the Assembly's claim to its traditional rights and privileges. His Honour will now declare the causes of calling this Legislative Assembly.

*The Sergeant-at-Arms made obeisance with the Mace and retired to the side of the Chamber.*

### SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

**Hon. Peter Liba (Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba):** Mr. Speaker and members of the Manitoba Legislature, I welcome you to the first session of the Thirty-Eighth Legislative Assembly of the Province of Manitoba.

Je vous souhaite la bienvenue à la première session de la trente-huitième Législature de la Province du Manitoba.

#### **Translation**

*I welcome you to the first session of the Thirty-Eighth Legislative Assembly of the Province of Manitoba.*

#### **English**

Congratulations and good wishes are very much in order for all new members of this Assembly and for those who are returning to this House. The people of our province have entrusted you with heavy responsibilities at all

times to advance the public interest and to provide leadership and vision in making decisions which will help shape the future of Manitoba.

Due recognition should also be given to all the candidates who allowed their names to stand in the general election. All have made the highest possible commitment to public service.

Your Government feels honoured to have been given a strong and clear mandate by the citizens of this province. Your Government will honour that mandate by proceeding to implement the commitments they have made to the people of Manitoba: to continue improving our health care system, to provide hope for our young people through education and training opportunities, to continue strengthening and diversifying our economy, to make our communities safer and more secure and to make Manitoba an even more affordable place to live.

Some of the actions necessary to achieve these commitments were summarized in the last Speech from the Throne on November 27, 2002. Those actions were debated and received the approval of members at that time.

Members also debated and passed the 2003-04 Budget, which was presented to the Assembly on April 22, 2003, shortly before the adjournment of the last Legislature.

With the agreement of all parties, the new Legislative Assembly will be asked to adopt the agenda for action presented in the most recent Speech from the Throne and the budgetary policies that were approved two months ago. Review of the Estimates flowing from the 2003 Budget and consideration of new legislation will proceed when the House reconvenes in September.

Notre gouvernement est fier d'avoir reçu un mandat sans équivoque de toutes les régions du Manitoba. Il demeurera fidèle aux principes d'inclusion et d'équité qui devraient guider toutes les délibérations de l'Assemblée.

\* (14:20)

#### **Translation**

*Our Government is proud to have received a strong mandate from all parts of Manitoba and*

*will endeavour to uphold the principles of inclusion and fairness which should guide all the deliberations of this Assembly.*

**English**

In each region of our province new challenges as well as new opportunities have arisen in recent months.

In the North we are confronted with renewed concern over shipping volumes through the Port of Churchill.

At the same time, we stand on the brink of a major opportunity to develop untapped hydro resources through agreements with Manitoba First Nations and Aboriginal citizens and a clean energy partnership with the province of Ontario.

In rural Manitoba, cattle farmers are feeling the impact from the single case of BSE found in Alberta which has resulted in a prolonged and potentially devastating halt to Canadian beef exports. At their recent meeting in Kelowna, the western premiers were united in calling for a strong national response focussed on reopening the border as soon as possible and addressing the losses to producers.

Exporters in all sectors of our economy are carefully monitoring the impacts of a rising Canadian dollar spurred by the spread in short-term interest rates between the U.S. and Canada.

Manitobans have enjoyed the benefits of a dynamic and resilient economy in recent years but now, more than ever, it is important that we build on our strategic partnerships and lay the foundations for strong growth into the future. To do so, it is critical that our provincial strategies are supported by federal leadership in such key areas as transportation, energy, agriculture and disease control. In the months ahead, members of this Assembly will be asked to stand together to defend Manitoba's interests and to work for national policies that will benefit all our citizens.

I want to thank our guests, and in particular the families of our newly elected members, for

joining us today for this first session of this new Legislature.

Also, I wish to thank our Speaker and all members of the Legislature for the hard work that lies ahead.

Je tiens à remercier nos invités, en particulier les familles des députés nouvellement élus, pour s'être joints à nous aujourd'hui à l'occasion de la première session de cette nouvelle Législature. Je désire également remercier le Président et les membres de l'Assemblée législative en prévision du dur labeur qui les attend.

**Translation**

*I want to thank our guests and in particular the families of our newly elected members for joining us today for the first session of this new Legislature. I also want to thank our Speaker and all members of the Legislature for the hard work that lies ahead.*

**English**

As you proceed to carry out the responsibilities the people of Manitoba have entrusted to you, I trust that divine providence will guide your deliberations in the best interests of all our citizens. Thank you.

*"God Save the Queen" and "O Canada!" were sung.*

*The Speaker proceeded to the throne after His Honour retired from the House.*

*The Sergeant-at-Arms approached the Speaker, made obeisance with the Mace, then placed the Mace on the table.*

**Mr. Speaker:** O Eternal and Almighty God, from Whom all power and wisdom come, we are assembled here before Thee to frame such laws as may tend to the welfare and prosperity of our province. Grant, O merciful God, we pray Thee, that we may desire only that which is in accordance with Thy will; that we may seek it with wisdom, know it with certainty and accomplish it perfectly for the glory and honour of Thy

name and for the welfare of all our people. Amen.

Please be seated.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I ask, knowing that there is a great sense of ensuring that there is leave that is going to be accommodated from all members of this Chamber in order to assist the Government in being able to fulfil its agenda. The reason for my rising is that a fundamental pillar of democracy is that we have healthy, effective political parties. I am standing to ask that, with the leave of this House, we allow for a recess that would allow representatives from all three blocs of parties represented in this Chamber to deal with an issue that I believe is of utmost importance. I do believe the Government and the Official Opposition are aware, and I would ask if there would be leave for us to be able to have that recess so we could re-adjourn after representatives from the blocs have had—*[interjection]*

\* (14:30)

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. When members are recognized by the Speaker, they should inform the Speaker if they are up on a point of order, matter of privilege, or what the reason the member is up for. We have not got into debate yet, so I do not even know if the member is up on a point of order, on a matter of privilege or—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable Member for Inkster, for clarification.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, for clarification, much like the Government in asking for leave, we are requesting leave to allow for the House to recess so that representatives from each bloc of parties represented would be able to sit down and deal with the fundamental issue.

I would raise it in the form of a point of order.

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable member does not have a point of order. You are dealing with House business. House business should be conducted amongst the House leaders. That is how House business normally has taken place in the past since I have been Speaker.

That is how I have seen House business negotiated with members of the party. If that is the will of the House and if they would like the participation of the Speaker, I would be more than glad to sit down with the House Leader. I have always been very open with the House leaders and members of all parties to negotiate or conduct their businesses.

Normally, a member rises on either privilege or a point of order so I get a chance to rule on it. I have recognized the honourable Member for Inkster and I will recognize the honourable Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) so we can continue to sort out this business of the House.

## MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

### Seating Arrangement

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** I rise on a matter of privilege.

**Mr. Speaker:** On a matter of privilege.

Order, please. It is the privilege of all members, on matters of privilege or points of order—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. As the Speaker, I must be able to hear to make a ruling, so I ask the full co-operation of all honourable members, please.

I am recognizing the honourable Member for River Heights on a matter of privilege.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, my matter of privilege is this. It concerns the fact that we were provided a seating arrangement in the House and that one of the criteria to be used in allocating the seating arrangement was that there be the opportunity within each of the three blocs for members to communicate—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I must be able to hear the matter of privilege. Matter of privilege is very serious. I have to be able to hear what the member has to say. I ask the full co-operation of all honourable members, please.

The honourable Member for River Heights, please continue.

**Mr. Gerrard:** The letter from the Clerk of the Legislature spoke very clearly of three seating blocks and laid out very clearly that one of the primary criteria in allocating seats was the ability for members within each block to be able to carry on confidential conversations. This is an important facet of life in the Legislature, that there is a need within each of the blocks to be able to have the ability, and we would have this if we were side by side, but, given the situation within the current Legislature, I rise because it is a little bit hard to have a confidential conversation when the member from Springfield is on one shoulder and the member from Rossmere is on another.

Mr. Speaker, this is, as we are all aware, a matter of housekeeping. There is a need to employ, as was done in this fashion, recent criteria which include functional and operational criteria for the allocation of seats. There is a need to follow those criteria and to use principles of fairness and justice. I suggest to Mr. Speaker that in fact this was not done adequately in this place and it needs to be done.

The problem here, Mr. Speaker, is that fundamentally at the beginning of this Legislature, when we would like to co-operate in making sure that the Legislature works well and that things go well that we have a government which cannot even seem to get the housekeeping matters done properly and fairly. The matter is that—*[interjection]* Just a minute. As the members know full well and the Government Whip has admitted quite clearly, the Government House Leader has admitted that it is well within the ability of the House leaders to reach an agreement in terms of the seating and that the seating arrangement provided for the Clerk is presented as a tentative seating arrangement of the blocs. It is a matter which needs to be dealt with by the House leaders. There needs to be an all-party agreement in terms of what is fair and what is appropriate and what is just in following criteria.

The Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), who is the Government House Leader, we presume, had admitted to me, told me initially first of all that he had absolutely nothing to do with the seating arrangement and then admitted afterwards that in fact it was very much within the purview of his role as Government House Leader

and the House leaders of all three parties to reach an agreement in terms of the seating.

Mr. Speaker, in this matter and a number of others, the Government has been quite arrogant in how it has proceeded. It is time to have a little bit of fairness and a little bit of responsibility and a little bit of justice.

There are some things which are of fundamental fairness and importance. I would say that a government which tramples on the rights of smaller groups within this Legislature is a government which is also ready to trample on the rights of smaller groups in society, a government that tolerates unfairness. A government that tolerates the poor loose use of criteria in making decisions is not a desirable government for this province. I would make my case that there is a need to look at this in a fair and just way using the criteria that have been put forward.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that the House recess to allow for representatives from MLAs in all three seating blocks to get together with the Speaker to see if the concerns in relation to seating in the Legislature can be resolved.

**Mr. Speaker:** Before recognizing any other members to speak, I would remind the House that contributions at this time by honourable members are to be limited to strictly relevant comments as to whether the alleged matter of privilege has been raised at the earliest opportunity and whether a *prima facie* case has been established.

\* (14:40)

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I first want to say the law of privilege is very clear. Matters of privilege are to come up very rarely; that is in *Beauchesne's* Citation 27. Privileges are about rights of members in Parliament that are absolutely necessary for the due execution of the powers of this place and individual members.

Those on this side of the House, Mr. Speaker, find it regrettable that on day one of public business in this province following the election, the new dawn of business, the first order of business, the first public statements by



members from that party is about who gets to sit next to the Leader of the Liberal Party in the House.

There are issues of public importance that are on the agenda today. There are some brief Throne Speech contributions and, as well, the very important issue of BSE and its effect on the Manitoba economy and individuals in the industry. We want to move to that.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, who decides where people sit in the Assembly is first and foremost decided by the people of Manitoba based on how many members they have sent to represent them in the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba. Gratuitous advice, I suppose, for members of the Liberal Party: if they want more members on the second row, their objective must be to get more members elected to the Legislative Assembly of course.

Second, the positioning of members within blocks in this Assembly is decided on the basis of precedence. That is the only way to be fair to independent members who have come before and those who come after. It was my understanding on information received after the Legislature was called back that the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) was not happy that the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) was not sitting next to him. The third row is available, of course.

Mr. Speaker, I remind the honourable member that the decision is based on precedent and it was done by the Clerk in the absence of the Speaker. I commend the Clerk for that difficult task. That is the kind of challenge that faces an administrative officer of this Assembly when there is not an occupant in the office of Speaker, but she did so on the basis of precedent. I understand that in '95, for example, there was one Liberal on the second row despite having three seats in the Chamber and vacancies on the second row. She did her best efforts.

I told the member by telephone a few days ago that we are only here for one day. Those matters can be appealed or dealt with by the Speaker, not as a matter of brokering among parties. Indeed, if he thinks that it is the government of the day that decides where the Liberals

sit in this Chamber, that would, in fact, be a matter of privilege. This is not.

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Speaker, I too would have to concur with the comments made by the House Leader with respect to this issue.

Today, Mr. Speaker, is a very serious day in Manitoba. It is a day when farmers across this province have gathered to demonstrate the difficulties and the seriousness of the issues that affect not only their livelihoods, but indeed many of our communities and indeed this city and across this province.

I say to the two Liberal members who occupy this Chamber that they should not be petty on this first day of the sitting and that they should indeed get their priorities straight and deal with the issues that are of importance to Manitobans. The reality is this party does not have party status at this time, Mr. Speaker, and so, therefore, the two members are independent members in this Chamber. So in that issue they have had much more than their share of privileges because I understand that the allocation of offices that was given to them was one of the larger offices that was given to independent members in this building, and they do not even have party status. They received offices before. Offices were allocated to the Official Opposition party in the Chamber, yet we do not see an issue with that because we know that those are matters that can be dealt with outside of this Chamber in consultation with members of government. Today we need to focus our attention on the issue that is of the utmost importance to this province, and that is the BSE issue on which members of Manitoba have come together.

Without taking any more of this precious day's time, I simply indicate that this is a matter that should be set aside, and if, in fact, the Liberal Leader has a problem with it, he can approach the House Leader and you, Mr. Speaker, as now the Speaker of this Chamber, to deal with this matter at a later time. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, as the seconder of the motion, I would like to take the opportunity to I think spend some time

on this issue, unlike other members of this Chamber. We recognize the importance of democratic principles.

Mr. Speaker, I listened to the heckling as the Leader of the Liberal Party talked and started to state his case. As the heckling was going on, I would remind all members of the very first rule in *Beauchesne's* and I quote *Beauchesne's* from the 6th Edition: "The principles of Canadian parliamentary law are: To protect a minority and restrain the improvidence or tyranny of a majority; to secure the transaction of public business in an orderly fashion."

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I would just like to remind the honourable member that we are not debating the motion that you made reference to. What we are debating is if it is a *prima facie* case and a matter of urgency of this debate here, but we are not debating the motion itself.

So I just want to kindly remind you of that, because you had made a reference that you are debating the motion, but we are not debating the motion. I just wanted to give you a kindly reminder.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate your comments.

*Beauchesne's* 115: "A question of privilege must be brought to the attention of the House at the first possible opportunity. Even a gap of a few days may invalidate the claim . . ." Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Liberal Party did bring it at the very first opportunity.

"A complaint of a breach of privilege must conclude with a motion providing the House with the opportunity to take some action." Again, the Leader of the Liberal Party has done just that.

In speaking, Mr. Speaker, to the comments that members were referring to and what the Leader of the Liberal Party was talking about, I would like to pick up on a few points. First of all, when we look at a political party, what we have to recognize is that when we talk about the Legislature, really what we are talking about is the financial resources.

What people need to realize, Mr. Speaker, and you might not respect the fact that there are only two Liberal members who sit in this Chamber, but we have a responsibility to all Manitobans, not just the Manitobans who happen to live in River Heights and Inkster. That means our caucus has many different demands on it, demands that are very similar to the other opposition party and the government of the day. Financial resources are something that is absolutely critical.

\* (14:50)

The Leader of the Liberal Party has been most co-operative in terms of working with the Government House Leader. I was even somewhat discouraged in terms of the lack of good will coming from the government of the day to acknowledge the high need we have as a political party in wanting to be able to deal with Manitobans the best way we can. That is one of those critical issues that is very important as a political party for us to be able to operate.

When we talked about the seating arrangements, Mr. Speaker, I heard comments coming: What about the BSE and the problems that are out there? I truly believe the leader and myself are just as committed to that issue as any other MLA sitting inside this Chamber. We could come back tomorrow and the next day and the following day. At the end of the day I would ask: Where has the Government been? What about applications? Do they even have applications today? That is another debate. I can appreciate that.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, when we talk about the seating arrangements inside this Chamber, for anyone to believe for a moment that there is not a difference between the Liberals in this Chamber and the NDP and the Tories, I do not know what planet they are from. Quite frankly, it makes a huge difference if you have the two members of the Liberal Party being able to sit side by side. The Premier (Mr. Doer) will attest how many times he looks over to the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) or the Deputy Premier (Ms. Wowchuk). To be able to have these types of conversations is absolutely critical. You have a Tory on the right, a New Democrat on the left. It is very difficult to be able to

have any sort of discussion of any sort of confidential nature.

You are taking away, and this is the argument, you are taking away from the abilities of a very significant percentage of the population who want the Liberal Party to hold this Government accountable. Over 13 percent of Manitobans, of those that did show up to vote, over 13 percent voted for the provincial Liberal Party. We are asking that the Government, in particular the Government that has failed to recognize the importance of the pillars of democracy, to recognize that fact and to treat us accordingly.

This is a government that is very arrogant in its very nature and the way in which it deals with opposition-related issues. We have attempted in the past to get better recognition. That recognition has not been there. What they are doing is they are putting limitations on our abilities to be able to be as effective as we could be. They are doing that in a number of different ways. The seating arrangement is one of those ways. The financial resources is another one of those ways. We want to be able to see the Liberal bloc in this Chamber be treated with respect.

The government of the day, as will the Official Opposition at times, will come to either me or the Leader and they are going to be requiring to be able to get leave in order to get the business of the day done. This is an excellent example. There needs to be a high sense of cooperation. There needs to be a recognition of the important issues that are before us and we need to be accommodating where we can in terms of making sure that Manitobans' best interests are being served.

A good example of that today is the BSE issue. That is something which we want to see debated. In fact, I am sure that we would be quite content to see not only it being debated but a government that will actually do something on the issue. I met with a cattle producer yesterday. They are still waiting for an application.

There are many agendas in this Chamber. All we ask for is a little bit of respect. Respect democracy. Democracy works a whole lot better. We know how seats are filled inside this

Chamber. You do not need to point out anyone to me because I have a good sense of how the system works. I trust and hope that you will give serious consideration to this. I was disappointed in terms of the two House leaders' response to the leader of the Liberal Party's motion. I will anticipate that over the summer we will get both the Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) and the Opposition House Leader to revisit what we feel are very critically important issues that are going to allow us to be able to better serve Manitobans and, more importantly, ensure that there is a higher sense of democracy in our province. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Speaker:** A matter of privilege is a serious concern. I am going to take this matter under advisement to consult the authorities, and I will return to the House with a ruling.

\* \* \*

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), that Conrad Santos, member for the electoral division of Wellington, be Chairperson of the Committees of the Whole House and Deputy Speaker.

*Motion agreed to.*

**Mr. Doer:** I move, seconded by the Minister of Health, that Harry Schellenberg, member for the electoral division of Rossmere, be Deputy Chairperson of the Committees of the Whole House.

*Motion agreed to.*

**Mr. Doer:** I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Bonnie Korzeniowski, member for the electoral division of St. James, be Deputy Chairperson of the Committees of the Whole House.

*Motion agreed to.*

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

### **Bill 1—An Act Respecting the Administration of Oaths of Office**

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Aboriginal Affairs (Mr. Lathlin), that Bill 1, An Act Respecting the Administration of Oaths of Office; Loi sur la

prestation des serments d'entrée en fonction, now be read a first time.

***Motion agreed to.***

\* \* \*

**Mr. Doer:** I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh), that a special committee consisting of the Honourable Mr. Ashton, Ms. Allan, Messrs. Dewar, Tweed, Dyck, Reimer and the Honourable Mr. Mackintosh be appointed to prepare lists of members to compose a standing committee provided under subrule 83(1).

***Motion agreed to.***

\* \* \*

**Mr. Doer:** I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), that the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor be taken into consideration today.

***Motion presented.***

**Point of Order**

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Attorney-General, on a point of order.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, as a result of discussions among the parties represented in the Chamber, there was an agreement that there would be four speakers to the Throne Speech motion, the mover, seconder and the Leader of the Liberal Party and the Leader of the Opposition and that the speeches would be limited to five minutes each. I wonder if you could provide guidance on the time limits, Mr. Speaker.

\* (15:00)

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there agreement of the House for the time limit of five minutes each for speakers as proposed, that is, previously agreed to by House leaders? Is there agreement of the House to limit the speeches to five minutes? *[Agreed]*

The agreement is five minutes for speeches.

\* \* \*

I did not get an opportunity to move the motion because the honourable member was up on a point of order.

So it has been moved by the honourable First Minister (Mr. Doer), seconded by the honourable Minister of Agriculture, that the speech of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor (Mr. Liba) be taken into consideration today. *Agreed?* *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Peter Bjornson (Gimli):** I move, seconded by the honourable Member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick), that the following address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor:

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this first session of the Thirty-Eighth Legislature of Manitoba.

**Some Honourable Members:** Hear, hear.

***Motion presented.***

**Mr. Bjornson:** Mr. Speaker, it is indeed an honour to stand here today to be the first speaker on our side of the House to move the Speech from the Throne.

Before I address the content of the Throne Speech, I must first congratulate you on your election to the Speaker's Chair, extend my congratulations to all members of the Legislative Assembly for their success on June 3.

Moreover, I must congratulate all who sought office and all those who volunteered during the election for a job well done. As a social sciences teacher, I have long been a strong advocate of the Canadian political process. The recent election has demonstrated that participatory democracy is alive and well in Manitoba.

I wish to pay tribute to my predecessor, Mr. Ed Helwer, who served his constituents well over the past 15 years.

I must also take this time, Mr. Speaker, to thank my wife, Joanne, and my three small children, my parents, Don and Hedy Bjornson and the many family members and friends who have worked hard on my election. I must thank numerous volunteers and mention specifically Roger and Norma Lowe and Don and Helen Tole for their tireless efforts, not just during the election, but for the past four years that I have known them.

I would also like to thank the honourable First Minister for choosing Gimli as a site to launch the five commitments to Manitoba in the first week of the election.

Mr. Speaker, the Throne Speech confirms the five commitments the Government has made to the people of Manitoba. I would like to address those commitments relative to my constituency. With the new Gimli community health centre as the backdrop, the honourable First Minister pledged to continue to improve our health care system. Manitobans recognize the good work the Government has been doing. We will continue to work very hard to bring the health care services and infrastructure to a level that Manitobans can be proud of.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to making it easier for young Manitobans to stay in Manitoba, to stay in their communities, offering affordable university and college programs, increasing educational and vocational training opportunities and increasing the minimum wage.

I look forward to hosting a youth forum in the Gimli constituency for input from the youth in the region to understand their concerns and needs. I have met and worked with hundreds of exceptional young people and look forward to doing the same throughout my term in office. As a father of three pre school-age children, I look forward to a bright future for my children in our province. This is about our children; it is about our future; it is our pledge.

Mr. Speaker, we are committed to strengthening and diversifying our economy. The Gimli constituency has tremendous potential for growth in all sectors of tourism, agriculture,

fishing and industry. Manitoba's low unemployment rate, among the lowest in Canada; the best credit rating in 15 years; our strong Manitoba economy and our pledge to facilitate diversification and encourage economic growth will continue to move Manitoba forward and go a long way to keep our youth here in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we will make our communities safe and secure. I am very pleased about the proactive component of this pledge. Let us give our youth more recreational and educational opportunities to engage them in constructive activities, rather than put the emphasis on enforcement. It makes a great deal of sense to invest in our youth as active citizens, rather than spending money on youth correction services.

When correction measures are necessary, there are several effective programs that serve Manitobans well, such as a volunteer-driven Community Justice Forum, the RCMP auxiliary forum and groups such as Gimli Restitution and Reconciliation Committee. I commend the efforts of these volunteers and look forward to working with both volunteer and law enforcement professionals to achieve the goal of safer and more secure communities.

Furthermore, besides the safety and security of persons through preventative and corrective measures, the Government has listened to the concerns of the Gimli constituents with respect to highway safety. I must commend the honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar); the Reeve of West St. Paul, Cliff Dearman; and the Reeve of St. Andrews, Don Forfar, for their successful lobby to address the highway safety concerns and the recent announcement to straighten the dangerous curves on Highway 9 between West St. Paul and Selkirk. The people of Manitoba have spoken and the Government has listened. We will make Manitoba a safer place to live.

Mr. Speaker, we will deliver all of these promises and do so in an affordable way as we pledge to continue to make attainable and sustainable tax cuts. Manitoba is an affordable place to live. We are committed to making it even more so by cutting taxes in a manner that will not compromise delivery of services and infrastructure improvements that Manitobans are

asking for. We will keep doctors and nurses in Manitoba and provide the necessary health care technologies and infrastructure that Manitobans deserve. We will continue to offer quality programs in Manitoba schools, which includes daily quality physical education, which includes music, which includes the arts. We will strengthen and diversify our economy and keep young Manitoba entrepreneurs in Manitoba.

It is indeed an honour to stand here today and represent the diverse cultural, economic and rich heritage and tradition that is the Gimli constituency. It is a tremendous honour to move the Throne Speech on behalf of the Government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Ms. Marilyn Brick (St. Norbert):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to be seconding the motion made by the honourable Member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson) that the following address be presented to his Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the speech addressed to us at the first session of the Thirty-Eighth Legislative Assembly of the Province of Manitoba.

As a newly elected member of the Legislative Assembly, I am truly honoured to be asked to second this motion. I would like to congratulate you on your election as Speaker of the House. You bring the gifts of fairness, honesty and strong parliamentary skills to your role of Speaker. I look forward to enjoying the upcoming sitting of the House under your guidance.

I say this as a Manitoban who represents Manitobans. We live in an astonishing, beautiful province. I have had the pleasure of travelling to many different countries and I know there is no better place in the world to reside than here in Manitoba. Visualize the fields of wheat, the city of Winnipeg skyline, and the tundra of Churchill. The diversity of the landscape of our province is matched by the cultural diversity of the people who populate this beautiful province.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my brothers and sisters in the Aboriginal community on the opening of the First Nations University of

Canada in Regina on Saturday, June 21. In watching the news this weekend, I could see that the 25-year process of planning this facility is evident throughout the structure. A building is a physical structure. It is the spirit that has guided this venture that has made the difference. First Nations spirituality adorns the buildings, as it does the St. Norbert Arts and cultural Centre and the St. Norbert Behavioural Health Foundation.

\* (15:10)

Mr. Speaker, in my role as a new member of the Legislative Assembly I have been invited to share many special celebrations. The graduation ceremony of 41 students from the St. Norbert Adult Education Centre that took place on June 19, 2003, was an event filled with pride and many tears. Fond memories of the years past that led to the graduation of these 41 individuals, many of whom have struggled to move ahead with their lives, is a testament to the good work our Government is doing in funding education.

Saturday, June 21, was the summer solstice, the longest day of the year. I was honoured to be able to share in this special day with the artistic director, Louise May, at the St. Norbert Arts and cultural Centre. The Aboriginal village that is being built with the strength and creativity of my sisters is awe inspiring. I am proud of my Government for taking the initiative to name this site as a new provincial park and ensuring its continued success.

Along with the honourable Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Rondeau) I was pleased to be able to assist in the first ever Safeway Because We Care fair at La Barriere Park in St. Norbert this weekend. This special event, hosted by Safeway, supported by Ben Moss Jewellers, allowed 1500 children and youth to participate in rides, games, crafts, a petting zoo, entertainment and a barbecue at no cost to the participants. Children from CancerCare, Big Brothers, Big Sisters, the Rainbow Society, Variety, and Manitoba Child Care Association were the honoured guests at this event. Safeway is to be congratulated for undertaking this initiative.

For myself, a graduate of the University of Manitoba, it is indeed a special honour to be a member of the Legislative Assembly repre-

senting the interests of this university. Students in Manitoba have expressed their support of our Government's interest in their advanced education. Our capital investment program at the university, which has levered many additional dollars through the university's fundraising campaign, is seen as a positive step forward for the province. The fact that the engineering building is in the throes of reconstruction bodes well for the students of Manitoba.

One of the key issues for people in St. Norbert is health care. I was told numerous times by my constituents that our Government is making their lives better by improving the health care system. In my constituency the announcement of the upcoming expansion of Victoria Hospital, the training of more nurses, the reinstatement of the two-year nursing program, the purchase of new diagnostic equipment to allow them more speedy diagnosis of illnesses, and the announcement to train 12 more doctors in the future are viewed by my constituents as positive steps forward in health care. Our Government's continued support of the publicly funded health care system has helped improve the lives of all Manitobans.

June is a perfect month for the beginning of summer and for the 11 new MLAs joining the Legislature today. I strongly support the motion made by the honourable Member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson).

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all new members on both sides of this House. I would like to take the opportunity to congratulate you on your position, Mr. Speaker. In particular I would like to welcome the MLAs on our side of the House: the new MLA from Lakeside (Mr. Eichler); the honourable member, the MLA from Minnedosa, who will be joining us shortly; the MLA from Morris (Ms. Taillieu); and, of course, the MLA from Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen). We welcome you to the House and we know that you are going to do a tremendous job.

I am delighted to put a few words down about the Speech from the Throne that we heard. Indeed a few words is probably appropriate, because this is a government with few results.

We know that. I do believe that this Legislature was convened on the basis of an abbreviated Throne Speech, because we all in this House want to do the right thing, and that is to get to a debate to talk about an issue that is very important to all Manitobans, and that is the debate around BSE. I am somewhat astonished that the Leader of the Liberal Party, who reluctantly agreed to come back to even have a debate in this House, has caused those in the gallery who have been here waiting patiently for us to get into what is a very important debate, and that is something on BSE.

I was somewhat surprised when I realized that the First Minister (Mr. Doer) had not adequately filled the two vacant Cabinet positions that were left vacant with those who did not run this time. We, on this side of the House, clearly do not have a lot of confidence with the members opposite. It is interesting that perhaps the First Minister does not have the same confidence with the people on the back benches to bring them forward for this session, because I think it is important that when we start the very first session that those Cabinet positions are filled. I would hope, on behalf of all Manitobans, with all the issues that are happening that we do not find something falling through the cracks because the First Minister does not have the confidence to fill those Cabinet positions immediately.

We know that the budget process is a very important process. The Budget was introduced, and, in fact, what we find is that there has not been adequate time before we recessed to have the Estimates process. We know that on June 18, this Government had to sign a special warrant to authorize \$1.6 billion of expenditures to ensure that provincial programs and provincial services are being looked after. All Manitobans know that for the last three and a half years and some, this Premier has had a spending habit. What is going to be interesting is when we get a chance to come back on September 8—that is some four months since the Budget was introduced in this House—four months' worth of spending will have gone on before we have a chance to go through the Estimates process. That is something that Manitobans should be mindful and careful of, particularly because they know that this Premier has a spending habit.

In this Throne Speech, they talk about issues, health, hope for young people, communities that are safer. They may want to applaud it, but what do you say to those Manitobans who are having to wait in longer and longer waiting lists because of the failure of this Government? What do you say to those Manitobans who live in fear in their communities because of the incredible increase that we see in violence in the province of Manitoba under this Government?

What do they say to Manitobans about rising Autopac rates, about the fact that this First Minister wants to build Conawapa, but there is no talk of going to the Public Utilities Board? We hope that the Government does the honourable thing and does what this side of the House wanted to do and eliminate the education tax off of residential property and farmland.

We know that there is much to do. We look forward to the debate on BSE, and we look forward to getting back on September 8, because there is much to hold this Government's feet to the fire on.

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saluting all those who stood as candidates for whatever party in this last election, because the democratic process that we have been through is fundamental to good government in this province, fundamental to good representation of people. Whether we are talking about the rural and the farm community, or people in the urban areas, it is important that we have good democracy.

I would like to congratulate the MLA for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) on his election. After a gap of several years, to have the MLA back is certainly a welcome presence in the Legislature.

Mr. Speaker, let me say a few words about the Government. It is a government which has, unfortunately, started with a certain level of arrogance, which campaigned on five priorities, but very little in the way of a real plan. What arrogance. A government with a five-minute Throne Speech. We would have been very co-operative in longer, but the Government did not have much to say, I would say, to the people of Manitoba.

What arrogance to try and put through such a brief statement of intent.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government which, instead of announcing a real Cabinet to be in place for this term, announces only that the ministers will stay as they are, with two assuming added responsibilities. The real problem here is that until the major shuffle, which the Premier has already said that he is going to make within the next week, two weeks, month, two months, we do not know precisely, but clearly, until that major shuffle is announced, ministers will not really know what they are going to be doing for this term. You have got people filling temporary slots, and it will be much harder to get the business of the province done because there is a lot of uncertainty about who is going to be doing what for the remainder of the term.

Mr. Speaker, this is a government which has not done very well in terms of housekeeping, as we have already pointed out. This is a government which needs to pay attention to things much better than it has. Clearly, the omission in this Throne Speech is reference to specific items which would attract young people to Manitoba, omission of items which would help to create a positive climate for business and investment and jobs in this province, the omission of elements which would address environmental issues.

\*(15:20)

Missing was any mention in a meaningful way of reform to the health care system, reform which has been very clearly needed, recognized as badly needed, and of course, the inadequacy of specific measures to provide aid for those affected by the BSE. The bovine spongiform encephalitis is a very important issue and one of the things that this Government could have done because they are bringing forward a budget resolution in a very short period of time was to take or reduce even the education tax on farmland. That was a measure that could have been done today, but we are going to have a budget resolution which, in fact, will not incorporate that, we expect. Too bad.

So I am sad to say that this has been a very inadequate and rather arrogant approach to government from this Throne Speech and it is a rather unsatisfactory way to start the session.



**Mr. Speaker:** Any further speakers? Are there any further speakers on the Throne Speech? Seeing no further speakers, I will now put the question.

Order. The question before the House, moved by the honourable Member for Gimli (Mr. Bjornson), seconded by the honourable Member for St. Norbert (Ms. Brick), that the following address be presented to His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor:

We, the members of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, thank Your Honour for the gracious speech addressed to us at this first session of the Thirty-Eighth Legislature of Manitoba.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Agreed.

**Some Honourable Members:** No.

#### Voice Vote

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Yea.

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Nay.

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

**An Honourable Member:** On division, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, the will of the House on division?

**Some Honourable Members:** On division.

**Mr. Speaker:** On division.

#### REINSTATEMENT OF BUDGET

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, as a result of discussions with the Opposition parties, I would like leave to

move a budget reinstatement motion and dispense with that without debate and then move to the BSE debate.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave for the honourable Government House Leader to move budget motions? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Mackintosh:** I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that notwithstanding any rule or practice of this House, the steps or segments of the financial process introduced and concluded during the Fourth Session of the Thirty-Seventh Legislature be forthwith reinstated in this first session of the Thirty-Eighth Legislature as follows: Introduction, debate and adoption of the budget motion and the tabling of the messages of His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor and the Estimates attached thereto shall be deemed to have been introduced, considered and concluded during the first session of the Thirty-Eighth Legislature and that the ensuing steps of the financial process be continued at this or any subsequent sitting of this House in the current session.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Mr. Mackintosh:** As a result of agreement, it is my understanding that there may be leave for a matter of urgent public importance to be brought forward by the Official Opposition and, Mr. Speaker, it would be our intent to move directly to the 10-minute debates under 36(4) without the introductory putting forward of the case, but move to the debates.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave to waive the introductory portion of the debate and move right into—is there leave for the MUPI to come forward?

**An Honourable Member:** Leave.

**Mr. Speaker:** Leave has been granted.

#### MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

#### Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Kirkfield

Park (Mr. Murray), that the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the need to debate the impact on the Manitoba economy of the discovery of bovine spongiform encephalopathy in Alberta and the subsequent closure of the border to exports of Canadian cattle, bison, sheep and lambs; including the impact on producers, on the numerous businesses and industries that provide supplies and services to our multimillion dollar livestock sector, as well as the need to debate ways to ensure the border is reopened quickly and that the federal and provincial compensation flows in a timely and equitable fashion.

**Mr. Speaker:** The need to debate the impact on the Manitoba economy of the discovery of bovine-dispense?

**Some Honourable Members:** Dispense.

**Mr. Penner:** Mr. Speaker, we have in this province some 10 500 livestock producers, cattle producers that have been impacted by one case of a disease that has been prevalent in some of the European countries. That impact is going to have a major, major economic impact on all of the provinces in Canada, but no more probably, no more of an impact than here in Manitoba.

Because of the significance of our cattle industry in this province and a lack of processing facilities that we have in this province, most of our cattle must be and are exported out of this province of Manitoba, either to the United States or to other provinces such as Alberta, Ontario, Québec and others and that processing is where the problem lies, I believe, in the compensatory package that has been negotiated between the provinces and the federal government.

However, before I get into that, I believe that the 12.3 percent of the national beef herd that we have in Canada, the two federally inspected killing plants that we have in this province and the 25 provincially inspected killing plants that we have in this province are part of the problem that we must deal with in this province of Manitoba.

\*(15:30)

Mr. Speaker, we have roughly between 40 000 and 60 000 individuals who will be affected negatively by the closure of the U.S. border and other borders to the importation of meat products in this province. Manitoba has the third largest beef cow herd after Alberta and Saskatchewan. Just better than 12 percent of that herd is here. We have 1500 beef cattle producers that market more than half a million head of cattle in this province of Manitoba for slaughter and sale in this province and other provinces. The value of those cattle is better than half a billion dollars, \$525 million, or one-seventh of the total value of the agricultural production in the province of Manitoba.

We believe that about 98 percent of the commercial beef cattle operations were cow-calf and many producers retaining or buying calves for further feeding to be sold as stockers, short-keeps or for slaughter. The remaining 2 percent of the commercial operators were feedlots, the largest of which has a capacity of 6500 head.

We know that the beef cattle industry is about \$190 million to feed in the 2001 year. Those are the last numbers that we have. I believe that two small, federally inspected plants slaughtered about 6500 head of cattle. The 25 provincial remaining ones slaughtered about 9500 in this province. We believe that the impact to the employment situation and the layoffs currently being incurred in the transportation industry, the slaughtering industry and directly in the feedlot industry are going to have a major, major impact in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, why is this occurring when we have determined that the province of Manitoba is probably the safest food-processing and producing province in all of Canada? We know that the processes that have been put in place by the beef producers to tag their cattle, to be able to identify those cattle throughout the processing and export industry are second to none anywhere in Canada.

We wonder, Mr. Speaker, whether we are now feeling the effect of the American closure even after it has been proved that the industry has only experienced one case in all of Canada. We are wondering now whether we are feeling the effect of our Premier (Mr. Doer) and our

Prime Minister standing hand in hand in condemnation of our closest neighbour's activities in Iraq and in condemning our neighbour's economic strategies and policies. Is the silence of our next-door neighbour on the BSE and the opening of the border an indication of how cold the relationship has become between Canada and the United States? Are the courts' actions on water and water flows hampering our trade relations with the United States? The silence is both deafening and costly to the producers, the cattle producers and all the agricultural producers in the province of Manitoba.

I believe it is imperative, Mr. Speaker, that our Premier take similar action to what the premier in Alberta has taken. Our Premier has at least on three different occasions gone to Washington to deal with the water issue. How much more important and how much of a greater economic impact has the beef industry in Manitoba than water and other issues that perceivably might affect us in the future. I believe it is extremely important that our Premier should take the initiative, first of all, to meet with the Prime Minister and to try and affiliate himself with those people who can in fact go to Washington and negotiate.

Maybe what our Premier should have done, maybe he should have gone with Ralph Klein to Washington to stand tall by his side and negotiate on behalf of Manitoba farmers. I think it is absolutely imperative that the economic impact of this and other issues that we have seen in the past are negotiated and discussed properly.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned about the measures that were indicated in the federal-provincial-territorial release and the communiqué that was sent out dealing with how the compensation that has currently been announced by the federal and provincial governments and agreed to by this Province would be dealt with.

It states measures that will allow producers to receive payments for cattle owned as of May 20, 2003, that have subsequently been sold for slaughter in Canada will receive assistance. It goes on to say the percentage of government contribution decreases as the price declines. The government contribution decreases as the price

declines, creating a strong incentive for producers to sell at the best price possible.

I ask the members of this Legislature how can we justify a compensation package that is only directed at those cattle that are going to be slaughtered in Canada, sold and slaughtered in Canada. The cow-calf operators and all the other beef operators and the goat and sheep operators, all the backgrounders, are going to be affected equally. Their prices have dropped dramatically. Yet we are only going to contain the compensatory package to those cattle that are sold and slaughtered in Canada. What kind of an agreement is that?

Mr. Speaker, I believe decreases as the price declines, the contribution decreases as the price declines, is clearly an indication that this Government of Manitoba and the federal government have no intention to pay a great deal of money to compensate the beef cattle producers in this province of Manitoba, indeed in Canada, for the declines that they have seen in the last while, the price declines, and how that is going to impact the rest of the economy of this province.

I say to you, Mr. Premier, I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that this is going to have a more dramatic effect than almost any other impact we have had, including the bus manufacture plant that the Premier was willing to compensate quickly and retain the employment. We agreed with that, that we retain the bus manufacturing in this province. However, the impact to our employment, on our economy, is going to be greater than any of the things we have seen in the past. We believe it is imperative that this Province immediately reconvene a meeting with Ottawa and go to Washington to try and convince Washington and the President of the United States to open the border to Canadian cattle coming into their country.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** I would like to thank all parties for putting this matter of public interest before this Legislature today. I would like to offer our thanks to the people who have shown patience with the timing of this debate here this afternoon.

Certainly, I think it is important to state over and over again with one voice in this Legislature

and one voice across western Canada and across Canada that the beef in Canada is safe, that it is safe to eat, that the one cow that was detected was removed from the food chain, the one cow was dealt with, and every other contact that was made from that cow going through various herds in Saskatchewan and even other places south of the border came up negative in terms of its testing. The independent international experts have come up with a view that the Canadian beef supply is managed in a very safe way. They also have come to the conclusion that this situation is isolated and not worthy of continued action against the producers of western Canada and against the exportation of beef from Canada to our major markets.

\* (15:40)

We certainly agree with everyone here that the border is crucial. We know that from our discussions with the western premiers before any BSE case took place, that if there ever was a case south of us or north of us, due diligence would be used by various sectors, province to province, state to state, Canada to the U.S., due diligence would be utilized in the region and in the various countries to ensure the safety of our food supply. We would, obviously, take measures if the situation was on the other foot, so to speak. Having said that, due diligence has taken place. The tracing back through the various herds has taken place. It has taken place over two and a half weeks ago. The fact that the border remains closed, Mr. Speaker, I believe is a political decision now in Washington, not a scientific one. The first couple of weeks, yes, due diligence would be applied on either side of the border if the situation was reversed, because the safety of the food supply is crucial for all of our mutual citizens.

Mr. Speaker, the western premiers did make this the No. 1 priority a couple of weeks ago in Kelowna. We did work all weekend to get an agreed-upon proposal and program. I am disappointed that the member did not like that program, but it was developed by all Ag ministers, was developed by the province of Alberta that is on the front lines, if you will, of this issue because the cow was detected first of all in Alberta, and it was developed in consultation with the cattle producers. In fact, the premiers

themselves did not take the proposal from the Ag ministers for a couple of hours. We went back and reconfirmed the position of the cattle producers across western Canada and across Canada before we came forward with a proposal to the Prime Minister. We took that proposal to the Prime Minister in a conference call. We called on a conference call with all premiers. The chair of the meeting had that conference call with the Prime Minister and there was nothing, nothing, zero on the table when the western premiers met. The Prime Minister discussed this with us the next day and we had got agreement that all Ag ministers would meet on the Friday when he was attending a speaking engagement in Vancouver.

Having said that, there is no question in our minds that two weeks ago, three weeks ago, we should have had a bridge for our producers that dealt with the systemic issues of feed cattle and the appropriate date. We did develop a proposal that had a private sector or the producer taking some of the loss. The obvious for federal and provincial governments taking the remaining loss between the price that it was now being sold—I think it was at 72 cents compared to \$1.05—and that that proposal would form the framework of our bridging agreement.

We also agreed, Mr. Speaker, that we had to get this border open. Obviously, the federal government is responsible for trade and getting the border open. We also knew at the time that Premier Klein, who helped develop the proposal to the member opposite, is not that positive about it. I am a little surprised at that. Premier Klein was going to meet in a meeting that had already been established with Vice President Cheney and with other representatives in Washington. We all, obviously, would go anywhere at any time if we thought that that would help the case. It was the opinion of Premier Klein and the people of Alberta that it was important for him to have and carry on the one-on-one meeting that he had established. Vice President Cheney had not agreed to a meeting with everybody in Canada at the time. He had agreed to the one-on-one meeting and to anything we might do to jeopardize that one-on-one contact with Vice President Cheney, we thought was maybe good politics but bad policy and we followed the advice. We are working together as one team.

I just say that to members opposite because I would go anywhere and I would agree with members opposite, this is as important as the water in United States, the diversion projects. It is as important as the bus company. I know that if all of us would have, if the premier of Alberta who was going to Washington already and set up all these meetings already had felt that this would be an advantage, we would obviously do it. He feels he has a friendship with the Vice President that goes back a long time with the oil and gas sector. It goes back after he was a federal minister in the Reagan administration and when he was a private producer in Wyoming. We obviously want to do what is best for producers, not what is best for us politically, what is best for producers. That is why all the western premiers—all the western premiers—have agreed with Premier Klein's strategy. Now I hope that the meeting this week on Wednesday is successful. We are going to be in contact with all the western premiers to see what next step we can take.

At one point last week or the week before we thought muscle cuts would be allowed through the border. We thought that there would be some movement of the beef industry and obviously there has not been. I suggest to members here that you can ascribe all kinds of reasons. I know that when we talk about this, we have had trade disputes now with the United States on the U.S. farm bill. We have had trade disputes now and with the major subsidies that are there, including now the speciality crops that were not there before. We have had major disputes on softwood lumber. We have disputes now with the Wheat Board and these disputes are very troublesome to producers.

This border situation is unique because we have, according to Premier Klein, until August 31. If we do not get any movement at all, the industry is completely destroyed here in Canada as we know it. We know and agree with members opposite on how many families, how many communities, how many industries, how many jobs, how much economic activity is attached to this industry here in Canada and here in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I want to say to everyone here, to paraphrase the old term that was used before:

Mr. Gorbachov, take down this wall. I would say to the United States today, to this Legislature, and we will send this letter to Vice President Cheney in advance of the Alberta premier's meeting on Wednesday expressing the views of all members that President Bush and Vice President Cheney, take down this wall. It is an unacceptable barrier to trade. It is not based any more on prudence. Prudence was obviously in place in the first two weeks. I respect the prudence that took place in the first two weeks. We would do the same here in Canada to protect our producers. But test after test after test have proven that science is backing up the fact that our food supply is safe. Our cattle industry is safe. Our beef producers produce the best beef in the world and we would hope that short-term economic gain for an American producer is not making and rendering, if you will, the Canadian production and the Canadian cattle industry obsolete.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest that all members join together in this emergency resolution, that we should not play politics with it. We are absolutely supporting Alberta in its resolution which we supported in Kelowna and we wish the premier of Alberta success on Wednesday. We need those borders open. I believe that if we cannot succeed this week with the premier's intervention in Washington, that the Prime Minister has got to find a way to get these borders open. The border should have been open today. It should have been open a week ago. Tomorrow marks the fourth week and that is way too long. We stand with our producers here in Manitoba. Thank you.

**Mr. Speaker:** Before I recognize the honourable Leader of the Official Opposition I just wanted to remind all honourable members, I did not do it at the start but MUIs are for two hours and each speech is limited to 10 minutes. I just forgot to inform the House, so I am doing it now.

\* (15:50)

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have an opportunity to speak on a motion, something that is very important to those people that have taken the time to come to the Legislature today to listen to their representatives debate an

issue that is very, very important to an industry in this province, and that is what is happening to our producers with respect to BSE.

I will make a comment. What we have just heard from the Premier, from the First Minister (Mr. Doer) of this province, is a history lesson. Manitobans do not want a history lesson. They know what has happened. They want action. They want something to be done. If I say a few things that perhaps may make members in this House feel a little uncomfortable, well, so it should be, because I can tell you the people in this industry that depend on it for a livelihood, they are feeling pretty darned uncomfortable today, and they have felt uncomfortable for a couple of weeks.

I ask the Premier, and I say to the Premier, not in a partisan way, but as I say, as the Premier of the Province of Manitoba, if this is a priority as has been stated—he said on the radio that this is a No. 1 priority. If it is such a priority, then simply the question must be asked: So what are you doing about it? Is it enough to say, well, the Premier from Alberta is going down and we respect the fact that he had a meeting, and we are not going to interrupt that meeting, because we were not invited to go along?

Well, is it enough then to say to the producers in Manitoba that what we will do is, everybody hang tight, do the very best you can, because we are putting all of our hope on what the Premier of Alberta might be able to do with the Vice President of the United States of America? I say it is not good enough for the people of Manitoba.

The question is simply this: When the Premier of the province talks about one voice, when the Premier of Manitoba talks about the fact that this is political, it is not scientific, I agree with the Premier when he says that. Again, the history lesson that we have heard in this Chamber today from the Premier, we all understand that it is not scientific. It is well beyond that. It is now political.

I say to the First Minister of this province, we saw a situation that the Americans were taking an approach in Iraq and the Prime Minister of Canada made a decision on behalf of

the people of Canada to turn his back on his friends. It is important to know that, when this First Minister talks about one voice, he stood as the Premier of Manitoba and said: I believe it is my responsibility to support the Prime Minister of Canada with his comments that he has made with respect to the Americans going into Iraq. One voice.

Well, is it not interesting that the Premier of Alberta was not part of that one voice, that he took a different approach and has very clearly stated that he stands behind his friends the Americans? Now, today, we find that this is not a scientific but a political decision, and it is clear that what the Americans are doing is they are saying to Canadians thanks for your support. Thanks for all your help. Where were you when we needed you?

I do not want to get into a debate about what the Prime Minister said with respect to going to Iraq, but it is clear that all the Americans were looking for, all they wanted to hear from their neighbours to the north, were three simple words: We support you. That is all they wanted to hear. But instead we got leaders and premiers of provinces and prime ministers that turned their backs on the Americans. Now we are suffering the consequences of that.

So this is an industry that needs help. This is an industry that does not need speeches. This is an industry that is suffering because everybody is taking the approach and saying, well, gosh, one of the premiers is going to visit the Vice President. Well, maybe he can solve it.

I say to you, to the people that have come to this Chamber, it is not good enough. We have to unite. The First Minister of this Province should get on a plane and make the arrangements. Has he talked, for example, to the Governor of North Dakota? Has he talked to the American ambassador? Has he talked to the senators from North Dakota? Has he talked to the U.S. Agriculture representative? Has he talked to the federal Liberal representative in Manitoba? Has he talked to the Prime Minister?

The fact of life is that—

**An Honourable Member:** He has talked to everybody.

**Mr. Murray:** Well, now they say they have talked to everybody. That is not getting us anywhere. We need some action. Something has to be done rather than listening and hoping that maybe the Premier of Alberta is going to go down and solve all the problems here in this province.

Mr. Speaker, it is not good enough. We believe that this issue is one that has to be dealt with immediately. We heard the First Minister state that he would meet with representatives anywhere, anytime. Is it not interesting? I believe that when the U.S. farm bill came in, there was a crisis for our ag producers in Manitoba. We heard the First Minister at that time say: I will meet with the Prime Minister anywhere, anytime, absolutely 100 percent. Fact: the Prime Minister of Canada came to Winnipeg. Fact: the First Minister was in Moose Jaw at a Western Premiers'-or ministers'-Conference, less than one hour away by airplane. Did he come back and meet with the Prime Minister? No, he did not.

Now, we hear, again, more political rhetoric, Mr. Speaker, on the basis of I will meet anywhere, anytime. Boy, it sounds good. It really sounds great, but what is it doing in terms of solving the problems that our cattle industry is having here in Manitoba? It is doing the square root of zip. Nothing. Cattle producers in Manitoba have been very, very patient. Now, we hear from the First Minister that he is prepared to sign on and work with the federal government with respect to flowing funds. I think the Premier loves to use the words "bridge financing."

Mr. Speaker, the fact of life is we have seen this Government and how they operate when they sign on with agreements with the federal government. During the discussion over the APF, the 40 percent that they were gleefully happy to sign on to, they did not flow one-plug nickel to the ag producers in Manitoba. Now, do we have a situation where the First Minister and his Government are going to say to all those cattle producers, and all the ripple effect of those producers that are affected by the cattle industry, are we now going to hear: Well, we are a part of this, and we believe it should be done, and we believe it should be done yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, those producers would be waiting for this Premier to flow the money. If he uses the excuse: We do not know what is in the program; we have to wait for the feds, I say shame on the Premier, because, in 1999, the former Progressive Conservative government realized there was a disaster happening in Manitoba. What did the provincial government do? They flowed the money and they dealt with the federal government later. It is not a matter of stating, let us wait to see what the feds do. This is Manitoba. Manitobans are waiting for this Government to do something, to show some action.

I ask the First Minister (Mr. Doer), and I give him all my support; I give the support of our caucus. We will stand with him if he will, as he says, make this a priority and get the border opened. We will do it in a non-partisan way. We will stand as an all-party committee, but please, Mr. Premier, enough with the speeches. We need action. Thank you very much.

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture and Food):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this issue in the House. I can tell you it is an issue that I have been working on since the one case of BSE was detected in Manitoba. It was an issue that ministers across the country began to deal with very quickly. We knew that there was going to have to be scientific work done to prove that there was only one case of BSE in this country. We should be proud of the work and the trace-back systems that we have, so that we were able to prove that there was only one case of BSE.

\*(16:00)

Now that that science has been proven and we know there are not any other cases here in Manitoba, the biggest priority for us is to open the border to the U.S. If that U.S. border is not opened, it is going to have a devastating effect on the industry, much greater than what we are seeing right now.

Certainly, there is a significant impact right now because livestock are not moving. We know that currently we are losing about a million dollars a day because of the border closure. We know that we are very dependent on the U.S.

market because the majority of our livestock goes to the U.S. as live animals. Until that border is open to not only muscle cuts but live animals, it is a significant impact. We have to say that Manitoba will suffer the most because of the number of our animals that go in the live state to the U.S.

Mr. Speaker, right after the election this became a priority for us again, as I say, even though we worked on it during the campaign. It was a priority at the Western Premiers' Conference. The package that went to the Western Premiers' Conference was designed by the Canadian Cattlemen's Association. It was a program that we looked at. In fact, while we were in Kelowna, as the Premier said, we called back to the Manitoba Cattle Producers to see if they were on board with the particular program that was designed. We found that Manitoba Cattle Producers were involved in the designing of the program and supported the program that went from the Western Premiers' Conference to the Prime Minister of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the program that was proposed was a disaster assistance program, a program that would be 90-10, because we feel that this is a national disaster and should be handled through a national disaster program. Unfortunately, when that program was put forward to the federal minister the package that came back is different. It is not exactly the same package that was proposed at the Western Premiers' Conference because the program will end very quickly once muscle cuts start to go.

Mr. Speaker, that was one of the concerns I had with the new proposal, that once muscle cuts start to go across the border then the support payments stop for the rest of the animals in the country. But in the news release it says: Upon notification of the border opening, the ministers will meet immediately to review conditions during the adjustment period to determine what further action is needed, if anything, to facilitate the continued movement of cattle.

Mr. Speaker, we recognize that this is just a temporary program. The highest priority is to open the border, but in the meantime if the border is not opening we have to help our cattle industry. We were told by the cattle producers that the most important thing to do was to start moving some of those fed cattle into the pro-

cessing chain. If you start to move the cattle then there is activity at the auction marts. There is some trucking activity. This is the advice of the cattle producers on how we could get the industry moving.

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

I want to say now that this program is designed and there is part of the package that will go to help with the declining prices in animals that are slaughtered in Canada and there are also incentives to move surplus meat and cuts that are in the system.

The members are talking about what the payments are going to be like. Well, I want to tell all members in this House that, again, my department is working very closely with the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association. They were in the office the other day and they are going to be in the office. I think there is a conference call tonight. They are going to be in the office in the next couple of days, working through how this money should flow.

Manitoba has another challenge because, as I said, our animals traditionally go to the U.S. Now we have to find a way for our cattle to fit into the slaughter facilities that are there right now. We had a commitment, when we were putting this proposal together at the Western Premiers' Conference that there would be fairness in this system, that it would not be all the cattle from Alberta that would be slaughtered at the Alberta facilities, that there would be a system put in place where cattle from Manitoba can move as well.

We also have slaughter facilities here in Manitoba and we are looking at how we can encourage more use of those facilities but ultimately our challenge is that we have much more beef in this country than we can consume. Canadians consume about 30 percent of the beef we produce. That leaves us with a surplus of about 70 percent. We can only slaughter so many animals before the cold storage and all the reefer trucks and all of those other things are filled up. That is a challenge and that is why the premier from Alberta and others have said that if we do not resolve this issue by the end of August, we are going to see a restructuring of the beef industry in this country. We will not be able to



raise the number of animals or finish the number of animals in this province if the border does not open and if we do not develop alternative markets. Canadians can just not consume that much beef, and Canadians also like the best cuts. They like the nice, lean, trim parts of the animals. They like the steaks, but there is a whole lot of other meat in there that we just cannot consume.

So this is a huge challenge for us, a huge challenge for the people in the beef industry, and right now the pressure is on those with feedlots. It is not going to take very long before we start, the months will go by very quickly when we have those grassers that have to come off and go to some feedlot. If we do not have this feedlot system working again, if we do not have these borders open, then there will be no market for those facilities.

There are many other issues that are tied to this as well. There is the transportation, and we were disappointed that at the beginning they would not waive the EI weeks in order to get people drawing EI sooner. There is the whole rendering industry. There is the feed industry. There is the auction mart industry. This is very significant.

Mr. Speaker, I want to recognize the work of the Canadian Cattlemen's Association and the work the Manitoba Cattle Producers are doing in order to help us come to some solutions. The first solution we are working on is moving some of the fat animals, fed animals, into the system. Many more issues to work on on this and we will continue to work with the producers.

I was very pleased for the number of people that came out today to join us on the back lawn of the Legislature to show their support for the beef industry as well. We should all go home and talk about the high quality of beef in this province, it is a healthy food, and also just put our support to consume it this weekend, on the long weekend. Enjoy your beef steak and support the industry, but as I said this package that has been put together may not be the best package for everybody, but it is a step forward. We have to work through this one and then we have to start to address the many other issues that are out there facing this industry. I want to just thank everyone for taking the time today to put their thoughts on the record of this industry

and offer your support to all of agriculture in Manitoba.

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased today to join in this debate on the economic issues that are facing our cattle producers in this province. This request for this debate came as a result of the Premier wanting to hold the Legislature in order to be able to get on with the business of the province. One of the conditions that was put on the table by our party was that we dedicate a part of this day to the debate on the mad cow or the BSE issue in this province because it is of such a critical nature.

\* (16:10)

Mr. Speaker, if you look at the amount of money that is being lost on a daily basis in this province as a result of the border to the United States being closed to cattle producers in this province, we are losing millions of dollars daily. That is impacting not only on the producers themselves, but it is impacting on our entire economy. The economy of every small community, the economy of this city, all depend on the agriculture business.

You know, this is the time when we begin to recognize how important the agriculture industry is to us as a whole province. I am happy to say today that the Government I think has now come to grips with how serious this matter is and is indeed working with the cattle producers. I congratulate the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) and I encourage her to continue working in a positive way.

I ask her perhaps if this becomes much more critical than it is that she may have to look at a special request to Treasury Board to help farmers to bridge the gap between the period that they are in now and the time when they can actually move those cattle to market, because there are dollars being lost right now and banks have certainly been co-operative, but I think the day is going to come when we as the people of Manitoba need to support this industry financially.

Whether it means bridge financing, or whether it means non interest-bearing loans until such time that the program can click in, I think we need to really show our support to cattle

producers and farmers in this province at this time. As long as I have been in this Legislature, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there have been difficulties in the agriculture industry, not as a result of what the farmers do, not a result of what the producers do, but it is always external factors that come into place that impact on the economy and on the livelihood of these families that work so very hard to produce the quality of food that we enjoy in this province.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is time for us as legislators today to commit ourselves to support this industry in its entirety. The Minister of Agriculture knows that I will support her completely if in fact she makes the decision to support the farmers with bridge financing until such time that their product can move to market.

We do not know how long that is going to be. The Premier of Alberta is in the United States now. In talking to the Premier this afternoon, he indicated that it was a private, one-on-one meeting with the Vice President where this issue is going to be discussed. I respect the fact that the Premier has recognized that the Premier of Alberta is speaking not only for himself but indeed for premiers of the provinces that are being impacted by the situation.

One of the things I think we need to understand is how vulnerable we are when it comes to dealing with our neighbours. If we do not treat our neighbours right in terms of the kinds of things that we say about them and the kinds of support that we give them in times of need, this all can be translated into the impacts that are being imposed upon us when borders are closed to products that we produce.

I think the other thing we need to recognize is that trade is a very important part of our province. A large percentage of the products that we produce in this province are exported to the United States. The United States is the biggest importer of products from Manitoba. No other jurisdiction in Canada or anywhere else imports more of our products than the United States does. We have to respect that trading partner. We have to respect the fact that these are important trading partners to us. We are such a small province that indeed we have to show that

they are a valued customer and that our products are important to them as well.

In entering into this debate, we just wanted to make sure that producers across this province know that we are standing with them, that we are standing shoulder to shoulder with them through this difficult time, and if the government of the day sees it in their wisdom to support the agriculture industry at this time with cash, we will be there supporting that kind of a move.

I go back to 1999, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when farmers in the western part of this province were flooded and could not get their crops in. Yes, it was in June, I believe, that we made a decision that we would forward monies to producers at that time who could not get their crops in, and then we would fight it out with the federal government at a later date. That is exactly what we did. We went ahead and we made the commitment; we made the payments. I think the payments were received in farmers' pockets by September of that year, and then we went to work to recoup the share of federal funding that was supposed to be forthcoming.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think this is a similar situation. If we look at other disasters across this country, whether it is the SARS situation in Ontario, the ice storms of Québec, the flood of the century, where co-operatively we all worked together in this Legislature to make sure that the right things happened for the people who were losing their livelihoods, not because of anything they had done but because of a natural disaster.

I would say that this is as close to a natural disaster as you are going to get, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you have the border of your biggest trading partner closed to you because of one incident, not of a management decision, not of a decision that any farmer made but simply because of a natural situation that has occurred—maybe not natural but it is an unfortunate situation, and we have the borders closed to movement of our products into the United States and into markets.

It also shows how vulnerable we are as a province by not having a packing industry in Manitoba. That is a serious issue that we need to address as we look at the economy of this

province down the road. I think we have to challenge the people who work in the Department of Industry, Trade and Mines, the people who work in the Department of Agriculture, to go out and to actively pursue an industry that is going to perhaps be able to establish itself as a packing industry in this province.

Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have lost our packing industry in this province. That is a sad situation because at one time Manitoba had the largest packing and processing industry in the beef industry of all the provinces. We lost that about 30 years ago. I think it is time that we re-examined that issue and that we sought actively for people and for industries and for processors that might be willing to re-establish business in this province, because we rely very heavily on the United States or on Alberta to process our products.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see that my light is flashing which means I have two minutes. I want to say to all producers in this province that this is not a partisan issue. This is an issue that is an economic issue. It is an issue I think that all members of this Legislature have come to understand. We understand how serious it is. We understand the impact that it is having on families and on communities. It is time for us to act. We cannot sit by very much longer and wait for governments to decide in a political sense to open the borders. We need to pursue the opening of that border very aggressively.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I ask the Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province to take those extra measures to contact the United States and the political powers in the United States to make sure that they understand the importance of opening the border to the economy of our industry in our province. These are reasonable people. They are not going to turn a blind eye or a deaf ear to the requests that are being made by the Premier of this province.

I ask the Premier of this province to work very closely with the Premier of Alberta, the Premier of Saskatchewan and other premiers in Canada to make sure that we do everything we can to ensure that those borders open and that the countries then are prepared to accept the products that we produce. There is no question

about the quality of our product. It is some of the finest product in the world. We have always prided ourselves in that, but we have to take that extra step now to support the industry, to support the farmers and to make sure that the border between us and the United States is open as quickly as possible.

With that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak.

\* (16:20)

**Mr. Tom Nevakshonoff (Interlake):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House this afternoon to put my thoughts on the record in regard to the outbreak of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, and that is the last time I am going to try that. I will refer to that as BSE from this point forward but certainly an issue of grave importance to not only the cattle producers in the province but to all Manitobans in general I think. Agriculture plays a critical role in our economy and the beef industry, the livestock industry is a big component of that so it is a matter of grave importance to us and very appropriate that we are going ahead with this debate this afternoon.

The Interlake is home to many cattle producers. In my home community of Poplarfield, just for example, I am virtually surrounded by cattle producers. I realize that we are in a very difficult situation today largely given the fact that we do not have any slaughter facilities in our province and well, not to any great extent, and we are largely dependent on the U.S. market in terms of our live cattle exports.

So I would like to begin, first of all, by drawing attention to the fact that it seems, once again, that our national government refuses to recognize a crisis when one is staring them in the face, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I would suggest that if this were in Québec, for example, where a lot of the votes lie, they may have recognized this as a disaster, which it truly is, and would have accorded it the proper status and would have entered into a program of 90% payments with the Province paying 10 percent. Instead, once again, they have downgraded it because largely it is a problem to western Canadians and we are dealing with the 60-40 split. I recall when the

Saguenay River flooded in Québec that the response was instantaneous, when we had the ice storm in Québec as well and all the sugar trees were damaged by the ice it was recognized instantly as a disaster. Yet here all of western Canada is in dire straits and, again, you know it is a 60-40 split. So I think the first message from this Legislature should be to our national government that we want this recognized as a national disaster and expect them to move forward in a responsible manner not just from a political perspective which sadly appears to be the case today.

On the other side of the fence, I think that our neighbours to the south as well have to be a little more realistic and members on both sides of the House have alluded to this. The Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), very early on in his speech, was suggesting that it was our reluctance as a country to enter into the Iraq theatre that has led to this situation, the implication being that the United States is punishing us for not following along with them into Iraq. That may very well be the case, and that is a most unfortunate occurrence if that is what is at the root of this. Canadians do not need any lessons from the United States when it comes to courage and when it comes to what is right. In 1914, Canada was one of the first countries to declare war against the Germans and once again in 1939 it was within seven days of England declaring war that Canada was in that war as well, and I seem to recall that it was not until 1943 that the Americans entered the European theatre. So we do not need any lessons from them when it comes to courage and backbone in going to war when the cause is just.

When we have entered into the war with the terrorists, and we here in Canada acknowledge that is a just war, we acted there as well when it was identified that the Taliban regime in Afghanistan was where a lot of these terrorists were being trained, we did not hesitate. We went with our American brethren into that theatre and fought it because it was a just war, but we reserve the right in this country to decide for ourselves what wars we are going to enter into. We are not going to be strong-armed into doing something against our will and something that we feel is not right just for the sake of the economy. If that is the way the American government

wants to do business, I suggest they seriously take a look at their foreign policy and decide whether or not they want to be a member of a community or whether they are just going to be the strong man in the world. I think that point has to go on the record.

Our beef producers today are feeling the brunt of these practices, as have our wheat producers time and again in the past. How many times has the Canadian Wheat Board been challenged by the United States government? We have gone to the World Trade Organization eight, nine, ten times and continued to prove that our trade practices are just. As soon as the case has been decided, we end up facing another challenge. Our forestry producers are also experiencing trade sanctions to that effect so, really, if they truly are our neighbours and our brothers then they would treat us a little bit more fairly and not continue to try and strong-arm us into making poor decisions.

I think the Premier (Mr. Doer) hit it bang on when he said on the back steps of the Legislature this afternoon, Mr. Bush, bring down the wall because this wall has no business being there. We have done our due diligence. Our scientists have gone out and determined the cause of the outbreak. It has been determined that only one cow in all of Canada has been confirmed with BSE, which is on average with spontaneous mutation of this disease. This disease does spontaneously mutate at about one out of one million animals. That may be the case here.

It may be the case of contaminated feed that has come in from elsewhere. If that is the case, I think our neighbours to the south better look to their own herds as well because our herds are largely intertwined in North America. There is a lot of trade back and forth.

I think an international team of scientists has looked at this and has determined that it was contaminated feed that led to it and has also determined that it is very likely that other cases of BSE have occurred and that, given the integrated nature of the North American beef cattle industry, BSE cases may well have occurred in the United States as well. Given the level of scrutiny on the Canadian industry, I think if this continues for too much longer the same level of

scrutiny should be applied to the industry in the United States. If that happens, there is a good chance that BSE might be present there as well.

Cooler heads have to prevail here. I think we have to speak with one voice out of this Chamber. I am a little disappointed in the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray), the tone that he took. Obviously, it is just another political football from his perspective that he is going to kick around and try to divide this Legislature. Once again, I implore all members of this Legislative Assembly to speak with one voice and cooperate fully on this issue and try and get resolution here for the better interests of the cattle producers and the farmers in this province.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** Mr. Deputy Speaker, Manitoba cattle producers are facing an unprecedented difficulty due to border closings of 33 countries to Canadian beef and related products. This was a result of a single case of BSE in Alberta. Since then, 2900 cattle have been slaughtered in Canada with no sign of BSE. Extensive testing has not detected a single other case, and BSE has moved from a health issue to an economic issue.

In Canada there are 900 000 head of cattle presently backlogged in the system waiting for processing which does not include cull cows, butcher bulls, which are traditionally marketed in the United States. There are 1.6 million head behind them and another 5 million calves growing up behind them. Cattle are backed up on the farm depleting feed supplies. On June 19, slaughter cattle sold for 45 to 47 cents instead of the normal \$1.05 in Alberta. In Manitoba, Winnipeg Livestock Sales opened for one day to help desperate producers sell some of their animals at distressed prices for critical cash flow.

Sheep shipping is down 70 percent and markets in Ontario are flooded with sheep that cannot go south. Bison and elk producers are in a similar predicament. Farmers are unable to get loan extensions from nervous bankers. Processing plants such as the one in St. Laurent are considering layoffs. Farmers are cancelling their

orders because the plant is suddenly faced with passing on carcass fees of \$80 a tonne. Canadian packers will only be competitive when they can resume exports of all products to all major markets. They must be able to sell meat and bone meal for value rather than pay for its disposal. Truck dealerships, implement dealerships, farm supply centres are facing reduced sales. Employees are wondering if they will have jobs tomorrow.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our industry is in crisis. We need immediate help with no strings attached. Manitoba's cattle industry is worth \$525 million annually, a significant portion of the provincial economy. Marketing of cattle amounts to 30 percent of livestock product sales and provides 15 percent of total farm cash receipts in 2001 alone. Manitoba beef exports account for a significant 7 percent of the total national beef exports. The industry in Manitoba is losing \$1 million a day. The average farmer gets very little out of safety nets now in place.

Two things must happen immediately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in order to help the industry survive. First, the border must reopen to exports of Canadian livestock. The Premier (Mr. Doer) must vigorously lobby the Prime Minister to take whatever actions necessary to convince the U.S. and other governments to start accepting imports of Canadian livestock and related products. Our governments must do all they can to restore international trade relations with North American and Asian markets. They must send a strong message that Canadian beef is safe and that our testing standards are high.

Secondly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is critical that the real aid starts to flow to livestock producers now. The Premier has agreed in principle to the compensation package proposed by the federal government, but the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) wants to cull this disaster issue by throwing responsibility for 90 percent of the compensation plan back to the feds. This kind of petty bickering is counter-productive to the real solutions to a desperate situation.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we call on this Government to do the right thing, to get emergency cash into the hands of our producers now. There is no time to lose. In addition to a competitive

compensation package, the Premier should give the industry a more accurate time frame in order for the industry to inform their creditors, thereby alleviating some of the financial pressures. We need immediate measures to stimulate Manitoba's cattle and cow markets to help producers with the border closures. Our grain farmers were promised a cost-share aid package under the Agricultural Policy Framework. The Premier refused to flow his share to the farmers. Will he do the honourable thing this time and co-operate in this joint compensation effort?

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

Once the borders reopen to muscle cuts, we must realize that there will be big losses as cattle prices remain well below the breakeven point of the excess cattle supply. If the program ends as soon as the market opens, there will be larger movement of cattle to the U.S. which will be sold at distressed prices. This could trigger an American antidumping action which would further devastate our producers.

This Government should look ahead to plan B. Prices in Canada must be supported at or near American prices till the full backlog of cattle in feedlots has cleared the market. The long-term health of our livestock industry and our provincial economy is at stake. Our producers are looking to governments for decisive action to protect this industry and the thousands of jobs that go with it.

Mr. Speaker, we need compensation that will foster better market conditions and help our producers through this economic disaster. We need a program that will encourage the buying and selling of cattle. We need to get the cattle moving in a system that will help prevent a market crash when the border opens. We need effective leadership and vision to resolve these issues as soon as humanly possible. We call on the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his Government to do the right thing for the livestock industry and indeed for all Manitobans, for this crisis will eventually affect all of us.

**Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin-Roblin):** Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your re-election to your position. I also want to welcome all of the new MLAs here in the House for the first time

today from all sides of this Chamber. Specifically, I want to say welcome back to the new/old Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). I am really hoping in the case of Inkster that the original movie does work as well as the sequel. I am one of the types that always thinks the original is always better than the sequel so that is the challenge I can throw out to my friend from Inkster.

**An Honourable Member:** I appreciate that.

**Mr. Struthers:** You are welcome.

I want to say I am very pleased that this issue is before our Chamber here today. I know this is an important issue, not just in my constituency and in my Parklands area of our beautiful province. I know that this is significant for our whole province of Manitoba. I know this is disastrous for our province. I know this is putting producers and communities in very tough straits.

Mr. Speaker, I want to very much say that I appreciate the opportunity to take part in this debate here in the Manitoba Legislature. I also want to make sure people understand there are a number of things that are happening to help this situation. These things spring from the willingness of a number of different people and departments to work co-operatively with each other to help the farmers, to help the communities that are affected by this one single case of BSE.

I want to point out that daily contact is made from the federal minister, Lyle Vanclief, to our minister and to the federal secretary of agriculture in the U.S. That is not an occurrence that you can point to a lot with many things that have a national and international flavour. This is an international/national crisis that we are dealing with.

Now, I want to talk a little bit about why we need to co-operate, why we need in this Legislature to be absolutely united in our position in support of our farmers in Manitoba. It is absolutely imperative that we be united on this. We have taken that opportunity on other issues. We have taken that opportunity with agricultural crises that have sprung forward over the last number of years. We as a Legislature have

moved forward together for the best interests of the farm community. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that that is the most important thing that we can do here today, that together all sides of this House can move forward with a discussion and with some thinking on how we can help our farm community. I am positive that that will be done. I am hopeful that we will achieve that here today.

\* (16:40)

Why would we take that step? Well, it is an important industry to Manitoba. There is no doubting that. It contributes a lot to our economy. We have had many farmers move forward to diversify out of strictly grain or grain and oilseeds into livestock, into cattle operations. It is an important step that we have taken in the past. It is big for our economy. It is big whether you live in rural Manitoba or northern Manitoba or in the city of Winnipeg or in the city of Brandon. It is an important issue. We are talking about food safety, which is important.

We are also, though, Mr. Speaker, talking about the future of many little communities throughout rural Manitoba. Now I am speaking from the basis that we have safe food in this province, in this country. I am making that assumption. I am very confident that I can say that. I am very confident that I can say that the farmers that produce our food hold themselves, and there are mechanisms to hold our farmers, to a very high standard, higher I suggest than the very country that is holding up the export of our beef, higher than what the American farmer is held to. That is our Canadian farmer. That is our Manitoba farmer. Those are the folks that are working hard in my constituency today to provide us with food. They are being held to a higher standard and they are suffering now because of one single case of BSE found in Alberta.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing that I want to say is that the premiers of Alberta and Saskatchewan and Manitoba and all the rest have to be united in this as well. We all have to work together on it. We do this because of the Eddystones of Manitoba. We do this because of the Cayers of Manitoba. We do it because of the Rorketons of Manitoba, those little communities, Ste. Rose du Lac, cattle capital of Manitoba. We

do it because those communities depend on us to put forward plans of action. They depend on us to support them and they depend on us to represent their views here in the Legislature and outside of the Legislature as well, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure many members in here can think about their own examples. I will use Eddystone. Eddystone is a little community outside of my riding. The Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) knows Eddystone very well. It is a little community that at one time was a very thriving community. As if things were not tough enough in agriculture already, things just got tougher for Eddystone. The community club suffers. The school is not there any more. The farm community has less money to spend. We are looking at an area that depopulates from rural Manitoba to larger centres. This kind of a crisis does not help the Eddystones and the Cayers and the Rorketons of the world and the families of the people who live there.

So do not ever, ever let anyone tell you that this is not an important debate. It is important in downtown Winnipeg. It is important in downtown Cayer and Eddystone. It is basic to our economy. It is basic to the way rural Manitoba exists. We are talking about the fabric of rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking as something as important as that because our fabric is based on agriculture and for years we have been telling farmers we have to move forward in diversifying. Many farmers have taken that risk based on the advice we have given them from this Chamber and they have diversified into cattle. What do they get for it? They get the borders closed off to their export. They have to survive.

Little schools in rural Manitoba depend on vibrant communities. We have to be there for them. That is why we need to come out of this Chamber united. We need to go to the other provinces and unite. We need to go the federal government with one voice on behalf of our little communities because this is basic. We have to be strong, we have to represent farmers and we have to go to Ottawa. We have to say you have to deal in a much more fair way with the threat that the closure of the border poses and you have to deal with the consequences of that decision.

Again, I am very glad to be able to participate in this debate here in the Legislature and I encourage all sides of the House to continue to work co-operatively on this very, very important issue.

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** I welcome the opportunity to debate this on behalf of the residents of Lac du Bonnet constituency. I begin by thanking the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) for switching positions with me in the speaking order this afternoon. I know it is a very important issue for him. He has a great number of cattle farmers in his constituency and I do not have as many in my constituency. Our Lac du Bonnet constituency is largely a grain producing area, not necessarily a beef producing area, but I think it is important as well though that I, in fact, debate this on behalf of Lac du Bonnet constituency.

I begin by thanking all those who put their name forward to run in this election. I believe I am very privileged and honoured to be the representative for Lac du Bonnet. I worked extremely hard over the last year to represent those in Lac du Bonnet constituency and I will continue to do so over the next four years.

I welcome all new members to this House and, of course, all those who have returned to this House after the last election. I congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on being elected to the Speaker's Chair. I know over the last year you have done an excellent job as Speaker of the House during which I was a member and I thank you for putting your name forward. I know you are going to continue to do a great job in that capacity.

I have a great deal of respect for farmers in Manitoba and I have a great deal of respect for farmers because of the faith that they put into their operations. I do not think we would find another industry in Manitoba in which participants are as faithful as they are. They put their life and their livelihood on the line every year. Every year. Many farmers put hundreds of thousands of dollars of input costs into their farming operations every year expecting that the fertilizer will take effect, expecting that rains will come when they are supposed to come, expecting that they will be able to harvest their crops and then,

in the final result, expecting that there will be a price that is high enough that they can make a profit and sustain and support their families.

So I have a great deal of respect for farmers and farming operations because they put a lot of money into the ground. They put a lot of money into their operations expecting to get that back by the end of the year. I do not think there are too many other professions, too many other industries where that is the case.

Mr. Speaker, there are two issues though that face farmers in the Lac du Bonnet constituency and, of course, the cattle farmers. The issue of course is the BSE, bovine spongiform encephalopathy. The BSE is an extremely important issue for our cattle farmers and our ranchers in the area.

Secondly, another important issue for our constituency and our farmers in our constituency is drainage. Drainage is extremely important both to cattle farmers and to grain farmers, and I would like to talk a little bit about drainage at the beginning. Drainage is an extremely important issue in our constituency because water flows through our constituency to a greater extent than other constituencies in the province. A great deal of water from the east of our constituency, from the south, from southern Manitoba and the United States and from the west flows through our constituency. So drainage, of course, would be a big concern because water flows through the constituency more so than in any other constituency in the province.

\*(16:50)

Another important factor with respect to drainage is that hydro dams along the Winnipeg River have been constructed over the years, and because of the dikes that were built along the Winnipeg River to contain the waters behind the hydro dams, because those dikes were constructed, they altered the drainage patterns in our constituency, so that now water does not flow east into the Winnipeg River, but instead it flows in a northerly direction. So those patterns were altered to a great extent which really affected our agriculture in Lac du Bonnet.

Thirdly, another factor which affects the drainage in our constituency is the fact that our



constituency has the highest precipitation rates in Manitoba by far. Western Manitoba has much lower precipitation rates than the Lac du Bonnet constituency, but in our area we have over 24 inches of precipitation annually, and that dramatically affects our farmers in our area.

Fourthly, there has been a lack of maintenance for provincial drains in our constituency, and a lot of that water, of course, then does not flow properly. Our municipalities, in fact, have been maintaining their drains, but that does not help us to any great extent in Lac du Bonnet because once it comes out of the municipal drains, it goes into the provincial drains and it is backed up.

The Province in the last Budget has, in fact, allocated \$4 million a year annually to drainage maintenance for the entire province, and I do not believe that that is enough. In fact, drainage is such an issue to our constituency that rains during the middle of the summer will, in fact, cause losses in the hundreds of thousands of dollars to many of the farmers in our area. So it is an extremely important issue in our constituency.

Mr. Speaker, the BSE, the bovine spongiform encephalitis, in fact, is an important issue as well, and that issue has to do with the cattle farmers and the beef industry within our constituency. The beef industry is extremely important to Canada. Canada is a very important importer and exporter of beef and cattle. To give you an example, in 2002 the beef and cattle exports were worth about \$4 billion a year, and beef and cattle imports were worth about \$1 billion. Canada's major export market for beef and cattle is the United States which in 2002 accounted for over 80 percent of our exports of beef and nearly all our exports of cattle, and the next most important markets are Japan, Mexico, South Korea and Taiwan. The closing of the United States border to Canadian beef exports will have a devastating effect on Manitoba's farmers and Manitoba's beef industry. The importance to Manitoba is such that 10 500 farmers are impacted by the BSE in Manitoba. In terms of the size of the beef industry in Manitoba, Manitoba has the third largest beef industry in Canada.

We have, as I said, a number of cattle farms within the Lac du Bonnet constituency, but,

again, we are largely a grain-producing constituency. The Agricultural Policy Framework agreement is similar in some ways to the BSE agreement in the sense that there is a 60-40 cost-share arrangement between the Province and Canada. The Canadian government shares 60 percent of the cost and Manitoba shares 40 percent of the cost.

Mr. Speaker, I was really quite dismayed when, in fact, under the Agricultural Policy Framework agreement, the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) signed that agreement and then, after promptly signing the agreement and bringing up the hopes of farmers in the province of Manitoba, that she in fact did not flow the dollars that were necessary to sustain our farmers in the area. That was borne out I believe in a *Winnipeg Free Press* headline on June 18 where I was quite dismayed to read the headline: Beef bailout funding rejected. I was really quite dismayed by that because again I felt that the Minister of Agriculture was reneging on her responsibilities to the agricultural industry in Manitoba. Again, as she did with the Agricultural Policy Framework agreement, she was bailing out with the BSE agreement. The next day, I saw the headlines and she reneged and, I presume after a great deal of pressure by the beef industry in Manitoba, she okayed the compensation for ranchers in the province.

Mr. Speaker, it is important that we recognize and support our beef industry. It forms an extremely important part of the economy of the province of Manitoba. I would like to thank all of those who joined us at the south lawn of the Legislature today, those who took the time out of their busy schedule to join us for that barbecue. Thank you.

**Mr. Peter Bjornson (Gimli):** Mr. Speaker, I will begin my comments by saying I have the utmost confidence in food safety in Manitoba. I had a wonderful steak on Friday, a roast beef dinner Saturday at the Viking feast in Gimli, a burger yesterday and a burger again today. Certainly, if most people in Manitoba had an appetite for beef that I had, we would not be as concerned about opening up the borders.

Mr. Speaker, I must commend the Canadian Food Inspection Agency for the manner in which

the diseased cow was handled as recognized by an international team of scientists who visited Canada. I must congratulate the honourable Minister of Agriculture and Food for the work that has been done by her department so far, as well as the employees of the Province of Manitoba who have been working on this very important issue. I also applaud the efforts of the honourable First Minister (Mr. Doer) on behalf of Manitoba beef producers at the Western Premiers Conference.

As a history major, Mr. Speaker, I have appreciated the history lessons that I have been hearing today from the honourable members. It would be redundant to go into more detail on some of these issues as such. However, I concur with the honourable members from Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) and the Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) that we do need to have a united front with this very important issue. The tone from the Opposition has been somewhat divisive, and I think we have to present a united front on behalf of the beef producers of Manitoba to resolve this very important issue. I will assure the producers in the Gimli constituency that we are participating in the BSE recovery program and that Manitoba is prepared to support our producers and ensure access to Canadian markets.

From the constituency of Gimli, where we do land more fish in the LGD of Gimli in the harbour area than we do produce beef in the area, in every single restaurant in town it is a lot easier to find a burger than it is to find pickerel fillet. It is a very important part of our local economy, and we will do our best to ensure that the producers have their concerns met here on the floor of the Legislature. Thank you.

**Mr. Denis Rocan (Carman):** Mr. Speaker, once again I take this opportunity to congratulate you, sir, to being elevated to the position of chairing this wonderful, beautiful Legislative Assembly.

It is essential, Sir, that we are having this debate today knowing the negative impact of the discovery of BSE is having on the Canadian livestock industry and in turn, our provincial and national economies. We are privileged to have so many representatives of the livestock sector and allied industries with us here today in the Legislature who were then watching this debate.

I would like to thank each and every one of them for taking time away from their operations to join us. We appreciate their input on critical issues such as this.

Livestock producers, like all of our farmers, are an extremely proud group and they do not come here to make requests for aid lightly. They are here today because they are dedicated to preservation of their industry for future generations. They know that their products are safe and that the borders should be reopened quickly so that they can once again begin exporting high-quality beef products to market in the United States and beyond.

I found it unfortunate that the Liberals saw fit to delay this important debate, but then again this is not the first time that the Liberals have been so sorely out of touch with the needs of our farmers. I hope that upon reflecting on their actions that they will realize that they were out of line and that they owe the producers who were here with us today a sincere apology.

I would just like to start out by touching on the importance of the livestock industry to Manitoba and the effects of the border closure on our provincial economy. According to Manitoba Agriculture, our province is home to Canada's third-largest beef cow herd after Alberta and Saskatchewan with 12 percent of the nation's beef cows and 1.5 percent of the total North American beef cows in 2001.

\* (17:00)

In 2001, Sir, Manitoba's 10 500 beef cattle producers marketed more than half a million head for slaughter or sale out-of-province. The value of cattle produced in 2001 was close to \$525 million, about one-seventh of the total value of agriculture production in this province.

It is not just beef producers who have been hard hit by the border closures. Our province is home also to hundreds of producers who are raising bison, sheep and goats and whose operations have been negatively affected by the discovery of a lone case of BSE in Canada.

Look around this beautiful province and you will see the immediate effects of the border

closures. Auction marts are virtually idle; business has slowed at slaughterhouses; many trucking companies have lost a considerable portion of their business; countless other businesses and industries that supply and service the livestock sector.

By some estimates, Manitoba's economy is taking a hit of \$1 million a day because of the border closure. Nationally it is believed the toll on the Canadian economy is now in excess of half a billion dollars. Rural communities and urban businesses alike are watching the situation warily knowing that each day that goes by without the border reopening is having a significant impact on the health of Manitoba's economy and the larger Canadian economy. Thousands and thousands of jobs in Manitoba rely either directly or indirectly on our livestock sector.

It is of the utmost importance that the crisis is resolved quickly so that the least possible damage is done. Moreover, the mental toll that the BSE crisis is exacting on our livestock producers cannot be tallied. I cannot even begin to imagine how difficult this must be for our farm families and the businesses that rely on them.

We know what needs to be done to protect the long-term health of our livestock industry. First, and foremost the border must be reopened. There is no need for delay. Stringent scientific testing has shown that the Canadian beef supply is safe. It is critical that politics not be allowed to override sound science when it comes to reopening the border to exports.

Secondly, it is critical that aid flow to the livestock sector as soon as possible in a fair and equitable manner. While I applaud the Premier (Mr. Doer) and the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) for their commitment to flowing the aid, it is essential that they keep their word. We cannot end up in a situation like we have seen with the \$80 million in transition funding under the APF that this Government refused to flow. Investment in agriculture is an investment in the long-term health of the provincial economy. The Doer government must recognize this and help protect our livestock industry in the time of its need.

The border closure is a crisis as real as any other natural disaster that has beset our province.

It is essential that both the federal and provincial governments outline details of the aid program and that aid begins flowing to affected parties sooner than later.

I would encourage the Premier and the Agriculture Minister to take whatever steps necessary to drive home to governments both on this side of the border and to the south of us that the border must be reopened now. I know that Alberta Premier Ralph Klein is travelling to Washington and New York this week to lobby on behalf of his province's livestock industry. I applaud him for his efforts. I would also encourage our Premier to consider doing the same. This is no time for the Premier and the Agriculture minister to be hesitant. They should be bloodying their knuckles knocking on doors convincing the power brokers to reopen the border to exports of Canadian livestock.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to read into the record some quotes from livestock producers that sum up their thoughts on this crisis.

One farmer who has 100 commercial cattle waiting to be sold who is worried that their market value will drop if they become overweight, stated: We have sat on them as long as we can afford to and it is now time to make a decision.

Another producer said: Right now, you have no idea what the value of your inventory is with nothing trading. You cannot market anything.

Another one said: On the situation regarding feedlots, someone explain that feedlots are the ones that are taking the hit right now, and if this situation does not get ironed out fairly quickly, it will be bad news for those guys.

Another farmer explained: Cattle have been my life all my life, and I have never seen anything that so suddenly caused such an immediate downturn in the market.

Someone else who raises sheep noted of the border closure: We need it open soon or we are in awful trouble. If nothing happens within a month or so, it will be too late.

Another stated bluntly: We are just in a dilemma. We do not know what is going to happen.

Another farmer passed down a note this afternoon, Mr. Speaker, and he said to me very simply: I would like you to ask the Premier (Mr. Doer) if this issue is not resolved in two weeks, would he be willing to shut off all power exports to the U.S. and work with Alberta to do the same with gas and oil?

These people are in terrible straits right now, and that is what causes these individuals to write such notes that they want to be put on the public record.

Mr. Speaker, all parties know what needs to be done. It is time to get the border open and to get the aid money flowing. Our producers' livelihoods are depending on it. The businesses and industries that rely on the health of our livestock sector are depending on it. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I would like to thank you for the warm welcome to the House here. It is indeed an honour to speak in the House today, my first opportunity to do so, on a matter of great importance both to the residents of my constituency and all Manitobans.

As Canadians now know, the response to a single case of BSE was the closing of the U.S. border to all Canadian cattle exports on May 20. Mr. Speaker, in the time I am allowed, I would like to speak to three specific issues. These are: the effect of the closing of the U.S. border to Canadian cattle, the response to the BSE finding from a position of science and the response that is needed by the Government of Manitoba.

The importance of this matter, Mr. Speaker, is directly related to the importance of the cattle industry in Canada and in Manitoba. Before May 20, Canada was the third largest exporter of beef and beef cattle in the entire world, with the industry employing over 100 000 people. More than half of the beef produced was consumed outside of Canada. In Manitoba, the closing of the border is estimated to cost our beef industry \$1 million a day, although we have heard from

some in the industry that the true cost could be as high as seven times that amount.

Many cattle producers, particularly in the feedlot industry, are suffering significantly, Mr. Speaker. For them the effect of the border closing was immediate as they were unable to move cattle ready for market. Today they continue to feed their animals at a cost of \$2 to \$3 a day, and as money is poured into these animals, the value of the cattle is declining as they become overweight. It is estimated by those in the industry that in our province today there are 10 000 to 15 000 cattle ready to be killed with fully a quarter of them now being overweight. The crisis for our cattle industry is clear. The bills are coming due and there is no assurance that the revenue to match those bills is coming. The investment has been made, but there is no return yet to be realized.

Over the past several days, Mr. Speaker, I have had the opportunity to speak with cattle producers in my own constituency in the Kleefeld, Pansy and the Grunthal area, and I can tell you that the emergency is real. Some producers have said the entire industry could collapse by the end of August if quick and decisive action is not taken.

It is not easy, I know, Mr. Speaker, for cattle producers to come to government looking for assistance. They are, like all farmers, proud of their own ability to produce their own product and it is uncomfortable and difficult for them to come here today to our Legislature, yet under these emergency circumstances little choice remains.

While the intensity of the problem is clear for cattle producers, Mr. Speaker, I want to point out that the challenge of science has been met by our regulators. Two days before the border was closed to Canadian beef, the farm where the single BSE-positive head was discovered was quarantined. An intensive traceback of all cattle had been produced and an association of the one positively tested for BSE was conducted. Farm records were examined. Processing and rendering records were examined. The effort to ensure that this remain only an isolated case seems to have been extensive. In many ways, it appears that the science in Canada has worked from

detection to containment, and that should help to restore confidence in our cattle industry.

\* (17:10)

Sadly, however, Mr. Speaker, good science and a quick response is not enough to alleviate this emergency. As many in the cattle industry have pointed out, this crisis has moved from the farmyard to the lab room, and now it is firmly in the political arena. It now requires a strong response from our provincial and our national governments.

That response needs to occur on two fronts. First and foremost, the border needs to reopen, Mr. Speaker. When an industry exports more than half of its product and faces a border closing, the result is a choking of that industry. This requires political pressure and leadership at the highest level in Manitoba. Unfortunately, our Premier (Mr. Doer) seems content to shake his finger at Ottawa and then walk away. We have not seen proactive action in working and lobbying with federal officials or the Premier's American counterparts.

This afternoon while I was joining many others to get a hamburger in the back, the Premier was talking to some of the producers, and the producers were asking him: Mr. Premier, why are you not going with Ralph Klein? Why are you not going with Ralph Klein to Washington? He added a bunch of excuses and he gave them a number of different reasons why he could not attend, and they looked at him and said: That is no excuse; we expect more from our Premier.

I agree with our cattle producers. It was shameful that he gave that excuse, almost as shameful as today when the Liberals tried to withhold this issue from debate, to slow it down when there were cattle producers in the gallery. I was ashamed at our Premier. I was ashamed at our Liberals. Only the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) has stood up and given direction on this issue.

The Premier (Mr. Doer) seems desperate to simply define this as a federal problem and hit the ball back into the federal court. It is a response that is insulting to our cattle producers and does nothing to help get the border

reopened. We know that some of the Premier's cabinet ministers have recently travelled to the United States on trade-related issues, yet we are left to wonder what real progress has been made on this important issue. It is time, it is past time for the Premier to take leadership on this issue and to put the practice of a strong federal government in cross-border relationships that he has preached into practice.

Mr. Speaker, the second response is in relation to aid. As mentioned, Mr. Speaker, many in the cattle industry are suffering today. They are suffering today. Last week the Province and the federal government discussed a 60-40 cost-sharing program. While it was a response that gave some hope to the cattle industry, already hope is fading. Concerns have been raised regarding how fast any compensation money will flow. Many in the feeder industry, in particular, have said that they simply cannot wait for six months, twelve months, eighteen months for money to flow. The need is now and this provincial government has to be prepared to move quickly.

Secondly, the scope of any aid program needs to be examined. It has to apply equally to those producers who are unable to sell their cattle, as well as those who are able to find a market. Compensating producers who sell their cattle for reduced prices is important, but it is of no use to those producers who simply cannot find a market for their animals. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, there is a great deal of suspicion when it comes to the NDP government and its response to emergency needs.

Residents of southeastern Manitoba remember how quickly provincial ministers and the Premier of this province and federal Liberal ministers found their way to southeastern Manitoba when there was flooding two years ago and when there was a photo op, but when the photo ops were gone and the water receded, so was the Premier, so were the ministers of this Government and so were the federal ministers in Ottawa. They were nowhere to be seen, and where was the money? Cattle producers need to be assured that even after the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) is through with her photo ops and even after the Premier is finished shaking his finger at Ottawa, that there will be an

aid package that is accessible quickly by those who need it.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, I want to commend the many cattle producers of our province who have responded to this emergency proudly and responsibly. I want to commend our Leader who has taken a proactive approach to this by bringing forward the debate today. Industry organizations like the Manitoba Cattle Producers Association have worked effectively with the industry. They have shown strong leadership. It is time that we called on the Premier of this province to do the same.

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to put a few comments on the record. As I sit and listen to the debate today, I have a sense of *déjà vu* when we were discussing the Agricultural Policy Framework a short period of time ago when there seemed to be agreement throughout the entire House that we understood what the issue was. We understood the problems our producers were facing, and yet there is only one group of people in this building, in this Legislature, that can actually make something happen. Unfortunately, they are sitting on the other side of the House and sitting on their hands.

We today sat outside and worked outside moving hamburger to all the people that lined up. The comment from producer after producer was we have to find a way of opening up the border. We have to find a way of creating the economy that we need. It reminded me of the story that Fred McGuinness wrote about rural life. I think members opposite sometimes feign interest in rural Manitoba but seldom do anything more than that. I think they have to maybe be a little more forceful with their Leader and perhaps take a little more aggressive stance with him to not just blame the feds for their problems and not say that it is a federal issue but to actually stand up and do something about it.

Fred's story goes similar to—and I will use the cattle producer as the prime example. The cattle producer sells 10 head of cows. What does he do? He takes that money and he goes into his community and he pays off his fuel bill and pays off his fertilizer bill. Probably goes to the drug store and pays off the drug bill and the grocery

store. Those people take that money and they pay the same amount of people in the same communities. My fear is that if we sit and do nothing, which I see is happening at this point in time, other than debate, we are going to be in that situation very quickly.

Once that money leaves your community or does not show up in your community the first time, these communities are destined to a very hard and serious and prolonged problem that we can easily identify and we can easily talk about, which we have been for the last several hours, and yet, at the end of the day, we have no resolve but to blame the federal government for not responding quickly enough.

Mr. Speaker, I agree that the federal government deserves a lot of the blame that is being heaped at their feet right now. We have a federal government that has no communication skills with Manitoba and with Canada's largest trading partner. Obviously, they are not communicating in any areas. I think that is a shame. I think that is where leadership within our province has to play an important role. I challenge our Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province. He spoke again today and as I said, in the last speech that I heard regarding the Agricultural Policy Framework, he talked about being prepared to meet anywhere, go anywhere, do anything. And yet I ask him, what has he done to this point? Who has he met? Who has he talked to? Who is this Government dealing with in the United States? I do not hear anything.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know if there have been any communications other than to say, well, maybe we will let Ralph Klein go down and negotiate on our behalf. I say kudos to Ralph Klein. Here is a guy that has an ability to communicate with the American government and is obviously taking advantage of it. But then why would the Americans not want to talk to Ralph Klein? They see a lot in common with him. They see a lot of approaches of the Alberta government that are very similar to the American style. I suspect that bodes well for not only Ralph Klein personally but for the province of Alberta provincially. Perhaps our government of the day could take a lesson or maybe ask Ralph if they could travel with him for a couple of days to see how they might be able to open up those communications.

Mr. Speaker, one of the major things I would say that would help, and I offer it as advice to the Premier, if he wants to actually show the producers in rural Manitoba that he does care, perhaps he can make a direct phone call to the American government to speak to them. Obviously Jean Chrétien does not have that ability, and, if he does, he is obviously not utilizing it. I think maybe we have got to move out of his realm of negotiations and let us move it back into the provincial level.

The one thing that Fred McGuinness talked about in his article, in his story, was the fact that when money leaves your community, and we are all going to see this even in our major centres in a short period of time, but when the producer is not making money, provinces, cities, larger communities are going to suffer very quickly. I learned in my business prior to this life that the economic speed-up usually starts in the city and spreads out to rural Manitoba, and over a period of time we all benefit, but when there is a slowdown and when there is an issue, it usually starts in rural Manitoba and the impact is felt in the cities and our larger centres in a longer period of time.

\* (17:20)

I would certainly urge members opposite, members of the Government, new members of this Government to take an interest in what is happening out there and perhaps light a fire under the Premier to get more active and more involved. I understand that many of the Government members have been travelling across the United States. I understand the Premier is out of town in the United States next week at issues dealing with other parts of Manitoba. I would say to him, perhaps take the agricultural argument with him and present it to the people. I think it is the public that has to put pressure on governments to make them do things. I find that unfortunate sometimes because we know what the right things are at times. We seldom act unless we are forced into that position.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to acknowledge the cattle producers. I think they are doing everything that they possibly can to raise the level of attention of this issue to the public. Are we stopping buying beef in Manitoba? No, not yet.

Unfortunately, the amount of beef that is in surplus right now, Manitobans cannot consume if they had forever to do it. It is just not possible. We need our American trading partners to open up the borders and to access that with our product.

My take on rural Manitobans is that they ask for very little. They seldom come to the Legislature. The producers seldom come to protest, they seldom picket, they seldom use tactics that we would see as normal practice or somewhat normal practice around the Legislature. They come, they are peaceful, they are understanding. All they are trying to do is make sure that everybody understands the message. The message is that if this problem does not get resolved very quickly, we are in a big world of hurt out there. I suggest that that hurt is going to move into the city of Winnipeg in a very fast way.

Mr. Speaker, it is unfortunate that some members opposite would make light of this situation, but I think that the situation that I am seeing of people in my communities, the producers in my communities, it is a very serious concern and these people are going to become more aggressive if they have to. I think that it is incumbent upon this Government to find ways to work this out. Again I am suggesting to the government of the day that if it means negotiating with individual states in the United States to move our product, perhaps that is what we should be doing.

I have talked to processors in the United States. They are clamouring for product. They do not have enough product right now. They want the borders open. Perhaps the Government can work with them. It is our role as politicians and it is our role as the legislators in this province to act on this, not to just acknowledge the problem, but to come forward with a plan.

The other issue that concerns me is the very fact of compensation. We are offering compensation based on animals sold. Well, we pretty much put the money back in our pocket, because they are not selling any animals, so they cannot really claim into the program. I think the program was obviously very ill-thought and quickly put together and is not going to satisfy the needs of our producers at this time.

I do not want this Government to feel comfortable that they can just blame the feds on this issue. I think it is something that they are going to have to roll up their sleeves and get more involved in. I think we have got to find ways that we can open up the border and create these opportunities that have been there in the past and I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that it is incumbent upon you and it is up to the Premier (Mr. Doer) of this province to take the lead role and actually prove to the producers that what he says, that his actions are larger and louder than his words and that he will stand up and support our producers in rural Manitoba.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Yes, Mr. Speaker. Is there leave of the House not to see the clock at 5:30?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to not to see the clock? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Just to clarify, that was also, Mr. Speaker, with a view to not recognizing the two-hour limit on MUIs. Would you canvass the House to see if there is leave to waive the two-hour limit on the MUI?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to waive the two-hour limit on MUIs? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been agreed to.

\* \* \*

**Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Education and Youth):** First of all, Mr. Speaker, prior to putting any comments on the record I would like to congratulate all the new MLAs elected to the Legislature. It certainly is an honour. This debate and discussion that we are having with regard to this tragic series of events, I would say, is probably a good opportunity for the new members to be able to see, and hopefully they will be able to see, how all parties can work together to try to come up with a solution. I just wanted to make that comment briefly.

Also to the cattle producers that showed up today behind the Legislature, these are individu-

als who can see their industry being very, very negatively affected. They are here to try to appeal to each and every one of us and to all individuals who want to listen to their appeal with regard to their plight and the plight of smaller communities throughout rural Manitoba which they are part and parcel of.

I just want to make a comment as well, Mr. Speaker, about our Minister of Agriculture and Food (Ms. Wowchuk). She has been working closely with her colleagues right from day one on this issue. I know when you find one cow and that one cow is removed from the food chain with BSE and all the scientific evidence we have and people have done everything humanly possible to attempt to come to a solution to prove there is no reason to have the borders remained closed on this issue, and yet our friends to the south continually do so.

I know that probably the most outstanding issue with regard to BSE is the closed border, it being political in nature, not, certainly, scientific. All the scientific evidence that we have shows that this is one animal and that animal has been dealt with and as many others have been, but there is no reason to continually close our borders and make sure that they remain closed. All the due diligence has been done. Our Premier has made mention of this repeatedly and dealing with safety of the food supply is crucial. The due diligence which anyone would expect and dealing with our friends just to the south of us in North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota and other states bordering us, we would expect them to do the same which we have done.

I know that when all the western premiers agreed to the solution proposed by Premier Klein and people are working in partnership, and I would hope each and every individual in this Legislature would want to take that approach as well. Even though we have had the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) make that comment about how, yes, let us work together; well, no sooner than he said let us work together, then he began to attack this Government on all kinds of issues which had absolutely nothing to do with BSE. That to me is not showing any kind of co-operation which this issue needs.

Members opposite in their remarks made some comments with regard to the federal



government and how, oh, we cannot let the federal government off the hook, we have to continue to attack them. Our approach in '99 has always been to try to work with our federal colleagues in trying to resolve many issues in which we have been successful in most cases, and sometimes not, but we continue to work in a civil way to try to address many, many issues that we face day in, day out, and again this is no different. Yet we do not propose to totally attack the federal government and, to use the term that has been often used by members opposite, let them off the hook for some reason.

We continue to work with them. Our Minister of Agriculture continues to work with her colleague, Mr. Lyle Vanclief, in attempting to not only be in contact with him on agriculture and food issues on a regular basis, on a daily basis, but also to try to find solutions and to work with him as an elected official, but not to totally attack the federal government on all kinds of issues and try to feel somehow that is going to get results.

\* (17:30)

I just want to say that as my colleague from Dauphin-Roblin stated, and I know many other members in the Legislature have commented on, about how it affects small towns, whether they be in Rorketon, Ste. Rose, Kleefeld and Brunkild in the corner of the province where I reside and where my constituency is, and this is certainly a concern because we are Canada's third-largest producer.

Mr. Speaker, the member from Dauphin-Roblin stated repeatedly about how the economics related to this, regrettably, terrible issue on BSE is affecting rural communities in Manitoba and their livelihood and their existence. Many communities in rural Manitoba are looking at this issue and seeing the impact that it may have down the road and they are very, very much afraid of what happens when the border does not open and our friends to the south continue to keep the border closed. They are looking at this issue not only as an issue related to beef but also to sheep and certainly other livestock, what they are raising and certainly wish to sell to our American colleagues and friends to the south.

Mr. Speaker, border closure is having a terrible effect, as I stated, on the economy and on the beef industry, and small communities are looking at this as being the last straw for them. They are trying to survive and, under our Government since 1999, we worked very, very closely in rural development trying to improve and having communities diversify and having farmers diversify in their industry, and many have. Yet they are looking for more support from us as a Government. Our Premier (Mr. Doer) has stated repeatedly, as well as the Minister of Agriculture and Food that they are fighting on behalf of all farmers, not only the farmers that are related to the beef industry.

So, in conclusion, the closure of the border is having a detrimental effect on not only the livestock industry but on Manitobans and Winnipeg as a whole, I would say, because it will not take very long before any impacts on agriculture and the agricultural industry outside of the perimeter is going to have an impact on the city of Winnipeg. We know it; all Manitobans know it. We take this issue very, very seriously, I, for one, as a rural member, and many, many others.

I would like to make a final comment. We have a number of MLAs and elected members of the Government side that are from Winnipeg and the comments that I hear from, for example, the new member from Steinbach, making comments about how because we have many members of the Legislature that are elected and part of the government from inside the Perimeter, how somehow there is a lesser feeling towards Manitobans outside the Perimeter.

I can tell you we are the Government that represents the North, rural Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg and will continue to do so representing all Manitobans. I certainly take exception to the comments of the new member from Steinbach, somehow because people are outside the perimeter somehow that this Government is not working on their behalf.

So, in conclusion, the Premier and the Minister of Agriculture and Food are working very, very hard and very diligently on behalf of not only the cattle producers but all Manitobans.

**Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose):** I certainly do not want to miss my opportunity to add a few

words to this debate because in the constituency of Ste. Rose, particularly, cattle have increasingly become the mainstay of the economy of a large part of the area that I represent, as they have increasingly across this province. That is what makes this situation with BSE as difficult as it is, because we, being governments in general, have encouraged the opportunity to produce more livestock, particularly cattle, in marginal areas and because of the freight costs to move value goods out of this province; obviously you need to value add. That seemed to be the catch word for the last decade. Here we find that the very time when the industry is really starting to hit its stride we are suddenly faced with a border closing, which if it is not reversed or changed very soon will be positively devastating for an awful lot of people in this province, including a large number of my constituents.

Mr. Speaker, I do have to start at where I think the root is of many of the issues. An awful lot of the cowboys out there that I talk to, and I do not have to prompt them to think in this way, they will very quickly say, you know, one of the biggest problems we have is in Ottawa and the federal relations we have with our largest trading partner.

I tie that very directly to what we might or might not do in this Legislature. I look across the Chamber at the Premier (Mr. Doer). I remember when the free trade discussions were first going on. People in this Chamber took very strong positions, pro and con, to free trade. Free trade was so important to the future of the economy of this province at that time. We needed access to that border. We needed access to the massive markets that are available to us. Let us not forget that one of the greatest assets the city of Winnipeg has is it is very close to the city of Chicago, when you start looking at the means or the distance and the time required in order to get goods into a major population centre on this continent.

We are sitting in the middle of the continent and we are sitting on a significant amount of land that is not necessarily land that would go into crop. At the same time we have parts of the province that produce some wonderful crops, and the two are a very healthy marriage, if you will, in terms of stimulus to the economy.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has had, and I hope will continue to have once we get this straightened out, the most growth in cow-calf operations in Canada. This is the one area where farmers have embraced that as a future opportunity. It is very, very important that we embrace the opportunity and embrace the trade partner that is just to the south of us. It does not mean we have to follow them into all corners of the world as their world interests dictate to them to do, but it does have to recognize that we, north of the border, are very dependent on the significant population base that is there and their demand for goods that we have.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, this country, through its leadership, kicked sand in the face of our American friends more than once in the last year. I do not think that is for one minute helping us persuade them that good science should override politics in terms of how we deal with the border.

Mr. Speaker, politicians closed the border on the recommendation obviously of health officials at the time that it was made, but I submit it will be politicians that will open the border as well. American politicians in co-operation with our officials and our politicians will arrange for that border to be opened eventually.

Mr. Speaker, the cattlemen, I cannot say enough about the quality of the lobby group, the quality of the individuals who are providing leadership in the cattle industry right now. They have been patient, they have been imaginative, they have looked at every opportunity to find ways to communicate to their American colleagues. They have sought every possible venue to provide reassurance to the consumers of this province that the product they sell is some of the safest in the world.

Mr. Speaker, one of the hallmarks of Canadian food is that it is produced under safe circumstances and that it is inspected and safety and healthiness of it is assured. So we have a leg up on assuring the rest of the world that the beef supply in this country is safe and safe to be traded around the world, guaranteed to be free of contaminants, guaranteed to be free of potential problems such as was identified with one cow, Mr. Speaker, one cow with BSE.

Very quickly our system has allowed them to research and to capture all of the associated locations and descendants of that cow. Now we are in a situation where we can look to the world.

That brings me back to two other aspects of why we may not have seen the border open yet. One is I do not believe the federal Minister of Agriculture has taken enough time and taken enough effort to really, really assure himself and the rest of the public of the world, if you will, that every precaution was taken immediately in dealing with the issue.

\* (17:40)

Early on I do not think we had a strong enough relationship minister to minister, if you will, at the federal government. I know that the cattlemen will tell you there is not enough money in the bank in Manitoba or Canada to deal with an offset and the loss of revenue. There does, however, have to be a recognition that if we are going to get the system moving again that the direction has to be given to the industry that there will be an opportunity for them to move beef into the food chain and that the losses that will occur because of this dramatic closure can be offset in some manner.

But we need to look at why that is necessary, if it was even raised in Alberta. Why do farmers who still have their cattle need any kind of assurance that there may be some assistance available to them in order to move them into the food chain? Those cattle, unfortunately many of them were about ready to enter into the food chain. They are now, day by day, decreasing in value. That is where the loss will occur. If that loss is not offset in some way, that segment of the industry will not in turn reinvest back in the cattle industry.

This is an industry breaker. That is the problem that we are facing. There is no more independent, there is no larger group in society that just wants to be left alone to produce good feedstuff than the cattlemen of this country. They would that it would stay that way, but they are now in a situation where something has occurred that is outside of their hands, and certainly through no cause of their own they are now in a difficult situation.

I would recommend as we move forward that politicians of all stripes at all levels redouble their efforts to make contact with our counterparts across the border to make contact with those who have an opportunity to pave the way, if you will, for restoring the trade stature that Manitoba has, Canada has with our American market.

It also demonstrates that in the long run our industry needs to be more diversified, but there is no place in Canada that is more important than right here. Alberta is volume-wise very important, but right here in Manitoba this industry is one of our key industries, it is one of the main supports of our communities, our small communities, and we simply have to redouble our efforts.

I encourage this Chamber, all of us to take every opportunity to make sure that we do that in terms of improving trade opportunities south of the border.

**Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie):** It is a pleasure for me to rise and participate in this very important debate. I want to take this opportunity to thank all members of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly for allowing this debate to take place, because it has taken full cooperation on behalf of every member of the assembly to carry on with today's debate.

This shows the co-operation that is necessary to address this catastrophic situation which is facing our livestock sector here in the province of Manitoba and specifically the beef cattle producers. The beef cattle producers are a very proud and independent group of individuals that take a great deal of pride in the quality of their produce, as they have shown in years and years of production, expansion and world-wide acceptance of their product.

Mr. Speaker, we are speaking about a situation that has developed by way of one single animal being detected with BSE. This situation has resulted in closure of borders of many of the countries to which Canadian producers have marketed their production. Most specifically, because the major end-user of Canadian production is the United States, we have spoken a great deal of the time this afternoon about the

United States and once again trying to get that particular country's borders open and marketing opportunities for Canadian production resumed.

It goes far beyond just the United States. In fact, more than 30 countries around the world have been alerted to the situation involving this one cow in northern Alberta, which, I might add, has resulted in more than 2700 head of livestock being investigated for this particular disease and subsequently slaughtered for investigative purposes. Throughout this investigation, I will state that there have been no positive tests. All tests that have been conducted to date have been negative for BSE.

Mr. Speaker, we are very, very supportive of all of the efforts that have been made to investigate this one occurrence and to make certain it is just one occurrence because of mutation rather than a positive genetic line, which is the case in any living, breathing being on the planet. They are subject to mutation from whatever environment or internal genetic makeup.

This situation is dire. On behalf of the livestock producers, I am very pleased that we are having the opportunity to debate this issue and that we come out of today's debate united in telling the world the product from our beef cattle is safe and that all previous countries that have been in receipt of the quality product from our beef industry will once again receive the product.

I will say that the United States being specific and most important to our beef industry is not only acting on their own at the present time. They are recognizing that they are also a player within the world and that other countries are looking to them to make certain the beef that is sold in our supermarkets is safe. Also, the countries that do business with the United States want to be assured that the quality of products they are receiving from the United States is safe and not something they would not themselves want to receive.

The United States is being looked upon as a world leader in their dealing with Canada and does not want to block itself out of markets it is

interested in, in showing favour to Canada before all questions are answered.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to say that the science of investigation has to date been totally satisfied. I am afraid right at the present time, we are moving very quickly away from the scientific support for continued border closure to one that is based more on public perception and politics. We say that our political leaders are making the decisions about whether the border remains open or closed. I would suggest that in a lot of cases politicians follow public sentiment rather than lead.

It is up to us in Canada to take forward our message to the Americans and to other countries around the world, that our product is indeed safe. It is incumbent upon us to show and demonstrate to everyone that we in Canada are continuing to consume our beef products, and we must take that message forward to countries around the world.

Mr. Speaker, I am very, very supportive of what we are attempting to do in this Legislature. I am extremely supportive that we go forward united because this, as I mentioned in my opening remarks, transcends differences that we might share in ideology in other areas. This particular situation is one that could be catastrophic to our livestock producers.

\*(17:50)

It is important that we act very swiftly because once cattle have reached market weight, they continue to gain and then, as we consumers like to have lean beef, very quickly the cattle get into an overweight situation and are considerably discounted as fat. The market value of the animals is very much discounted. What we are looking at is not weeks and months but days in order to resolve this issue because no amount of money from the treasuries of the Province or of the federal government can afford to offset what our producers are facing in lost revenues and effectively lost marketing of product that is indeed safe.

We cannot eat our way out of this situation because we are exporting the vast majority of our production. In Manitoba, 90 percent of our livestock production is exported to other

provinces in Canada or externally, outside of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to address in a very short time frame this most serious issue. I encourage all members in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly to continue to eat beef and to demonstrate to our customers around the world that our beef is safe. Thank you.

**Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise for a few moments to put some remarks on the record concerning the issue of bovine encephalopathy that is currently challenging all of us in this House and is certainly a big challenge to Manitoba beef producers.

I should begin by commending the Member for Portage (Mr. Faurchou) for his remarks about co-operation in this House on this matter. This is one of the issues where all of us indeed should be speaking with one voice in support of our producers. I quite agree with the member that this is an issue that should unite all Manitobans and indeed should unite all western Canadians and, I will take that one step further, all Canadians. The closure of the American border to beef products from Canada because of the discovery of one cow in Alberta is certainly using a hammer to resolve an issue that could have been addressed in a far less draconian fashion.

Mr. Speaker, I am also pleased to acknowledge that the western premiers stand united on this issue in defence of producers in western Canada, in getting a return to the normal market for the distribution and sale of beef in Canada and the United States.

We do have an issue that is very, very serious to producers in Manitoba as well as elsewhere in western Canada in particular. That issue is being addressed in a responsible and proactive fashion by the western premiers, as it should be. I think we should be supportive, all of us in this House should be supportive of our Premier (Mr. Doer) in his efforts to stand united with the other three western premiers in addressing this issue. The closure of the U.S. border to beef products has produced a dramatic

negative impact on producers. Although I come from the Wheat City of Canada, in Brandon, certainly the beef industry is very much a part of my community, as is the agricultural economy generally very much a part of my community.

I should comment, Mr. Speaker, as well, the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) mentioned Mr. Fred McGuinness and Mr. McGuinness' decades long support of rural life in Manitoba. I would be remiss if I did not mention that Mr. McGuinness continually credits and honours Mr. Len Evans, who was my predecessor in this House, for being the pivotal factor in the creation of the Keystone Centre in Manitoba. Of course, the Keystone Centre being the centre of agricultural excellence in this province and the centre for the display and promotion of agriculture in this province is something that I personally am proud of having in my home constituency of Brandon East. Certainly, Mr. Evans being acknowledged by Mr. McGuinness as being the pivotal factor in the creation of that centre is something I am very proud of and my constituents are very proud of, Mr. Evans' long history of support for agriculture in our province and for the construction of the Keystone Centre in 1970.

Mr. Speaker, in Brandon, Brandon East, Brandon West, in the community of western Manitoba that we represent in Brandon East and Brandon West, we share the concern of the western premiers and of most members in this House for standing united, for opening up that U.S. border again to beef products from Canada. I am very, very proud of my Premier's (Mr. Doer) standing united with the other western premiers in taking this issue aggressively, both to Ottawa and to Washington.

**Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris):** As a new member, I am very pleased to be speaking here today. I would like to thank you all for your very warm welcome.

The discovery of BSE in one cow in Alberta has caused a major crisis in the beef industry and all related industries, such as the feedlots, the trucking industry, rendering plants, auction marts and even the pet food industry. That may not sound like anything in the big scheme of things, but if that is your livelihood it would be

significant to you. It is only a matter of time before this disaster spreads to the rest of the rural economy, the co-ops, the farm implement dealers, car dealerships, and even the grocery stores. The impact of this will weave itself into the very fabric of our rural economy and the survival of our farms and our towns.

We have heard that the industry is losing a million dollars a day. That is what we can measure in the directly affected industries. The fact is the devastation is much more extensive than that and we will never know the full impact of BSE.

When this was first discovered in Alberta, that one cow was destroyed, the herd was destroyed. Related herds were tested, and all reported negative. The meat did not enter the food chain. The science has been done. There is no threat of the disease spreading as this disease does not spread from animal to animal. Since North American eating habits do not include eating the affected portions, it is extremely unlikely that any human in North America will contract the human form of BSE, Creutzfeld-Jacob disease. In fact, this disease has been recognized in the medical literature long before the emergence of BSE.

Two things must happen to save the beef industry and related industries. First and foremost, the borders must be opened. Premier Klein has taken the initiative to lead. He will meet with American Vice President, Dick Cheney. I urge our Premier to do the right thing and represent Manitoba in this most serious issue. I ask the Premier to lobby hard with the Prime Minister to get the border opened. Next week is not soon enough. Tomorrow.

In the meantime, we must make sure the compensation flows to our producers. Indications are that producers will receive payment for cattle owned as of May 20, 2003, that have subsequently been sold for slaughter in Canada. But there are still cattle in the fields getting overfat and losing value every day. What will be done for these cattle producers? What will be done for the truckers who have nothing to haul? What will be done for the people who are laid off from the feedlots and the abattoirs? What will be done with the cattle? Will we slaughter these animals and how will we dispose of them?

What will be done for those who simply cannot hang on and have no money left and no future? Compensation packages only go so far. The Government needs to set up disaster assistance for all those affected by this devastation. We must end this issue quickly by action and not words. Let us get those borders open and restore trade relations now.

\*(18:00)

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to be able to bring a few comments from the citizens of Arthur-Virden in relation to this issue of bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE, as it is known before us as well.

First, I would like to congratulate you on being elected as Speaker again to the Thirty-Eighth Legislative sitting in Manitoba. I would like to congratulate the Legislative staff for organizing the day and bringing us back in September 8 and being there for us as always. I would like to welcome all of the new MLAs in the Legislature as well and, particularly, the new members that we have on our side of the House. I certainly look forward to working with all of them. Particularly, I would like to make mention of the Member for Minnedosa who won her recount here again last week and will be sworn in later this week, I understand. I look forward to welcoming her as a neighbouring MLA in the House on issues.

The issue before us has come about because of one cow that more safely would have been dealt with in another manner, but it did become public. It is a situation that we have to deal with. The facts are that in Canada we have slaughtered some 1500 cattle, at least in herds in the numbers of teens and more, to try to make sure that we convince the rest of the world that the product that we had was an anomaly, that this cow was an anomaly, that it was only one cow out of the millions that we have in Canada. That has certainly been what science has proven.

I have to tip my hat to the people that first of all brought the Americans on board into Winnipeg to work with our inspectors so that their inspectors knew what process was being done here in Canada and dealing with determining whether any of the slaughtered

animals carried this BSE, better known publicly as mad cow disease, in any of the other herds. Of course, science and the tracking process that we have have proven that there were no other animals involved. So, in other words, Mr. Speaker, Canadians know that our food is safe. Canadians know that our food safety system works and is safe. They know that our food tracing system is superior to that of any other area of the world. Canadians and Americans know that the science has been met and the premiers know that it has now become very much a political issue. Our Premier (Mr. Doer) said so today in reply to the Throne Speech that we had in this House.

So, now that it is of such importance and it has become in the realm of politics and it is purely a political issue, we would certainly liked to have encouraged him to have gone with Premier Klein to Washington to deal with this issue. There may have been other personal reasons as regards to our economy in Manitoba as to why the Premier did not stand up for the agricultural community to the extent that he could have in relation to sort of saying that he has an exceptionally good relationship with the Prime Minister in Canada.

*Mr. Cris Aglugub, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

Of course, we saw some of the reasons in the House today from our Liberal members as to why the popularity of the Liberal Prime Minister of Canada is not too great in this country. Of course, I do not think they learned a lesson from the issues of the Prime Minister and his arrogance in relation to dealing with this when we have an industry that is on its knees seeking help and support and trying to come forward and we have people worrying about where they are going to sit in this Legislature. I just think that is unconscionable at this time and certainly shows an extreme lack of credibility with concerns in ever raising issues of rural Manitoba again.

I would like to come back to the Premier being able to deal more with these issues in Washington. If it had not been for the fact that he feels that he needs to sit idly by because the Prime Minister might withdraw funds for the ditch around Winnipeg or support for future power lines or developments in hydro around

Manitoba or that the Prime Minister might withdraw funds for some of the infrastructure projects that might be going on in other areas, you know the Premier could well have been in Washington as well and may still have that opportunity to do so. We would certainly encourage him to take the opportunity to meet with any of the neighbouring states if he feels that the Prime Minister is out of his league, or the Prime Minister or the President of the United States has certainly taken the opportunity in other areas to meet with our cohorts on the south side of the border.

Mr. Acting Speaker, as I said, there is another area of support that we have looked at. That is the fact that the American industry, the processing and packing industry has, it is unfortunate, but they do own a good deal of the processing industry in western Canada, particularly I am thinking of Cargill's plant in High River and Iowa Beef Packers, IBP in Brooks, Alberta. They are also smarting and hurting financially from this particular closure of the border on the product that they have had in Canada as well.

I want to also say that the opportunities that I have had in 1998 to work with Americans, in co-operation with the National Barley Growers president, Herb Karst, from Montana who was dealing with Governor Janklow in South Dakota on these similar issues and we were successful in bringing forth a number of common ground approaches agreed to by 50 farm organizations on both sides of the border and common sense prevailed as we took those to Ottawa and Washington. They were able to at least open up some of the borders in relation to South Dakota which was banning even the movement of product through its state in spite of the fact that the governor was realizing 15% layoffs in slaughtering plants in his own state. When common sense prevailed, it was reopened.

All of my life I have worked with urban and rural issues and I have never seen one more important to the agricultural industry as this one right now. Certainly I think the consumers of Canada realize that the food is safe that we have here on a regular basis because they have continued to eat beef, Mr. Acting Speaker, and so that is not an issue. People certainly know that

the food that we have in Canada is safe and an extremely valuable commodity and support it in Canada.

One of the things that I am concerned about is the fact that this Government was very concerned when it was first said it had to be a disaster, that there was a 90-10 payment coming. They said they would not participate if it was 60-40 because it should be a disaster at 90-10. Why are people in Arthur-Virden and the rest of the province of Manitoba sceptical about this Government's actions when it comes to dealing with agricultural issues? It would have to be because the track record is not poor, it is practically non-existent. In relation to not putting forth their 40% share on the Agricultural Policy Framework twice, \$40 million each time, they did not put the negative margin money into the Canadian farm income plan, the CFIP program. That was about another \$40 million. I know personally, lobbying and two trips to Ottawa with the minister to try and get funding for the flood of 1999 in western Manitoba, we were short \$22 million. We got right down to seeking \$22 million in that regard, and there were no funds coming forward at that point. We are at least \$141 million or \$142 million short in those areas, and I think that that is a tragedy.

So no wonder the farmers came to the Legislature today to make their point in busloads across the province of Manitoba. I commend those who came all the way from the Pierson and Melita area today and Virden area in buses from my constituency alone to be here to voice their concerns because, as you well know, Arthur-Virden is one of the fastest growing cattle areas of this province. We have got more feedlots and more back-grounding going on than ever before. It is certainly a growing industry in our area and we very much need to continue to make sure that No. 1, we get the American border open, and, 2, any compensation that might be in place for these individuals is of a nature that does not just pay the person who is marketing slaughter animals into a slaughtering plant directly but also includes those who have fat animals sold at auction marts that would go on indirectly into the slaughtering process as well as the cow-calf and backgrounding industries that we have in western Manitoba and indeed all of Manitoba and being impacted by this.

Even though the mad cow was not found in our province, it very much directly affects all of those other producers here in Manitoba. The biggest concern I have is that this Government, once they found out that this may not cost them a lot, if in fact they go by the letter of the law in paying only slaughter animals to a slaughter house, then they came outside and said, well, it does not matter, we will go with 60-40 because it might end up costing them less than \$1 million. So that only leaves them \$141 million short in the rest of the province. That is my concern. I will close by saying that again the most important issue is to get the border open.

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Conservation):** First of all I want, in this my first opportunity to address this new Legislature, to welcome all the new members. I think it is very appropriate that we have decided today, in quite an extraordinary way, to combine in this case several very important parts of the start of any Legislature in its life with the election of the Speaker, the Throne Speech, consideration of the Budget which was previously passed by the former Legislature, but I consider this to be a very important issue as well. I think it speaks to the commitment of members of this Legislature that we are debating this today because this is a very critical issue throughout Manitoba. When I say throughout Manitoba, it certainly impacts directly in terms of people in rural Manitoba, the producers, many of whom were here at the Legislature today, but we also have to be aware that has all sorts of implications in terms of the value-added chain throughout this province, the feedlots, you name it. People are hurting because of the situation in terms of BSE. I want to put that clearly on the record.

I also hope that we will be able to be relatively co-operative on this. I note the variation in tone by members opposite.

\*(18:10)

My view on this, by the way, is we should be taking a common position with the federal government, we should be taking a common position with the United States. That position should be very clear. There has been one reported case in Alberta, one isolated case.

I think there are some real questions with the American treatment of this, whether it has gone



beyond natural caution. I can understand the U.S. having concern about BSE, but you know this is not the situation we faced, say, in the United Kingdom a number of years ago, quite significantly different. There are all sorts of precedents in Europe, for example, of other countries that have had limited, isolated cases in terms of BSE which have not led to the total shutdown of the livestock industry in those areas.

I think it is important to note that in Canada we need some greater recognition, in this case the continental nature of the livestock industry. I would not expect in Europe someone to be shutting down production, say, in Greece or southern Italy during the BSE situation in Britain, or extending a ban elsewhere in terms of export any more than I would hope that Americans would understand a significant difference.

I will tell you the absurdity of this, Mr. Acting Speaker. I talked to somebody today who is involved with a company that markets caribou from Nunavut. They are being impacted by the U.S. ban. Caribou from Nunavut, I do not even know if there are any cows up there, but certainly caribou in Nunavut are not at risk in terms of BSE. So I want to put that on the record.

I also want to say, Mr. Acting Speaker, that I am a little bit disappointed for some of the members opposite who have taken a more partisan note in this. I appreciate this is the place for it, this is the place to have that discussion, but it was not that long ago we were into an election campaign and I remember the focus of the members opposite. If you look at their Budget you can say they actually talked about cutting for this unrealistic tax promise they made, cutting areas, freezing areas like education, a 1% increase for health care. There was no line item in there for emergency assistance in terms of agriculture, or BSE. When they were out on their tax cut agenda, which was not supported by the public of Manitoba, you can read their documents. They released it just before the election.

We are talking about not even a matter of weeks ago the same Conservatives were not

going around with cheques. They were going around with axes ready to go after public services. I always think it is important that people get a bit of a reality check. When you are in Government, the reality check is called the Budget. You have to come out with a Budget and we have come out with a Budget.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

Now they came out with their Budget just a matter of weeks ago and there was no line item in there for the kind of things they are talking about today. I will say it is very easy for members opposite to try, when they have an audience as they did earlier today, to pretend that somehow this was such a priority for them that they would go even further in terms of this. That was not the case just a matter of weeks ago. If they want to get into the partisan side, I would suggest they talk to people out there, because the producers I talked to earlier today, what they expect from the Manitoba Legislature, I believe, is unity on this. The first priority has to be to get the ban removed. It is an isolated case. It does not affect the Manitoba situation in terms of livestock. We have taken every precaution possible. That is the first step.

The second step has to say to the government—I can speak because I was formerly a minister of disaster assistance, for members opposite—I think it is equivalent to a disaster. We have acknowledged that. It is somewhat different in a sense that traditionally you are used to direct damage of property. You can call it what you want, but if you are a producer or you are impacted by this right now, it is a disaster. I think that has to be the second level.

I will put on the table once again this is the kind of responsibility of the federal government. Every time we get divided we allow the federal government to conquer because they expect us to be in here bickering back and forth. That is why I do not want to see this partisan tone. We should have a united position with the federal government that, you bet, it is equivalent to the ice storm or indeed some of the other circumstances we have faced.

I wanted to put that on the record that I support the efforts of the producers and many

people involved. I want to say, as I conclude my remarks on this, we should take a united position with the U.S., with the federal government. Let us not get into some of the partisan stuff we have seen here today. Let us support the producers, let us support the cattle industry and the many people that make their living from it. Mr. Speaker, let us have one united voice from the Manitoba Legislature. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** I am pleased to be able to rise and to just put a few comments on the record specific to BSE and the disaster that it has caused many of my producers within my constituency. Yes, the previous speaker, the minister was indicating that we were playing to an audience out there. You know, they do not see it that way. When you are sitting out there with your livelihood at stake, literally, that is totally different. That is not playing with emotions; that is playing with reality.

I have got several dozen feedlot operators within my constituency. This is their livelihood. They have diversified. They have gone into the feedlot industry. Again the previous speaker I think fails to see the importance that is specific to agriculture within the area. This is a closely intertwined organization which impacts on all of us. Let me just go through some of the steps here.

First of all, the feedlot operator buys the product that he is fattening and getting ready for market. He buys that from the cow-calf operator. The cow-calf, and all of these by the way are buying feed from the local feed mills, so they are dependent on the feed that is sold to the feedlot guys, to the cow-calf operators, but then it goes further.

This is something that I think we are losing sight of, the impact that it has on the local businesses within the community.

You have got the car dealerships. I talked to some of the dealerships out there right now. Whereas in previous years before the embargo was put on specific to meat going south of the border, they were selling product. That has changed. That has dried up. That has changed because the producers have no idea what is going to be taking place within the next little while. They are hopeful that this will change.

Yes, I do agree that the major issue right now is that the American border, the U.S. border be opened up so that the feedlot, those who are selling their product, their cattle can move them to the packers in the south. However, that has not taken place, and so consequently it is our responsibility, it is the responsibility of government to try and alleviate some of the problems that are out there with those who are being severely impacted this way to be able to bring them to that next step, that they do not have to at this point in time declare bankruptcy.

Believe me, that will happen. They cannot keep on pouring money into these animals which are decreasing in value as time goes on. That is a part of our debate here today. Yes, it is to show the agricultural community out there, not only the agricultural community, but I would venture to say all Manitobans, the seriousness of what has taken place. So it is our responsibility as MLAs, as legislators to do everything in our power to go out there and to try and open up that border.

Now, the other comment that the previous speaker made was the fact that, oh, yes, you were talking about it is the federal government's responsibility. I want to remind them who said previous to the '99 election that they were going to have this great, wonderful relationship with the federal government. Well, I fail to see as to what has happened there. Where is this great, wonderful relationship? If that were the case, this would be resolved. It would be resolved very quickly where they would be able to get some of the funding to those who need it most.

So I have a real problem with some of the comments that were made previous to this. I think that we are losing sight of the fact that it is the producers who are being severely impacted by the problem that we have here today.

I need to mention a few things. I was appalled by the members from the Liberal Party who indicated that there were other pressing issues besides the BSE. *[interjection]* Well, someone made the comment, select a seat, I think it was. I just feel at this point in time, maybe that is a real issue for them and I will not minimize that. However, to take valuable time when we have got producers out here, producers who maybe, maybe some of those even

happened to vote Liberal previously, to have that kind of a show take place within this Chamber when the essence, the bottom line is the BSE, the closure of the U.S. border and how can we do our best in order to make sure that that border opens up? That is the debate that needs to take place in this Chamber here today.

\* (18:20)

So, Mr. Speaker, again I would implore all of us to do whatever we can, whether we are Government, whether we are not Government, do whatever we can in order to restore that relationship with the U.S. in order to be able to open up the borders, that we can market our product south of the border.

Mr. Speaker, the other thing is I have had opportunity to speak to some of the packers who are requiring our product in the U.S., and they would love to buy our product. They are at this point in time needing to dismiss some of their own workers because they do not have the work that they require in order to keep their plants going. So it is not that there is not a market out there; it has boiled down to this one animal that was found in Alberta, and it is upon that finding that they have closed the border. So I believe it is imperative that all of us band together, that we see the gravity of it, the seriousness of this situation and that we continue to lobby the buyers of our product, and in this case it is the U.S., to lobby them to open up the border, that we, in fact, will be able to move our product to their packers.

The other side I want to talk about is the compensation package, the way it has been set up. This is not something, in talking to the feedlot gentlemen, that they can really work with at this time, because they need to be able to sell the product that they have that is marketable right now, and they cannot find a market. So, consequently, not being able to find a market does not even allow them to access the payments that would be out there, the program that has been set up. So it is a faulty program. There needs to be some sort of a different formula reinstated which will allow them to be able to get some compensation, some money so that they can, in fact, remain in business.

The other comment that was made this afternoon, and it is something I think that needs

to be looked at, and that is, is there an opportunity for the Province to buy up those marketable animals and then use them as food aid? Is there that opportunity? I am not sure that our minister, that the Department of Agriculture has explored that, and, first of all, if they have, have they suggested this to the federal government? I think there are all kinds of areas that need to be pursued because we need to come to the assistance of our producers as quickly as possible.

So, Mr. Speaker, I will not belabour the issue. The biggest thing is, No. 1, that this Government, that this minister, that this Premier (Mr. Doer), that they work hard at relooking at the formula that is out there for a compensation package. They need to look at that and introduce something that is fair, that is equitable. That needs to be No. 1, and No. 2, continue to work at opening up the border which will allow our producers to move their product which is ready to go and which, by the way, right now as the days go on, each day that progresses they lose value. So we need to in some way be able to open this up, so that they can move it out there expeditiously and be able to start to recoup some of the losses that have been created.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will sit down. Thank you, again, for this opportunity to speak to this very serious issue.

**Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale):** Mr. Speaker, firstly, I just want to congratulate you at your re-election as Speaker in this House. I know that your wisdom and your experience will come to the forefront as you proceed through the legislative session over the next short while.

I also want to welcome the new members into the Chamber. It is a way of being indoctrinated actually into the speaking order of some of the things that we are talking about today.

I think it is something that is very, very appropriate in the sense of talking about this BSE outbreak. As a urban member of the Legislature I do not have any direct farmers, feedlot operators or cow-calf operations in my constituency that I can directly relate to in the sense of having phone calls from constituents in regard to some of the problems they are facing. I

know my rural colleagues not only on my side of the House but also on the Government side would be getting direct contact, I imagine, on a daily basis with some of the untenable situations that some of the cattle producers and the related industries are facing right now.

We had the opportunity to meet with a group of cattle producers, the transportation industry, I believe the feedlot operators and some of the other people who are involved with the cattle industry here in Manitoba. They came and made a presentation to our caucus. For me, it was quite enlightening as to the amount of money that is involved in this industry here in Manitoba. I think as an urban member of the Legislature, sometimes you do not realize that there is a very, very significant amount of reliance on the rural economy not only for the economy in the rural area but also the related spin-off industries that are located in Winnipeg here.

The trucking industry, the supply industry, the manufacturing industry that supplies the fabrication for cattle operations throughout Manitoba, a lot of it is operated out of Winnipeg. Those industries are all suffering because of the border being shut down because of the one cow that was found in Alberta in regard to the BSE or the mad cow disease that unfortunately crippled this industry, not only in Manitoba but right across Canada. So there is a tremendous amount of anxiety in the community as to how and when this is going to resolve itself.

The biggest thing is naturally getting the border back open, getting the border back open not only for export into the United States but into the other countries that have also shut their borders to the Canadian operation of our cattle industry. I believe a lot of it goes to Japan also. So it is something I think that should be debated in this House. It is something where we should be unanimous in our condemnation of the border being closed and try to lobby to get it open. I think it is something that we should all be very concerned about.

At the end of the week, last Friday I believe it was, I ran into a person that I had not seen for quite awhile. I remember that her husband was involved with the auction business in regard to cattle. As in normal conversation, I said, well,

how is this affecting the operation? This was on a Friday. She said, well, under normal circumstances, Thursday, which was yesterday, we should have had about 1500 cattle go through the auction ring. She said they did not have any, but it looked like they may have 40 today, which was last Friday. So that is how much the number of cattle has gone down in going through the auction. There are no cattle moving to the United States. So it is something that has to be addressed, in a sense, not only in the long term but in the short term. In the short term and in the immediate future, the thing that should be lobbied for is the opening of the border, so that the cattle and the industry can have access to the market down there.

It is millions and billions of dollars to the Canadian economy. The spin-off is something that is tremendously of interest in regard to getting the industry in all areas back into a competitive position. There are alternatives to look at, and one of them is possibly the Farm Credit Corporation Canada, which lends many, many dollars to the rural economy throughout not only Manitoba but throughout western Canada. There is possibly availability of the Farm Credit Corporation lending money to the cattle operations to get them through this crisis.

If you look at the Canadian Wheat Board, I believe the Canadian Wheat Board already offers interest-free loans for grain farmers in wheat and barley, so there is the possibility of looking at the Canadian Wheat Board maybe getting involved, because it is a national crisis in one sector of the industry.

As was put to us in the meeting that we had with the group from the industry, this is a crippler. This can cripple and decimate the industry right here in Canada to a degree where it could be very, very hard for it to even come back.

\*(18:30)

We are talking about, as was mentioned, one cow. There is tremendous difference about the association of mad cow disease that was in Europe and in Britain a few years ago where there was the human consumption of beef that had the disease in it. Unfortunately, there were

some related deaths with some people that developed this disease from the cattle.

Here in Canada, the isolation and the scientific precautions that kicked in with the realization that one cow had the disease and the destruction of over 2700 related animals that had contact is an indication that the system of control and checks and balances is in place here in Canada to make sure that this disease does not spread throughout the cattle industry. It was implemented, it was proven effective and yet the border still remains closed. It is something that I guess was related to and alluded to by some of my colleagues and the colleagues, I believe, around the House here is that possibly this is retribution. Possibly this is retribution between the political decisions of a Prime Minister and situations that arose in regards to the unfortunate war in Iraq and that, but it is something that has to be resolved.

There has to be a strong delegation made to the United States to try to reopen the border. It is encouraging that Premier Klein has decided to make a trek down to the United States to talk to Vice President Dick Cheney I would encourage the Premier (Mr. Doer) to lend his full-hearted support towards the Premier of Alberta to make sure that his views are known and that the views of this side and the unanimity of the House is that we are very, very concerned about the cattle industry. The fact that if there is any way that we as Manitobans or he as First Minister of this province can lend the support, then I would highly recommend it.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you very much for allowing me the few moments to put my thoughts on record regarding this. I think that as has been mentioned, it is something that we have to be very, very cognizant of and it is an industry that we have to protect here in Manitoba because there are literally thousands of jobs and millions and millions of revenue that is involved. Thank you very much.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker, first of all I would like to congratulate all members who got elected into this Chamber. I would like to congratulate you personally on becoming our Speaker again, being elected our

Speaker and look forward to the next years with you in the Chair.

Mr. Speaker, when we met with the industry last week, there was a quote that one of the representatives made and said that, "This is a industry in crisis," and that is really what we are debating here today. The main problem that we have insofar as this industry is concerned is that the United States, one of our largest markets, has closed its border. What we really need more than anything else, is for the borders to be open.

What it speaks to is the fact that we have at this point in time in the history between Canada and the United States very strained and poor relations between Canada and the United States. In fact, I think it is just incredulous that our main foreign affairs spokesperson, the main individual doing our negotiating, is Ralph Klein, one of the premiers who is going to the United States and has at least one of the channels open to the Vice President of the United States, Dick Cheney.

It is very unfortunate that we have premiers having to go over and run what is basically a federal jurisdiction and deal with foreign policy. What concerns me even more is where our Premier is on this position. We have our Premier, who had all kinds of time to travel to Minnesota titillating with "Body Slam Ventura" at the taxpayers' expense. The Premier spent all kinds of taxpayers' dollars visiting in the United States, yet where is the payback? When we start calling the chips back, where is the payback in any of this? Where have the tax dollars gone? There was supposed to be some kind of an opening of communications. That is what the Premier was claiming. None of that has panned out.

The only individual that seems to have any capital left in the United States that can actually go over and do something for our beef industry is Premier Ralph Klein, and it speaks to how far the relations have deteriorated between Canada and the United States. That is shameful, because in all of this there is a human cost. I was able to go outside and speak to many of the beef producers in my constituency. The one individual who, I will not use his name, said to me, Ron, I am at the end of my line of credit. I cannot go any further. If this does not come to an

end, I am going to lose my operation. That is a real serious problem across this province.

I have a call on my desk. There is a disposal cost now. Again, keep in mind that the farmers are at the end of their line of credit. They either have to bury the cattle on their property or it now costs \$50 a head, I believe, to have them picked up. The whole problem with all of this is there is no end in sight.

The question that the farmers are asking is what are they to do. Are we prepared to see the end of the cattle industry in our province? Are we willing to lose our entire cattle industry?

My suggestion to our Premier, our Prime Minister is that either we pay to keep our farmers going right now or we will pay to keep our financial institutions healthy so that they can handle the costs of the bankrupt farmers and the farmers that are going to go into receivership who have an awful lot of money in lines of credit. We have to be very careful because this could spill over to our financial institutions and it can actually put some of our smaller financial institutions into difficulty.

This will be a very severe hit to Manitoba, first of all our farmers. It could be the end of our very strong beef industry. It can mean severe losses in our trucking industry, packing plants in Canada, to some small degree what is going on here in Manitoba, financial institutions, ancillary businesses. This will have an impact on health care, education and all the other departments in our Government because the beef industry pays a lot of tax dollars, as does the trucking industry and all the other ancillary industries.

The federal government must become engaged. This Brezhnev era of politics must come to an end. We now have what I call the comatose approach of this Prime Minister. That has to stop. We have more attention paid to how political parties will be funded at a federal level than we have paid to the severe crisis facing our country and facing our province. Instead we have what the Soviet Union had, what they used to call the Brezhnev era of politics. It is the decline of a nation, and it has got to end. We need action now and we need the borders to be open.

Our Premier must, and I speak to our Premier today, we must stop the buck-passing routine that has now become our Premier's standard fare. We must do something for our farmers and do it now, work with our neighbours to the south, and we must open the borders. In the meantime, not just the federal package, but we must push for more aid, and if it means that we as a Province dip into the rainy day fund, that is what it is there for, before we have a catastrophe the likes of which we have never seen in this province.

If we do not do something, we will pay now or we will pay later. It is time to open the border. It is time to help our beef producers, because, Mr. Speaker, as that spokesperson said, it is a crisis in the industry. If we do not do something and we do not do something soon it will be the end of that beef industry. I do not think we want to go there. I call on the federal government, I call on our Premier, do something and do it now.

\* (18:40)

**Hon. Scott Smith (Minister of Transportation and Government Services):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to get up and put a few words on record here today on an issue that I think everyone in the House here feels is quite rightfully so an emerging issue and an important issue to all of Manitobans.

First, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. Speaker, on reappointment, all members in the House that are here, both new and past members, for being elected and back into the House.

The members, I think, quite eloquently from both sides have expressed views that we are hearing from all Manitobans. Certainly we are hearing from the industry and folks that are in the industry.

One thing that is certain is that this is of proportions that we have never seen in the cattle industry here in Manitoba before. We have looked on this and I think it was eloquently said by a number of speakers here today that when this was first addressed, the BSE, the mad cow disease identified in Alberta in one of the cattle there certainly I think it was diligent of other nations and certainly diligent of basically the

different provinces to make sure that it was addressed and addressed quickly.

That was done within a period of a few weeks. It was done, quite frankly, with forensic science and basically the establishment of scientific tests that we have to use comparables and to backtrack and go through all the animals, some 1800 animals that were tested that had been anywhere close to the animal in question. It was some time ago, it was two and three weeks ago that in fact we had proven that there is no outbreak, there are no other animals affected, that it is quite frankly quarantined and it is basically a one-time issue that has been dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, it has been said many times in here that the border should have been opened some time ago. I think we all agree to that. Certainly the member opposite from Springfield quite often gets quite confused in his intellectual lack of resources in some of his blather. He quite frankly spoke about the policies of Alberta and running down to the States and basically his Republican views. In fact, it might serve him well to be an Albertan, but the Premier had dealt with Premier Klein, had dealt with the other premiers from across Canada and had established a communication with our province, with the other provinces and had had a meeting established down in the States. If our Premier had felt that he wanted to go against the wishes of Premier Klein and the advice of the other premiers and Premier Klein, that is what the member from Springfield seems to be ensuing in some of his comments.

Quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, to have a 48-inch chest and a size 3 head is not probably the best idea to deal with issues. In fact if you look at what is best for producers and look at what is best for our province and certainly the provinces, the west and Ontario that have a large cattle market—in fact some of the members had mentioned about one-seventh of the agriculture production in the province of Manitoba or 13 percent or 14 percent, it is probably quite close to that. We know the impacts in the industry. We know the impacts on the individual producers. Certainly, they are being dealt with in the best of heart both by a minister of agriculture that had taken this issue on right from day one, Mr. Speaker, and in fact a premier that had taken this

issue on right from day one with the other western premiers, with the premiers from across Canada and taken it to the federal government.

Now, the federal government's responsibility is there and it should be there. In fact a member opposite had spoken, so did the member from Thompson on the responsibility in disaster assistance that the federal government should recognize in the time of crisis. This is, quite frankly, when you listen to producers today and when we were out having our barbecue today, is in a proportion that has never been seen before in the industry when they can lose thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars per week just on feed on cattle that are finished already, feeder cattle that are completed and basically no market to go out to. We do have to open up that border as quickly and as soon as possible.

We all hope for the best. Certainly, Premier Klein and some of the initiatives he has in going down to the States, but the other ministers had certainly agreed with his view and the views that when he does go down and he does have the conversation down there, not to go on and go down there uninvited to cause problems. That would be just a lack of diligence on anyone's part.

The case that was diagnosed has been completed. It is three weeks overdue. In fact it is time to open up the border when you are seeing the price drop from \$1.05 down to \$0.72 and now starting to reduce and the costs going up for the producers. It does not take long to figure out the federal government does need to take immediate action on this. They do need to take action from their agriculture minister. I know our minister, as recently as the last few days, has been in contact with the federal minister, again relaying the concerns we have had from the producers here in Manitoba, relaying the concerns we are hearing from the smaller communities throughout all of Manitoba, in fact right into Winnipeg here where we are seeing producers who do not have the dollars to spend on commodities and purchasing power that is being reduced in every single community in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the immediate action by our Ag Minister, the immediate action by this

Government, the action by this Premier (Mr. Doer) in working with the other premiers right across Canada, is well recognized. It is time for the federal government to knock down the wall, open up the border and get our products back in where they should be, clean products into the United States.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** I am going to take this opportunity just to give a very quick thank you to some very special people. In particular my wife who has been very supportive for many, many years. Even the kids were quite involved in this particular election and I appreciate the support coming from my family, as I am sure all members appreciate support.

Another critical person, you always, as politicians will know, realize if you start saying thank-yous, you are going to miss a lot of people, so I am just going to leave it at my campaign manager, that being Pablito Sarinas, offering to him my greatest appreciation.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, congratulations to you on your election as Speaker. I was actually quite pleased when I first heard about it when you were elected back in '99 or something of that nature. *[interjection]* Do not go there. Again, I extend my congratulations to you. I know the member who has been a very good friend of actually my family, Mr. Santos and his wife, where the member and his wife have been attending events which we have been over the years, even the years in which I was not an MLA, it was always a pleasure to see them. I did want to extend my personal congratulations to you.

A special vote of appreciation for, whether it is the security people, the people at the Clerk's table, Hansard, who has to decipher all the baffle-gab at times—

**An Honourable Member:** Speak for yourself, Kevin.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** —that maybe gets espoused, and one might want to speak for themselves at times. I will choose not to at this particular time.

Mr. Speaker, having said all of that there are three issues which I was wanting to comment on.

**An Honourable Member:** You did not thank Jon Gerrard.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** There is the cross-border. There is the how are we supporting our farmers, and there are other issues.

The Premier (Mr. Doer) makes me want to comment on one other issue and I guess I should have put that right at the very top. That very top issue is what we had brought up a little bit earlier. I know people do not necessarily look at it if you were in our shoes, but trust me it is not the easiest time and you never, ever know. So, having said that, you never, ever really know. Take my word for it.

Getting back to the cross-border issue, there is no doubt many things which we can do collectively and individually, in particular the Premier of our province, in terms of lobbying Ottawa, lobbying other premiers, lobbying the United States. We like to encourage the Premier to do just that, to do what he can in terms of taking the lead in representing our province and trying to effectively lobby to the best of his abilities. Having said that, I think what I would like to focus some attention on is how are we in the province of Manitoba as legislators supporting our farmers?

I was over at the party offices the other day to meet with a farmer. This particular farmer has a great number of cattle. He talked and raised it. I told him I might not necessarily have all the experience in dealing with this particular issue, so I sat, and he was patient in explaining. I thought maybe I would share some of the things he told me to keep in mind when today came about.

\* (18:50)

When he looked at it, he had to sell a bull. The bull would have sold for 80 cents live weight a pound prior to the mad cow disease scare or BSE. That would have been at the Winnipeg livestock auction market. Well, he ended up post-BSE getting 80 cents dressed weight a pound. That is virtually a 50% loss. Unfortunately, he was fortunate because he was able at least to get rid of his bull.



The other issue he talked about was the range cows. This is really where it applies to a great number of our farmers. It is interesting, he had indicated—these are numbers that have been provided to me from someone who has some experience—that you are looking at anywhere from a \$1.10 pre-BSE to \$1.15 per pound on live weight.

Today when I posed the question—because he kind of just skipped over it—well, what are you able to get today, I was really surprised in terms of the response. Today you cannot even get rid of that meat. At least from his perspective it was just something you could not get rid of.

So the natural question comes: Well, if you cannot even get rid of the meat, what then do you do? He says, well, you have a choice. You can put a range cow onto the range. You can keep it in the feedlot. You start looking at the costs of doing that. He talked about the feedlots somewhere between \$1.50 to \$2.00 a day. If you have an animal that has been in a feedlot, after a certain point in time, as he explained to me, you have hit a point of no return where the quality of the meat starts to deteriorate.

I put the simple question to him: Look, we are coming into session today. This is going to be a major issue, as it should be. What would you like me to raise inside the Chamber?

He did not comment on the federal government. He commented on the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk). The issue he said to me is ask the Minister of Agriculture where the applications are today. Can you give me an application? That is what this particular individual said, who does not live in the constituency of Inkster but took the time to get in touch with me to express what he felt was important, that the Liberal Party needed to ensure that people in this Chamber were, in fact, hearing today.

I have not, because of time and resources—that is an extra little plug, Mr. Speaker—had the confirmation from the Minister of Agriculture, but I do know at times there are people who are listening in to what is being debated. In particular, I trust individuals from the Department of Agriculture are listening in.

I would suggest to you that it is not acceptable if that is, in fact, the case. If we have some provinces that are already at the table and helping their farmers, one has then to ask the question of why are we not being more supportive, doing what we can at the local level in order to support our farmers. I was, I must admit, quite surprised when I had heard that.

On behalf of this particular Manitoban, I would put forward that question. The moment the Minister of Agriculture actually does have an application, if she would be so kind to either send it to my constituency office or to my office here, I would very much appreciate it.

I see my time is quickly winding up.

**An Honourable Member:** Oh.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** My thoughts exactly.

The other comment that we got involved in is what we are going to do with all this beef. Are there other things that we could be doing? The first thing that came to my mind, Mr. Speaker, and it would be great to see more debate inside this Chamber on this particular issue, is: What are you going to be doing with a lot of that potential excess beef? You know what, maybe there is an issue in terms of human aid. There are many countries throughout the world, there are even places in the province of Manitoba, as the Premier knows, there are still food banks in Manitoba today. Maybe there are issues that are related to human aid. Mr. Speaker himself in the Point Douglas area, throughout the province, there is a high demand for good quality Grade A beef, and we have it here in the province of Manitoba.

That is why I think it is long overdue for us. We will let the Premier and others go ahead and continue to lobby in Ottawa. What we have to really focus more attention on inside this Chamber, Mr. Speaker, is what we can do today to try to alleviate the plight of those who are raising these animals and providing beef not only to our province but abroad.

With those very few words, I look forward to the next opportunity to be able to speak. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** Any more speakers? Seeing none, according to Rule 36(4), the debate on the matter of urgent public importance concludes without a vote. This should take care of the matter.

\* \* \*

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Would you please canvass the House to see if there is leave to present the report of the Committee of Seven Members?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave for the report of the Committee of Seven Members to be presented? [Agreed]

### PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

#### Special Committee of Seven Persons First Report

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Chairperson of the Special Committee of Seven Persons):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the first report of the Special Committee of Seven Persons.

**An Honourable Member:** Dispense.

**Mr. Speaker:** Dispense.

#### AGRICULTURE AND FOOD (11)

*Hon. Mr. Ashton, Messrs. Bjornson, Derkach, Dewar, Maguire, Nevakshonoff, Penner, Hon. Mr. Smith, Messrs. Struthers, Tweed, Hon. Ms. Wowchuk*

#### CROWN CORPORATIONS (11)

*Messrs. Cummings, Jha, Ms. Korzeniowski, Messrs. Loewen, Maloway, Ms. Melnick, Mr. Reimer, Hon. Mr. Selinger, Mr. Schellenberg, Mrs. Stefanson, Mr. Struthers*

#### HUMAN RESOURCES (11)

*Mr. Aglugub, Ms. Allan, Messrs. Altemeyer, Goertzen, Hawranik, Ms. Korzeniowski, Hon. Ms. McGifford, Mrs. Mitchelson, Messrs. Reid, Rondeau, Schuler*

#### INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS (11)

*Mr. Aglugub, Ms. Brick, Mr. Cummings, Mrs. Mitchelson, Messrs. Nevakshonoff, Reimer,*

*Rondeau, Schellenberg, Schuler, Hon. Mr. Smith, Hon. Ms. Wowchuk*

#### JUSTICE (11)

*Messrs. Aglugub, Dewar, Goertzen, Hawranik, Hon. Mr. Mackintosh, Mr. Martindale, Ms. Oswald, Messrs. Penner, Santos, Schellenberg, Schuler*

#### LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS (11)

*Messrs. Bjornson, Dewar, Hawranik, Hon. Mr. Mackintosh, Messrs. Maloway, Martindale, Mrs. Mitchelson, Messrs. Nevakshonoff, Reimer, Rondeau, Tweed*

#### PRIVATE BILLS (11)

*Ms. Allan, Ms. Brick, Messrs. Dyck, Maguire, Maloway, Martindale, Penner, Reimer, Rondeau, Schellenberg, Struthers*

#### PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (11)

*Ms. Allan, Mrs. Driedger, Hon. Mr. Gerrard, Messrs. Loewen, Maguire, Maloway, Ms. Oswald, Messrs. Reid, Reimer, Rondeau, Hon. Mr. Selinger*

#### RULES OF THE HOUSE (11)

*Hon. Mr. Ashton, Messrs. Cummings, Derkach, Dewar, Hon. Mr. Hickes, Ms. Korzeniowski, Mr. Lamoureux, Hon. Mr. Mackintosh, Messrs. Martindale, Santos, Tweed*

#### SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (11)

*Hon. Mr. Caldwell, Mr. Cummings, Mrs. Driedger, Messrs. Maguire, Maloway, Martindale, Hon. Ms. McGifford, Ms. Melnick, Hon. Mr. Sale, Messrs. Schellenberg, Tweed*

#### STATUTORY REGULATIONS AND ORDERS (11)

*Ms. Allan, Messrs. Altemeyer, Cummings, Derkach, Dewar, Jha, Ms. Korzeniowski, Mr. Rocan, Hon. Mr. Sale, Mr. Tweed, Hon. Ms. Wowchuk*

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Mr.

Chomiak), that the report of the committee be received.

**Motion agreed to.**

\* \* \*

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Estimates sequence.

Mr. Speaker, would you please canvass the House to see if there is leave to waive rules 31(2), 31(3) regarding the timing for submission and prioritization of private members' resolutions, with the understanding that the time frames for submission and prioritization will be determined at the discretion of the House leaders?

**Mr. Speaker:** Is there leave to waive rules 31(2) and 31(3) regarding the timing for submission and prioritization of private members' resolutions, with the understanding that the time

frames for submission and prioritization will be determined at the discretion of the House leaders? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, there has been determination and discussion with the Opposition that the House will return on September 8.

I move, seconded by the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach), that the House do now adjourn.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been announced that, according to agreement, the House would return on September 8.

The motion reads that it has been moved by the honourable Government House Leader, seconded by the honourable Member for Russell, that this house do now adjourn. Agreed? *[Agreed]*

So, the hour being 7 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned at the call of the Speaker.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 23, 2003

CONTENTS

<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>		Murray	19
		Wowchuk	21
<b>Speech from the Throne</b>	3	Derkach	23
Bjornson	10	Nevakshonoff	25
Brick	12	Eichler	27
Murray	13	Struthers	28
Gerrard	14	Hawranik	30
		Bjornson	31
<b>Matter of Privilege</b>		Rocan	32
		Goertzen	34
Seating Arrangement		Tweed	36
Gerrard	5	Lemieux	38
Mackintosh	6	Cummings	39
Derkach	7	Faurschou	41
Lamoureux	7	Caldwell	43
		Taillieu	43
<b>Introduction of Bills</b>		Maguire	44
		Ashton	46
Bill 1—An Act Respecting the		Dyck	48
Administration of Oaths of Office		Reimer	49
Doer	9	Schuler	51
		Smith	52
<b>Reinstatement of Budget</b>	15	Lamoureux	54
<b>Matter of Urgent Public Importance</b>		<b>Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees</b>	
Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy		Special Committee of Seven Persons	
Penner	15	First Report	
Doer	17	Mackintosh	56