

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

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable George Hickes  
Speaker*

**Vol. LV No. 46 - 1:30 p.m., Monday, May 31, 2004**

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

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
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, Hon	Riel	N.D.P.
VACANT	Minto	
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, Hon.	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, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
VACANT	Turtle Mountain	
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Monday, May 31, 2004**

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

*PRAYERS*

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**PETITIONS**

**Highway 227**

**Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition.

It is unacceptable for the residents of Manitoba to travel the unsafe gravel roads of Highway 227 in the constituencies of Lakeside and Portage la Prairie.

Inclement weather can make Highway 227 treacherous to all drivers.

Allowing better access to Highway 227 would ease the flow of traffic on the Trans-Canada Highway.

Residences along Highway 227 are not as accessible to emergency services due to the nature of the current condition of the roadway.

The condition of these gravel roads can cause serious damage to all vehicles, which is unacceptable.

Residents of Manitoba deserve a better rural highway infrastructure.

We petition the Manitoba Legislative Assembly as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation and Government Services to consider having Highway 227 paved from the junction of highways 248 and 227 all the way to Highway 16, the Yellowhead route.

To request the Premier of Manitoba to consider supporting said initiatives to ensure the safety of all Manitobans and all Canadians who travel along Manitoba highways.

Serving on behalf of Tim Hoepfner, Ron Cantin, Peter Hoepfner, Bob Mohr and others.

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

**Alzheimer's Disease**

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition. These are the reasons for this petition:

Alzheimer's is a debilitating disease.

Cholinesterase inhibitors are known to slow or even prevent the progression of Alzheimer's.

The provincial government asked for the development of an Alzheimer's strategy in 2000 and was presented with nine recommendations in 2002, none of which has yet been implemented.

In the absence of a provincial Alzheimer's strategy, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority put in place a policy in November 2003 whereby Alzheimer's patients entering personal care homes are being weaned from certain Alzheimer medications in a move that the WRHA's vice-president of long-term care has referred to as a financial necessity.

The administrative costs of the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority have more than tripled since 1999, to a total of more than \$16 million a year.

In a move that amounts to two-tier medicine, the families of Alzheimer's sufferers in personal care homes may request that the drugs continue to be delivered at the family's expense.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) to ensure that his attempts to balance his department's finances are not at the expense of the health and well-being of seniors and other vulnerable Manitobans suffering from this debilitating disease.

To urge the Minister of Health to consider reversing his decision to deny Alzheimer's patients in personal care homes access to certain medications.

To request the Minister of Health to consider implementing a provincial Alzheimer's strategy.

Signed by Kris Turner, Sandra Pieri, Cheryl Doyle and others.

\* (13:35)

### **Minimum Sitting Days for Legislative Assembly**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

The Manitoba Legislature sat for only 37 days in 2003.

Manitobans expect their government to be accountable, and the number of sitting days has a direct impact on the issue of public accountability.

Manitobans expect their elected officials to be provided the opportunity to be able to hold the government accountable.

The Legislative Assembly provides the best forum for all MLAs to debate and ask questions of the government, and it is critical that all MLAs be provided the time needed in order for them to cover constituent and party duties.

Establishing a minimum number of sitting days could prevent the government of the day from limiting the rights of opposition members from being able to ask questions.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba to consider recognizing the need to sit for a minimum of 80 days in any given calendar year.

Signed by Arsenia Pacete, Perla Tibay and Ellen Lee.

### **Proposed PLA–Floodway**

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Province of Manitoba has tabled legislation in the Legislature that may result in the \$660-million expansion of the Red River Floodway by the summer of 2005.

The Premier of Manitoba plans to subject all work related to the project to a Project Labour Agreement (PLA).

The proposed PLA would force all employees on the project to belong to a union.

Approximately 95 percent of heavy construction companies in Manitoba are currently non-unionized.

The Manitoba Heavy Construction Association has indicated that the forced unionization of all employees may increase the costs of the project by \$65 million.

The chair of B.C.'s 2010 Construction Leaders Taskforce has stated, "Major industrial projects built under project labour agreements from the energy sector in Alberta to off-shore development on the East Coast have repeatedly incurred cost overruns, labour disruptions and delays."

Organizations including the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Merit Contractors Association of Manitoba, the Winnipeg Construction Association, the Construction Association of Rural Manitoba and the Canadian Construction Association have publicly opposed the Premier's plan to turn the floodway expansion project into a union-only worksite.

Manitobans deserve an open and fair competition that protects taxpayers from unnecessary costs and respects workers' democratic choice.

Manitobans support the right of any company, both union and non-union, to participate in the expansion of the Red River Floodway.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Premier of Manitoba to consider ending his government's forced unionization plan of companies involved with the Red River Floodway expansion.

To request the Premier of Manitoba to consider entering into discussions with business, construction and labour groups to ensure any qualified company and worker, regardless of their union status, is afforded the opportunity to bid and work on the floodway expansion project.

Signed G. Harris, J. Harris, A. Macdonald and others.

#### **The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba Act**

**Ms. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba was originally incorporated by an act of the Legislature in 1964, and although amendments have been made in the ensuing years, The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba Act no longer reflects the present-day realities of operating a public, charitable foundation. As a result, it is proposed to replace the existing act with the new act that updates the Jewish Foundation of Manitoba's investment powers, empowers it to retain appropriate professional expertise to assist with its investments, clarifies its ability to manage funds entrusted to it by other charitable and non-profit organizations and generally modernizes its corporate governance.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To replace The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba Act in order to:

(a) update The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba's investment powers,

(b) empower The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba to retain appropriate professional expertise to assist with its investments,

(c) clarify The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba's ability to manage funds entrusted to it by other charitable and non-profit organizations,

(d) modernize The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba's corporate governance.

Signed Yhetta Gold, Edward Shinewald and Steven Kroft.

\* (13:40)

#### **TABLING OF REPORTS**

**Hon. Eric Robinson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Tourism):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Report on the Statutory Review of The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act.

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to table the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund Annual Report for 2003.

#### **INTRODUCTION OF BILLS**

##### **Bill 53—The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2004**

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), that Bill 53, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2004; Loi corrective de 2004, be now read a first time.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Attorney General, seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance that Bill 53, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2004, be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

##### **Bill 54—The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2004**

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, I move that Bill 54, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2004; Loi d'exécution du budget de 2004 et

modifiant diverses dispositions législatives en matière de fiscalité, be now read a first time.

**Mr. Speaker:** It has been moved by the honourable Minister of Finance, seconded by the honourable Minister of Justice, that Bill 54, The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2004, be now read a first time.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? *[Agreed]*

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery where we have from Pacific Junction School 58 Grade 5 students under the direction of Mrs. Cathy O'Donnell, Mrs. Pat Todd, Ms. Jody Godfrey. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson).

Also in the public gallery we have from Royal School 19 Grade 5 students under the direction of Mr. Greg Carpenter. This school is also located in the constituency of the honourable Member for Tuxedo.

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Red River Floodway Expansion Master Labour Agreement

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, now that the Premier has had several days to review the Wally Fox-Decent report, can he tell us if the government will be accepting the recommendations, including the ones that force non-unionized workers to pay union dues and excludes employers from negotiations?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the ultimate employer is the Floodway Authority. It is the one paying all the bills and, from the way I read the report, it does not exclude that employer from the process.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, the majority of those working on the floodway expansion project are non-

unionized and it is nonsense that the unions should be the ones doing the negotiating.

It is not enough for this Premier to say, as he said on this report, that employers will be consulted. Will the Premier do the right thing and make a commitment? Will he commit today to having the industry at the table and not relegated to the sidelines while the Premier fills his union-boss friends and they cut a sweet deal to fill their coffers?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite demonstrated on Thursday that he was extreme, to the right of Mr. Vic Toews who supported the principles of the Supreme Court decision back in the late 1940s. Members opposite are to the extreme of that, and given their extremities, we will not take extreme advice.

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, it is this Premier that is extreme in that he is basically saying to the employers you are not allowed to sit at the table for negotiations.

\* (13:45)

I think that is unfortunate because we all know this Premier will stand in this House and try to defend that non-unionized workers should pay union dues, Mr. Speaker, simply because it becomes political payback to his union bosses. How is it that this Premier can exclude employers from the table? How can he exclude their rights? They are the ones that have to look after their employees. They are the ones that make sure that the workplace, safety and health are enforced.

Will the Premier do the right thing? Will he ensure that employers, the 95 percent of those companies that are non-unionized, have a place at the table?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite will know that ultimately, subject to the approval of the Clean Environment Commission, there will be a tendering process that will proceed. We are pleased that Mr. Fox-Decent has outlined a set of compromise proposals dealing with no strike or lockout, dealing with the issue of work and how that will operate.

We think Mr. Fox-Decent, who has worked for both the Conservative government and our

government, has been very skilful in finding a proper way to proceed when matters are in dispute. Members opposite would want to reject the advice of Mr. Fox-Decent.

We are very, very carefully considering his advice because we respect his talent and his skills, his expertise and his wisdom in terms of the recommendations he has made to the government in the past and the recommendations that are before the government today.

### **Red River Floodway Expansion Master Labour Agreement**

**Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach):** Mr. Speaker, I gather then that the Premier did not respect the advice that was coming from the education financing committee because he did not take any time to consider their recommendations.

Construction industry workers in Manitoba have made a democratic choice. The choice is to not join unions and the choice is to not pay union dues. That democratic choice is today in question. Will the Minister of Water Stewardship today commit to respecting the democratic voice of construction workers by rejecting any recommendation that will force floodway workers to pay union dues?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship):** Mr. Speaker, as we outlined right from the beginning when we asked Mr. Wally Fox-Decent to be part of this process and provide recommendations to us as a government in terms of various aspects of the Floodway Authority of which this is one, we indicated that we would take the process very seriously. We have received the report, and unlike members opposite who took less than an hour and a half to reject a report that was a result of weeks of work by Mr. Fox-Decent in consultation with stakeholders we are giving it the due consideration it deserves.

Once again the members opposite are playing politics with the floodway. We are committed to building it and we take very seriously all aspects of the floodway, including this.

**Mr. Goertzen:** Again I have to remind the minister that it was his Premier who rejected a report the second that he saw it. He rejected a report only two weeks ago in this House.

There is no justification for forcing floodway expansion workers to pay union dues. Safety issues are currently covered under legislation or regulation. The industry, as it always has in the past, is prepared to do the training for the project and wages are regulated under The Construction Industry Wages Act. To force union dues is nothing but an NDP kickback to their union-boss friends and paid for on the backs of ordinary Manitobans. Will the Minister of Water Stewardship, who was also the Minister of Labour, reject the plan to provide a payoff to his union-boss buddies on the backs of Manitobans, Mr. Speaker?

**Mr. Ashton:** I think, if you were to sum up the disagreements in terms of this, Mr. Speaker, I think you would see that when it comes to the "C" in PC it does not stand for "conciliation" or "compromise" or "consensus," it only stands for "confrontation."

We put in place the Wally Fox-Decent process because we wanted to work in terms of conciliation and compromise and consensus. We are reviewing the report he has submitted. That is our approach. Confrontation is their approach. I say Manitobans want us to take a co-operative approach in terms of the floodway.

**Mr. Goertzen:** That minister's approach is a union kickback, and I do not think Manitobans respect that particular approach. The recommendation shuts out industry at the negotiation table and forces construction workers to pay a due for services that could have been provided in other ways.

Mr. Speaker, the Premier is sending a several million dollar thank-you cheque to his union-boss friends and it is written on the account of ordinary Manitobans.

Why will the Minister of Water Stewardship not stand up and say that is not on the table and reject any forced union dues in this project?

\* (13:50)

**Mr. Ashton:** Mr. Speaker, there are many members of our community: unions, the members and their families, contractors, their families. We put in place a process where Mr. Wally Fox-Decent talked to all the stakeholders, took all of the interest and put forward a report that we are giving due consideration.

I say, if you want to build a floodway without interruption which is our No. 1 goal here, the way to do it is to involve all Manitobans, not the confrontational, political approach of members opposite. They can play politics all they want with the floodway. We are going to build it.

### **Red River Floodway Expansion Master Labour Agreement**

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker, first we learned that the Doer government was going to force-unionize all floodway workers and our Minister of Labour said nothing. Then we learned that the Doer government was going to force all floodway workers to pay union dues, a kickback to union bosses and, once again, our Minister of Labour had nothing to say.

Will the Minister of Labour now take her role seriously and stand up for all Manitobans and reject any attempt to force workers to pay union fees against their free will?

**Hon. Nancy Allan (Minister of Labour and Immigration):** I am very pleased and appreciative of the work that Wally Fox-Decent has done and I am very pleased with the report that was received. I would also like to congratulate the lead minister, the Minister of Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton), who made a commitment in this House to release the report, and within 24 hours he received the report and released it. That is public transparency and we appreciate that report, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Schuler:** Perhaps the minister should do us a favour and read the report.

During Estimates the Minister of Labour repeatedly stated that neither she nor anyone in her department had any say over labour issues at the floodway, as strange as that might be. Will the Minister of Labour now take an interest in her department and take a stand against any forced union-fee payment by workers at the floodway, or is she prepared to stand by as her government continues to run roughshod over Manitoba workers?

**Ms. Allan:** Actually I have read the report. It is quite obvious the MLA for Springfield has not. It says right here, "fundamental to labour management relations in a project agreement is a concept there are

no free riders. Every worker who benefits from the services which have been rendered on their behalf should participate in a fee payment for that service whether they are a non-union worker or not."

**Mr. Schuler:** Well, glory be. The minister has actually read the report.

This minister has refused to defend Manitoba workers against forced unionization and has refused to defend Manitoba workers against coerced union dues. Will she defend Manitoba workers or will she leave that up to the next Minister of Labour? Will she finally stand up for the working men and women of this province, or is she going to sit there and continue to do nothing?

**Ms. Allan:** I continue as a Minister of Labour to represent union workers and non-union workers. I would like to know where the MLA for Springfield was when there was a workplace safety and health act in this Legislature.

He voted against it. The Compassionate Care Legislation, Bill 4; in December, he voted against it, and anytime he wants to, let us discuss Bill 37.

### **Red River Floodway Expansion Master Labour Agreement**

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House want to get on with building the floodway. In order to do that, in order to ensure Manitobans get the floodway they deserve, I simply will ask the Premier today, will he accept all of the recommendations in the Wally Fox-Decent report, including those that force non-unionized workers to pay union dues and exempt employers from the negotiating table.

I ask him very simply, will he accept all those recommendations, yes or no.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, we are considering the wisdom in the Fox-Decent report and it is under consideration as we speak.

### **Report Costs**

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, this Doer government has had that report now for over four days.



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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable Leader of the Official Opposition has the floor.

\* (13:55)

**Mr. Murray:** Mr. Speaker, I notice that members opposite laugh when they know that they have had a report for four days and are not able to make a decision, yet when this Premier's education group came forward raising the PST by one cent, he jumped up and said, "It is not on."

Why is it such an incredible length of time to make a decision to do the right thing?

Mr. Speaker, this Premier has a decision to make. Given that 95 percent of the workers are non-unionized, can this Premier tell Manitobans how much this report ensuring that non-unionized workers pay union dues and excluding the employers from the negotiating table is going to cost taxpayers?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** One wonders how much cost there has been for this member opposite to run around with his other colleague with his hand on the horn claiming, "the sky is falling, the sky is falling, there is going to be forced unionization, forced unionization," and when Mr. Fox-Decent who has a lot more experience and knowledge than members opposite said, "there is no forced unionization," the statements he made fell like a house of cards. He has no credibility on this issue, Mr. Speaker.

#### Master Labour Agreement

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I find it somewhat interesting that this Premier is unable to make a decision on something that was handed to him. It is very clear that forcing non-unionized workers to pay union dues and excluding employers from the negotiating table have been tested. They have been inspected. They should be rejected. This Premier should do the right thing and reject that.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Members opposite certainly want to reject the advice—[interjection] As I say, Mr. Speaker, members opposite have been ranting and raving for months and months about, quote, "forced unionization."

We have been seeking a goal of no strike or lockout so the public could be protected to ensure certainty in terms of the floodway

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

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

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, members opposite would recall with their rhetorical extreme arguments that we are the party that banned union and corporate donations. The members opposite are the only political party in this House committed to returning union and corporation donations to political parties. We are the ones who got rid of the old kickback system in Manitoba.

#### Vulnerable Persons Wards of Public Trustee

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, last week the CBC reported that a woman who was ready, willing and able to take over the affairs of her brain-injured sister has been prevented from doing so due to a custody dispute with the Public Trustee.

It turns out that this woman is one of the Justice Minister's own constituents and that she made him aware of her difficult situation face to face when he came to her door in the last election. Will the Justice Minister at least stand up for his constituent and call an independent public review into this matter?

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, unfortunately the member's information is wrong.

However, I can advise the member opposite that if he looked into this matter, indeed there was a visit with the individual complainant along with another candidate in the last campaign. I can also advise that at that time an issue was raised with me by the individual. It was about a request by defence counsel and the decision of the court that she be not allowed in the courtroom for a preliminary inquiry.

I can confirm that, to my recollection, at no time were any issues regarding the Public Trustee ever raised with me, but her concern was addressed as I committed to.

\* (14:00)

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Speaker, the Justice Minister failed as an MLA when he did nothing in response to his constituent's concerns over a year ago, including not returning her e-mails and her mail to him, her letters to him. On CBC this constituent stated, "I do not think he is sincere or honest because he ignored my concern in the first place."

Now the minister is failing as the Minister of Justice. Will the Minister of Justice stand up for his own constituent and call an independent public review into this matter?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Before recognizing the honourable member, I just want to caution all honourable members, when either quoting from an article or a letter, you cannot use a third party for unparliamentary language in this House.

All members are honourable members and they should be respected as such. I want to throw that caution out to all honourable members.

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, Mr. Speaker, any time allegations are made like that, obviously they are humbling experiences for MLAs, but our job is to get the facts, unlike members of the opposition.

The issue that was raised was with regard to a prosecution. I advised the complainant that the matter would be looked at and information would be given back to her which I understand, through her MLA, it was provided.

I just want to remind members opposite that the office of the Public Trustee is only authorized to manage a person's affairs when appointed under The Mental Health Act by the Director of Psychiatric Services or by Court of Queen's Branch. The matter in question has been the subject of court order.

Indeed, I understand that the court ordered in January that the complainant was restrained from intimidating the plaintiff's caregivers and attending at the plaintiff's place of residence or harassing, molesting or annoying the plaintiff or her caregivers directly or indirectly. It is under an independent review at the courts.

**Mr. Hawranik:** Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that this Justice Minister will not stand up for his constituent.

The Hells Angels are also constituents of this Justice Minister and he has gone out of his way to welcome them into his constituency. They responded by opening a retail store just down the street from the Justice Minister's own constituency office. Why does the Justice Minister not extend the same courtesy and the same service to this other constituent whose issue deserves an independent public review?

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Mr. Speaker, I would urge the member opposite to get his facts right before he comes into the House, whether it is about I do not know how many questions a couple weeks ago on the deletion of positions in the Crown Attorney's office, about the date that the Legal Aid report was due. Today he is alleging that a particular individual is a constituent.

I want to get to the root of it. The Public Trustee is accountable to the Court of Queen's Bench which has the power to remove the Public Trustee. This has been the subject of ongoing court deliberations. It is also answerable to the Ombudsman's office.

If the complainant wishes to go there, Mr. Speaker, that is an outside independent review that is available. I can advise the member opposite that the Public Trustee is an appointment of last resort and will step in where there are no family members available to provide service to the client in the best interests of the client.

### **Farm Income Government Support**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** The Statistics Canada final numbers for 2003 show that Manitoba's net farm income was down 51 percent at a time when this government has millions to provide kickbacks, line the pockets of its union-boss friends. Will it today acknowledge that a cash advance last summer would have alleviated many of the farm and business closures in rural Manitoba?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Mr. Speaker, the last year has been a very difficult year for producers in this province, and our government has recognized that difficulty, particularly those faced by the cattle industry and those affected by BSE.

We have put in place programs to help those producers. I am pleased that the Leader of the

Opposition (Mr. Murray) at the beginning of this process said that we should put in place a loan program or a cash advance. We took his advice. We put a loan program in place and that program is still available for producers.

**Mr. Maguire:** This government knows how little help it has provided rural Manitobans in its time of crisis.

Over the weekend, it became public that a long-standing auto dealership in the hard-hit BSE-, drought- and grasshopper-stricken area of southwest Manitoba, one that had been in existence for 22 years, will be closing this Friday. When will this government get its priorities straight, come up with an economic strategy which recognizes the plight of farmers and businesses in these areas hit by a catastrophe that is beyond their control?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** We have recognized the plight of the people of rural Manitoba that has been brought on by drought, by BSE, and we have put in place programs. We have made money available for producers. They are taking advantage of the programs that are there.

I would urge the member opposite during this period of a federal election to also try to get the federal government to recognize the importance of this industry, to try to get the federal government to recognize that we are working with producers. We are trying to address the issues such as slaughter capacity, and we have absolutely no response or support from the federal government.

**Mr. Maguire:** What this government has provided is millions for forced union dues, \$35 million for Laundromats and a sandwich factory, \$75 million for VLTs. Farmers have 51% lower cash income. Why is this Premier (Mr. Doer) more willing to provide union-boss kickbacks than providing sustainable funding for farm families and family businesses hit by a catastrophe which is beyond their control? What part of closure do they not understand?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** There are many producers that are looking for options where they can go to work so that they can supplement their farm income. Many producers are taking on extra jobs. Unfortunately, given the crisis we have in agriculture, a very serious crisis, people are looking for other options. Many of

those producers, I am sure, will be working on the floodway as they have gone to other jobs.

I would hope that members opposite would start to look at the floodway as a good project, rather than continually criticizing it. We will continue to work with the producers of this province to look for other alternatives.

### **City of Winnipeg Sewage Disposal**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** The City of Winnipeg is reporting today the dumping of raw sewage at more than 25 sites along the Red River, the Assiniboine River, Sturgeon Creek, Omand's Creek and the Seine River. The dumping of raw sewage into our beautiful rivers may be associated with health problems and certainly is a black mark on our wonderful capital city and our wonderful province.

Can the Minister of Water Stewardship tell us what the volume has been of raw sewage going into the rivers in May and how that compares with the major spill last September? Can the Minister of Water Stewardship tell us whether there are health concerns related to this dumping of raw sewage into our beautiful rivers?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship):** First of all, I would hope that the member would recognize that, as a result of the spill in 2002 which was a result of a maintenance failure at the City of Winnipeg waste water treatment plant, our government put in place Clean Environment Commission hearings that resulted in a report last summer which we have adopted, Mr. Speaker, and now we are moving to the licensing stage which will do a number of things including replacing the current system, the joint sewer system, which has for many years resulted in those kinds of spills into the Red River.

The member is asking detailed questions in terms of more recent events. Certainly I could provide that information, but I point to the CEC hearings that again it was this government's initiative not only in calling the hearings but adopting the basic principles of the CEC hearings. As indicated, we have recognized there is a problem and we are now working with the City, including through direct cost-sharing of the waste water treatment plant, to

end that problem and that is really what counts. Action, in this case, Mr. Speaker.

\* (14:10)

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, Community Row, Oakgrove Bay, Woodhaven Boulevard, Elmhurst Road, Portsmouth Boulevard, Tuxedo Avenue, Chataway Boulevard, Riverbend Crescent, Tylehurst Street, Aubrey Street, Colony Street and there are more and more and more.

When the raw sewage is being dumped into the Red and the Assiniboine rivers and the other lakes and rivers in our city, it is very important that Manitobans should know how much raw sewage is going into our beautiful rivers and whether there is a health risk. These are very serious matters, Mr. Speaker.

I ask the Minister of Water Stewardship a simple question about the quality of water in the Red and Assiniboine rivers. How much raw sewage went into the Red and Assiniboine rivers in May and is there a health risk? Is the government going to issue a health alert?

**Mr. Ashton:** In terms of the situation, I want to stress again that the concern, the problem has been identified. We in fact took the initiative to have the whole issue of the city of Winnipeg waste water treatment referred to the Clean Environment Commission, something that should have happened in 1992. We have also worked, by the way, with the federal government, and this is one time where they have come through, and there is in fact agreement on the infrastructure program, Mr. Speaker, for the first phase of the waste water treatment plant.

In terms of the specifics, I want to indicate that I can certainly gather that information together. I can also indicate when it comes to what we are doing now in terms of Lake Winnipeg, something we will be extending province-wide, we will be putting incident reports. In fact, we have done that already to deal with the situation in the R.M. of Gimli, which has now been dealt with, but there were excess waste water emissions into the lake.

So we are moving not only to solve the problem, we are also moving to greater disclosure, something I hope the member opposite will support.

## **Wildlife Unlicensed Hunting of Bears**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** The Minister of Conservation's inability to answer questions regarding bears in the province, Mr. Speaker, caused a great deal of concern to conservation officers and hunters alike. I think the message that this government attempts to get across is you do not need a hunting licence in the province of Manitoba, go and shoot a bear and just say it was in self-defence. It seems to be the attitude of this government.

My question to the government is this: As the minister responsible for protecting wildlife in our province, can the minister give this Chamber any idea on how many bears are in fact being killed and then it being stated by saying, well, they were killed in self-defence? Does the Minister of Conservation have any idea how many bears we are actually talking about?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation):** I thought last week I was very clear and very co-operative with the questioning of the Member for Inkster. I tried to do this in a nice way but still he persists and still he does not get it. What I would like to know is why it is that his federal government, his colleagues, his cousins in Ottawa, why it is—

**An Honourable Member:** Answer the question.

**Mr. Struthers:** He probably does not even want to know the answer to this question, Mr. Speaker—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I cannot even hear the answer. The honourable member asked a question, he has the right to hear the answer.

Order. I ask the co-operation of all honourable members.

**Mr. Struthers:** I think the Member for Inkster would be absolutely appalled to hear the numbers. Then stack that up with his party's support of a useless C-68 gun registration law that will do absolutely nothing, absolutely nothing, Mr. Speaker, to help the very problem that the Member for Inkster claims to have his finger on. My commitment has been to work co-operatively with my department, with municipalities, to make sure the numbers of bear-to-human contact is down and down and down.

That is the only way to deal with this issue, not supporting useless, expensive boondoggles from Ottawa.

### **Water Levels Update**

**Ms. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, with the recent advent of heavy precipitation in southern Manitoba, could the Minister of Industry, Economic Development and Mines give this House an update regarding the present water levels?

**Hon. Scott Smith (Minister of Industry, Economic Development and Mines):** There has been heavy rain throughout southern Manitoba, the U.S., Saskatchewan and into Ontario. Certainly water levels are elevated. There has been some above-ground saturation with above-ground flooding in many areas in Manitoba, but flash flood predictions are saying it does not exist. All major waterways, streams remain contained within the banks and certainly no flooding is anticipated. Although they are above the summer levels, there is plenty of room.

Mr. Speaker, we are monitoring the Roseau River in and around Stuartburn. In fact, we have Water Stewardship, Conservation and EMO out there right now dealing with the municipality, taking precautions, and we will continue to monitor the levels in Manitoba.

### **Farm Income Government Support**

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** Mr. Speaker, I am rising to ask a question that was based on an answer that was given by the Minister of Agriculture just moments ago. Farmers in my part of the world today are working harder than ever to try to sustain their livelihoods in agriculture.

They have been asking this government continuously for some recognition of the hardships that farmers in Manitoba are facing. Other provinces have anted up to support their farmers, Manitoba continues to stall.

This afternoon the Minister of Agriculture stated that it was okay for farmers to start looking for work off the farm to supplement their income. Mr. Speaker, this is a shameful statement by the minister and a shameful statement by government. Does this

minister say that her agricultural economic strategy is to have farmers seek employment off the farm to sustain their farms and keep their families fed?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Absolutely not, Mr. Speaker. What I did say, and I will correct what the member opposite said where he said this province has not anted up, I would ask him to check his facts, check the budget in other provinces, check the budget in this province and check the amount of money that our government has put in place to support the Manitoba farmer in comparison to other provinces.

I will stand by the record, the numbers we have put forward, Mr. Speaker. We have stood by our farmers. The most important things that we continue to work on is to look at ways to get slaughter capacity in this province, to get the border open.

I can tell you also that I live on a farm and there have been times when my husband has gone off the farm to supplement our income. Mr. Speaker, sometimes it does happen, but I will stand by the programs we have put in place.

### **Farm Income Government Support**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Mr. Speaker, I rise also on the comments made by the Minister of Agriculture regarding families having to find jobs off the farm. I had a young family call me from Alexander not too long ago in the evening, both in tears. The mother was going to have to give up her maternity leave, a right that all mothers or fathers who have children have a right to take time and enjoy their children. Because of the situation with the BSE crisis, the mother is having to give up the right to stay home with her child.

My question is to the Minister of Agriculture: Is she going to stand up for rural families, please, finally, and make a decision on helping these farm families and let the mothers who want to stay home with their children have that opportunity?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** It is interesting, Mr. Speaker, that members opposite will use maternity leave when it was members of their government that

voted against maternity leave for mothers. They voted against it, now they use it.

These are very important issues. These are very difficult times for families. Our government has stood, our government has put money on the table, more money than any other province has put in place. Other provinces have not put the kind of support that Manitoba has. I would hope that we will see movement on the border. I hope that we will see increased slaughter capacity in this province so that we can have additional dollars and activity and economic development that will support our farming community.

\* (14:20)

### **Farm Income Government Support**

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** I have seldom ever seen a government that has abandoned a sector of their society to a greater degree than this government has abandoned its farm community. Mr. Speaker, a 50% decrease in their paycheques.

How would any of you like to take a 50% decrease in your paycheques? Young family farms closing, food banks springing up all over the place in rural Manitoba; Mennonite Central Committee providing food aid and feed aid to northern Interlake; the \$60 million of debt that farmers have incurred under this government, under this administration.

Now this minister is telling the farmers of Manitoba to seek work in the mines. When will this minister realize it is time she sign on to fully support the agricultural community through its CAIS? She has not yet fully committed.

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** Mr. Speaker, I am amazed at the comments made by the member opposite about this government's support.

Let him just read the budget that he cannot seem to comprehend. Money is there. I told him last week and I tell him again this week, we have signed onto the APF and our 40 percent is there.

It is unfortunate the member opposite cannot read the budget and cannot understand and it is unfortunate that he continues to put misinformation out into the rural community on the support this

government has put forward. He is wrong. This government has been supportive of the farming community and we will continue to be there.

**Mr. Speaker:** The time for Oral Questions has expired.

### **Speaker's Ruling**

**Mr. Speaker:** Following the daily Prayer on Tuesday, May 18, 2004, the honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) rose on a matter of privilege based on answers to questions placed to the honourable Minister of Labour and Immigration (Ms. Allan) during committee consideration of Bill 9, The Manitoba Immigration Council Act.

The honourable Member for Inkster contended that the honourable minister already had names of persons to appoint to the Immigration Council before the bill had completed consideration in the House. The honourable Member for Inkster concluded his remarks by moving "THAT this issue be addressed by the Standing Committee on the Rules of the House."

The honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh), the honourable Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Derkach) and the honourable Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) also offered advice to the Chair on this matter. I then took the matter under advisement in order to consult the procedural authorities.

There are two conditions that must be satisfied in order for the matter raised to be ruled in order as a prima facie case of privilege. First, was the issue raised at the earliest opportunity, and second, has sufficient evidence been provided to demonstrate that the privileges of the House have been breached in order to warrant putting the matter to the House.

Regarding the first condition of timeliness, the honourable Member for Inkster asserted that he did raise the matter at the earliest opportunity, and I will accept the word of the honourable member.

Regarding the second condition, I must advise the House that according to the procedural authorities and rulings of Manitoba Speakers, matters of privilege that are raised in the House regarding events in committees must be raised in the House by way of a committee report. *Beauchesne's* Citation 107 states "breaches of privilege in committee may

be dealt with only by the House itself on report from the committee." Marleau and Montpetit state on page 128 of *House of Commons Procedure and Practice* that "Speakers have consistently ruled that, except in the most extreme situations, they will only hear questions of privilege arising from committee proceedings upon presentation of a report from the committee which deals directly with the matter and not as a question of privilege raised by an individual member."

Similarly, Speaker Rocan ruled in 1989, in 1993 and in 1994, that the opinion of the Speaker cannot be sought in the House about matters arising in committee, and that it is not competent for the Speaker to exercise procedural control over committees. In these three cases, he ruled that the proper course of action to be taken is for the issue to be raised in the appropriate committee at the earliest opportunity. In addition, I had ruled in the House on March 4, 2004, that matters of privilege raised in the House regarding events in committees must be raised in the House by way of a committee report, and it is not appropriate for Speakers to exercise procedural control over committees.

On this basis, I must therefore rule that the matter raised does not fulfil the conditions of a *prima facie* case of privilege. However this does not preclude the matter from being raised in the appropriate committee.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, with respect I would challenge the ruling of the Chair.

**Mr. Speaker:** The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. Does the honourable member have support? I need to see four members. Can I see the members rise that support the challenge of the ruling? I do not see the support so I cannot exercise the challenge.

We will now move on and we will move on to Members' Statements.

#### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

##### **Bronwyn Dobchuk-Land and Willem Boning**

**Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Wolseley):** Today I would like to highlight the achievements of two very impressive young people who will be graduating from Gordon

Bell High School this June. Bronwyn Dobchuk-Land is a well-known community and school leader, balancing her many volunteer efforts with community organizations while maintaining a very high academic average. Bronwyn was one of the main organizers behind last year's Student Day of Action Peace March, which I was proud to attend, as well as a driving force behind the Gordon Bell human rights group and their annual Human Rights Day, an event at which the Minister of Justice (Mr. Mackintosh) spoke earlier this year.

Bronwyn was recently one of 22 young Canadians who received the Canadian Merit Award and she has just accepted a full scholarship from McGill University valued at \$10,000 per year.

She recently participated in the national debating championships in place of a fellow Gordon Bell student, Willem Boning who was away at Princeton University.

Willem has accepted a full scholarship valued at \$45,000 U.S. per year from Princeton, choosing between Princeton and Yale, which had also offered him a full scholarship. Willem is obviously an excellent student with a grade point average of 98 percent. He also takes an active role in the life of the school and is one of four students on the provincial debating team. Willem is also one of Manitoba's top high-school musicians, an accomplished clarinet player.

I am very proud to be part of a government that strongly supports public education through stable funding for schools and school infrastructure. This is the fifth consecutive year that our government has kept our commitment to fund schools at the rate of economic growth and this year this meant an increase of \$17.6 million.

I want to sincerely congratulate both Bronwyn and Willem and their families on their very impressive achievements and wish them the very best as they begin their post-secondary careers and studies. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

##### **Canadian Advocate for the Adoption of Children Inc.**

**Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa):** Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Advocates for the Adoption of Children Incorporated (CAFAC) is a non-profit, intercountry

adoption agency that was founded in 1995 by parents who adopted children from Ethiopia.

Located in Minnedosa, CAFAC became a fully-licensed national adoption agency in 1999 and has since been serving many families throughout the country.

\* (14:30)

CAFAC offers assistance to adoptive families not only with the adoption process itself but also with the children's arrival, transition and reporting procedures.

Travel assistance, support groups, seminars and social activities are offered as well, providing adoptive families with formal and informal sources of support. CAFAC has diligently worked to make contacts, create programs and accredit the organizations in countries such as Brazil, Bulgaria, China, Ethiopia, Haiti, Russia and St. Vincent, giving confidence to the children's home country and to Canadians planning on adopting from these countries.

CAFAC's work has also been featured in a documentary highlighting the experiences of the Koochin family from B.C. and the Matthews family from Winnipeg. The documentary shows the process by which these families participated in adopting children from Ethiopia.

We all know that children are very precious. Children require our love, time and attention in order to become healthy adults who make valuable contributions to society. Every child is welcome in Manitoba, whether they are born here, moved here with family or arrived here through the assistance of organizations like CAFAC.

It is organizations like CAFAC who have made a very real difference in the lives of children and families. On behalf of all the honourable members, I would like to thank Roberta Galbraith and Deborah Northcott along with all CAFAC staff and volunteers for acting on their deep concern for families and children all around the world. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Marlene Street Resource Centre**

**Ms. Kerri Irvin-Ross (Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, May 19, my colleagues, the

honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Sale) and the honourable Member for St. Vital (Ms. Allan), attended the Marlene Street Tenants Association grand opening of the Kiddie Computer Lab in its resource centre. This project was funded through the Community Connections program.

The kiddie lab is made up of three computers which are specially designed to appeal to children. They are child-friendly with only the monitors, keyboards and mice visible. The lab itself has been artistically designed and colourfully painted. The ceiling is bright blue with a large yellow sun in the middle. Marlene Street tenants volunteered long hours to paint the entire resource centre.

Marlene Street is a public housing complex in St. Vital whose population includes recent immigrants, Aboriginal people, single parents and working poor families. A total of 98 families and close to 200 children reside in the complex which is the size of one city block.

The Marlene Street Tenants Association was formed in 1998 to develop and strengthen community resources and to make Marlene Street a safe and healthy place for families to live. The association has been tremendously successful.

In 2002 it obtained funding for a full-time youth program co-ordinator. Artistic, recreational, nutrition and cooking skills, leadership and volunteer activities are all a part of the programming.

Past initiatives include community connections, development of a playground, parent support network, sharing circles, Winnipeg Harvest site, children's programs, clothing depot and community circles regarding issues that include bullying and conflict among residents. The programs are operated out of the Marlene Street Tenants Resource Centre, a townhouse unit within the complex.

I congratulate the tenants on their hard work and commitment to the community and their impressive achievement. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

#### **Vehicle Impoundments**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** A tune-up at an auto shop was anything but routine for Brandy Simmons as she witnessed the seizure and repossession of her 1993 Pontiac Sunbird. The single



mother was the victim of an overzealous section of provincial legislation which authorizes police to impound and seize any vehicle being operated by a suspended driver, regardless of the vehicle's owner, and which does not allow for an appeal once the forfeiture has occurred.

Brandy's ordeal began in November 2003, when she took her car to a mechanic for a routine tune-up only to discover that her mechanic had been arrested while moving her car the short distance between the parking lot and the garage. The mechanic's arrest, his third offence for driving without a licence in five years, triggered a section of provincial legislation which authorized police to immediately impound and subsequently repossess the vehicle.

Although Brandy bailed the car out of impound, it was again seized in March when the mechanic pleaded guilty to The Highway Traffic Act offence. To add insult to injury, the car was stolen just days before the forfeiture date, and the Province claimed the \$5,300 settlement from Manitoba Public Insurance, which she cannot even retrieve.

While the intent of this legislation was not to create hardship for law-abiding citizens like Brandy, the potential for highly unusual circumstances such as those surrounding this case was not taken into consideration, and require an amendment.

It is our hope that the government will recognize the financial and emotional impact that this situation has had on Ms. Simmons, and will seriously consider tabling an amendment to this legislation. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **Dakota Collegiate Reunion**

**Ms. Theresa Oswald (Seine River):** It is my pleasure to rise today to pay tribute to the outstanding committee, the staff and students at Dakota Collegiate who worked tirelessly to host the 40th reunion held on the May long-weekend.

The weekend began with a wine and cheese at the school, where participants picked up registration packages, renewed old friendships and laughed at the photographs displayed throughout the school.

Classrooms were skilfully decorated with memorabilia from each of the four decades, and a special athletic Wall of Fame was unveiled with its first

inductees: Rick Watts, Scott Koskie, Corrine, Connie and Janet Laliberte and Ed Alexiuk. An alumni revue was presented by the band, choir and drama departments, and the evening ended with a sold-out social evening at the Dakota Community Centre in the sunny constituency of Seine River.

On Saturday, May 21, alumni enjoyed participating in a highly creative car rally, watched the action at the alumni basketball tournament and had an opportunity to see an encore performance of the alumni revue. The gala dinner at the Winnipeg Convention Centre was a classy affair attended by 500 alumni or more. The tribute and video montage that featured the many accomplishments of Dakota students, highlighted the "Reach for the Top" national championships, numerous musical awards and achievements, and of course the 58 athletic provincial championships, more than any other high school in the history of Manitoba. The musical stylings of the Ron Paley Band made for a fun-filled evening that went on for some until dawn.

The Dakota staff, past and present, gathered for a luncheon on Sunday, while the alumni participated in the golf tournament.

Indeed, there was something for everyone to enjoy at the reunion. I would like to extend my admiration and many thanks to the huge organizing committee, guided expertly by Rob Glennie, Gord Steeves, Ellen Hartle, Lorrie Dueck, Chris Macey, Heather Westdahl, Gerry Ilchyna, Jim McCormick, Leslie Later, Linda Watson and Kirsty Dunlop, to name a few. Congratulations, félicitations and thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### **GRIEVANCES**

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Member for Portage la Prairie, on a grievance.

**Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie):** I appreciate the opportunity to be recognized and rise on the grievance I have today to share with the House in regard to the non-performance of ministers opposite. I am extremely concerned.

The Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers) and the Cabinet communications went out of their way to bring recognition this week, being the Canadian Environment Week, May 30 through 5.

But it is the total disregard that Cabinet ministers are showing to this Legislative Assembly.

Again, we saw that the minister rose today on a question posed by the backbenches of the Doer government on the concern everyone has about flooding and the excess moisture consideration. In administrations past, that address would not have been by way of a response to question; it would have been an initiative of the minister to stand and give a report that is of concern to all Manitobans. But this government, because it does not want to give the opposition the opportunity to put forward a rebuttal or put forward a response that may be contrary to what the government has to say, is inappropriate. That is why I rise on this grievance.

\* (14:40)

So, specifically speaking, the Minister responsible for Conservation had Cabinet communications put forward a Manitoba government news release to promote what the Doer government has stated as multiple initiatives to improve the environment. But this is not the case. The only initiative that this government is proficient is that of putting out press releases. Press release after press release heralds this government's basic inaction. But within the press release one would think otherwise.

Insofar as the Water Stewardship Minister making announcement approximately two weeks ago heralding a \$1-million investment in the health of Manitoba's lakes, that could not be farther from the truth. Mr. Speaker, \$1 million divided by over a hundred thousand lakes here in Manitoba is an investment of \$10 per lake.

Seriously speaking, what is this government expecting to accomplish with a \$10 investment per Manitoba lake? I do not think anyone in this province could regard that as really, truly an investment in the future of Manitoba's water bodies.

In fact, Manitobans have stated through recently announced poll results that included 800 Manitobans that found almost two thirds of Manitobans do not believe this government and they believe this government is not putting forward adequate resources and giving due consort to the environment. In other words, two thirds of Manitobans believe that the environment is not of priority to this government.

Again, in this Chamber today, at the start of Environment Week, they do not even take the opportunity to stand and provide a ministerial statement in which to recognize this week. Well, what this government is indeed doing, all we have to do is go back just a couple of weeks ago to the passage of the budget for 2004-2005. It tells the real true story of what this government has in store for the environment here in the province of Manitoba.

Let us look at the Conservation Minister's budget. Start right at the very bottom line and then I will get more specific. The Conservation Department, under the recently passed budget, takes more than \$1 million out of expenditures from last year. That is \$1 million less in anticipated spending, let alone wait till we see the final figures that this government actually spends on the environment and in Conservation.

You will find that it is significantly underspent. That is a travesty. Within the Estimates of the budget just passed, this government intends to cut numerous Conservation programs. Specifically, planning and development is being cut. Park district support has been cut. Park operations and maintenance has been cut. Support services towards the parks and recreational facilities in this province have been cut. The amount of support for the forestry industry in Manitoba has been cut. Forest inventory and resource analysis has been cut. Forest health and renewal has been cut. Forest regeneration stock has been cut.

Cut after cut after cut is taking place on this province's greatest natural resource, and that is found within our environment. Forestry is one. Water is another. In speaking of water, again this government has decided to cut. They have cut the department where water licensing—that is the body that interprets whether or not a person's use of water is in fact in harmony with nature—and that department has been cut.

Water planning and development have been cut. Surface water management has been cut. Ground water management has been cut. This is in total contradiction to the minister's announcement of a million dollars extra in water management here in the province of Manitoba.

For those of us that are interested in Fisheries and water quality, what has this government done, I ask?

Well, found within the budget here, fish culturing has been cut. Aquatic ecosystem management has been cut. Sport and commercial fishing management has been cut. Water quality management has been cut. The Office of Drinking Water, in fact, is an office which this government heralds as their foundation in their plank towards providing safe drinking water throughout the province of Manitoba. Yet what do they do? They cut the budget of the Office of Drinking Water. They have also cut the regional Fisheries resources officer. One of the bottom lines which tells all here of what this government's true regard for the environment is is a cut to the Manitoba Water Services Board.

The Manitoba Water Services Board, Mr. Speaker, is responsible for providing the resources to improve water quality for every use. As well, that Water Services Board provides resources to treat waste water so when it re-enters the water system here in the province of Manitoba, it is in the stead which will not cause environmental concern.

Mr. Speaker, right now before the government and the Legislative Assembly, is a new bill that is wanting to provide for planning into the future for water here in the province of Manitoba. It is The Safe Water Act and it provides within that act, Bill 22 does, for conservation districts. The bill is before the House and you would think that the government would be anticipating passing that bill, but if they are really serious about passing a bill which asks that every single area within the province provide for a conservation district, they would make provision within the budget to support the establishment of the conservation districts in areas that are not yet covered by conservation districts.

But, Mr. Speaker, what have they done? They have let this line in the budget remain exactly as it was last year, so I believe this government in all its efforts to put forward legislation which the vast majority of people support if the bill can be amended in certain areas, I would suspect they would have put into the budget the necessary monies to put this particular act into force, but we see clearly within the budget that this is not the case. You wonder where in fact the additional money is. Are there any lines in the budget that are going up?

Well, I see that the ministerial salary is going up, for one. I see that Executive Support of the minister's office is going from \$130,000 up to \$666,000,

Executive Support for the minister. We see where this government's priority really, truly is. It sure is not where the rubber hits the road, as I mentioned in the previous programming. I find it extraordinarily disappointing that this government says one thing and does something totally contrary to that.

I would not even mind if the government saw fit to keep the budget the same from year over year in areas that have seen previous increase, but, Mr. Speaker, that is not the case. Each and every year, this government has underspent the Conservation budget, the budget responsible for the environment and the health of our water and other natural resources in the province of Manitoba. Why is that so, Mr. Speaker, if this government is really, truly serious about protecting the environment and preserving the quality of our natural resources for Manitobans into the future?

I know the other day upon questioning of the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Struthers), he stood and said they were very proud of the marks the independent groups in Canada and worldwide had given this government in regard to the environment and environment management. The truth be known, the marks this government is receiving are less than the marks received by the previous Filmon administration, and I say to you, to the government's Conservation Minister, if he is truly proud of those marks, I suggest that he should consider resigning.

Mr. Speaker, it is not something that we should take lightly. I personally believe in preservation. I come from the noble profession of farming to which one takes the environment very seriously because we must preserve the environment, otherwise the health of the land to which we farm will not be there for future generations. That is fundamental to every one of us that farms. We want to see future generations take over the operations and continue in that noble tradition.

Mr. Speaker, back in 1993, I was recognized as being the conservation farm family in all of Manitoba because of efforts that have been made by myself and my family to preserve the environment and to enhance the environment. I am pleased to continue on with doing that with participation in planting of close to 70 000 hybrid poplars in just a couple of weeks' time.

\* (14:50)

Mr. Speaker, I have risen to grieve today because I am sincerely disappointed with this government and I believe that, because the individual ministers truly do care about the environment. They want to see their portfolios that they are responsible for carry out the mandate which they have been given. But it is the government as a whole that is not recognizing the importance of these departments, the Department of Conservation and Department of Water Stewardship.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I have stood today to grieve, to say to all members of the government that these respective mandates are vitally important, not only to Manitobans today but Manitobans in the future. Our next generation wants to have the opportunity to use and participate in the great outdoors of which this province of ours has so much in abundance.

I recognize that my time is short, but I hope that some members have listened today to my concerns that Manitobans want more than just press releases. They want action. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Deputy Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker. Could you please call Supply.

**Mr. Speaker:** In accordance with our Rule 23(5), the House will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

### COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

#### Concurrence Motion

**Mr. Chairperson (Conrad Santos):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order? We have before us for our consideration the Supply concurrence motion. The floor is now open for questions.

**Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition):** I would like to just review some things from the initial Estimates with the questions that were asked of the Premier. He said that he would get back to me on those, so I just wanted to clean up some of those before I go into some other questions.

The one question I asked was the salary of Robert Dewar. He indicated that he would check on Mr. Dewar's final salary. I wonder if he has done that, to provide the information.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Yes, it was higher because of the wage increase that was effective on March 31. So Mr. Balagus did come in at a lower rate and did end up at a lower salary. Those are the specifics, but the civil service salary agreement expired March 31. There was some retroactivity in the general wage increase, which was applied to all excluded people as well.

**Mr. Murray:** For clarification, if I understood what the First Minister said, Mr. Balagus came in at a lower level than Mr. Robert Dewar? The information I had, and I guess I will move on, but could the Premier just indicate, I was told that Mr. Robert Dewar was at \$96,000 and that Mr. Balagus was at \$109,000.

**Mr. Doer:** I believe that Mr. Dewar came in at a comparable level to the chap that took Mr. Sokolyk's job, the chap that was there for a year as Mr. Filmon's chief of staff. Mr. Dewar came in at a comparable step and then was there for four years, plus he had both the steps and the general salary increase, which was 2.3, 2.3, 2.3 and then a 3. It was retroactive to March 31. Then Mr. Balagus came in at a level lower than that and then the salary was adjusted again with the salary increases.

The answer to your question was that Mr. Balagus did come in lower than Mr. Dewar, but Mr. Dewar's salary, the information that the member opposite had was dated. There had been increases, no extra-ordinary increases, but the general civil service increase plus the steps that were in place were applied as they were to Mr. Sokolyk a few years earlier.

**Mr. Murray:** The Premier was going to find out if Liam Martin was involved with government. He said he was not, but he would find out exactly where he is. I just wonder if the First Minister could respond to that.

**Mr. Doer:** I will get back to the member. He is in a department.

\* (15:00)

**Mr. Murray:** The other question, I think it was to do with the Kenaston underpass. I think it was the First Minister who indicated that there was an agreement in place, that there was sort of a legal agreement in place. I think the member from Fort Whyte was wondering exactly where that was at, process-wise. I just wondered if the First Minister could bring that information back to the Chamber.

**Mr. Doer:** There is an agreement between Ottawa. It has been passed by our Treasury Board, and, as I understand it, it has been passed by the federal Treasury Board. It had not been passed by the Treasury Board at the time of the announcement. I think the press release said it was being recommended to the federal Treasury Board.

As I understand it, it has been passed and it has been passed by a resolution at City Hall. So it is all three have been legally carried out.

**Mr. Murray:** Again, if the First Minister could just clarify, have there been any changes at the ministerial level where ministers within the government would have their own communicator responsible for their issues, over and above the central branch in Culture or Cabinet communications?

**Mr. Doer:** No, there is not. I think that the Crowns have their own people. I believe the Winnipeg Health Authority has an individual as well, but there are no departmental communication people in the minister's office.

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, but that was not the information we got from the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak). In his executive line in his budget, he indicated that he had a communicator. So I am wondering how the Premier can justify his comments based on what the Minister of Health told us in his Estimates.

**Mr. Doer:** Okay. I brought my notes to 255. I will double-check them. As I understood it, there was a communicator in the Department of Health, and I assumed that was in the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority. So I will double-check that discrepancy.

**Mr. Murray:** Can the Premier indicate if any communicators from his department or a government

department or a ministerial department have been assigned to the Floodway Expansion Authority?

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, there has been an individual that has been hired by the Floodway Authority.

**Mr. Murray:** Could the Premier indicate the name?

**Mr. Doer:** I believe it is Mr. Ronuk Modha, but I will double-check that.

**Mr. Murray:** I just wondered. Was he a political staffer for either the Premier or for a minister?

**Mr. Doer:** He worked in the Department of Agriculture before he worked for the government. I will check his hiring, but I believe he was working in the civil service before we came into office. But I will double-check that. I believe he was working, doing some policy work in the Department of Agriculture under the former government. I do not know whether we are tainting him or not tainting him with the question, but I am just trying to recall his career record. As I recall it, he was in the public service when we were elected, but I will double-check that.

**Mr. Murray:** So, on that basis, would he have come directly from the public service into the Floodway Expansion Authority?

**Mr. Doer:** No, I want to make sure I get all the facts in terms of his career. I do believe he was working, I am not sure, but I do believe the individual was working for the Department of Agriculture. He is now working for the Floodway Authority, and I will check the actual status of his position. I do not think we had this exact question when we were in the Estimates, so I will get the exact information.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** So the Premier is indicating, was it an independent process that the Floodway Authority hired him, or was he a recommendation of government?

The Premier appears to have a bit of background and, I guess, just for clarification again, did he move directly from his policy position in the Department of Agriculture to the communicator for the Floodway Authority, or was there some other position that he held before moving over to the floodway?

It just appears strange that a policy analyst in the Department of Agriculture would become the communicator for the Floodway Authority, so I would just like a bit of clarification around that.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, he was doing both policy and communication work before he went to the Floodway Authority, but I just want to be precise to the questions that were raised. The method of his employment at the Floodway Authority, of course, the ultimate employing authority at the Floodway Authority is Mr. Gilroy, who answers to both the federal and provincial government.

He is accountable to both levels of government and, in terms of actual decisions, I know he has authority to make some decisions at a certain level. I also know he has to report to a board of individuals that are representing both levels of government, so I just want to be sure. I do know that when you asked the question, I think that he is the one at the Floodway Authority, and I also believe that he was in the Department of Agriculture, but I do want to give a precise answer to the question.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** So the Premier is indicating to me that Mr. Modha, I believe was the name, was not an Order-in-Council appointment under his government at any time since they became government. Is that a fair assessment, that he was always a civil servant, or was he at some point in time an Order-in-Council appointment?

**Mr. Doer:** I want to check because, quite frankly, the members have asked me a question. I want to check the facts. I do believe he was in the Department of Agriculture, I do know he was doing both policy and communications in our government, and I know he is now hired in the Floodway Authority.

So that is what I know and the precise nature of his employment, whether it was 3.1 of The Civil Service Act or some other section, I am not sure, but, as you know, and as I reported to the Leader of the Opposition, we have comparable staffing now in the Communications Branch as we had when we came into office. We have comparable numbers of people that have been seconded into the Communications Branch. I will get the exact answer to the question.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** We do know that all Order-in-Council appointments are signed by the Premier, so

is the Premier indicating that he does not recollect whether he signed an Order-in-Council? I am sort of wondering why the Premier cannot ask that direct question. Does he not recall whether he signed an Order-in-Council appointing this individual to any position within his government?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, I just think it is prudent to get the facts. You ask a specific question; I will get the specific answer. I have a sense of what he was doing and where he was doing it, and I think I have indicated to the member opposite he was performing communication functions, not just analyst functions. I just want to get the facts because the member is entitled to the facts as much as I can get them. I am not saying I do not remember every O/C I sign, but there are a lot in a year, and the member opposite knows that as well. That O/C would have been signed four years ago, I would imagine, if it was signed.

Members opposite, probably if they have done their research, probably have it sitting right there. It is a public document; we have not withheld it. If there was one, it would be public, but I will check it and find out.

\* (15:10)

**Mr. Murray:** Could the First Minister give an indication if Mr. Modha, who is now with the Floodway Expansion Authority, was seconded?

**Mr. Doer:** I do not believe he was, but I will double-check that—I will make sure I find out the exact issues. As I recall it, and this may be incorrect, he was working in the Department of Agriculture as a policy analyst when we came into government, and in recognition of the talent the members opposite had hired—I am not going any further than that until I get the facts. I just want the facts.

**Mr. Murray:** If the Premier could include in those facts exactly which payroll Mr. Modha is on, that would be helpful.

**Mr. Doer:** I will double-check, but the whole intent of the Floodway Authority is we are a Floodway Authority responsible for 50 percent of the expenditures. The federal government is responsible for the other 50 percent of the expenditures, even on issues such as matters raised by members opposite.

You had the lead minister of Canada making some comments as well, and so we have set up this authority to be able to deal with the City of Winnipeg, obviously, indirectly, the federal and provincial governments. I will inquire on the authorities.

As I understand it, there have been some people hired for the Floodway Authority, one individual from the City of Winnipeg engineering branch, and, I do not believe the individual has been, quote, "seconded," but I will double-check that. I am aware of a couple of people that have been hired there, usually after they are hired. I understand a pretty competent engineer from the City of Winnipeg has been hired, and I understand Mr. Gilroy has been hired. I will check the status of Mr. Modha's employment, whether he crossed the civil service Rubicon or not into the Floodway Authority.

**Mr. Murray:** Could the First Minister explain how the Floodway Authority group works? I understand the 50-50 funding, but could he just explain from an overview as to how that works with respect to both the provincial government's responsibility and the federal government's responsibility?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, it is an agreement for \$240 million. Inside that agreement, it is for an agreement to have X numbers of dollars dedicated, I believe 1 percent for recreation. The Floodway Authority has a board of directors made up of technical representatives from both levels of government and then they report to the minister and to the federal government, the lead minister. So that is generally how it reports. The minister responsible can report more directly. We have committed ourselves to \$120 million.

We still have not received an environmental licence yet. I would point out that we cannot proceed with some work covered under The Navigation Act of Canada without a joint licence that we have agreed to commission. I believe that application is in now; it is definitely in now, when the engineering work was completed. I think the proposal is going to be less problematic in an environmental licence because of less groundwater damage with the way it has been designed, but I cannot predict that.

The most work we have to do, by the way, at the initial stages, is bridge work, including bridges that were built in a rather shortsighted way over the last 10 years. But the most work is bridge work at the

front end with a lot of crane operators that will be required, those endangered species, the crane operators.

**Mr. Murray:** The Premier was asked by the honourable member from Ste. Rose with respect to the chemotherapy room at the Neepawa Hospital. He talked about it being expanded and improved. The honourable member from Ste. Rose had asked if he is prepared to recheck with the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) and see if he will live up to the commitments the Premier made while he was on the campaign trail with respect to the Neepawa Hospital. He said that he would double-check; I wonder if he could report.

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, the Minister of Health was at a meeting all weekend. I am going to check with him, hopefully, tomorrow.

**Mr. Murray:** The member from Ste. Rose had also asked the Premier about the road into Sandy Bay, about the upgrade on that particular road. The Premier indicated that he would get some specifics back to the member. I wonder if he could indicate to the House what the specifics are.

**Mr. Doer:** Specifically, we did one road already, tied to the provincial road, and, secondly, the other major issue for roads was the ambulance. We have located an ambulance adjacent to Sandy Bay. The second road which was referenced is something we have been trying to deal with with the federal government, but I do not believe there is a conclusion to that.

**Mr. Murray:** What stage would it be in, understanding that there is no conclusion to it? Would it be in the developmental stage? Could the Premier just indicate so I can get back to the member from Ste. Rose as to a time line when that road would be completed?

**Mr. Doer:** As I understand it now, we have completed the one connection to the provincial road. The second road, we have no agreement with the federal government. In terms of the time line, I think everything is in a state of suspended animation for time lines. The Canadian public is now in a state of election, and I do not believe the federal government can make any financial decisions while the writ is issued, notwithstanding their promises which seem to be quite capacious.

**Mr. Murray:** In discussion around the education report of funding, we were having discussions about experts, and at that point the Premier indicated that we knew that Professor Fox-Decent's report was out. He referred to him, of course, as an expert and that he wanted to wait to hear what he had to say with respect to the expansion of the floodway project.

I had asked the First Minister, who had rejected the education funding report, and I was trying to get some sense of continuity as to the people who sat on that committee, specifically Carolyn Duhamel, if he felt that she was a professional in her capacity. So the Premier indicated that he would get her title. I wonder if he could respond in context to the question that was posed about listening to experts or professionals, the words that the Premier used, and I wonder if he could respond with respect to the education report, especially on Carolyn Duhamel's title.

\* (15:20)

**Mr. Doer:** Well, the member opposite must appreciate that any one of the stakeholders you could list, and I do not want to go through all of them, are by definition stakeholders. Stu Briese did not agree with Ms. Duhamel. It does not mean to say that they are not both professionals. The difference is, of course, this is a mediator's report which was attempting to provide balance on the recommendations.

**Mr. Murray:** I just think from the perspective that the question was asked, that when it was talked about, the issue of having non-unionized workers pay union dues—at that time, I think there was maybe some discussion about a single contract—I think the First Minister was very clear indicating that he was prepared to listen to the "professionals," which, I think, is the word that he used in his comments. So that would say that he relies on the advice of professionals. I appreciate that, yet when he received the report on funding of education he dismissed it out of hand immediately.

He could redefine the term "New York minute." On that basis, I asked the First Minister, who says that he always listens to the advice of professionals, as he is indicating with respect to Wally Fox-Decent; so Ms. Duhamel who has given him advice, could he just indicate why he would not accept her advice on the basis that she is a professional?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, first of all, I have not received the final report from Ms. Duhamel, but she is a stakeholder and that is a difference between a mediator; there is a fundamental difference between the two. If the member opposite wants to draw the comparison, he can do so all day long. I see this quite differently. I do not see it as a comparable set of recommendations.

**Mr. Murray:** Well, that is interesting. The First Minister, then, is changing his tune because at that time he referred to Mr. Fox-Decent as a professional, and that he would respect his view as a professional. Now, he is indicating that he is a mediator. We understand that, but it is not my line of questioning; it is what your response was to my questions. So, if you want to change your opinion on or you want to change the title of who they are, that is the First Minister's right to do that kind of a change, if he wants to do so.

At the time, it was pretty clear that the First Minister was going down a path of trying to say, well, I am waiting for Mr. Fox-Decent's report because he is a professional and professionals are the people who should be involved in this. Yet Ms. Duhamel, who was involved in his education task force, I think, is very respected. Certainly, I would sort of see her as a professional. The Premier (Mr. Doer) parts company and says that, well, she is a stakeholder, and that Mr. Fox-Decent was a mediator, and today explains the difference.

I think we all understand the difference. I am just simply indicating that he has changed his position on it. I would like to ask the First Minister who, as I said, was so quick to point out the report that was made public on funding of education in Manitoba, that he stood up in the House and said that he was not going to support. Yet the recommendations that have come forward from Mr. Fox-Decent have been in his hands since early Thursday morning.

Could the Premier indicate why the delay in accepting the report?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, I have not had an opportunity to discuss it with relevant ministers yet. I received it, probably, after the member opposite did. I received it a little after one o'clock, just before Question Period on Thursday. I think we were in condolence motions and I had another urgent meeting before then.



So I received it just prior to Question Period, and read it. I mean, there is a fundamental difference between taking a mediator's report on a set of recommendations and a recommendation to raise the sales tax by a percent—a fundamental difference.

**Mr. Murray:** I wonder if the Premier could indicate, knowing that the education funding committee that was assembled under him produced a report that he indicates was a draft, when he is expecting a final report from that committee.

**Mr. Doer:** No, I am not sure of the date. I am not sure whether they will rework some of their stuff based on comments made in this House. I am not sure whether they will rework some of their work. I saw some comments made by other stakeholders. I would imagine they have a job to do with their other stakeholders, because some of the recommendations that were made in the draft report were not supported by other members that were stakeholders. So I am not sure when it is going to be released.

All I know is last week we committed ourselves to releasing the floodway mediation report as quickly as possible. We could have held onto it, I guess, a week and had our discussions. We decided to release it instantly, almost.

**An Honourable Member:** I think we would have got it somehow.

**Mr. Doer:** Beg your pardon? The member opposite certainly knew—how should I call it?—how the torch was proceeding into the House with this report. That is okay. That is part of the job. But I am not sure of the date. I do not know whether they will get even a consensus. Obviously, they will have to, judging by comments made about rural, the impact on rural Manitoba. I imagine that there is going to be either a change in the position in the report or, there did not seem to me to be a consensus.

**Mr. Murray:** I am very interested to find out that the Premier has rejected their initial recommendation of the three areas. Today we learned that he is not sure whether there is going to be consensus.

What was the mandate of this committee?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, it was a number of issues. Part of their mandate was to look at the levels of various

levels of capacity. Part of capacity is, obviously, in my view, on the taxpayer. Part of the report is to deal with the relationship between municipalities and school divisions. Part of the issues is to deal with the way that costs can be managed. Part of what they were dealing with, as I recall it, was the whole issue of transparency.

One of the issues that worries me and the members on this side is there are so many different levels of funding and issues of funding that even members opposite cannot get it right about how much funding there is to the school divisions. So, if we cannot get it right in the Legislature, how is the public going to get it right? We will await the report. I do not have a copy of the final report.

\* (15:30)

**Mr. Murray:** So this is a report that will remain out in the wilderness, that may come forward, that may not come forward, that might have some relevance, that might not have some relevance. I find it interesting that the Premier would be part of that kind of, it just sounds like it is not managed very well. Either you are going to have a report with some kind of a recommendation, with some sort of deadline—I have no idea if he is assuming that they are volunteering their time. I do not know that. But to go through a process and say, "Well, yeah, there may be a report. We're not sure. We might not get the recommendations. I don't know when we are going to get the report," I just think it shows pretty weak management. Did you not set any time lines for them to get back to you with the recommendation?

**Mr. Doer:** These are volunteers. They are stakeholders. It is not a commission established by the government. It is not like the Norrie commission that was established by members opposite to look at boundaries and that recommended we go from 57 boundaries to 22, and we were paying the bills and calling the shots. This is more of a voluntary effort from stakeholders, as I understand it. As such, they all see things in education and municipal planning and financing a little bit differently. I think it was an opportunity to get them together. Maybe they can come up with a consensus, maybe they cannot, but it was an attempt to see what they could come up with.

It might be easy for every stakeholder to come up with a recommendation to increase taxes at our end, to lower taxes at their end, but that is just not

on, given the legislative framework we exist under. I am sure it will be out. I just noticed the comments made by Mr. Briese and the comments were contained in the draft report.

There seemed to be a variance when you have the head of all the municipalities saying one thing, and the major recommendation is both increased taxes and redistribution of taxes in the report. The increased taxes were dead on arrival here, and the redistribution of taxes was dead on arrival for the municipalities.

These are volunteers, and, as such, we did not establish a commission to go out and write a report that we are partially paying for so we can hold people accountable in terms of time lines. It was an attempt to try to bring people together. We have some unique natures of funding here in Manitoba, for example, the municipal tax transfer that is not in place in other provinces. We also have a second education tax called the ESL, which is unique to Manitoba, which we are trying to eliminate.

So there are lots of things that are unique to Manitoba. We will see. We are making progress. I noticed my ESL went down on my property tax bill. The cost went down again this year under our government, but it is more gradual than some other people would like it. I am not going to raise the sales tax.

**Mr. Murray:** Again, the Premier has asked a group of volunteers to put together a report to come up with some consensus. I think it is even most unfortunate when you have got a group of volunteers who would put time in over and above their regular jobs only to find that, you know, a report comes forward and it gets dismissed out of hand, and then to find that there is no real sense of any kind of time line.

I think it is perhaps somewhat disheartening to those volunteers that they have worked together to put a report together and that it just might be deep-sixed, and to know that as volunteers they are putting in a lot of extra time on an area that they think that there are opportunities on, and that there may not be any, you know, to use the Premier's word, they may not be able to reach consensus.

It just sounds to me like a pretty poorly thought-out process. One would argue, I mean, careful, because I know that the First Minister will take some

of these comments, as he is wont to do in these processes, and throw them back, but, I mean, somebody is paid to do a job that you would say, "Well, you are paid so we will take your response and we will do as we see fit, because at the end of the day you get paid and you walk away."

I just find it somewhat unfortunate that volunteers would be put in a position that they do not know whether they are going to have acceptance with what they come forward. There seems to be a very loose approach in how it is going to be delivered.

Nonetheless, the report, supposedly some final report, we saw a document that hopefully the final on the final report is bigger than the final report that we brought forward to this House, but that is, I guess, a matter of degrees, and the Premier has to deal with that.

Knowing that we have just seen the tax bills come out to residents, clearly, it is an issue I think that is important to Manitobans. I think they are wondering about where things are going. I think that the Premier was very quick to dismiss any increase in the provincial sales tax. The committee had, I think, if I recall correctly, there was a, b, c, d, e, f, g, maybe h in terms of recommendations that were around there.

The one that they recommended, of course, we understand and know that the Premier rejected. The fact that he has rejected it, could he indicate to me whether he has gone back to that committee to give them some direction as to not tying their hands, but just saying, "Do not go down this avenue or this avenue. I can tell you right now that those things are going to be unacceptable to the government."

**Mr. Doer:** Well, the member opposite chose to leak the report, which I know was not appreciated by all members, the volunteer members of that committee. Having said that, I expect the report will be in shortly, and we will deal with it accordingly.

**Mr. Murray:** Could the Premier give at least, I mean, a month, a year, when he talks about shortly? Is that before the end of 2004? I mean, the Minister of Education (Mr. Bjornson) had indicated that, and this gave everybody a lot of confidence that it would be done by the end of June maybe. So maybe the

First Minister could indicate at least what month and what year we might receive the report.

**Mr. Doer:** Oh, I expect it will be received in the summer season of 2004, which is only three weeks away, to start with.

**Mr. Murray:** What does the First Minister refer to as the summer season?

**An Honourable Member:** Pardon.

**Mr. Murray:** What does the First Minister refer to as the summer season?

**Mr. Doer:** The legal definition of summer, as opposed to the current weather patterns.

**Mr. Murray:** So the Premier is suggesting that this report will be received, to use his terminology, using the legal definition of summer, I personally do not know when—I just do not recall that. I will certainly look it up because I think those are dates that we will be watching closely. I just could ask: Is it the intent of the Premier, once he receives the report, to make the report public?

\* (15:40)

**Mr. Doer:** I am sure our past practice has been to release final reports expeditiously, and I am sure we will do so in this case. Last week, they were worried about the floodway report. Generally speaking, we are pretty quick at releasing reports.

**Mr. Murray:** The Premier is also pretty quick in dismissing certain reports as well. So I would ask the interest of how he was able to indicate that he would dismiss the education report, and yet we have Wally Fox-Decent's report. I appreciate that the Premier has a busy schedule, but I think that there are a couple of recommendations that I would hope that the Premier would see fit to do the right thing. I make reference, as I asked him in the House today, about ensuring that those non-union workers are not forced to pay union dues, and that the employer groups who are 95 percent non-unionized that will be working on the floodway, hopefully, would have a seat at the table.

Could he just confirm that he will look at those two recommendations and ensure that no non-unionized worker pays a union due, and that the

employer groups have a seat at the table along with the unions and the Floodway Authority?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, as I said, we have not made a final decision yet, but the member opposite will understand that a mediator's report contains a set of recommendations to deal with some disagreements and try to arrive at some consensus. It is a series of recommendations that have to be seen together. You cannot cherry-pick them.

The member opposite would understand that our primary goal is to get no strikes and lock-outs in the process. He obviously does not care about that. We do, and we are driven by the motivation to have the floodway dealt with on time. That allows us to be more predictable on budget. So the bottom line is that is our primary consideration. Mr. Fox-Decent has given us a way to do that.

We have not had an opportunity to discuss it yet since we received it. I had public events. After the report was issued, I had the condolence motions, as the member opposite did, and I went right to two speaking engagements that evening and then speaking engagements the next day and on to the racetrack that night. I have to show some solidarity with the constituents of the member opposite. We have not had an opportunity to discuss it with various ministers that have received the report.

I have to say, though, that the member opposite is driven by a narrow issue, and we are driven by the bigger picture. The bigger picture has a number of recommendations, and we will always make decisions based on the big picture. It is a bit of an omelette. The mediator's report is an omelette, and, to quote Sterling Lyon dealing with Autopac when he realized he could not sell it, that it is very difficult to "unscramble the omelette."

**Mr. Murray:** I am sure that the First Minister, through his busy schedule, has a chance to read the, I believe it is a five-page document. One of the recommendations, if he is not aware of, is the issue or recommendation that those non-unionized workers on the floodway would have to pay union dues.

So I guess one could say that you have to study and work and look at and have meetings and all that, but, surely, the First Minister would have a principle that he would be able to acknowledge whether he

agrees with the recommendation that non-unionized workers should be forced to pay union dues.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, that is not what the report says. The member opposite raised a lot of questions about forced unionization. He created this term and misused it, as the report indicated. He can create these terms all he wants. The bottom line is there is a set of recommendations. It is a road map to get to a fundamental place which is to have a framework in place, to have no strikes and lockouts. That is our goal. That has been our goal from day one.

We can argue that that denies people rights to strike, denies employers rights to lock out, but that is what we are after, and the member opposite might want to nibble away at various parts of the report, but we are looking at the big picture. He can look at little pieces.

We, in government, will look at the big picture, just as Brian Mulroney did for the Confederation Bridge. His goal was to get the bridge done in such a time that he did not have to continue to pay to subsidize ferries that were being replaced to some degree in that strait. He certainly went further than this report recommends, but each report is different. Of course, Mr. Fox-Decent was the, I think he was the head of the veteran admiralty group, the, I forget the term, reserve admiral in the Mulroney government, and it is kind of fitting; I guess some of that wisdom of those decisions on Confederation Bridge, I am sure, were cited to the member that wrote the report.

It is a set of recommendations, and I cannot just choose the ones that unions do not like, and I cannot just choose the recommendations that companies that might tender business might not like. I have got to deal with the set of recommendations that gets us to a point which is in the public interest. I am interested in the public interest; the member opposite is interested in a narrow interest. This government is interested in the public interest, so we will agree to disagree on it, I suppose.

As I say, we have not had a discussion. I expect by the end of the week we will have made a decision, but we have not had a chance to discuss it.

**Mr. Murray:** I always take great delight to hear the Leader of the provincial New Democratic Party mention the name of the former Prime Minister, Mr.

Mulroney, whom, yes, I worked for, and had a great opportunity to do so. I hope, knowing that the Leader of the New Democratic provincial party is associated with the Leader of the federal New Democratic Party, Mr. Layton, that the Premier is not just bringing up the former Prime Minister's name because either he or his associate, Mr. Layton, has Prime Minister envy, but, anyway, I digress.

I would like to say that the big picture is well, you know, one of those inheritance rights taxes, but anyway, I would say, when you talk about the big picture, Jack, please, do not bother. When you talk about the big picture, the Premier likes to talk about the big picture, and I find it interesting that he likes to somehow trivialize the fact in a democratic society that non-unionized workers who, by the way, have made a choice to work for a company, that is their choice, and it is also their choice to join a union. That is their choice, but what we are seeing is that this Premier is having some difficulty trying to come to terms with the fact of whether he should agree with forcing non-unionized workers to pay union dues on the floodway project.

I just find it interesting, his way of trying to sort of get around this is to invoke the name of a former Prime Minister, or to talk about somehow that he believes that his answers are that it is all about the big picture. In fact, I would very strongly argue with him, with the Premier, that when you are forcing non-unionized workers to pay union dues, that is a pretty big picture, because it sends a message to workers, not only here in Manitoba, but certainly sends a pretty strong message to companies across North America, Canada, what have you, about investing in Manitoba, that it is acceptable for the Premier of the province to agree that non-unionized workers should pay union dues.

\* (15:50)

We have had this discussion and I think we will continue to have it. He as the First Minister might want to sort of say that, well, that is just a narrow view of the world.

I would strongly argue with the First Minister that he is wrong. That is not a narrow view. That is a pretty substantive view on how his government is deemed to treat entrepreneurs, deemed to treat business and, frankly, deemed to treat workers, because workers have a democratic choice whether

they want to join a union or not. In his world as he sees it, he is prepared to agree that there should be no democratic choice. You just fleece the workers and they should have to pay union dues.

So I will watch this very closely, and I will be very happy to take this discussion out broader than just in this Legislature. If he thinks in his words that this is just a very narrow view of the world, that is his opinion. He has expressed it. I disagree with it. I think that forced unionization on any workers is not very narrow. I think it is incredibly undemocratic. But he will stand by his views and I will beg to differ with him in the strongest way possible, and I would like some clarification that when I asked in Question Period today whether the First Minister would agree to allow the employer groups to have a seat at the table in the negotiating process along with the unions so that they are not on the sidelines, the Premier indicated that they do have a seat because the Floodway Expansion Authority is at the table. Is that his interpretation of having employer groups at the bargaining table?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, the issue is fundamental: Are you going to accept the mediator's report in its entirety or are you going to reject it? I am surprised the member opposite would be so critical of the knowledge of Mr. Fox-Decent and state all kinds of factors that would lead to this and that. It really, really does speak to the fact that Mr. Fox-Decent is knowledgeable. So, surely, the member opposite would agree that Mr. Fox-Decent who has, I think, even worked years ago in other administrative offices in this building would balance issues that he has to balance, including the issues of businesses here in Manitoba.

He has done that for years, and I am surprised the member opposite is so critical of Wally Fox-Decent. If we were exceeding his report in its implementation, then the member opposite can make whatever comments he wants to. But the question for me is that he does not want to follow Mr. Fox-Decent's report. Our government is strongly looking at the report in very favourable ways, but we have not had our discussion yet.

So the issue is not what I would like. The question is what Mr. Fox-Decent has recommended. That is the issue. The member opposite is more extreme than Vic Toews when it comes to some of

these issues. He has got a right to be that way. I am looking at a mediator's report and the question is will we implement a mediator's report. Some of the comments the member opposite made about a report conducted by Mr. Fox-Decent quite surprises me.

**Mr. Murray:** Again, it probably makes for interesting reading, and I am sure that some staff member in the Premier's office is madly sending out his comments that would have some believe that somehow I have taken exception to Mr. Fox-Decent's report. That is not the issue. The issue is, simply, Mr. Fox-Decent, we understand, was brought into a very difficult position because of the bungling of the Doer government, to try to bring some sense to a process and he has brought forward a series of recommendations. There are some excellent recommendations in the report.

I think that if the Premier wants to go out and publicly say that I, somehow, am rejecting the report outright, I think that probably makes a good political spin for him, and makes him and others feel pretty good. It is inaccurate, and I stand by that. I have never, ever said that. I simply have asked about two specific pieces in it. If he wants to call it cherry-picking, the Premier can refer to it on whatever basis he wants to, but, regardless, there are two areas that I find troubling in the report. I find them troubling not because of who recommended it; I find it troubling that the Premier does not see any concern with the issue of having non-unionized workers pay union dues.

Of course, we know that that is just an additional cost to the taxpayers for no reason and, secondly, the notion that the employer groups are left out of the bargaining table. I think if it was indicated, and, again, the Premier loves to sort of make references to other members and other prime ministers. I have not heard him talk about Margaret Thatcher, but I suspect that is coming shortly, but it is what you believe.

**An Honourable Member:** Only on pensions.

**Mr. Murray:** Talk about cherry-picking, but, anyway I think there are two issues that are somewhat troubling in terms of the notion of how Manitoba, as a province, will conduct its business. What we see is that, rather than dealing with the issues at hand, the Premier talks about, well, we are not going to reject the report in its entirety. I agree

with that. I think that is sound and I hope on that we are on the same page, but I find it absolutely unacceptable that the Premier would just go down a road of trying to ratchet up. We get it from the other side; they talk about that it is rhetoric, somehow, for us to ask if it is acceptable for non-unionized workers to pay union dues, somehow that is political rhetoric, it is deemed to be unacceptable or extremist for us to ask is it acceptable to have the employers' groups sit at the bargaining table, and so we get labelled as extremist. I am telling you those kinds of comments, I think, are worthy of getting out into the public to see what the public thinks of forcing non-unionized workers to pay union dues, that that somehow is deemed to be extremist. I do not think it is.

I have been very clear. I have been on record. I am opposed to it. I have asked the Premier numerous times if he is opposed to non-unionized workers paying union dues. To me, that is a fundamental yes or no question.

The First Minister likes to kind of go back and talk about rejecting the report, accepting it in its entirety, blah, blah, blah. I find it quite enlightening, shall I say, that the Premier of the province of Manitoba cannot answer a simple yes-or-no question on whether he agrees with non-unionized workers having to pay union dues.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, we are dealing with the Fox-Decent report. I said before that this is a man of wisdom. Members opposite created all these terms like forced unionization that have descended upon their rhetoric like a house of cards. I am not going to answer the member except to say that it is my job to deal with the public interest. The public interest is served by no strike or lockout. I have a recommendation how to do that. What we want to do is no strike or lockout. There was an argument about how to do that between various stakeholders. We now have a report of how to proceed. We will either accept it or reject it.

**Mr. Murray:** So what the Premier is indicating is that he will either accept this report in its entirety, or reject it in its entirety. Is that what he is saying?

\* (16:00)

**Mr. Doer:** I am saying stay tuned, but, certainly, there is a series of recommendations that are related

to each other. Our goal is to get no strike and no lockout. I am not moving away from that objective. At the end of the day, four years from now the member opposite can go out and campaign on whipping up the no strike and lockout agreement. That is fine. Hopefully, most of the floodway will be completed by then, this stage at least.

**Mr. Murray:** Well, I think most of the floodway would have been completed without forcing non-unionized workers to pay union dues, much the way that the Z-dike was completed in a very efficient manner by those companies in Manitoba that are proud Manitoba companies that have workers that choose not to be part of the union. They went out and built the Z-dike in some very difficult conditions, quite, I would suggest, not conditions that would be conducive over a long-term project as we are going to see on the floodway expansion project. These were under-the-gun conditions in the sense that there was a flood coming and they had to pull together as Manitobans, as proud Manitobans, as entrepreneurs of Manitoba and do the right thing and build the Z-dike. They did that on time and on budget.

Again, I just find it interesting that the Premier will not acknowledge that, that he is more intent on trying to figure out. I would ask him, is his interpretation that by forcing non-unionized workers to pay union dues that that somehow will guarantee that there is a no strike, no lockout provision.

**Mr. Doer:** We have a report that allows us, gives us a road map to get to no strike or lockout. That is what the government's objective is. The issue that the member opposite raised for months of no forced unionization has been dealt with in the report. His assertions fell like a house of cards and he is left with very little after the mediator's report, but he can carry on. We are going to achieve the objective of no strike or lockout. That is our management objective. We represent management here, and we will represent management as effectively as we can.

**Mr. Murray:** This is a revelation. First it was the floodway that was going to be at the table as management. Now, has he indicated that we, meaning his office, the Premier's office, is going to be the one that represents management?

**Mr. Doer:** When I mentioned no strike or lockout, it is certainly our objective, certainly the advice we have received and we think good advice to have no

strike or lockout. The member opposite can go all over the place, but we are interested in no strike or lockout. Have I made myself clear? No strike or lockout. The member opposite may not worry about it, but we are interested in no strike or lockout.

**Mr. Murray:** Could the Premier indicate what no strike or lockout provision was building the Z-dike?

**Mr. Doer:** This is a five-year agreement. It is not dissimilar to what was there. Tembec had a much more stringent one here in Manitoba. Simplot, years ago, had one. Hydro development had one. This is a unique way of dealing with this.

The member opposite can substitute his judgment for Wally Fox-Decent's. He heard the arguments. He heard the discussions. I am sure he heard statements opposite. He wants to substitute his judgment for Mr. Fox-Decent's. That is his right.

Mr. Fox-Decent has given us a plan of how to achieve no strike or lockout. That is what we asked him to do and now we have to consider how he is doing it. But he has recommended no strike or lockout. That is our fundamental concern.

**Mr. Murray:** The Premier, I know, always finds it convenient, as we have seen in this Chamber, and there is a history with this government, that whenever there is trouble on the horizon, if it is a Crown corporation, they turn to the head of that Crown corporation to indicate maybe they should write a letter which is basically a way of copping out and saying that, "Well, it is not us. We are listening to the head of this Crown corporation, or the head of that Crown corporation," when it is convenient.

Mr. Chairperson, I know, again, that it probably serves great fodder in caucus and Cabinet meetings and maybe at NDP gatherings to try to indicate that, I am sure they say this, although I do not know this, but I would not be surprised if they went on and said, the Leader of the Opposition, the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba is somehow opposed to Wally Fox-Decent. Again, I suspect that sounds probably pretty good around the NDP coffee pot, water cooler.

It is just not accurate. This, obviously, is not about Wally Fox-Decent. It is about a decision that this Premier has to decide whether he, philosophically, believes that it is important or that he

agrees with the fact that it is acceptable to charge non-unionized workers to ensure that they pay a union due over the four-year time frame of the project, that that is somehow acceptable to say that it is somehow extremist to stand up for workers, to say that we do not think that anybody who is non-unionized should be forced to pay union dues.

It is not about Wally Fox-Decent. This is clearly about the Premier of Manitoba and his ability or inability to stand up for all Manitobans and a principle of philosophical importance of forcing non-unionized workers to pay union dues. That is what this is about. He wants to go on and make sure that all correspondence and all literature and all Hansard and all that has reference to Wally Fox-Decent. Well, it really comes down to the Premier of the province making a decision that he believes is the right decision.

There are two issues in this report. The essence of the report, Mr. Chairperson, is a very good report. It is a good report because the individual, Mr. Fox-Decent, that put it together is a very skilled person. I think it is important to know that Mr. Fox-Decent found himself in a position where the Minister of Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton) has gone on the record very clearly as saying, "Yes, there would be a project labour agreement and that everybody on the floodway project would have to pay union dues." So that was on the table and on record.

So you have Mr. Fox-Decent who is trying to make semblance, and as a mediator he is looking at ways to move a process through. The fact that he has produced a report that, I think, is very genuine in essence, in scope, but, clearly, has two recommendations that are troublesome. I think the Premier of the province of Manitoba has taken, basically, a very weak position by not standing up for workers who are non-unionized by saying, "Well, I am either going to accept the report or I am going to reject it." I would say that I hope that is not the way he and his Cabinet ministers and caucus colleagues address the situation.

I do not think it is a matter of accepting or rejecting. I think it is a matter of looking at the recommendations and looking at those that he, as the Premier of Manitoba, does not believe reflect true democratic principles in our province, probably in our country. But, certainly, this is a Manitoba issue that he does not think it makes sense to force non-unionized workers to simply pay union dues.

I think that for him to try to hide behind Mr. Fox-Decent on this shows weakness and lack of leadership on the Premier's part. All he has to say is that this is an excellent report and that we want to get on with building the floodway, but the fact that we will not put non-unionized workers who, Mr. Chairperson, have made a decision to not join a union, so he should stand up and say, "I respect those non-unionized workers who have made a decision to not pay union dues. So that part of the report we are not going to accept."

As far as excluding the employers' groups who are responsible for the employers, 95 percent of the employees who will be working on the floodway, the employer groups are non-unionized. But that recommendation was absent and silent in the report.

So to go through it and to make those two subtle changes, I think you have a very solid report that would respect workers' rights to choose, and would respect the fact that employers' groups would not have the unions negotiating on their behalf, but they could stand up and negotiate for themselves.

\*(16:10)

**Mr. Doer:** I really think we have made some progress here because the member opposite has said that the essence of the report is a good report. Now I will have to check the Hansard, but, certainly, then we have to deal with the essence of the report and the essence for us is no strike or lockout. So thank you very much for that.

**Mr. Murray:** Again, I know this is what I said earlier. The First Minister will love to cut and paste and cherry-pick because it makes for good political rhetoric around the caucus table, Mr. Chairperson. *[interjection]* What is that?

**An Honourable Member:** You have never done that in the past.

**Mr. Murray:** I think it is very clear what I have said. If you look past the languishing ability to make a decision from members opposite on a very important issue, we have said very clearly that we do not believe in forcing non-unionized members to pay union dues and that is in the report. I disagree with that part of the report. I have said it publicly; I will say it again publicly.

Just the same way that I do not agree in the report with respect to having employer groups sit on

the sidelines while the unions are at the bargaining table, I disagree with that part of the report. When it comes to training and Aboriginal opportunities in the workplace, we support that.

We support it because the employer groups, those people who will do the work support it and they are the ones who are held accountable. So we do not have any quarrel with that. But, certainly, we have more than enough to be able, I believe, to stand up and challenge the Premier to do the right thing and get a seat at the table for the employer groups, allow them to be part of the bargaining process. Do not exclude them at the expense of putting unionized groups out there to negotiate. Those are the two issues.

He will want to replay, fast forward, edit, all those sorts of things on comments on the report. There are some good things in the report. But those two initiatives which lay at the feet of the Premier to make a decision on whether he accepts them, and, by accepting them, whether he agrees with the issues of forcing non-unionized workers to pay union dues and excluding the employers' group from the bargaining table, those are issues that the Premier of the province of Manitoba has the ability to deal with.

So I will ask the First Minister this: When will Manitobans know whether he agrees with forcing non-unionized workers to pay union dues and whether he agrees with excluding the employer groups from the bargaining process? When will he make that decision?

**Mr. Doer:** We will, hopefully, make a decision by the end of the week. We have not had a chance to discuss it yet, and we will. We have had it less than a week. One of the great strengths of our government is we have released it in a way that the member opposite could chew it around a bit. We certainly have got the report and so has the member opposite, and as he said, the essence of the report is very good.

**Mr. Murray:** Without the ability of the Premier to answer what is a fundamental philosophical question, he obviously supports non-unionized workers paying union dues and supports excluding the employers' groups from the bargaining process. Knowing that he supports that, could he indicate to the House what additional cost to taxpayers will there be to force non-unionized workers to pay union dues during a four-year expansion of the floodway project?



**Mr. Doer:** Well, the member opposite will know that there is also a recommendation to modernize The Construction Industry Wages Act, something that I think he called for in the question he asked a while ago. So the bottom line in the issue is not this item, this little pecking away at this little item, pecking away at that little item, pecking away at another item. The issue is do you accept the essence of the Fox-Decent report and the no strike or lockout and the methodology to get there, or do you not.

It is interesting when I talk to average folks that had seen some of the newscasts on television, they said, "Oh, there it is. Wally Fox-Decent. I saw his report, and I saw a union leader saying, 'Well, this is not going far enough,' but I saw a representative of some of the potential people that might win some tenders say, 'Oh, it did not go far enough.'" It looks like Mr. Fox-Decent came in with another report of Solomon to get this thing going ahead.

The person that I talked to also said, "You know, I really think it is great that Mr. Fox-Decent has recommended that there be no strike or lockouts. That is really good." That was an average citizen at a food store, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

**An Honourable Member:** That was what? Your worker, or your SA, or who was it?

**Mr. Doer:** No, I think it was somebody that actually, dare I say it, leans in the opposite persuasion, but probably when he noticed how extreme members opposite are—

**An Honourable Member:** So he was humouring you is what he was doing.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, humour is not a bad thing from time to time. Having said that, out of all this noise, this is what came out of the report. No strikes or lockouts, people think that is a good thing. A union person says, "Well, it does not go far enough here." A person who might get a tender contract: It does not go far enough there.

Mr. Fox-Decent says again no forced unionization. Somebody says, "That sounds like a sensible way to go." If members opposite want to be extreme to that view, if they want to be out there in the little outrigger, way out there to the right, way, way out to the right, so far out to the right they cannot get back into the boat, that is fine.

**An Honourable Member:** At least we are not to the left.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, you may be.

**An Honourable Member:** Thank God we are not so far to the left that the only thing we know is the union buddies.

**Mr. Doer:** Oh, you know, this old outdated, "we ban union and corporate donations," I know members opposite want to bring it back.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Does the Member for Russell want to speak?

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** In time. You just carry on your job.

**Mr. Murray:** I think, just for the record, we should say that the latest rant by the Premier, not once did he mention Mulroney. It is amazing. He went on a pretty long rant there, but Mulroney's name never came up, which is always, maybe, a little sign of progress.

I will say, Mr. Chair, that I am fascinated that something as fundamental as workers' rights to choose whether they pay union dues or they do not pay union dues, that fundamental right that the Premier of the province of Manitoba, the Leader of the New Democratic Party, calls that "pecking away." That is very interesting, very enlightening. It is perhaps one of those things that maybe he could pass on to his federal counterpart, Mr. Layton, to bring that in as a policy, because it apparently, somehow, speaks to some bigger picture. That would be an interesting debate to have on the national stage.

\* (16:20)

I would say that the First Minister (Mr. Doer) recalls excluding employer groups from a bargaining table while the union is there. He calls that somehow "pecking away." That is an interesting description. I think, as has been said, it perhaps shows more about the individual that said it than what they are trying to portray. I will take the First Minister at his word that making non-unionized workers have to pay union dues as "pecking away." It is not what I would call it. I think there are Manitobans and workers that would see it in a different perspective. I will take the First Minister's position that standing up for workers to

decide whether they want to be forced to pay union dues as being some kind of a right-wing extreme position. That is the Premier of the province of Manitoba, the Leader of the New Democratic Party's position.

I will stand up for workers and say that, no, I think workers should have a chance to choose whether they are forced to pay union dues or not. I will stand up for employer groups when there is a project to be discussed in the province of Manitoba and the unions are at the table, the Floodway Authority is at the table. But the 95 percent of companies that are non-unionized are exempt, that are left on the sidelines. And, yes, if it is deemed to be picking away, well, I am going to pick away at that until either this Premier will stand up in front of Manitobans and he agrees it is the right thing to exclude them from the process, or he does the right thing and includes them.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, just for the record, a couple weeks ago, with Desmond Tutu, I did praise former Prime Minister Mulroney on his fight against the South African apartheid regime. He would remember that.

Secondly, I did point out that Manitoba was the first jurisdiction in North America to ban South African wines from sale, and that was well appreciated by Desmond Tutu. So Manitoba has got an interesting history on human rights, and on the issue of taking on Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan on South Africa, I gave credit with Desmond Tutu at that dinner that was sponsored by the Governor General, and he should be credited with that. That and the Confederation Bridge look like two—having said that, the issue is the member opposite has said the essence of the report is a good report. I thank him for those comments, and we will take that advice under serious consideration.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Just an interesting dialogue between the leaders of the two official parties in our province. I would just comment that we would not have really needed Wally Fox-Decent to mediate anything if we had not had a discrepancy between the Minister of Water Stewardship (Mr. Ashton) and the Premier, when the minister came out and directly indicated that we will force unionization and we will force union dues. That was the party's position.

The Premier, I guess, realized and recognized that his minister went a little too far. So we had to go

to the expense of bringing Wally Fox-Decent in to solve the problem between the Premier and his lead minister on this issue when they had differing opinions. So the taxpayers have already suffered somewhat in their pockets as a result of the damage control that Wally Fox-Decent had to bring to the whole process, and that is a bit of a shame.

Anyway, we will move on to what the Premier may call "pecking" or "picking away." A little earlier I asked him to clarify for us where the communicator that has moved over to the Floodway Authority came from, and he indicated from the Department of Agriculture.

I guess I just want to go back and clarify, Mr. Chair. I asked whether, in fact, there had been an Order-in-Council appointment, this person had been hired by Order-in-Council appointment. Could the Premier tell me whether Mr. Modha ever worked for him in his office?

**Mr. Doer:** I have just checked. I have not got all the facts but he, Mr. Modha, did work, was hired in September. I believe the date was September 7, 1999, that is a full month before we were elected. So, in my understanding, he was hired in a civil service position, civil service function. He did work in the communication area and analysis area subsequent to that and then he is now working in the Floodway Authority.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Did Mr. Modha work in Cabinet communications?

**Mr. Doer:** I believe he was one of the seconded positions in there and, as I have indicated in previous Estimates, there were comparable numbers of seconded people into the Cabinet communications from the previous government and in our government.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** That clarifies things, but the Premier led us to believe at the beginning of the discussion around Mr. Modha that he came from the Department of Agriculture. Quite frankly, I do not know what he was trying to hide.

The reality was that he worked in Cabinet communications and whether he was seconded or not, I question why the Premier could not be open and honest and forthright and indicate to us that he left Cabinet communications and went over to work

for the Floodway Authority. What was the hidden agenda?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, I said I would get the facts and not answer fully until I had them. I did say my recollection was that he was hired before we came into office; that was correct. I did say he was doing both analysis and communications; that was correct. I did say he was hired from there to go into the area of the Floodway Authority; that was correct. I also said that I did not know whether an Order-in-Council was signed or not, and I said I would take that as notice.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I am really glad that the Premier finally has indicated that he worked in a political capacity for this government. So it is nice to have the Premier come clean. Anyway, I—

**An Honourable Member:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Order, please. The Member for River East has the floor.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would just like to move on a bit to comments that were made today during Question Period by the Minister of Agriculture.

I do know that there is a training strategy that is a component of the Floodway Agreement, and I understand that there will be an Aboriginal training component. Maybe the Premier could just indicate to me what that would be comprised of. Are there certain targets? Is there anything definitive around that, or is that still to be worked out?

**Mr. Doer:** I would point out to members opposite that there is no environmental licence yet granted. We are having broad discussions with the federal government through the Floodway Authority. The member responsible for the floodway can answer this more specifically, but I want to point out there is no licence granted. I would point out that Mr. Gilroy was successful.

We had discussions with Mr. Rock and letters of correspondence with Mr. Rock when he was responsible for this project, rather than having two separate processes that would have taken up to three years. We were successful in contracting that to be one process, but we are having general discussions.

You know, obviously, we have to get our environmental licence; otherwise, we will have to go back to square one on some of the issues we are working on, obviously, training and recreation and other concepts of the proposal, but the specific questions could be answered by the lead minister.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** I understand that all those things do have to be worked out and that we certainly would not want to see the floodway move ahead without the proper environmental process. I was just wondering whether, in fact, there were discussions ongoing on the training component and what that might look like. I think the Premier answered my question in saying that there was nothing at this point in time around training that is solid or concrete, that that is all a matter of further discussion and negotiation. Would I be correct in assuming that?

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Doer:** Well, in light of the fact that I made some statements in terms of recollection from five years ago that mostly turned out to be correct, but were not totally to the member's satisfaction on another question, I want to be very careful. I would ask the lead minister to go into specifics. I think the member opposite used the term, there is no—I will have to go back and look at Hansard.

I do think that we are committed to training; we are committed to Aboriginal training. We are committed to Aboriginal training that will have elements of apprenticeship and elements of non-apprenticeship.

**An Honourable Member:** Limestone again.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, the member opposite mentions Limestone. Of course, the members opposite were opposed to Limestone, and it came in half a billion dollars under budget. Thank goodness we brought it in.

**An Honourable Member:** Seventeen graduates.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, the member opposite would know. If the member opposite, when he became Minister of Education, did not carry out the excellent planning processes of training that were put in place before he got there, I am shocked to hear that.

I will leave that specific answer to the minister responsible that would have more of the details than

I would have. The member is asking a detailed question.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** In view of the comments today that were made by the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) that farmers should, in fact, look to the floodway for economic opportunity because the net farm incomes have decreased some 50 percent or 51 percent in Manitoba, could I ask whether there is a strategy in place for farmer training for the floodway?

**Mr. Doer:** I know the Minister of Agriculture is totally committed to the family farm. I know that she has brought forward proposals to have a generation of farmers carry on with the next generation of farmers and bridging generations. It has been a tough year for farmers. I mean, it has been tough in 2003. We acknowledge that. So far in 2004, the first quarter of 2004, thankfully, the income is up, but it is up over a very low level last year. I know the Minister of Agriculture feels very strongly in the survival of the family farm and people working on the farm. We will leave it at that.

**Mr. Derkach:** I would just like to pick up from where the member from River East left in terms of the ag issue. I was actually appalled, as members on this side of the House were today, to hear the Minister of Agriculture give her solution for farmers shoring up their family incomes.

Now, I do not know how much the Premier knows about agriculture and about a family farm, but since the BSE crisis hit this province, farm families have probably been busier than ever trying to hold on, because they have had to lay off staff who, perhaps, were integral to the operation of the farm.

Today, it is the family that is carrying on the responsibility on that farm. The workload has not only increased by 10 or 15 percent, it has increased like 100 percent, because there are more animals on the farm today because they cannot be sold. So the workload has just increased along with the costs.

The minister's response today was that they should look for off-farm work. Now, I would like to know whether the Premier supports that statement that was made by the Minister of Agriculture and whether, in fact, that is his position with respect to agricultural producers in this province.

**Mr. Doer:** To be perfectly honest, there was so much noise in the House when the member was answering the question that I could hardly hear a word. I am sure she felt in her answer she was getting the same volume across the way. Having said that, I know she is totally committed to the family farm and I know she is a member of a family farm, as she indicated in the next question.

The bottom line is that I think all of us in this House want to see the family farm sustainable and on its own right while we recognize that some people have chosen to supplement their family farm income with other employment. I think all of us want to see the family farm be an economic unit that can survive on its own right. We recognized last year that a 50% decline in income was very, very tough on many family farms. We said that on the BSE anniversary, the minister said that, and I think all sides of this House agree with that.

**Mr. Derkach:** Well, Mr. Chair, regardless of the noise level in the House, the Premier sits right next to the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Agriculture. I heard very clearly because, up until that point, there was not an overabundance of noise in the Chamber. When I was sitting here in my place, I could hear the minister very, very clearly. So the Premier had to have heard her because he sits next to her.

Mr. Chair, what I heard was quite appalling because, as far as I am concerned, our farmers are professional. Our ag producers are professional agriculturalists. These are people who take their profession as seriously as any chief executive officer of any corporation in this province. The tasks that they perform are probably far more complex in terms of trying to manage the multi-faceted approach to agriculture that we have today and the changing environment in agriculture. In addition to that, these people are put under tremendous pressure by governments, at the provincial level and at the federal level, in terms of regulations that keep being jammed down their throats and all to appease a non-agrarian society.

As of today, I want to ask the Premier whether he thinks it is fair in his mind, as the chief executive officer of this province, this Premier of this province, whether he feels that it is fair to ask farmers, to ask our ag producers, those many family farms who are having such difficulty coping not only with the workload, but also with the financial stresses,

whether it is fair for his Agriculture Minister to suggest that if they have to make ends meet they should go and find off-farm work.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, Mr. Chairperson, the Minister of Agriculture is totally committed to the family farm. I have known her as an opposition critic, a government member and a Cabinet minister that is totally committed to the family farm and totally committed to farm incomes.

Three of the biggest payments we have made in government since we have been elected on an emergency basis have been to farmers and farm income. She is the minister responsible for that and she has continuously made those recommendations to Cabinet. I think our first year, the spring of 2000, she recommended we put \$50 million back into the farm income. In 2001, she recommended I think the figure was \$47 million to be matched by the federal government.

I do not believe there was anything in 2002. In 2003, was the BSE situation where considerable millions of dollars were put in place. So this person has recommended close to \$150 million in extra support for farm families over and above the budget that has been produced in the Legislature. The budget itself is beyond what the budget was as a base budget.

She also was accused in the House of not signing an agreement which she had signed. So I think that members opposite should know that we were part of the framework agreement and then we were part of the amended framework agreement. So allegations were flying left, right and centre in the House at that point. I know the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) supports the family farm.

\* (16:40)

**Mr. Derkach:** The Premier, I am not asking him to applaud the efforts of the Minister of Agriculture. If he wants to be a cheerleader for her, that is his prerogative. We have a Minister of Agriculture who has been saddled with not only one portfolio, but keeps getting portfolios that actually demand the attention of a full-time minister, whether it is the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, and we used to have in this province a Department of Rural Development that looked after the economic development of communities and supported the

economic development of communities. That has now been rolled into the Agriculture portfolio and it has been lost in the Agriculture portfolio. This is another example of what the Premier's view is of rural Manitoba.

Then, today, we have the Minister of Agriculture announcing in her answer to a question the new policy of this government. Now I have no personal attack to foist on the Minister of Agriculture. Personally, I know that she is a decent individual. That is not the issue here.

We are talking about a Minister of Agriculture who is part of an institution of this government and who has to carry out the policies of this government. The policies of this government have to stem from the Premier.

Today, we had the Minister of Agriculture announce that if farmers wanted to make ends meet, they should go out and find work off their farm. I am simply asking the Premier if he supports this principle, if he supports this policy, if he supports this approach in terms of making our family farms and our farms in general, being able to sustain themselves over the course of the period of time that the BSE crisis is going to be with us.

**Mr. Doer:** As I said before, we in government support the family farm. We have put over \$150 million into the family farm. The Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), as I recall the question, was being accused of not signing a, quote, "agreement." She was stating, "Read the budget and look at the budget and see what is in the budget."

We came on board on the framework agreement. Members opposite said we should not. Then the agreement became amended with action from other provinces after different elections. We agreed to the amended agreement. She was still being accused in the House of not signing onto the agreement when she had. I recall the context of the question and she was being accused again of something that just was not fundamentally, factually true.

So, beyond that, if she did not support the family farm and family farm income she would not have signed the amended agreement. She would not recommend to the Cabinet that we sign the amended agreement. She would not have recommended to Cabinet the fundamental agreement and the govern-

ment would not agree to put in to support the family farm.

**Mr. Derkach:** We are getting carried away here. I am going to ask the Premier to focus his attention on the question that was asked. Sometimes that is difficult in the Chamber, but I am going to really ask the Premier to pay attention to the question and that is: Is this now the policy of this government? Regardless of whether they support the family farm or not, the way you support it is not shown by telling farmers that they should go out and seek off-farm income. Is the Premier saying that it is their policy now to ask farmers to go out and seek off-farm income to sustain their livelihoods?

**Mr. Doer:** Our policy is to support the family farm.

**Mr. Derkach:** I think it is sad that we cannot get a straight answer from the Premier. I mean, regardless of how he tries to couch this, he either has to say yes, this is the policy of the government; no, the minister misspoke herself. I know that is a very difficult thing to do. Sometimes in this House we do misspeak and we have to retract some of the comments that were made. Far better do it that way, and we will make sure that every farmer knows the comments that were made by this minister today, because I do not know of any other jurisdictions where ministers of Agriculture, or any other responsibility that ministers might have, would advocate that those people they have responsibility for should go and should suck it up and go and find work elsewhere to sustain their livelihoods. That is basically what we told farmers today in this Chamber.

Now, Mr. Chairperson, the Premier also said that the government has signed the amendment to the APF agreement that was put forward, I believe, by some other provinces including Saskatchewan. Is the Premier now indicating to this Chamber that, in fact, Manitoba has signed onto the amendment to the APF agreement?

**Mr. Doer:** We have approved a signature on the agreement and the federal government is aware of it, and the documents in terms of the province have been signed.

**Mr. Derkach:** Just a couple of final questions. Can I ask the Premier, then, can he tell the House whether he has recommended, along with the signature of the

amended agreement, whether or not this is going to include the issue of negative margins?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, I will get the specifics, but we signed the framework agreement when it was improved and we had recommendations to sign it. As I understand it, the amended agreement also provides improvements. I want to make sure I got the exact improvements, to be precise.

You can ask that question of the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), but, as I recall it, there were a couple of improvements we made in the negotiations with Vanclief and then there are other improvements were made in the amended agreement.

**Mr. Derkach:** Well, Mr. Chair, I find this a very significant revelation by the Premier and I think that it is very important for that announcement to go out posthaste. If the Premier says today that he has instructed his Cabinet and his minister and approval has been given to sign the amended agreement including the negative margin, I know he has not said that they have; he said he will get the details on that aspect of it, but there are farmers that are waiting out there desperately to get some indication from the government and we have made announcements on much lesser issues than this.

I would hope that the Premier would, together with the Minister of Agriculture, engage in a communication news release indicating that, in fact, Manitoba is in on the amended agreement and also on the negative margin.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, I believe the Minister of Agriculture said that three times last week in the House and at least once or twice this time.

**Mr. Derkach:** No, I do not want to correct the Premier, except to say that the minister said that once seven out of ten provinces have signed, then Manitoba would look at the agreement. That was one of the conditions that she said Manitoba was waiting for. I believe that the minister left it at that and did not indicate that they had signed the agreement at all.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, I will check the Hansard, but, you know, this comes back to my point about the noise in the House. I will check Hansard and I will come back with it tomorrow, but I think that I am not sure of the legality of signatures. I mean, we have approved the amended agreement, and I think the

minister said that last week. In fact, I think she said it on Tuesday or Wednesday of last week, but maybe Wednesday, I think it was, she was asked and she said, "It is approved."

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Derkach:** Well, and that is an important item, Mr. Chair, and if that, in fact, is the case, then certainly I will be the first one to stand in my place and thank the government for recognizing the importance of this.

Additionally to that, I want to ask the Premier, laying all political rhetoric aside, whether he would also view the importance of a cash advance for farmers right now who cannot sell their cattle.

Prices are dropping about 5 cents a day on livestock right now, and I have been getting calls in my constituency office from producers who have taken their livestock to a point right now where they should be marketed, and because of the timing and because of circumstances, there is just no market for them. As a matter of fact, buyers are telling them not to bring their cattle in.

I am asking the Premier whether or not, along with his minister, his Cabinet would look at the feasibility and the practicality in putting in place a cash advance for livestock, just like we have for grain. It is not a gimme; it is not a grant. This is a cash advance against inventory that could be accessed by farmers to pull them through this summer's feeding program and perhaps give them time to market their livestock when the border does reopen, hopefully, in the near future.

**Mr. Doer:** Obviously, everybody here wants the border to open. We had a program in place over the winter to deal with the cull cows which was not reciprocated by Ottawa. It was, now, reciprocated by Ottawa. I know the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) was meeting today with the Minister of Agriculture from Saskatchewan, I believe, on some of these issues, and I do not deny the pressure.

**Mr. Derkach:** Mr. Chair, I am sorry to be pestering the Premier on these issues, but they are issues of such importance and magnitude that I really think that the First Minister does have some responsibility here and must take the lead on these issues.

I am not discounting or discrediting the Minister of Agriculture in any way, shape or form because I know these are Cabinet decisions that have to be made at Executive Council, but, Mr. Chair, I do plead with the First Minister to reconsider, not because we proposed it, I think it does not matter at this point in time.

I think, and I will say to the Premier right now, the loan program was of some benefit to some farmers. The cull-cow program was of some benefit to some farmers. The feeding program was of benefit, but we know that at this point in time, things have gotten worse out there, and it is not so much the wallet of the farmer that I am worried about, it is more the status of the family on the farm and also the community that they live in.

So it is for this reason that we are saying to the government to perhaps look again at the practicality of a cash advance program to inject some much-needed cash into the pockets of farm families and communities because, let us face it, this is an economic engine that is coming to a stop, and a little bit of a boost at this point in time can keep it going over this next hill that it has got to climb.

So I plead with the First Minister with respect to that, but, secondly, I just wanted to conclude by asking the First Minister whether or not there was an Order-in-Council passed that gave approval for the amended amendment to the APF, to the framework agreement to be signed, whether that was a Cabinet document or whether that was a simple, I guess, directive given to the Minister of Agriculture or approval given to the Minister of Agriculture.

**Mr. Doer:** The issue of the signature with Ottawa I will take as notice, but the issue of approving the financial authority for the amended agreement has gone through the department. Obviously, the members opposite know it goes through our financial analysis. It has gone through the appropriate authorities.

**Mr. Derkach:** I would understand by that that we are going to be fully funding 40 percent of the province's share in the amended agreement. I think the Premier understands that that is the question I am asking. Secondly, I was wondering if he would comment on the cash advance.

**Mr. Doer:** We are trying to get the border open. We met with the U.S. officials yesterday. The

Undersecretary of State, I think, J. D. Penn, is going to be here next week. The Undersecretary of Agriculture, I will meet with two weeks from now with the International Meat Conference. Secondly, we are trying to improve the slaughter capacity. Thirdly, we recognize that there continue to be real economic challenges.

I appreciate the advice the member has provided. I know we are discussing a range of issues. We do want to get more slaughter capacity here. We are really frustrated. I am sure producers are even more frustrated that we have not been able to get some ideas. We get them to a certain stage and then we cannot get them to the next stage. I do think that the situation the producers are in right now is just awful, with having only 19 000 cattle finished. On May 10, there were 19 000 cattle that were being finished here in Manitoba, or slaughtered here in Manitoba. So we are working with small operations. We are working, obviously, with the co-op. We have one proposal that went to Ottawa. It did not get approved. Another proposal is before Ottawa. We will need inspectors.

At the end of the day, we would like to increase the capacity, because consumers want to eat the beef, and producers have got the cattle. We are frustrated. Last year it was dealing with the culled cows instead of slaughter, a feed program for the 8 percent that would normally be culled. The fall was the drought transportation; the summer was the feed program, and then the slaughter program before that did not work. It seems to us that we have got to get some more permanent solutions in place, irrespective of the border.

Having said that, I was actually just talking to the Minister of Industry about it. We really want to move. We were talking about Saskatchewan again about some ideas, too, with the Minister of Agriculture.

But I accept your advice. I accept what you are saying to me is true. I know the Minister of Agriculture feels the same way. I know all of us do. So just let me thank him for that advice. As I say, I do not give any Cabinet minister, including this one, a chequebook. That is a good thing, because it does require the usual—any proposal that comes from the department goes to the Treasury Board. We moved things quickly before on the slaughter program, when we moved it into a feed program, but the

member is right about the price issue and the pressure it puts on people.

*Mr. Doug Martindale, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

**Mr. Derkach:** Boy, oh boy, I do want to conclude, because I know the Premier has been here a long time, but I would just like to say there is a mechanism. I have talked to a number of producers who are prepared to invest their own money into—I would not say they are small, they would be medium in relation to Manitoba sizes, I guess—medium-sized processing facilities in the province. But it is the same old story. There needs to be a program in place that would assist in the capital of these facilities that could be written off over a period of time.

I noted, from the government's performance, that grow bonds have sort of been shelved and are not being used for these kinds of purposes. The Grow Bonds Program was designed for this very kind of endeavour. The money for Grow Bonds, the guarantee for Grow Bonds came from lotteries. That is what the VLT money went to. I note that, I think in this government's term, I think there have been about two Grow Bonds that have been approved in the last four and a half years.

It is not even government money. It is actually people who are prepared to invest in an endeavour like this. All the government does is provide the guarantee in case the money is lost, the principal is lost. The government does not guarantee any of the interest or the costs associated with interest. It simply guarantees the principal. So it is the people who, instead of investing in the towers in New York and other places in the world, put their money into their own local economy, and all the government does is guarantee the principal.

\* (17:00)

I am wondering whether the Premier's Executive Council has looked at expanding the Grow Bonds Program to allow for these kinds of medium-sized processing facilities to access these kinds of monies. I think it is an opportunity. I am not saying this because this was a program that I had some responsibility for. I am saying it because it made good sense then. I think in times like we are facing today it might make good sense to help get this



fledgling, if you like, processing industry off the ground in our province.

**Mr. Doer:** I think the principle of Grow Bonds is good. I think sometimes the application of it—I know that Quarry Oaks was a real problem. I think there was a considerable amount of money we lost at Quarry Oaks. The member opposite would remember that decision. We are willing to share the risk with producers and with other levels of government. We recognize that it is a risk. We are willing to use public funds to share the risk for slaughter because we think it makes more sense. We would rather have the products consumed by people than subsidized for feed or income because of the border being closed.

It is just a question of making sure that when we share the risk we are not taking all the risk. That is where we are at. We have not had a situation where we have been able to share the risk. We are willing to share the risk. I hope members opposite will be right with us sharing the risk with us, and I know you will. We have not been able to get something past the stage of due diligence on how we can justify it, because it is all the risk so far.

Now, we are willing to share the risk. If the minister thinks I am making an inaccurate statement, kick me under the table. It would not be the first time. But that is where we are at. The one problem with Grow Bonds, sometimes, I do not know whether the member thinks that, the idea is great, but it should not be totally politically determined. That is what we have to be careful about. The Quarry Oaks decision was, well, I do not want to get into history. We could talk all day about Quarry Oaks. Having said that, the bottom line is the principle of putting some risk in place to share the risk with producers to get more slaughter to Manitoba. We are on board.

The statement the member opposite raises about some of the financial challenges, not some, but the real financial challenges, I accept.

**Mr. Derkach:** I did not bring the Quarry Oaks issue up; the Premier did. But I have to tell you, as a resource in this province, I am proud of the fact that we can attract tourists to this province as a result of the facility we have got at Quarry Oaks. Now, having said that, somebody says, "yeah, it is all about money," but let me say to the Premier I would rather

invest it in Manitoba than into office towers in New York. The Grow Bonds Program is not a provincial guarantee, not a provincial risk, a loan. The Premier says that he does not want to be in a position where he takes all the risk. Under the Grow Bonds Program, you do not take all the risk, because the money comes from the local investor. All the Province does is guarantee the principal of the money that is loaned by the people themselves.

*Mr. Chairperson in the Chair*

Now, yes, we guarantee it. Does that mean that every project then is going to go down the drain? I hope not. If the right due diligence is done, that should not happen. There will be losses, no question, and you always set aside an amount of money for losses. In any business transaction, that is normal.

All I am asking the Premier to do is to not close out the idea of supporting some of these smaller processing facilities. If you had six of them, if you had ten of them in this province, you could significantly impact the amount of processing that is done in Manitoba.

If we could do that with some money assigned from Grow Bonds, which comes, not from the government, not from the taxpayer, but comes from Lotteries.

I know Lotteries is supposed to be viewed as going through the general revenue pot. Nevertheless, this is new-found money coming from Lotteries that could be used as a guarantee to help start a processing industry.

Lord, if we find that it is not working, well, then I will be the first one to say let us curtail it, but for goodness' sake, let us get off the starting blocks and do something.

**Mr. Doer:** I accept the sentiment of the question. As I say, we are willing to share the risk. We are willing to look at any program to increase slaughter capacity, because we think that all these short-term programs have not been able to reverse our inability to slaughter cattle. You can look back over the years when these plants went down, the last one being in Brandon in the mid-nineties.

Having said that, the bottom line, it does not matter when it happened. It happened. Producers did

rely, more people in Manitoba relied on the export market, both interprovincially and internationally, than any other province. We are now left with a situation where most of our hooves are in the one basket. We have to find a way to get some more capacity here. So we are willing to share the risk, but the word "share" has to be part of it.

However we do it, with Grow Bonds or MIOPs or other means, we are willing to do that, but we just cannot be 100% risktakers. You do not want us to have the Government of Manitoba slaughter plant. You want to have a community-owned slaughter plant with people putting some risk in and some involvement.

The other issue of smaller places, co-ops and stuff, yes. Can we use the new gen co-ops to work? Yes. We are looking at everything. That is where we would prefer to go. Having said that, we have not got there yet, and we acknowledge that.

**Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie):** I appreciate the discussion back and forth.

Just a point of clarification insofar as the way the program is designed, to my understanding, the agricultural framework agreement, it is effectively that Manitoba has agreed to sign but the signature has not officially been placed upon that.

Now that is the original agreement which includes the CAIS program. There have been recognized deficiencies within the CAIS program, the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization program, and those provinces that have recognized these deficiencies have put forward amendments. There are now six provinces that have put forward their willingness to sign an amended agreement. We need seven.

Manitoba could very well be the seventh, if we want to show leadership in doing this. So I encourage the minister to look at this because the amendments are very significant.

Also, I want to make certain the government fully appreciates that if the amendments go through, if there is another province, such as New Brunswick or B.C. or Saskatchewan, that goes ahead and signs, automatically the agricultural framework agreement is modified. Therefore, even though we signed the original agreement as a province, we will be out.

Anyway, there are two very fundamental distinctions between the original agreement and the amended agreement. I know the Agriculture Minister was very, very focussed on the original agreement and we speak very specifically of the amended agreement.

Now in regard to the current situation in agriculture to which I have my livelihood as well, the agricultural sector is nearing a crisis situation. It does not matter which; whether one is in livestock or specialized crop or another endeavour.

What I encourage the government to really, truly consider in at least one sector, and that being the livestock, is to put forward the cash advance program. Right now we know that there is a co-operative put together for additional slaughter capacity and packing capacity in the province. But the producers do not have the cash. They will willingly put forward the cash but they do not have the money in order to do that, and this co-operative will fail unless there are some more dollars.

\* (17:10)

I would like to say to the First Minister (Mr. Doer) that for every dollar expended at the agricultural farm gate, that transmits into \$7 of activity within our gross domestic product within the province of Manitoba. Within that gross domestic product activity, the government recoups basically all of the investment through additional economic activity and income taxes and other registrations, permits, et cetera.

I encourage the minister to really, truly look at the cash advance program and to consider that the importance, not only of the city of Winnipeg, but to our rural communities. If the First Minister was to come to Portage la Prairie and do the same campaign down Saskatchewan Avenue as he did in 2003, and ask the individual business owners of their activity, they will tell you it is significantly down because there is no money in the agricultural sector. If the First Minister has a comment, then I will move on to a couple of other items.

**Mr. Doer:** It is similar to the advice I received from the Member for Russell (Mr. Derkach). We accept the suggestions, and we are trying to figure out ways to manage and afford every of them. But it does not necessarily mean we cannot afford any of them, but thank you very much for the ideas.

**Mr. Faurschou:** I appreciate the First Minister's response. There is another consideration I would like to ask, because the municipal governments rely on property taxes, and right now farmers are extraordinarily hard pressed to pay for the taxes that support the municipal services as well as our school board activities in the rurals of Manitoba. In many cases, these municipalities are in desperate need of resources in order to carry out basic services. We are hearing that different areas of the province, even as far as RCMP contracts go to police our rural areas, that they are being pared back because they cannot come in on budget because of the recent elevation of gas prices.

The bottom line I want to leave with the First Minister is effectively that anything we do for the agricultural community is sevenfold when it gets through the province, gross domestic product. If he could look at the agricultural activity and support the agricultural activity in the province by lessening the tax burden through school tax on farmland, which, essentially, is a tax on food, I would like to see the First Minister consider that investment, because that would go a long way to support our rural communities and the activity throughout the province.

**Mr. Doer:** I am against tax on food.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** I am just wondering if the First Minister—

**Mr. Chairperson:** The member has to be in his seat.

**Mr. Maguire:** For concurrence? Okay—

**An Honourable Member:** You have to be in your seat? In concurrence?

**Mr. Chairperson:** The member has to be in his seat.

**Mr. Maguire:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My apologies. I was of the opinion that in concurrence it was like being in committee and we could be in another seat.

My question is to the First Minister of Manitoba. I wondered if he could tell me whether or not there are seven provinces that have signed onto the amendment, to the APF.

**Mr. Doer:** I will take the question as notice. I know we have approved the amended agreement.

**Mr. Maguire:** Mr. Chairman, I would inform the minister that there are seven provinces that have signed on. Let us back up a bit. Manitoba has signed onto the APF. I was there when the minister signed onto that agreement.

No, she signed onto the first one, I guess, in Swan River. I was there when she signed onto the agreement with the federal minister, Vanclief, at the time. The Member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) and I were in attendance the morning she did that last September.

I am asking the minister as to whether or not, I mean, the agreement she signed onto at that time was very clear that if seven provinces or a certain proportion of the population of Canada signed onto that agreement it would be an automatic agreement, that all provinces would be a part of it. She did sign that.

So my question of the minister, asking why seven provinces were signed on or not is very relevant to this discussion because this is the amendment that would bring Manitoba into the agreement or not. I just wanted to check with the Premier in regard to whether or not he was aware that seven provinces had signed onto it.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, I am certainly aware that the minister recommended we be part of the amended agreement. We were a part of the original agreement. The minister wanted to be part of the changed agreement, the amended agreement. I will get back.

There are issues of indications of people signing and there is also the issue of signing. It is happening simultaneously with the federal election, but we do recognize that the amended agreement certainly has been supported by our minister. I will get the exact numbers.

The word "signed," there is a simultaneous event happening called the federal election. Given how much I got chastised by saying somebody was an analyst and a communicator at the same time, I am not just a communicator. I want to be very careful and precise in my words because I do not want to be hiding anything. So the word "sign" is an interesting term.

We have authorized both the original agreement and the amended agreement. The issue of signing

that, there are different signatures that come along the way. I am not sure of the status of the ability of the federal government to sign these agreements. What if somebody, for example, is campaigning against this agreement now in an election, or campaigning with something to amend the agreement again in this election. I do not want to comment, I could not possibly comment on the Toronto agricultural policy, not that there is anything wrong with it of course. I just want to be precise on the member's questions.

The term "sign-on," having been totally criticized and unfairly so, I might add, very unfairly so, I reported that the person was working in the civil service, correct. I reported the person was doing communications and analysis, correct. I reported that he came from there into the other office, correct. I do not think I was asked whether they were ever asked to the Premier's office. However, I digress.

I will look at the status of signing on. I do not know who we communicate with because some of these events took place simultaneously with—it was hard to get hold of the federal Ag Minister for about a week before the federal election, let alone during the federal election. So I do not know—*[interjection]* Well, you know that.

I am just saying that he was going to be here. Remember, he was going to be here. Then he was not going to be here. He was going to meet with our minister, and then he was not going to meet with our minister. It was kind of an elusive situation, who is in government, who is on first, there for a while, and we still do not know who is on first and who is on second.

**Mr. Maguire:** I know that there is another NDP leader in the country—his name is Jack—who is a ton light right now in regard to some of the areas of concern that he is dealing with in the country.

We do know that there was a federal Ag Minister that was in the country here just recently that did not even think enough of our own Ag Minister to, you know, she could not get together with him, so I guess she did not command much of an audience. Of course, he was prepossessed with the election process that was going on.

\* (17:20)

My comment, Mr. Chair, my question to the Premier is that even though he can play words around whether he signed onto the agreement or not, I think I got a clear answer from the minister that said that, well, you know, if seven provinces sign onto this agreement, we will be part of it.

I outlined for the Premier that that is the agreement that was signed by our Agriculture Minister with the federal Minister Vanclief last September; however, nowhere and at no time did the Manitoba Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) ever sign onto the amendment since seven other provinces have.

Now, I guess, my point in the question the other day and in comments that I have made is that the minister or the Manitoba government has been forced to come into this program through the back door because seven other provinces signed onto the agreement, and, of course, the last one being Newfoundland.

We do not know what kind of a deal coming up to an election the federal government had to make with Newfoundland to force them to come into the agreement because therefore it forces the other provinces, I believe it is Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, to become part of this agreement. When all other provinces voluntarily signed onto it, why were Manitoba farmers, I guess, in my regard, left in the lurch here?

The Premier can say all he wants that Manitoba has been part of this all along, but Manitoba was not one of the seven provinces that signed onto it. Why not?

**Mr. Doer:** We were part of the original group, and we would not even have a deal to amend if we had not signed on to begin with.

**Mr. Maguire:** Excuse me, Mr. Chairman. I think that it is worthwhile that the Premier repeat his answer in regard to how they became part of this program. Was it because they voluntarily signed onto it, or was it that, because seven other provinces did, they are now forced to be a part of it?

**Mr. Doer:** We voluntarily signed the first agreement, and we approved, through our mechanisms, the second agreement based on our recommendations from the Minister of Agriculture.

**Mr. Maguire:** Well, I just wanted to make it be known across Manitoba, Mr. Chairman, that the Premier, I think, will have to check with his minister in regard to how Manitoba is going to be part of this. We need, farmers out there today, and I raised the issue in Question Period today in a very serious issue.

A car dealership in a community that I represent has been forced to go out of business because of, in their words to me, basically, there has been very little, if any, profit since June 1, 2003. Mr. Chair, that is, ironically, about 11 days after the BSE issue struck in Manitoba.

We have been warning the government for some year now, over a year now, that this is the biggest catastrophe that has ever happened to agriculture in the province of Manitoba on a province-wide basis, at a time also when drought and grasshoppers and the closure of many of the PMU barns in Manitoba, and the horse industry has been heavily affected.

We have now got a pork countervail that looks like it is going to be coming down. The pork industry has to put a 50-cent-a-hog check-off on all of its hogs in the province of Manitoba in order to raise \$5 million to look after their research that it is going to be required to fight a countervail from our United States neighbours on this issue.

When all of these industries are down, I would think that the very least thing that a government could do, Mr. Chairman, is to come forward with a voluntary program to help its hard-struck industry, never mind those particular individuals that are there.

I give him an example of the impact that the Special Grains Program of \$1.1 billion in 1988 and 1989 under the former Mulroney government, when people like the Honourable Charlie Mayer, Mazankowski, McKnight, Murta, and others, brought forward \$1.1 billion each of those years for three Prairie Provinces, not for all of Canada. That saved not only individual farms, but it saved communities in that time. So dollars can help in those circumstances.

I ask the Premier if he can find it in his will to come forward with some direct funding instead of putting farmers in greater debt through his loans program that, obviously, it has not had a great uptake and hardly half of that money has been borrowed.

Other farmers who have taken it have been absolutely forced into the position financially; they do not have any other alternative. They have to feed their kids. They want to be able to have an opportunity to pay the hydro bill and keep those things going. They want to keep those homes from being destroyed. It goes back to decades and generations on those farms.

I ask the Premier if they will fund their 40% share of any of the CAIS program that the government has come forward with, that his minister now feels that they are part of, simply because seven other provinces have signed on.

**Mr. Doer:** Yes, the money is in the budget. We are discussing the concurrence as part of the budget. So I know members opposite voted against the budget, but we actually think it was a good budget and included the program.

**Mr. Maguire:** Well, we know what was in the Premier's budget, \$1.5 billion more than he had when he came into power in this last budget. It is a matter of priorities in where you spend that much money. I want to note that there has been so very little support given to a major industry in this province as far as not only the direct farm numbers, but particularly the suppliers and transporters of that product, the people in those local communities who depend on those jobs.

I mean, today the Minister of Agriculture indicated that farmers should go and find another job. Well, I put out to the Premier of this province that, if those funds had gone forward last summer and last fall as we had proposed, these types of farm closures and business closures that we are seeing in many of these communities would have been impacted much less than they are today.

I urge the Premier to go back to his Cabinet and Treasury Board and to look at the kinds of programs that can be brought forward to alleviate the problems, or alleviate the concerns, of many of these industry people who are struggling to stay as Manitobans and do not want to leave, but who are being forced to.

**Mr. Doer:** The member opposite mentioned Mr. McKnight, Mr. Murta, Prime Minister Mulroney, I recall the former Leader of the Opposition at that point, Mr. Jean Chrétien, standing on the Legislative

steps saying that the money was not enough. We had to go back to the former Prime Minister, Mr. Chrétien. I remember his speech, "You know, I lived in Alberta, or my grandparents are from Alberta; this money is not enough." I remember him standing up there as Leader of the Opposition. Lots of people were out there protesting. I am sure the member opposite was there with a picket sign, and that is good. I was there.

The interesting point was it was federal money. *[interjection]* No, I was up there with Jean Chrétien and Gary Filmon at the time, I believe, or Jim Downey—*[interjection]* His famous saying, of course, still reverberates around this House, "The best day in opposition is not as much fun as the worst day in government." Having said that, I do not want to remind you of that. I went through it too long.

I do remember the speech of the Prime Minister, or the announcement of the Prime Minister, but I would note that at that time in our history most of

these programs were carried by the federal government. To the credit of the federal government of the time, there was major support for the family farm in western Canada.

I think I have not yet heard any federal leader talking about comparable amounts of money as we had in the early nineties. It was '91 and '92, I think the date years were, where there was a considerable amount of federal money for agricultural producers. It was not cost-shared. The Filmon government did not have to come up with 40 percent of the money. It was 100% federal cash on the dash.

**Mr. Chairperson:** The hour being 5:30 p.m., committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

#### IN SESSION

**Mr. Speaker:** The hour being 5:30, this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, May 31, 2004

## CONTENTS

<b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>			
		Vulnerable Persons Hawranik; Mackintosh	2749
<b>Petitions</b>			
Highway 227 Eichler	2743	Farm Income Maguire; Wowchuk Derkach; Wowchuk	2750 2753
Alzheimer's Disease Driedger	2743	Rowat; Wowchuk Penner; Wowchuk	2753 2754
Minimum Sitting Days for Legislative Assembly Lamoureux	2744	City of Winnipeg Gerrard; Ashton	2751
Proposed PLA–Floodway Murray	2744	Wildlife Lamoureux; Struthers	2752
The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba Act Irvin-Ross	2745	Water Levels Irvin-Ross; Smith	2753
<b>Tabling of Reports</b>		<b>Speaker's Ruling</b> Hickes	2754
Report on the Statutory Review of the Operations of The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, May 2004 Robinson	2745	<b>Members' Statements</b> Bronwyn Dobchuk-Land and Willem Boning Altemeyer	2755
Annual Report of the Teachers' Retirement Allowances Fund for the year ending December 31, 2003 Bjornson	2745	Canadian Advocate for the Adoption of Children Inc. Rowat	2755
<b>Introduction of Bills</b>		Marlene Street Resource Centre Irvin-Ross	2756
Bill 53–The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2004 Mackintosh	2745	Vehicle Impoundments Maguire	2756
Bill 54–The Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act, 2004 Selinger	2745	Dakota Collegiate Reunion Oswald	2757
<b>Oral Questions</b>		<b>Grievances</b> Fauschou	2757
Red River Floodway Expansion Murray; Doer	2746, 2748		
Goertzen; Ashton	2747	<b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b>	
Schuler; Allan	2748	<b>GOVERNMENT BUSINESS</b>	
		<b>Committee of Supply</b>	
		Concurrence Motion	2760