

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

Official Report
(Hansard)

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

Vol. LX No. 34A – 10 a.m., Thursday, May 1, 2008

ISSN 0542-5492

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Ninth Legislature

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 1, 2008

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYER

Mr. Speaker: Just to remind the House this morning, one section of the Committee of Supply will be meeting in Room 255 concurrently with the House, and, by agreement, there are to be no recorded votes or quorum calls.

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader): This morning at 10 o'clock, of course, we're considering private members' bills, and I wonder if there might be leave to proceed directly to Bill 216.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Mr. Speaker: Is there agreement to proceed directly to Bill 216?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. There's agreement.

**Bill 216—The Personal Information Protection
and Identity Theft Prevention Act**

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): I move, seconded by the Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Cullen), that Bill 216, The Personal Information Protection and Identity Theft Prevention Act; Loi sur la protection des renseignements personnels et la prévention du vol d'identité, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mrs. Taillieu: It's with pleasure, again, that I rise to speak on The Personal Information Protection and Identity Theft Prevention Act. I've introduced this, started in May 2005, three years ago. Certainly it's something I think is necessary, and that's why I keep bringing it back to this House.

Unfortunately, the government does not see the need to protect personal information and extend the same benefits into the private sector. In fact, up until just this last week, we have not, in three years, seen anything on the Order Paper in regard to privacy or privacy protection, but I see that there's a freedom of

information and protection of privacy amendment act coming forward.

We hope that we see that today so that it can be dealt with in this session. Otherwise, we know that it won't be. So, Mr. Speaker, we certainly hope to see something reflecting the premise of my bill in that one.

What's frustrating is that the longer this is stalled, the more common and complex the problem of identity theft becomes. At that heart of that matter is the need to protect personal information whether that is collected in the public or the private sector. This legislation, this bill, is very simple. What it does, it extends the same protection to employees in the private sector that there is in the public sector. Businesses already protect their information that they collect from consumers if they're in that kind of business so it's not an onerous task to extend that protection of information they collect to their employees.

This bill also contains a duty to notify clause, meaning that reasonable steps would need to be taken to notify employees should their information be stolen or lost.

At the very heart of identity theft is personal information that is then used to establish new bank accounts, new credit cards, new identities, and all this at the expense of the unsuspecting person. It's big business, Mr. Speaker. We know that if you look on the Internet, you can buy a full identity for \$14.

We also know that companies such as Symantec, the company that developed Norton AntiVirus, and I'm quoting here, it says, urges government and private businesses to require mandatory encryption of sensitive data.

I've spoken on this issue many times, Mr. Speaker, the need to protect the personal information, because if identity thieves can't get your information, then they can't assume your identity or set up fraudulent accounts in your name.

It's a good bill for thousands of reasons. I really do not know why the NDP have not supported this bill. We certainly look forward to the amendments that would be brought forward in the FIPPA legislation; hopefully, we'll see that today. Certainly,

I expect that they will be incorporating some of this information into that bill. If they don't, it's obvious that they haven't taken the protection of personal information in the private sector very, very seriously, but it's serious to the criminals that are accumulating enough information to steal our bank accounts and our identities.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of arguments against the bill over the last three years saying that it would be duplication of legislation. It's not duplication of legislation; it's simply enacting your own legislation here in the province which supersedes the federal PIPEDA act.

We've been told there's no redress mechanism in this bill. That is because it's a private member's bill. They could amend that. Hopefully, they will incorporate some of the premise of this bill into the FIPPA amendments.

We've been told, well, there's no other privacy legislation in the private sector. That is absolutely false. Alberta, B.C. and Québec have all enacted substantially similar legislation.

We've been told there's no consultation. Let me assure you that the Manitoba Federation of Labour recommended this four years ago in the FIPPA review.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) says we don't want to burden business. Well, that is a laugh. Minimum wage policies, a new stat holiday, a payroll tax, regulatory reform does burden small business so to use that argument simply doesn't hold any water. In fact, this is a bill which will be much more business friendly to businesses in Manitoba.

They even talk about the use of smart cards. I wouldn't even go down that route, Mr. Speaker, because that brings a whole new range of privacy concerns when you're talking about chips and cards and radio frequency identification.

I'd like to quote an author that said: The criminals are always one step ahead. We always seem to be catching up to their new techniques. Relying on technology to protect personal information is just allowing the cyber criminals unfettered access.

Of course, the big, the big one, the reason for not supporting this bill is that information is stored outside of Canada. Well, this is huge, Mr. Speaker. Information today is global. Our information travels beyond our province. This is the basis of this bill.

*(10:10)

When I first read that McDonald's restaurants were using palm scans to punch in and out their employees—many of these young people may be 16 or 17 years old, providing personal information, personal biometric data, such as a palm scan, that is then stored in the U.S.

Homeland Security in U.S. has unfettered access. I would say that, if my child had to provide that kind of information without being told why it was necessary to collect it and how it would be used and how it would be stored, that would be exploitation of youth.

In fact, when you talk about biometric information, an article just on April 10 of this year says the U.S. Homeland Security czar says Canadians shouldn't fear plans to expand international sharing of biometric information, such as fingerprints, because your fingerprints are hardly personal data. You leave them on glasses and silverware and articles all over the world. I would suggest if your fingerprints aren't personal data, then your DNA is not personal data. Then who owns you, Mr. Speaker. Is it the government? I think that's a very, very scary thought. There is a need to protect our personal information.

Two days ago, I was listening to CJOB and they were talking about the privacy implications on social networks, such as Facebook. Facebook was maybe not heard of three or four years ago, I'm not sure, but certainly we know about it much more today than we did then. People are going on Facebook and allowing their personal information on there without the knowledge of how it can be used. The person on the radio, two days ago, who was an IT expert, said people should be very careful about putting personal information on Facebook sites and such sites because they're not, Mr. Speaker, not secure.

Mr. Speaker, I do want to say that, in these last three years, we have not been allowed to debate this bill or take it to committee. The government has not put forth any reasonable debate on it and simply just wants to shut it down. I think that what we need to do here is to bring this to the committee; let's have some public input on it; let's have a vote on it. I would love to see members opposite vote against protection of personal information and prevention of identity theft. They tell us that they've brought forward measures. The measures that they've brought forward are only measures that apply after the fact and do nothing in terms of prevention.

As I've said, we look forward to what is in the FIPPA amendment that's coming forward. We have been calling on a privacy commissioner for eight years. They promised it; it took them eight years. We'll see if it's there; the devil is always in the details. We'd like to see exactly what they do because they bring forward these bills with much fanfare and then there's no substance to them.

I want to quote Mr. Brian Bowman who said in the *Free Press*, the NDP should support this privacy bill or say why not, Mr. Speaker. Do they support this bill or do they not? Manitobans want to know where this NDP government is on protection of their personal information in the private sector.

Let's have a debate; let's take it to committee. Let's have a vote on it in this House and let's see what's in that FIPPA legislation. There had better be something to address protection of personal information, how it's collected, used, stored, destroyed. Let's see if that's in this amendment that's coming forward. Let's see if they talk about the privacy commissioner. Let's see what's there, but, until we do, Mr. Speaker, I would like to see some of the premise of this bill incorporated in there. If not, we look forward to some amendments.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to support this legislation. The protection of privacy is clearly badly needed. The NDP have been stalling for years on this and have been very delinquent in not bringing this forward, in not allowing this bill to go to committee.

I would urge the members opposite to allow this bill to go to committee. Let's have the appropriate province-wide consultation, as we do at the committee stage. Let people speak out. I believe that we'll have substantial support for this bill. If it is amended, fine. It can be amended in committee if the government wants to make some changes, but let's get on with this. Let's not have the NDP's stall tactics that we've seen for the last three years on this bill. Let's get on with supporting this bill, getting it to committee and moving it forward, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): I certainly welcome the opportunity to speak on Bill 216. I was a little hesitant getting up this morning. I was expecting the members from the other side of the House would be getting up to speak to this very important piece of legislation, but it appears the government, again, asleep at the switch, as they quite often are. I'm not sure why the government wouldn't want to get up and debate this bill, or maybe their

intentions are to move it through into committee. That would be something. It would be a step in the right direction for this government.

I want to say I certainly appreciate the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) bringing this particular bill forward again, and we certainly have to acknowledge her perseverance in bringing this bill forward, I believe for the third time now—

An Honourable Member: The third year anyway.

Mr. Cullen: The third year this bill has been brought forward to the Legislature.

Really, it's up to the government who's sitting there quietly this morning, Mr. Speaker, but it's certainly up to them if they would like to move this bill forward into committee so that Manitobans have the opportunity to come and have a look at this particular legislation, see what it's all about and see how it could benefit all Manitobans.

We welcome the debate on this particular piece of legislation, and we would welcome the opportunity for Manitobans to come forward and have a look at this legislation and see how it would be in their best interest to protect their personal property, their personal rights, Mr. Speaker.

We've seen in the past here, over the last number of years, when opposition members bring forward legislation, and good legislation, to the benefit of a lot of Manitobans, and quite often what this government will do is they will tend to ignore the legislation that's brought forward by private members. Usually, down the road, within six months or the year or within two years, the government usually comes up with its own legislation and, of course, then they take the credit for it.

Just recently, this past year, the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) brought forward a piece of legislation relating to the protection of emergency providers in terms of the ambulance and fire, paramedics and the police officers in a very novel approach to that particular, protecting Manitobans again, and it's something that's been enacted in other jurisdictions, so he felt it was a good idea to bring forward to protect the first responders across the province.

He brought it forward on two different occasions, and, of course, eventually, Mr. Speaker, the government of the day decided, well, maybe that's not a bad idea. So they bring forward their own legislation. Again, they brought that forward. Of

course, we supported that particular legislation. We took it to committee the other night, and Manitobans have the opportunity to have input into what that particular legislation says.

That's all about the democratic process, Mr. Speaker, and that's exactly what we would like to see happen here. Again, I commend the member for her perseverance in bringing this issue forward. She has done a tremendous amount of work in consulting with the legal community and various other members of society in Manitoba and not just Manitoba, across Canada, in terms of what is needed in terms of privacy protection in terms of legislation. Now, we know similar legislation has been enacted in other provinces, notably Alberta, British Columbia and Québec, and it's a time that this particular province here in Manitoba stood up for the rights of individual members of our society.

Mr. Speaker, we see technology changing on a daily basis. I know the Member for Morris talked a little bit about the Facebook, and that's been a relatively new phenomenon occurring on the Internet. When you have a look at those types of scenarios, and that type of technology, we know that situations are changing on a daily basis and that our fundamental privacy rights and obligations are exposed. It's something that we as society have to have a look at because we have to address the changing technologies and where our personal information is becoming more and more open and more available to the public.

* (10:20)

I know the member talked a little bit about what's going on in McDonald's chains. A lot of other companies are instituting similar types of programs such as this and using the new technology that's available. So it's becoming more and more important that we have a legislative area to look at how the government can protect our private information and our personal information.

Now, we know that many Manitobans have been exposed and have been the victims of identity theft. It happens on a regular basis. Again, it's the role of the government to come forward to try to protect the identity and the personal information of private Manitobans. This is what this bill addresses.

Now, the government can come out and they can bring forward all kinds of legislation. We're looking at Bill 37, Bill 38 they brought forward yesterday. Sometimes some of this legislation is a step

backwards. But here they have a real opportunity to be proactive in helping and protecting everyday Manitobans. We think this is a role that the government should be taking serious.

Now we do look forward, I know the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) mentioned that there is looking at some changes in legislation to the FIPPA in terms of the Order Paper and documents coming forward. We're certainly curious to see what that might hold for us. But this particular legislation addresses the personal identity information that's necessary for all Manitobans. It's something that this government should have a very, very serious look at. We've seen other provinces become proactive, and they're trying to protect their citizens, their private citizens from identity theft. Now it's time for this government, here in Manitoba, to step up and move things forward.

When we get into this discussion, I'm reminded of situations, and this pertains to the banking industry, and it's very easy in some situations there for people to get their hands on materials that have other people's identity, you know the account numbers and that sort of thing. So what they can do is basically make up identity and then go into a banking institution and withdraw money.

So, it's a very important issue here. You know, it really strikes to the heart of individuals' personal finances. Again, that is the role that the Province should have here as a government. Take a responsibility to protect the personal property, the personal rights of every Manitoban.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that it's time for this government to take a step in the right direction, move this bill through to committee. We want to see Manitobans come into the House and debate this particular bill, tell us what they think about this particular legislation. We've got support. The member has talked to the legal community. There's tremendous support around Manitoba and through the legal community for this type of legislation. So we know there's a need for it. We know that Manitobans should be protected. Let's take the initiative. Let's move forward. Let's be proactive. Let's pass this bill—move on and do the right thing for all Manitobans.

Hon. Jim Rondeau (Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, and I'm glad to speak on this topic for a little while because I think identity theft, as the members opposite have said, is a very, very important issue. I

think that it gets very complicated because now as Minister of Science, Technology, Energy and Mines, I've learned that technology is changing so fast, it is very, very hard to understand the information that's available on-line, understand all the information that all these different sectors give you. Then I was really shocked at how many times your computer's breached, your computer gets viruses. People can use technology to come in and actually invade your own space, your own home space, your own computer, your own data.

Then you learn that different organizations, be they companies or other organizations or third parties—or dare I say, I had one constituent just recently come to me and say that he thought he was filling out a simple survey. All of a sudden, he ended up getting invoices; he ended up joining organizations and all this. We're working through what happened to this survey which then lead to being signed up for contracts which ended up with invoices being sent to him. It was really scary because, basically what it was, through a very strange answering of a survey, he ended up getting all these issues and hassles which have taken us a few months to start unravelling.

So the whole issue of personal information, the old issue of sharing information, what is protected and what shouldn't be protected, how companies take your basic—sometimes people fill out these surveys at the home show, the Red River Ex or things like this; all of a sudden, that information is transferred or moved to another third party or used in a way that the person didn't originally intend.

That becomes a very, very important issue because, what it's taking is, it's getting the information and not using it for what it was originally intended. I actually have to thank the member for bringing this important topic up to the public because I think that the whole idea of identity theft, inappropriate usage of information and the way that society's now moving is, people are often trusting. People believe that the information is used appropriately, and they don't believe that it can be sold or transferred to others. That, I am sorry to say, Mr. Speaker, is not actually true.

It was scary to note there was a simple survey by an organization—I can't remember exactly the organization. What they did was they tested computers to see how many had viruses, how many were attacked by a third party, et cetera. It was shocking the amount of invasions on personal space

and personal computers that actually take place. So it is an issue. It's an important issue and I thank the member opposite for bringing this issue, not only to the attention of the House, but to the attention of the public because it's important.

On March 28, 2006, the Manitoba government launched an I.D. theft prevention Web site. Why I think that this was important is because the ID theft Web site, which is on the government of Manitoba Web site, includes access to the ID theft prevention kit, an ID checklist, contact information for a variety of organizations and resources. That's just to start.

What's scary is that not everyone knows that this identity theft Web site does occur. It's important that we use it, and I would hope that we can try to get more and more Manitobans aware of this. It's about protection against identity theft and what you should do if it happens. Some of the problems with computer crimes—it's like with fraud. I know that I talked to some seniors in my constituency. I don't know whether it's the scam where people get an e-mail saying, if you give me \$500 or \$2,000, I have successfully inherited \$50 million and I'll send you lots and lots of money. Lots of people succumb to that information and pay the money, and it's sad that they're defrauded.

So through this Web site and others, Manitobans are encouraged to be cautious about giving out personal information and to give it out only if it's imperative. Businesses are also reminded they're responsible to protect customers' personal information under the Personal Information Protection Act.

One of the things that I was surprised at is there are some businesses that, even if you conduct a transaction, they're supposed to X out your credit card information, except for a very, very small part of it. What's scary is some businesses don't understand that that information can be used to create fraud. We need to make sure that all businesses are aware of the personal protection and privacy act so that they know that they're not having credit card information out there. That's very important.

* (10:30)

One of the other measures taken in the recent past to combat ID theft includes the minister responsible for consumer affairs, who met in Winnipeg in January 2004. They launched an identity theft kit for consumers, which contains

advice on how to prevent identity theft and what to do if you're a victim. An identity theft business kit for business was also developed and it talks about what businesses can do, but the more important part is, is realize that it is a huge issue that we have to take action against totally.

Other things that we have to do is make sure that fraud and impersonation are matters that fall into the Criminal Code. In November 2007, the federal government introduced new legislation proposing Criminal Code amendments that permit police to intervene at an earlier stage of criminal operations before identity fraud or other crimes, which usually cause financial or other harms, are attempted or committed. The amendments are moving through the House, and I actually have to commend the government, the federal government, for moving like this. Because what we need to do, is we have to make sure fraud is dealt with as a criminal offence. I am, again, commending the federal government for taking this action because it needs to move forward, and those are crimes.

Now, part of the problem, though, that we are experiencing is, before the age of technology, before the age of the Internet and computer, a lot of the fraud, a lot of the theft occurred within Manitoba. You got the information within our boundaries and it was easier to control. Now, it's not just information theft and identity theft within the province of Manitoba or the city of Winnipeg or people you know. What's happened is that it's expanded throughout the country, and more often even, it's throughout the world. So the identity theft—the person might be in a Third World country, might be far, far away, thousands of kilometres away, might be able to go, take the identity, go into the computer from the business, your own personal computer, et cetera. Go in from far away, steal your information from your computer, from the surveys, from the businesses, take that and then take it to a third-party country—might be far away—and then use that information fraudulently.

So what we have to do is under provincial legislation. We've worked under The Consumer Protection Act to limit the consumer's liability to \$50 when a credit card is lost or stolen, or credit card information is used to make fraudulent purchases. We made sure that Vital Stats has taken steps to ensure critical personal information is protected and fines up to \$50,000 may be imposed on anyone possessing or using fraudulent documents or using the legitimate documents unlawfully. MPIC is also

taking steps which will ensure personal information is protected, and they've done that through all the agents.

So we need to worry about and be concerned about this. I'd like to thank the member opposite for bringing this to the House, and I think we all have to look at just not this, but additional steps that we can take for all of us to let all of Manitobans know about how to protect your personal information and privacy, make sure that fraud doesn't occur and, again, make sure that people are not taking identity improperly or sharing information improperly. We need that not only as legislators, but as citizens of Manitoba.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): I sat here and listened with rapt attention as the Minister of Science and Technology congratulated the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) for bringing forward a piece of legislation that is absolutely vital for Manitobans, yet he goes on to say that it's more of an educational process. That we should be, in fact, explaining and telling to Manitobans how it is that they can better protect themselves from identity theft, but he refuses to put it into legislation.

They're prepared to put into legislation quite a number of things, Mr. Speaker, that are fluff, that certainly don't mean anything to Manitobans, but this is one piece of legislation that's put forward to this House that, in fact, does something and they're not prepared to support it.

I am very pleased that the minister stood and spoke because up till that point in time, every member on that side of the House was sitting on their hands and obviously not thinking that this was a serious enough issue that they should put on the record their own views and their own thoughts as to how Manitobans should look at this government to help protect them with identity theft.

The Member for Morris, I congratulate her. This is the third attempt at trying to put forward what I consider to be a very vital piece of legislation and an attempt that finally should be accepted by this government and its members, Mr. Speaker. We all know, as the Minister of Science and Technology has put on the table—we all know that technology is changing almost every nanosecond that we exist on this planet, but that's no reason why they should sit and not try to enforce what it is can be forced right now, and that is very simple.

A private sector must and should respect the privacy of their employees, and they do it in any numbers of fashions. In fact, this legislation speaks to the fact that it's those private-sector employers that should make sure that—no, no, a simple thing, notify the employee when in fact there has been a breach of security in their privacy.

That's so important, Mr. Speaker. We hear, every day there's examples. Watch the news. Watch the documentaries. Every day there are examples of normal everyday Canadians who are being impacted by identity theft, and it's a huge issue. If somebody took your name, your social insurance number and your personal, private information, they then can become you and go out into the marketplace and destroy everything you've done to build up your reputation, your financial ability to continue, and that is wrong.

All we're asking is that this government place into legislation Bill 216, the opportunity to have Canadians protected. We need an opportunity to have mandatory requirements within that piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker.

I listened to the Minister of Science and Technology and, wow, I'm so pleased that they grasped this issue with the importance that it seems to take, because they now have an identification theft prevention Web site. Well, we just heard from the minister that computers are being accessed on a regular basis. There are people out there that are much smarter than I or much smarter than the minister who can hack into your computer systems and can get all of your personal and private information. But we have—guess what? We have a Web site. This government has gone to the wonderful extent of putting in an identification theft prevention Web site. I certainly hope it hasn't been infected by a virus. I would like to ask the minister how many hits does he get on that Web site on a regular basis. I would suspect it's not all that many, Mr. Speaker. But a Web site is only one tool. The best and the most final tool is legislation, and this legislation would certainly resolve a lot of the issues that are out there in the marketplace at the present time.

The minister is suggesting that—and I think he's suggesting that maybe they might even accept this fact, that they may bring forward some legislation themselves to try to deal with it. But that's not the issue here. If there's a piece of legislation here that they're not particularly pleased with, they can put

amendments forward, Mr. Speaker, to make it stronger, if that's what the government wants to do. I would recommend that they do that, that if they look at this piece of legislation and see some ways of strengthening it, that's very positive. Strengthen it with amendments, but take it to committee.

Let Manitobans speak to this legislation, not this government. Let Manitobans come forward in committee, Mr. Speaker, and tell this government exactly what is happening and how this legislation would help them in their own personal and private lives. The only way you do that is to get this bill off this floor and take it to committee. That's all we're asking. Let Manitobans speak in committee as to why they support this legislation, and let this government say to those same Manitobans why they don't support this legislation. I think it's the only fair and democratic way to make this thing happen.

The minister also goes on to say, well, you know what? We're doing all our best with this wonderful Web site. But there are other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker, that actually lead as opposed to simply follow, and we know now that Québec, British Columbia and Alberta have got similar legislation already in place. So why not have this government actually show some leadership, put forward this piece of legislation and take it forward to committee? Let them have some leadership, and say that, yes, we do in fact respect the privacy information that each individual Manitoban should cherish, control and keep safe.

We've got hundreds of examples of how this has been abused in the past, how people have been affected by it, Mr. Speaker, and to simply state that they are going to put in a Web site is absolutely a dereliction of duty. They are not doing what they have to do and should do for Manitobans.

*(10:40)

Identity theft can be prevented. We do it ourselves. As a matter of fact, I'm sure everybody here in this House recognizes when you get a personal piece of information with an identification SIN number on it, or an address on it, or a piece of financial information, you should be shredding that information rather than tossing it out in the garbage. *[interjection]* Well, everybody does, everybody should do it. If you don't do it, you're being foolish. That's a self protection, but there are other protections that are not available to—that are available to employees in this province right now, because the

employer is not, by legislation, required to protect that employee's identity.

A simple thing, and I said it earlier, a simple thing, if your identity has been breached, if there has been a breach of computer systems, if there has been a breach of identification systems, the employer should be required to notify that employee immediately, immediately, because you can destroy a life by identity theft. And that's all this speaks to is protection for Manitobans, and to not have this government support this bill is to say that they do not see it seriously enough to protect those same Manitobans that they're put here in order to make sure they do protect their rights, Mr. Speaker.

So, thank you, Mr. Speaker, I appreciate it. Once again, I thank the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu), for being so active and diligent and aggressive in trying to bring forward a piece of legislation that is so vital and so important to Manitobans. And to not have this government support it, at the very least to not have this government send it to committee so Manitobans can speak to it in a very intelligent, logical fashion, is a dereliction of their duty.

Thank you very much for allowing me to put that on the record.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): I move, seconded by the Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff), that debate be now adjourned.

Motion presented.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

* * *

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I do believe that the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Faurichou) was wanting to speak to the bill and that

there would be leave to allow him to speak to the bill.

Mr. Speaker: Well, if the honourable member rises to ask leave, then I will put that request to the House, but I can't do it on my own.

Mr. David Faurichou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, we were being courteous to the opposite side of the House in offering time in order to make presentation to this bill, and we did not know that they were rising to stand and so I ask for leave—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Either the member asks for leave or—

Mr. Faurichou: So, therefore, I ask for leave to continue debate on Bill 216.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House for the Member for Portage la Prairie to speak to the private member's Bill 216? But at 11 o'clock it will remain standing, adjourned in the name of the honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar).

Is there leave of the House to allow the Member for Portage la Prairie to address the bill? *[Agreed]*

Mr. Faurichou: Well, thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I've got to express my disappointment in regard to the honourable Member for Selkirk standing. We believed that he was standing to participate in debate on this very important piece of legislation, and yet the individual decides that they're going to stand, want to stand the bill even though this bill has been introduced into this House three times, three times, and this particular bill was introduced into the House on November 27, and the government is yet unprepared to participate in debate. This legislation is very, very important. The honourable Minister of Science and Technology made the point that the government thought that identity theft was of a concern, and that's why they launched their government Web site as it pertained to identity theft, and herald this particular Web site.

Well, I'm familiar with the Web site and, basically, it has gone unmodified for almost two years until, coincidentally, this morning, when the government was going to make mention of it. Miraculously, it was updated. I really, honestly cannot say what particular clause or line was updated because I didn't see any changes since it was introduced back in March 2006.

But, Mr. Speaker, this particular bill is important to all Manitobans, regardless of age or culture as to whatever their status in Manitoba. Everyone has an

identity and everyone deserves to have that identity protected as best we, as legislators, can.

Mr. Daryl Reid, Acting Speaker, in the Chair

I know there's a film, although the title get's away from me, but the primary actress, Sandra Bullock, portrayed an individual whose identity was stolen and taken and used for illegal purposes to preserve an undertow of conspiracy and misrepresentation and how, potentially, a program can be introduced into government software and, essentially, take over and infiltrate every identity of every person that is a citizen of that country. That is a very, very scary thought that if, potentially, the information stored by government is taken and misused.

We know that there was a significant outcry from the members opposite here when they were in opposition, when it was a decision of the former administration to share with the national organization of War Amputees, drivers' licence information—very scant as it may have been, addresses of those persons that were licensed motor vehicle operators here in the province of Manitoba. The purpose was just one of fundraising and awareness and, essentially, protection because the War Amputees were wanting to issue an application to all registered drivers here in Manitoba for the War Amps tag that would be attached to your key ring. If your keys were lost, that particular encoded number would be able to be used so the keys would be able to be returned to the rightful owner, all an honourable thought, all honourable intent.

However, the New Democratic Party, when in opposition, was extraordinarily critical of the government sharing personal information because the War Amps was not the entity to which that information was originally given. They were the third party to the information, and as was mentioned by the Minister of Science and Technology, stated that a survey information went to parties that were not originally securing that information through survey. That was the case here.

* (10:50)

So we have to be very very cautious and understand how sensitive persons are and appreciate that we should all be that sensitive, because the information, if it falls into the wrong hands, even what we think as, perhaps, minor information—our birth date, for instance. But with birth date, a lot of on-line- and telephone-type services are accessed by

the question of what is your birth date. Others are, perhaps, your postal code, your street address; so much of that information is readily available even through the telephone directory or on the telephone—pardon me, on the radio—announcement of today's birth dates. Persons can write down the birth date of the individual celebrating their 34th or their 54th or 29th birthday, perhaps, the 15th anniversary of your 29th birthday. So there is ability to access personal information very easily.

That is why this particular bill, Bill 216, that the honourable Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) introduced into the House for first reading on November 27, 2007, is a comprehensive bill, very, very, well written, much better than I'd believe that the government has shown in its nine years of government inspection and introduction of legislation to the House. I do not see why this government is not prepared to debate this bill and to put it on to committee where Manitobans can have their say in regards to important legislation targeted at preserving one's identity.

Now, I know the honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) said that I'm standing by his leave of the House and this will never happen again because of my recognition of the government not wanting to debate this particular bill. I would like to see the government—I hope that others across the way will ask for leave as well to continue with debate.

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

We have just a few short minutes left here, but we do want to see this bill go on to committee so Manitobans can, in fact, have their chance to speak to it, and I see nothing coming from the government's side of the House that is anywhere near resembling the comprehensive nature of Bill 216. It is not unique to this country, our province, insofar as across the province, the country, we have seen other similar pieces of legislation passed.

The question then begs to be asked why are Manitobans being deprived of identity protection through legislation, and it only goes to, perhaps, ask the question why the NDP believe that Manitobans are not deserving. I think it is another example of what we've just experienced in the House when we looked at legislation that would allow for—and it was just passed—Bill 18, through committee, that gives the ability to collect blood samples for testing to make certain that those persons are not carrying HIV or other blood—other contagious diseases.

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

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Thank you—

Mr. Speaker: Order, order. If the honourable member is speaking to 216, it's been adjourned so the honourable member will have to ask for leave.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and I wonder if I might ask the House for leave to speak to Bill 216.

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

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, I thank the House for leave to be able to speak to this bill. I guess I'm questioning why members of the government aren't getting up and speaking on this legislation, this very important legislation that has been before the House for three years now.

Obviously, Mr. Speaker, they're afraid to stand on their feet, to put comments on the record about protecting the personal information of Manitoba citizens. I find it very disturbing coming from a government that likes to hide from the truth, that would rather keep things secretive internally. I just really question the motives behind not standing up in this Legislature.

I think we had the Minister of Science and Technology (Mr. Rondeau) speak briefly on this legislation. I commend him for standing in his place; I couldn't agree with all of the information that he put on the record, but at least he had the decency to stand up and speak about issues that impact many, many Manitobans.

I know I see some members of the House sitting hanging their heads in shame. I think members on the government side of the House should hang their head in shame when they don't and aren't prepared to stand in this Legislature to talk to Manitobans and to address some of the fears that Manitobans have about the information and privacy legislation that needs to move forward to address the ever-growing need to protect people in Manitoba.

I know the Minister of Science and Technology did indicate that technology is changing at such a rapid pace that it's pretty difficult to bring in legislation that might address this. Why sit on your hands after three years when many, many, other provinces have privacy legislation in place that has attempted to protect its citizens and, yet, we have a government today in this House that has had ample

opportunity to stand up for Manitobans to ensure that their privacy is protected through legislation like this that has been tried and proven in other jurisdictions.

I have some difficulty in understanding what the problem is with the government, what the problem is with members of the Legislature who sit here today, sit on their hands, are afraid to stand up, are afraid to put comments on the record and indicate why, for three successive years, they have failed to pass legislation that's been before this Chamber to protect individual Manitoban's privacy.

It is a shame, Mr. Speaker, that that's what we're seeing here today. Is it because they haven't thought this through, that they have no creative ideas or solutions on how to move forward when we've had experts in the field of privacy that have indicated and helped us develop this bill? Why would we have members of government sitting by and not contributing, not moving forward to ensure that this legislation gets passed, gets enacted and puts into place some protection for the citizens in Manitoba?

Mr. Speaker, we know that they have legislation to modify the Freedom of Information Act on the Order Paper, but we haven't seen the introduction of that legislation to date. Maybe it's because they're struggling and they're trying to see whether they can incorporate some of my colleague's bill into that legislation. I would hope that we would be seeing that when legislation is introduced but we see very often in this Legislature that, when this government brings in a bill and the media spin, the spin that's put on that bill from this government—

Mr. Speaker: Order. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) will have four minutes remaining, and it will also remain standing in the name of the honourable Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar).

* (11:00)

RESOLUTION

Res. 6—Specialty Wine Store in the City of Brandon

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 11 a.m., we will now move to resolutions, and we will be dealing with Resolution 6, Specialty Wine Store in the City of Brandon. The honourable Member for Brandon-West.

The honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on House business?

House Business

Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader): Yes, Mr. Speaker, on House business.

In accordance with rule 31(9), I would like to announce that the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the resolution on Pharmacare Deductible Increases sponsored by the honourable Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson).

Mr. Speaker: It's been announced that the private member's resolution that will be considered next Thursday is the resolution on Pharmacare Deductible Increases sponsored by the honourable Member for River East.

Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West): I move, seconded by the Member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon),

WHEREAS the NDP government has not allowed the opening of a single new specialty wine store since coming to power nine years ago; and

WHEREAS the former Progressive Conservative government recognized the entrepreneurial spirit of Manitobans and the value of private enterprise in creating jobs and growing a vibrant economy; and

WHEREAS the former Progressive Conservative government therefore made changes to The Liquor Control Act to allow the creation of specialty wine stores; and

WHEREAS these changes were followed by the opening of eight specialty wine stores in Winnipeg, which have been thriving and serving Winnipeg's population for several years; and

WHEREAS there are currently no specialty wine stores out—

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable Member for River East, on a point of order.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I apologize to my colleague for interrupting the introduction of his private member's resolution, but I think the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) should pay attention instead of yelling from his seat, and I would ask you to bring him to order. I would hope that when this resolution is introduced, he has the nerve to stand up and speak against this resolution.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Brandon East, on the same point of order.

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I note that there were a number of members heckling and talking during the introduction, including the Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) and the Member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Briese), so there was discussion going on here.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order—[interjection] I have to deal with the first one. I don't want this to turn into a debate. I listen to the member first, then the rebuttal part is—I just want to take this opportunity, because it is a good point, to remind all honourable members that we need some decorum in here, not only now but throughout the whole business of the House because we all need to hear the comments, and any member wishing to speak to it will have the opportunity. Let's move forward.

* * *

Mr. Borotsik: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for that ruling. I appreciate it.

WHEREAS—I'll continue—there are currently no specialty wine stores outside the city of Winnipeg; and

WHEREAS, the city of Brandon is Manitoba's second-largest urban centre with a population of 40,000 people and growing; and

WHEREAS, the NDP government has repeatedly refused to allow the opening of a specialty wine store in the city of Brandon; and

WHEREAS, the public and the business community of Brandon have indicated an interest in supporting a specialty wine store.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider allowing the creation of a specialty wine store in the city of Brandon; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to better recognize the true potential of the city of Brandon and the entrepreneurial wishes of this Manitoba business community.

Mr. Speaker: Before moving the motion, there were some different words used instead of as printed, very minor. For example,

WHEREAS the public and business community, should read "has," "have" was used.

Also at the end, THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED Brandon entrepreneurial wishes of the Manitoba business community, the word was used "this," instead of "that."

Is it the will of the House for the resolution to be as printed? *[Agreed]*

WHEREAS the NDP government has not allowed the opening of a single new specialty wine store since coming to power nine years ago; and

WHEREAS the former Progressive Conservative government recognized the entrepreneurial spirit of Manitobans and the value of private enterprise in creating jobs and growing a vibrant economy; and

WHEREAS the former Progressive Conservative government therefore made changes to The Liquor Control Act to allow the creation of specialty wine stores; and

WHEREAS these changes were followed by the opening of eight specialty wine stores in Winnipeg, which have been thriving and serving Winnipeg's population for several years; and

WHEREAS there are currently no specialty wine stores outside the city of Winnipeg; and

WHEREAS the city of Brandon is Manitoba's second-largest urban centre with a population of 40,000 people and growing; and

WHEREAS the NDP government has repeatedly refused to allow the opening of a specialty wine store in the city of Brandon; and

WHEREAS the public and the business community of Brandon has indicated an interest in supporting a specialty wine store.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider allowing the creation of a specialty wine store in the city of Brandon; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Provincial Government to better recognize the true potential of the city of Brandon and the

entrepreneurial wishes of the Manitoba business community.

It's been moved by the honourable Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik), seconded by the honourable Member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon),

WHEREAS—

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

Mr. Borotsik: I'm sorry I used have instead of has, but as printed it still says the same thing, Mr. Speaker.

This is not necessarily just about the ability to have a wine store located in my community. This is about fairness. This is about equality. This is about being treated with respect. The city of Brandon is the second largest community in this province. We have constantly battled the perception that we're not being treated as equally and fairly as the city of Winnipeg, on a number of occasions. Whether it be infrastructure dollars that flow to the city of Winnipeg, whether it be cash that goes to a convention centre as opposed to my convention centre in the city of Brandon.

This is a bigger issue. This is not just simply about a wine store but certainly, the wine store is one specific issue that brings this inequality to a head. I've heard the heckling.

The fact of the matter is, in the '90s the Filmon government of the day decided, and rightfully so, that Manitoba should join the 21st century and have the ability to provide services to Manitobans in this province. Thankfully, they've provided that service in one small way and that was to allow Manitobans choice with a simple product like wine.

By the way, it's been extremely successful. The entrepreneurial spirit of Manitobans took the forefront and Mr. Speaker, they are very, very successful in providing a service to Manitobans that was not being provided by the monopoly called Manitoba Liquor Control Commission. Now I'm told that it's not a monopoly. Well Mr. Speaker, it's all semantics. The Liquor Control Commission is a monopoly. They control the wholesaling of the wine. They control the wholesaling of spirits in this province. They control the retailing for the most part of those same products to Manitobans.

But the one thing that they can't control is efficiency, choice, quality and service. That is what

is being provided by the private liquor stores to the population of this province. The population has accepted it, in fact if they didn't accept it, the businesses would not survive. They would not exist, they would simply go away and that service then would be provided by the monopoly again. But that's not what's happening. Manitobans have embraced privatization of the liquor stores as private as it can be, under a monopoly. They've embraced it.

All Brandon is saying is, please allow another operation outside of the Perimeter Highway. Now this isn't a burning issue. I don't have people knocking down my constituency doors on a regular basis saying, we have to leave the province if we don't have a private liquor store. That's not the issue. The issue is, treat us with respect.

Why can't Brandon have the same opportunity as what eight stores have in the city of Winnipeg? Why can't this government see that this isn't going to be the downfall of socialism?

This is simply going to be an opportunity to let Brandon be seen as a part of this province. It's not going to destroy their political ideology. It's simply going to allow Brandon and Brandon residents to take advantage of something that's available already in this province. That's all were talking about Mr. Speaker.

* (11:10)

We have entrepreneurs. We're very proud of it. We're very good at it. When given the opportunity, they can provide what's necessary and what's expected from our residents, but this government, for some reason, has decided that, no, Brandon should be treated as a second-class citizen regardless of how many times we would approach this government to ask for a simple change to a political policy that was put into place in 1999. A simple little thing. Allow us to be seen as equals in this province.

The Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) will speak to it, and I will be very happy to listen to why he doesn't want my community and his community to be seen as a partner in this province, because that's all we're asking, Mr. Speaker.

My question at one point in time in question period was let the residents of Brandon decide. If they want to go to a plebiscite, maybe that's what we should do. We went to plebiscites on another issue that this government threw at us. It was necessary that we had the residents of Brandon decide. Well, why won't this government suggest that maybe a

plebiscite is the way to go with respect to a private wine store. Let's do it. Let's see what the citizens have to say or, no, does this government continue to control what the wants and the needs and desires of my community are? It seems they are.

I've been heckled. In 1995 when this policy changed I was the mayor of the city of Brandon. As a matter of fact, I had other people on this side of the House on my council, and I was asked: Where were you in 1995? Why didn't you fight for your rights in the Filmon government?

Well, there are certain issues that you fight for. There were certain issues that we had as priorities at the time and, quite frankly, I thought that at some point in time we would be seen as the marketplace that could support this kind of a store. We are. We've grown. By the way, that was 13 years ago, Mr. Speaker. I know this government likes to go back at least 10. Now they can go back 13, 13 years, but in eight years or nine years of this government they have seen fit not to rectify a situation that should have been rectified eight years ago if in fact the members of this House were fighting for their community as opposed to simply standing up and regurgitating government policy, which is wrong.

Stand up for your community. Stand up. Make sure you're heard. Make sure you can fight for what's right for your community. As a matter of fact, I think the previous member from Brandon-West, who no longer is in this House, when at a committee at one point in time, when asked about the ability—in fact, I think he was the Minister responsible for MLCC and in a committee meeting he was asked if in fact Brandon should and could have a private wine store. Well, at that point in time he was a little fresh. Sort of like other ministers that we have in the House right now, a little new, a little wet behind the ears, and he said, Absolutely; I think it's a great idea, until Manitoba Liquor Control Commission suggested very vericif—very *[interjection]*

Some Honourable Members: Vociferously.

Mr. Borotsik: —vociferously. I might get that one in *Hansard*, vociferously. MLCC said, No, no, we're not going to change our policy to allow Brandon to be a partner in this province. So he succumbed to the control of MLCC. He succumbed to the control of the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his office, and what happened? We suffer.

We suffer to this day not just because we don't have a wine store. We can buy wine in

Saskatchewan, by the way, if we have to. We can get a better choice and certainly better service. We can buy wine there if we have to, but you know what? The thing is we want to be seen as the same in this province, and it's a simple little thing. It may seem like wine to the members—wine, that's a poor play on words. It may seem like wine to the members across, but I'm not whining. I'm just asking for fairness for the community.

I asked the Premier (Mr. Doer) the other day why will he not put out a request for proposals? It's a simple thing. We call requests for proposals at a number of developments. Either do a plebiscite, simple. Make a policy change which is even more simple to put into place another store or call for a request for proposals. See what's there in the marketplace. Are you afraid? What are you afraid of? That somebody might come forward and do a better job. What are you afraid of? That Manitoba Liquor Control Commission is going to go down because of all of the wine sales that we're going to have in the city of Brandon. Is that what you're afraid of? Well, if you are, you have bigger problems than simply one wine store in my community.

So don't be afraid. Don't sit on your hands over there. Suggest to the Premier and his office and the bureaucrats in MLCC that this is just a matter of one extension, of one wine store.

I do know that there are some extenuating circumstances of which, perhaps, we're not going to come to the final resolution. We do know that the government and MLCC have made a very controversial agreement and settlement with the private wine stores. What we don't know is what that settlement was and what conditions were placed in that settlement.

Mr. Speaker, if this is not about simply fairness and equity, this may well be about not being transparent and accountable to citizens in this province. If that's the reason, if they made a side deal with the city of Winnipeg wine stores, that is unacceptable. It's inexcusable that my community would be used as a pawn so that they can get out of a jackpot that they themselves and MLCC caused.

If that's the reason, put it on the floor today. If that's the reason why we can't have a wine store in the city of Brandon, because of your mismanagement, then I want to know about that. Don't give me this, well, we don't need anymore in the province; we're well-serviced. That doesn't cut it. I want to know the reason why this government is

not prepared to make a change to a very silly policy that was put in, in 1999, by that government. Just make sure my city can be treated equally.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to put it on the floor.

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): It's a pleasure to get up after my good friend, the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik), to put a few words on the record regarding this particular issue. I have to say that I appreciate working with the Member for Brandon West. We joined together recently with the Brandon Chamber of Commerce and the Brandon District Labour Council on a major issue in my community. Unfortunately, we were on the wrong side of that plebiscite, but we certainly did both strongly support economic development in Brandon during the recent plebiscite. It was a pleasure to work with the member on that particular battle.

The member and I go back a couple of decades now, Mr. Speaker. I served on city council with the Member for Brandon West in a previous life, and I well remember this particular issue coming to the fore in Manitoba and certainly coming to the fore in my home community of Brandon.

For the life of me, at the time, I couldn't understand why Mr. Filmon and his Cabinet—the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) was sitting in that Cabinet at the time—would so badly discriminate against Brandon and, in fact, every other community in Manitoba, when that Cabinet decided that Winnipeg would be the only beneficiary of private wine stores. In fact, Winnipeg isn't the only beneficiary; the individual owners of those private wine stores are the only beneficiaries, at the expense, I might add, of every other Manitoban who gets a benefit from the profits made by the MLCC.

Last year, Mr. Speaker, those profits which were approaching \$200 million went back into every community in the province of Manitoba, creating jobs, contributing towards hospitals, contributing towards roads, contributing towards schools and public education. Simply put, we believe, of course, and I believe personally that the people of Manitoba should be the beneficiaries of profits made by wine stores, not individuals that own individual wine stores.

The member asked what our feelings were in this House. Our feelings on this side of the House are that Manitobans should be the owners of liquor stores in Manitoba and that Manitobans should get

the profits from those liquor stores, not individuals that may have an in with the government or be related to a member in the government, as the case may be. Manitobans themselves should be the beneficiaries of that, as I said, \$200 million or approximately \$200 million that goes back into general revenues. I think it's about \$170-\$180 million.

* (11:20)

So that answers the member's question about why we support MLCC ownership of liquor stores in the province of Manitoba. We feel that Manitobans should be the beneficiaries of the profits made from wine, beer and liquor sales in this province.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues I want to touch upon in regard to this. The member suggested it's more symbolic in nature, this issue; it's not one of substance. He suggests that, in 1995, when he was mayor and I was councillor, we didn't really look at this all that seriously because it wasn't a burning issue. In the day, it wasn't an important issue. It wasn't like the public school system or the health care system in our province. Nothing's really changed in that regard, as the member stated. It's an issue of symbolism even today. It's not something that is important in the life or death—it isn't important in a life-or-death status for individuals or communities around the province.

I wonder why the member or his caucus who let this resolution come to the floor wouldn't feel equal indignance at the fact that Headingley's taken out of the equation. The Member for Morris (Mrs. Taillieu) represents Headingley, and she's often fond of getting up and talking about liquor sales in her own constituency. That's not an important issue with her or members from Virden; the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) is in the House today. It's not an issue with Virden; it's only an issue with Brandon. I understand the politics of it because it's a nice legislative issue; it does speak to a sense of fear that seems to be facilitated by members of the opposition, the Progressive Conservative Party, who are very big on the politics of fear and very, very small on the politics of building communities.

This issue does speak to that very clearly. It's a wedge issue; it's not an important issue; it's a symbolic issue. These are all—paraphrasing the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik)—we again believe that the profits for wine and beer sales should accrue to the people of the province of Manitoba, not

to an individual who may or may not be related or connected to the government of the day.

We believe that the millions—tens of millions of dollars, hundreds of millions of dollars, in fact, that are a form of revenue by liquor stores—should go to our hospitals and to our schools and to our roadways.

It's a very small and minor issue provincially, Mr. Speaker. I dare say that we will see a wine boutique in the city of Brandon proudly at some point. I know that's something that I've been working on very hard for the last number of years, and I expect that that will bear fruit at some point. We do have two beer stores, two liquor stores in Brandon right now, one in Brandon West and one in Brandon East. I know that I'm a frequent visitor to my own in my own neighbourhood in downtown Brandon to get some of the fine wines that we have to offer in this province.

We'll be pleased to speak this one out as the morning goes on, Mr. Speaker, but I wanted to say a few more words because I think we've put into context now why we, on this side, oppose this resolution and why this resolution is one more of symbolism than substance.

I wanted to say a few words just—further praise of my colleague and my good friend from Brandon West because, during the debate that we just went through together on the same side of the question, on the plebiscite that was in Brandon, we both had occasion to talk about issues that we both agreed upon, Mr. Speaker. This was about the only issue that we found that we had a disagreement on.

I know the Member for Brandon West is very much in favour of the relocation of the Assiniboine Community College to the Brandon Mental Health Centre campus and the tremendous opportunities that it will provide for young people in western Manitoba far, far into the future. I appreciate the member's support and encouragement on continuing to develop that particular site. I'd like the member to vote for a budget that gave it money, but I do know that he does support it in word, if not actually in standing up in the House and voting for it. I appreciate that very much.

I know that the member supports the continuing investment in the Keystone Centre, Mr. Speaker, which is the largest economic engine for tourism outside of the city of Winnipeg. I appreciate the member's support for investment in the Keystone Centre, although again, I'd like him to get up and

vote for a budget and encourage his colleagues to vote for a budget that does provide those dollars.

I know that the member's in support of downtown renewal in Brandon and the money that our government is contributing towards the renaissance of Brandon development corporation, Mr. Speaker, because I know he's in support of that. Again though, I would like him to get up and vote for a budget to actually give money to that endeavour. I know that the member's supportive of the development of affordable housing in the supporting Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation in Brandon. That's another very big positive for Brandon in redeveloping downtown, and I hope he would get up and vote for a budget that provides dollars for that initiative as well.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, about Brandon and infrastructure development. I know he's supportive of the waste-water treatment plant renewal in Brandon, the Assiniboine River bridges twinning, and the improvement of city streets because he wants Brandon to grow, but again I'd like to encourage the member and his colleagues to get up and vote for the dollars and vote for the budgets that contribute to those improvements. Thank you.

Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson): It gives me great pleasure to stand up and speak to this resolution that's been presented by my colleague from Brandon West, and I'm certainly disappointed in his counterpart in Brandon East. He's actually degraded part of Brandon today in the House here, Mr. Speaker, and I find that appalling from a member that's been elected as long as he has in different capacities.

I'd like to say a few words about the private wine stores, and I'll probably do it from—first of all, Mr. Speaker, I have to say to you and to this House that Brandon has matured as a city. Brandon has matured in a way that they should be able to make decisions for themselves. They should be able to have the same opportunities that the city of Winnipeg has. So, part of that, and just a small part of that, would be a private wine store.

We've seen MLCC mismanage a number of issues over the past, and one of the greatest mismanagements along with a lot of others, Mr. Speaker, is when they tried to drive the private wine stores out of business. They did that in a very underhanded way. Because we don't know the full details of the court case, however, we do know what the outcome was, and that outcome was an

\$8-million settlement. But muzzled, muzzled, all the information that went between the beginning of the case and the end of the case. I would challenge, I would challenge the minister responsible to give us that information. I would challenge him to do that.

But, the more important issue, Mr. Speaker, was that private enterprise still thrived; private enterprise thrived in spite of, in spite of the MLCC, in spite of the efforts of this particular government today to drive them out of business. That's what Canada's been built on; that's what Manitoba's been built on. It's been built on private enterprise. So, as I look through some of the information that's been presented to us over the period of time, we see in rural Manitoba in many, many small communities, we see a liquor store, and we see wine being sold in a grocery store. Yet, my colleague from Morris can't have that store because of the restrictions, the restrictions put on by MLCC. They're afraid of some competition. They have to put in regulations and control. It's control, it's control.

Mr. Speaker, the reason that these little stores provide this service in the country is because the MLCC doesn't want to have the overhead. Yet, they still compete against them. They still compete against them. They try and lure the people from the country. They lure them to the cities, to the Liquor Marts in the cities that are controlled by MLCC with issues such as Air Miles. If a person's in the city shopping and they get Air Miles, certainly, we have no problem with that. However, it's that follow-up call; it's that follow-up call, that follow-up letter, that goes out to the small country areas that suggests they can get double Air Miles if they come back.

* (11:30)

Mr. Speaker, that's unfair. It's been proven before that it's unfair, and I would suggest to the MLCC today that it would continue to be unfair.

Brandon, we'll talk about MLCC making money and how much money they make. After the private wine stores were introduced, MLCC made way more money than they did before. I'm not exactly sure why that is. Perhaps the minister responsible will be able to enlighten us if he has enough intestinal fortitude to get up and speak to this.

Mr. Speaker, the MLCC have continued and will continue to compete with their controlling tactics, shall we say, to private enterprise. Today it gave me great pleasure to stand up and put a few words on the record to support my colleague and his wonderful

city of Brandon in this issue with private stores. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Competitiveness, Training and Trade): Mr. Speaker, it's a pleasure to stand up and speak to this resolution. There's really three things I want to touch on. The first, which I think is the point my friend from Brandon West has really made is an issue about respect for Brandon, respect for the Wheat City, and I will talk about that. Secondly, I would like to touch on the history of the issue. Actually, the Member for Brandon West has maybe shed some more light on what happened back in the '90s, and that's good. Third I think is the most important issue. I'll put some words on the record about the excellent service, the wide product lines and the tremendous job that MLCC does in providing service across the province of Manitoba.

First of all, I would like to actually recognize both the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) and the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell). It's clear from their comments they're both passionate about the city of Brandon. That's a very positive thing. I know that they stood together in the recent plebiscite issue in the city of Brandon and they put aside a lot of issues to work together on that. It was quite interesting, of course, to see the Chamber of Commerce and the Brandon District Labour Council shoulder to shoulder. I hope that's something we'll see more often in the future. I expect it will be, but I do want to recognize both individuals for their work.

But, you know, my friend from Brandon West has kind of reframed this, acknowledging that really it isn't an issue for his constituents except as he's trying to portray that he doesn't believe that the beautiful city of Brandon is getting the respect that it deserves. I take a look just at the last budget at some of the provisions that have been made for Manitoba's second largest city and certainly a growing and thriving city.

For example, budget 2008 invests \$7 million for the reconstruction of the Westman Lab. That's a great thing. We're investing \$20 million to develop the Western Manitoba regional cancer centre, which is going to be a beacon for all of Westman and indeed make Brandon the first community outside of Winnipeg to provide radiation therapy. I was very pleased, and I know the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) is a very, very strong supporter in our caucus of downtown Brandon.

I'm very pleased that budget 2008 provided a commitment to provide resources to Renaissance Brandon, to match contributions from the City of Brandon to support downtown revitalization projects. I know as well there're some debates going on right now in the City of Brandon about recreational facilities. I can assure my friend from Brandon West, I'll be out there at the Brandon half marathon, raising money for the Y in Brandon. I'll be out there for the third time in four years. I'm hoping, even if you don't pledge me, you'll be there to cheer me on as we run along Princess.

Other major projects this government has delivered, showing our respect and our commitment to the people of Brandon include, of course, the hospital that the Conservatives promised. Was it seven times and never delivered on? The first-ever MRI machine outside of Winnipeg, \$7 million for revitalization of the Keystone centre. I'm always pleased to attend events at the Keystone Centre. It's an amazing spot. Of course, money as assistance for Maple Leaf Foods, as they move to their second shift, to improve waste-water facilities in Brandon so that the development can be done in a sustainable and appropriate way.

Indeed, I could go on for quite some time about the respect that this government shows every single day for the city of Brandon. I should mention, as my friend from Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell) has, the replacement of the 18th Street Bridge, which is going to be taking place over the next two years. Not only is that the largest infrastructure commitment this government's made since 1999, that's the largest commitment or it's larger than anything that the previous government gave to the city of Brandon in its entire time in office. So, respect, I would suggest, is not an issue.

The second piece, of course, is the history. I'm glad that the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) has shed some more light on the subject because it was true. The previous government, pursuing their own ideological wishes, decided to embark on private wine stores and they approved a number of private wine stores here in Winnipeg, and I wasn't certain before this morning what the Member for Brandon West was going to say. I wasn't sure if he was going to tell us that he just didn't think it was an important issue at the time or maybe he was going to say he did think it was an important issue, but the Filmon government ignored him. So, I'm actually pleased to see that it was the former. That,

indeed, it simply wasn't an issue and that's why there is no private wine store in Brandon.

I suppose what's happened, whether my friend will admit it or not, is that there have been changes since the late '90s. I don't suggest the tremendous growth in Brandon is because he's no longer mayor because I rather respected his work as mayor.

But Brandon is doing very well and I think that they, like many other communities in Manitoba, can point to a particular turning point, and that was the date in 1999 that the people of Manitoba elected a New Democratic government. A government that doesn't just look out for certain family members of former Premiers who may be getting licences to operate private wine stores, but indeed, all Manitobans across this province.

So, because we do have a government for all Manitobans, I'm glad that the Member for Brandon East and the Member for Brandon West can keep raising issues in this House recognizing the tremendous development and the tremendous excitement that exists in Manitoba's second largest city.

But the final point that I want to address is the question of the service provided by the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission, and as minister responsible for that commission, I am very pleased that Manitoba Liquor Marts provide excellent service to all Manitobans, both—well, in terms of a number of different parameters.

First of all, MLCC staff are terrific. When I've gone into liquor marts, as I'm sure everyone else in this House had the experience, they have excellent staff who can assist. For those learning more about wine, they're quite prepared to talk about pairings with food, talking about all kinds of things that we can perhaps all learn about. It's wine fest week, of course, in Winnipeg, and I'm sure I'll be learning more about it, even tonight as I go to the wine fest event.

Every time there's any poll done, whether it's by private organizations, whether it's by the Commission, Manitobans have a high level of confidence and trust in Manitoba Liquor Marts and the Manitoba Liquor Commission. They have knowledgeable staff. They have a wide and a growing selection of products, whether it's beer, whether it's wine, whether it's spirits and, indeed, that selection is growing.

If there are individuals in the city of Brandon—maybe that's the Member for Brandon West (Mr.

Borotsik) who has a particular taste in some type of wine. If it's not on the shelves at the two liquor stores in Brandon, I would suggest he use his considerable charm to speak to the manager, to speak to the staff there, and I can assure him that the MLCC will bring in, for the people of Brandon, any item that they believe is not on their shelves, that should be. That's the way that this responsive corporation works for the people of Manitoba. Indeed, as I have said before, people have a high level of confidence in the Manitoba Liquor Commission.

Having said that, the Liquor Commission is always striving to improve what they offer to the people of Manitoba. They do that in terms of their product lines. They do that in terms of renovating, expanding, upgrading their stores and, indeed, by a policy of opening new stores where demand warrants. I agree with my friend from Brandon West, that Brandon is thriving, that the entire Westman region is thriving and indeed, the Commission is looking at the city of Brandon and its surrounding area to decide whether there should be enhancement to the MLCC facilities that are there.

So I am sure that the Member for Brandon East, the Member for Brandon West, who are passionate backers of their city, will be bending my ear to tell me how good things are in Brandon. I'm sure that the member will be very pleased when MLCC completes its review to continue providing great service by a public corporation which, indeed, returns significant dividends to the people of Manitoba. Indeed, those dividends come from operational efficiencies. The MLCC is, in fact, the most efficient liquor jurisdiction in the country.

* (11:40)

At 10.3 percent, the administrative expenses are the lowest in Canada.

Manitoba has mid-range liquor prices. We don't have the cheapest liquor in the country, nor do we have the most expensive. We have mid-range liquor prices, but that combination of decent pricing, good service and, as well, efficient service means that, in 2007, the people of Manitoba earned a dividend of \$207.9 million that we can use on building schools, on building roads, on investing in health care for the benefit of all Manitobans.

So, I'm very pleased to have a chance to speak to this. Again, I appreciate the passion of Brandonites for their city and together we will continue to build what is a beautiful city and a great area in Manitoba.

Thank you very much.

Mr. Blaine Pedersen (Carman): Mr. Speaker, I certainly do welcome the chance to speak for this resolution brought up from the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik). The fact that we even have to have a discussion about opening a private wine store just seems absurd. Why are we wasting time in here when we could actually do this and let them do it? But then I realize, hold it. I realize that this is a socialist province; this is a socialist government showing their true colours. It's a fear of competition.

I certainly listened to the Member for Minto (Mr. Swan). He gave me some real gems here because increased competition—we don't want that, we have to have—and what was the other one? Just a minute, I've got to find it. Operational efficiencies. I'm sure he was comparing Manitoba when he's talking about operating efficiencies for MLCC—oh, just a minute, they're the only one in Manitoba, so I guess they are the most efficient here.

Then he talks about cronies and what not, and I got thinking, MLCC and the chairman—no, that can't be cronies. We can't be talking about that one. No, no, no.

We wouldn't want to talk about a slush fund from MLCC, Manitoba Hydro, MPIC, and Lotteries Corporation—[*interjection*]-I realize, there come the threats. If you don't believe in the socialist mantra, out come the threats.

I realize that Brandon now is going to join the moratorium fund here, because we have a moratorium on agriculture on Bill 17 on food production. We have a moratorium on school boards from Bill 28. We have a moratorium on advertising from Bill 37. Why don't we just have a moratorium on wine stores in Manitoba?

An Honourable Member: We have a moratorium on wine stores.

Mr. Pedersen: That's right too; we do have that. We're not going to allow—we don't want to have competition. I just wonder, when are we going to nationalize Coca-Cola and Boeing aircraft in Manitoba too? We could really increase this.

When they talk about operating efficiencies, operating efficiencies are interesting too because, if you look at Alberta when they actually reduced the rate of taxation, when they increased competition—but we don't want to increase competition. We must always keep the socialist dream come true here.

Don't ever want to compete. We keep the bar low, always want to keep the bar low. Underachieving is the message of this government.

I'm sure Brandon is mature enough to have their own wine store, Mr. Speaker. I think it's degrading to the people of Brandon that this government doesn't think that they can actually participate in a private wine store. Are they trying to legislate morality in Brandon or whatever it is? It beats me what they're afraid of.

This is not going to cut into the revenues from MLCC. If they're worried about that, we put out the challenge. Open a wine store and see if it really does cut into the competition. What's wrong? What are you afraid of?

An Honourable Member: We're afraid of private enterprise.

Mr. Pedersen: Private enterprise. Brandon has many private enterprises and, in spite of this socialist government—it's amazing how they can thrive under this—the message here to Brandon is that you're not mature enough; you can't handle a private wine store. The Member for Brandon East (Mr. Caldwell), I would like to see him explain that to his constituents.

As I was going door to door there and they also—boy, are we being ignored here in Brandon. Next time I go door to door, I'll just make sure I tell them that this government does not believe you're mature enough to handle a private wine store.

An Honourable Member: Let alone an NDP Cabinet minister.

Mr. Pedersen: Well, what can I say. They don't have that either so I guess that shows.

But really, if we can get past the political jousting on this, come on—[*interjection*] Okay, then I will get past it. I put out the challenge. Let Brandon have a private wine store, and what are you afraid of?

An Honourable Member: Do a plebiscite.

Mr. Pedersen: Do a plebiscite. Open it up. Let Brandon decide. Manitoba Liquor Control Commission will still be supplying the main bulk of the product going into a private wine store. What are you afraid of? Open it up. Let Brandon decide if they really want to. Let them have the ability for an entrepreneur to come out and open up a store, and if that private wine store is not successful, it will close and Manitoba Liquor Control Commission will still

be there. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It's been a pleasure to speak to this.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): That was a pretty quick speech there. I jumped to attention rather quickly. Very pleased to speak to the resolution from the member put forward from the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) today, and I want to start out by saying that this is a long-standing battle over the last 30 years plus between the two parties, the Conservatives and the NDP, over the future of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission.

When the Conservatives were in government, historically, when they run for election, they have talked about privatizing MLCC and turning over the liquor business to private enterprise, as is the case in Alberta and other areas.

An Honourable Member: Does MTS come to mind?

Mr. Maloway: They have, in fact, privatized Manitoba Telephone System. We are always suspect that they would, if they could privatize Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, they would. If they could privatize Hydro, they would, and the Liquor Commission is just another part of that whole privatization game that these guys play when they are in government.

An Honourable Member: They privatized home care.

Mr. Maloway: And so what we found, and the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Lemieux) points up, they tried to privatize home care when they were in government for their last 11 years. For every success that they can point to, you can point to more disasters in the privatization process, but that's the nature of the ideological argument and the ideological battle.

Now, what we had in the Filmon government was a tentative move. They were trying to privatize by stealth. They didn't just come up front and say—Sterling Lyon did. Well, they learned from his four short years. But, they thought, well, we'll improve on Sterling's argument here of privatizing the whole system, all the liquor stores. We'll start out by wine stores. We'll set up a few private wine stores. They started with one and then they went to two and then it, I think, moved up to eight

An Honourable Member: They ran out of relatives.

Mr. Maloway: They ran out of relatives, as the Member for La Verendrye points out, and the government changed. We are now in power and we

do not believe in private wine stores, but the Filmon government had already let these eight stores establish themselves. They should not expect that under our tenure in government that we will be expanding on this idea.

They are—the Member for Brandon West can count, I think—they're 10 seats shy of realizing his dream. Their first goal is to get those 10 seats and then worry about privatizing and setting up private wine stores in this province. To suggest that somehow this is part of economic development, part of entrepreneurial incentives and initiatives on the part of people in Brandon that somehow a wine store is going to promote that.

* (11:50)

I want to remind the members opposite the Manitoba Liquor Commission is very, very sensitive to the public in Manitoba. As a matter of fact, the stores have been renovated and been changed over the years. As a matter of fact, we have wine stores in Brandon, in the liquor stores. The Member for Brandon West (Mr. Borotsik) can go to one of his two liquor stores in Brandon, and he can buy any type of wine that he wants. We believe in offering choices to the public, but we believe in a government-run system.

Conservatives themselves are not immune from setting up public enterprises. In 1913, I believe it is, they, themselves, set up MTS. When it suits their purposes, they understand that the collective will of the public can be best served by a public enterprise. But as soon as the enterprise is set up and the public has paid for it, that's when the real entrepreneurs over there come up with these brilliant ideas of hiding and chopping pieces off for their friends. It's always the friends that get consideration.

We checked each of these applications under the Filmon government for wine stores and, lo and behold, we found corporate donors to the Conservative Party. It wasn't that arm's length at the end of the day, Mr. Speaker. So I should think that the Member for Brandon West would think up some better issues to make his stand. As a matter of fact, we know that, when he was the mayor of Brandon back in 1995, he made no case for Brandon getting a wine store at that time. We didn't see him banging on the doors here at the Legislature demanding that the government set up a wine store in Brandon.

As a matter of fact, the member likes to thrive on gloom and doom. He's constantly talking about how

Saskatchewan is in better shape than we are. He says in 2005, his own words in *Hansard* today, he's saying the reason he was not interested in the wine stores when he was mayor of Brandon in 2005 was because he had issues on his plate at the time, but a lot of growth has happened in Brandon in the last 15 years. There's been a huge amount of growth in Brandon. Coincidentally, since 1999 there's been a huge amount of growth, and now they have justification for making an argument for wine stores.

In question period at 1 o'clock today, he will be berating the Finance Minister for, Why is Brandon not doing so well? Why is the economy not doing well? So now it's doing well enough to have a wine store, but in another hour or two, it's not going to be doing well enough at all. He'll be wanting tax cuts at 1 o'clock today. So it's 11 o'clock in the morning, so I'm just wondering what his position is now. It's probably changed in the last hour. He's not too happy about that.

Mr. Speaker, just to show you all the great things that the NDP has done and how the NDP has been good for Brandon over the years, the members have failed to point out that Len Evans, the honourable member and minister for Brandon for 30 years, single-handedly took care of Brandon and drove Brandon forward, bringing all sorts of new development to that city. He will be long remembered for his efforts over all those years to bring development to Brandon.

We remember other projects that the Conservatives promised in Brandon. We remember them, not once, not two, not three times but seven times announcing a Brandon hospital. Coincidentally, just before the election, and then when the election was over, they forgot about it. But, you know, it was this government that actually built the hospital, and the member should recognize that.

Mr. Speaker, MRI machines. They never heard of them out in Brandon until the NDP formed the government. People in Brandon had to come to Winnipeg. People from all over Manitoba had to come to Winnipeg for an MRI test. Well, the first-ever MRI outside of Winnipeg was put in Brandon. As a matter of fact, we have more of them now.

We have also put \$7.5 million for a waste-water treatment plant. We put \$7 million for revitalization of the Keystone Centre. Well, Mr. Speaker, they're so noisy over there, I don't think they can hear what I'm trying to tell them.

An Honourable Member: Oh. They don't like to hear what you're saying.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Speaker, we've built a new health access centre for downtown Brandon. Canad Inns, you know, the members like to talk about Canad Inns. We have a new Canad Inns at the Keystone Centre. As a matter of fact, I've stayed at it several times, and it's a very nice place.

Maple Leaf pork processing plant; we're working with Brandon to increase the capacities there and, as a matter of fact, that is, in fact, happening. There's a waste-water treatment plan there. McKenzie Seeds is another very valued and valuable company in Brandon, which I've been patronizing for some 22 years now, buying my little packs of seeds that I send out to my constituents. As a matter of fact, I'm a regular visitor to McKenzie Seeds when I'm in Brandon. The Husky ethanol plant, \$130-million expansion in Minnedosa.

We had a member the other day talking about potash development in the area. We have oil development. There's a lot of good things and good news happening in Brandon and in the area, and when good things happen in the Brandon area, that helps Brandon, helps the people for Brandon. We twinned the TransCanada Highway. That helps Brandon.

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

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to this resolution. Manitoba Liberals support this resolution. Manitoba Liberals support fair treatment for Brandon. We know that the NDP doesn't support fair treatment for Brandon. The NDP wants to relegate Brandon to also-ran status. Manitoba Liberals are going to stand up, solidly support this resolution, and support fair treatment for Brandon.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): It's a pleasure to rise to engage in this very important debate. I'm very entertained by my colleagues, particularly the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) and others, Mr. Speaker. I can't believe it but I am—after listening to the Member for Emerson (Mr. Graydon), I'm led to believe we have to bring back Jack Penner, and I can't believe that I'd ever say that.

But what was interesting in the debates so far, and in particular those individuals who participated in this debate, we've not heard from a single urban member of the Conservative caucus. In fact, I think

the member is looking around. He appears to be lacking in support from his urban colleagues, from the city of Winnipeg. And I think I know why: because he knows what their position is.

Obviously we don't know, but I think we on this side know what the position of the urban members from Winnipeg—I don't believe they would be prepared to share their private wine stores with Brandon. In fact, he should have put that in his amendment, or, excuse me, in his motion. I'd had a chance to read it. Maybe you should have said that one of those stores in Winnipeg should be transferred out to Brandon, but he didn't put it in his—

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Point of Order

Mr. Speaker: The honourable Member for Carman on a point of order.

Mr. Pedersen: Is the government going to allow a vote on this resolution?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The honourable member does not have a point of order. All members have the right to participate in debate for the time limit that's allocated to each member and when all members that wish to speak have spoken, then the opportunity for the question is put, but we allow all members to participate if they wish to.

* * *

Mr. Dewar: I enjoyed the comments of my colleagues on the government side when they clearly point out the major benefits that Brandon has enjoyed since the NDP came into power. You look at the resolution and the member claims that all he needs in Brandon, all Brandon needs to realize its full potential, is the liquor store.

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 12 noon, when this matter's again before the House, the honourable Member for Selkirk will have eight minutes remaining.

The hour being 12 noon, we will recess and reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY CONSERVATION

*(10:00)

Mr. Chairperson (Rob Altemeyer): Will the Committee of Supply please come to some semblance of order. This section of the Committee of

Supply will now consider the Estimates for the Department of Conservation.

Does the honourable minister have an opening statement?

Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Conservation): Yes, Mr. Chairperson, a brief one.

Mr. Chairperson: Please proceed.

Mr. Struthers: First of all, I appreciate the patience of the critic across the way and his colleagues. Due to the maneuvering of the Estimates schedules, we weren't able to table in the House the books that are necessary, but I was glad that they were able to get their hands on a copy of the Estimates books. They will be tabled this afternoon.

I also want to indicate that usually the minister has tear-filled red eyes and lack of voice at the end of Estimates, after the critics are through taking him through all those paces, but I'm starting out with a bit of a cold. So I hope everybody can understand the very good answers that I'm about to give to my critic.

I want to start by just very briefly highlighting a few of the things that our department has been up to over the course of the last year since we last met for Estimates. Conservation is a big department. It's a mile wide, deals with a whole lot of issues, a wide variety of issues, and the department is full of very good, very talented people who do their best to manage all of those issues.

I want to make it clear to the opposition critic and his colleagues that we're always available to them to work our way through issues, whether they be big provincial issues or constituency-type local issues. I want them to please feel free to work with us in terms of addressing issues that come about.

The first issue that I would like to highlight a little bit is the parks reservation system. Now, you can tell we've got a good parks reservation system in place because my colleagues from across the way didn't ask a single question about it when we had a very successful opening day here a few weeks ago and where we blew out all of the records from before. We booked about 10,365 sites that day, if my memory serves me correctly. We had a very good start to the camping season.

This is, of course, a made-in-Manitoba parks reservation system. I know we had taken some heat in the past, given the American system that my colleagues from across the way had in place throughout the '90s. My attitude has been that we

could do better than that, Manitobans could do it, and I think we've proven time and time again each year that Manitobans can offer a good service through the parks reservation system.

I want to highlight the work of our department in that. I want to highlight the work of a company by the name of Protegra a Manitoba company that developed the software for this parks reservation system. Award-winning Protegra, I may add.

I also want to point specifically to another Manitoba company by the name of Function Four. whom, for this year, we used to develop a queuing system that really helped us a lot on opening day and made the booking experience for Manitoba campers much better. Again, a Manitoba company that performed very well.

*(10:10)

Another issue that I want to just touch on is the Commemorative Names Project. I've been the minister for almost four and a half years now and not once have I had a chance through Estimates or through question period or anything to point to this program. A program that I know members opposite are aware of and, I think, think highly of; a program that is managed by my department. It names geographical features after Manitobans who have died during war service.

I've been to friends' places; go down to the rec room and play a little pool. I look up on the wall and there's a commemorative plaque with one of their relatives' names on there being honoured by one of my predecessors in this position of minister, with a lake named after a relative who had served in World War II or Korea.

Actually this year we named for a couple of soldiers who perished in Afghanistan. So we have 4,150 lakes, rivers, and creeks and other landscape features that have been named in honour of fallen Manitobans. I think that's a very good program. It's a program that maybe we should be highlighting a little bit more. It's something I'm really proud to be the minister of, and I really enjoy sitting down at my desk and signing those letters to the relatives and putting my signature on the actual certificate that goes out to the family members of fallen service members.

Since we last met, we also had a couple of natural disasters that really had an impact on our province. I went out to a century farm south of Baldur and spoke with people who had got hit with a

tornado. It was just amazing to stand in the middle of a farm site, a farm that had been in the family name for 125 years and just to see the devastation. After 125 years of growing, within seconds it was flattened. The couple who lived on the farm hid in the basement and were lucky that they were not hurt. But to see that kind of destruction, I think, was pretty amazing.

That same weather disturbance moved east through our Whiteshell Provincial Park and wreaked havoc upon stands of timber in our park. I think we were very fortunate that we didn't have injuries with the trees that were falling. We heard stories of campers who, in the middle of the storm, I think, were very lucky not to be hurt. It left quite a mess behind.

We've been working together with quota holders in the area to make sure that we can take the trees that had been blown down and not leave them there as kindling for a major fire out in that area. Our department and others have been working very hard to clean that area up, to rehabilitate the area. Again, from the air, when I flew over it, it looked like a giant combine had gone through and just laid over every tree that you could see for all around. It was quite amazing.

The other natural catastrophe that we had to deal with in our parks out in that same area was a washout that took place at Booster Creek. I can't say enough about the work that our department staff out there did, ferrying people back and forth, campers who could have been stranded, given the washout that took place. When I viewed the washout on the road, it was amazing, the power of that water to cut through that road and form a huge gorge and really leave some campers in a bad space.

I want to make sure that everybody knows that our staff did a great job, ferrying campers and canoeists and others out of the Tulabi Falls area in Nopiming Provincial Park. We continue to work at that issue as well.

The last thing I want to do just before we turn over to our critic, you will notice when I introduce my very capable staff that there'll be a change from last year to this year. Bruce Gray was our former assistant deputy minister in charge of Corporate Services; he's moved on to the Department of Finance. I want to pay tribute to the work that Bruce has done in our department. I want to wish him well in his new position. I think that Bruce Gray can take an awful lot of credit for the success that our

department has enjoyed. I wanted that on the record and make it very clear that I appreciated the work and the advice that Bruce gave to me and others within Conservation.

With that, Mr. Chairperson, let's get at some questions.

Mr. Chairperson: I thank the minister for those comments.

Does the acting opposition critic have any opening comments?

Mr. Ralph Eichler (Lakeside): Yes, I do. I'll be brief.

Mr. Chairperson: Please proceed.

Mr. Eichler: I do thank the minister for his opening comments and certainly do thank the minister and his staff for their hard work that they go throughout the year. Even though it was just a few short months ago when we were doing this procedure in September last year because of the election and certainly have seen a number of changes as a result of their election promises, they're very aggressive, making some changes to their department.

When you talk about your parks reservation system and not ask any questions on it, it challenges me to actually thank the minister for listening to people on our side of the House, telling him how unfortunate it was that they farmed us out to the United States, and for finding a good solution right here at home. I actually congratulate the minister for listening to us and making that necessary change in order to make sure that we did have a better service provider for that reservation system.

Having said that, the minister brought up an interesting comment in regard to the community plaques and lakes that have been named after people that have served. It is a well-deserved program that, I agree, we don't spend enough time on. As the minister knows, unfortunately, the way politics is set up, we in opposition don't always get our way. I brought in the veterans' licence plate bill when I first got elected; this sits very dear to my heart. I've always felt that we need to respect and honour those people that have fought for our freedom, for our rights. Anything we can do to recognize those people, I think is, of the utmost importance. I echo the words of the minister and thank the minister for those words. Certainly, anything I can do—in fact, I know of at least two constituents that have had the opportunity and the honour of having lakes named

after them. They're very proud of that fact. So I encourage the minister and the department to continue on with that initiative.

* (10:20)

The minister did mention a couple of the disasters. I was actually up in his area last fall, looking at some of the devastation there that the hail had brought and the tornado they talked about in Baldur and also in the Whiteshell. I know the department did a great job in responding to those, and I know that certainly the initiatives that were taken on by the government were ones that had to be very thorough, very in-depth. We know when we have natural disasters through no fault of anyone's—it is an act of God—that's when we as government, we as MLAs, we as representatives of the people of Manitoba have a responsibility and a right to make sure those people are handled in the best way that they possibly can.

We also talked a little bit in the House about the tornado that was in Elie and that still has effects today. I'm sure the communities that the minister talked about earlier will also have effects today. Can we prepare better for this? I think we can. I think that we had generations and centuries of ways and means of trying to handle disasters, but I think we need to update those systems to try and give people more warning. I think that we as government have a responsibility to ensure we can try and get out ahead of some of these storms and try and provide the safety measures that need to be put in place in order to make those become reality.

One other thing that I wanted to talk about that the government has really gotten involved in this particular department is the cottage lots. I know the minister wanted to keep his comments short and we do have just a short time today, but I do think that in our line of questions I would like to challenge the minister on that.

So, having said that, the regular critic, the Member for Tuxedo (Mrs. Stefanson), unfortunately, wasn't able to be here this morning; she's reading names for the Holocaust. I certainly am very honoured and proud to sit in her place and bring these opening comments, but would look forward to moving on and getting into a line of questions. So I thank the Chair for that opportunity.

Mr. Chairperson: We thank the acting critic from the opposition for those remarks.

Under Manitoba practice, debate on the Minister's Salary is the last item considered for a department in the Committee of Supply. Accordingly, we shall now defer consideration of line item 12.1.(a) and proceed with consideration of the remaining items referenced in resolution 12.1.

At this time we would invite the minister's staff to join us at the table and ask, once they've arrived, if the minister can introduce them.

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Chairperson, I'm joined at the table here by my deputy minister, Don Cook. I have four assistant deputy ministers: Serge Scrafield, Fred Meier, and Bruce Bremner. Oh, sorry, Giselle Martel.

Mr. Chairperson: Thank you very much.

Does the committee wish to proceed through the Estimates of this department chronologically, or have a global discussion?

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Chair, because of the nature of Estimates this session, we certainly have a number of colleagues that would like to come in and ask questions. The two members from the independent party would also like to ask questions. So, in fairness to everyone, I think the global manner would be the manner which I would like to recommend for the minister to go through.

Mr. Struthers: It's fine. That's good.

Mr. Chairperson: Excellent. It's agreed the questioning for this department will follow in a global manner with all resolutions to be passed once the questioning has been completed.

The floor is now open for questions.

Mr. Eichler: Mr. Chairman, we know that, after yesterday, talking to the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), and my questioning to her in the wildlife protection and insurance program as provided by MASC, that there's this serious concern about the method by which predators are controlled. I provided for the minister last year as a result of my colleague, Mr. James Bezan, the MP for Selkirk-Interlake—I provided the department with a letter outlining the procedure to handle wildlife predators. To my knowledge, nothing has happened in that area. We're very concerned about wolves in particular in the Whiteshell and the northern area, up into the Interlake riding. We have a number of calves that have disappeared again this spring, and, as we know, as a result of that, there's no insurance coverage for that.

The wolves are definitely larger and a number of times these small calves are just picked up and carried away and there's no carcass, so they can't claim for a refund. We would like to know, on this side of the House what the department's planning on doing in order to try and control these predators.

Mr. Struthers: First of all, I want to make sure on the record that we're accurate. I know MASC, Manitoba Agricultural Services Corporation, had paid out some money in terms of predators, so I think that the member needs to follow that up with my colleague the Agriculture Minister. There have been some payouts. I know that MASC has been dealing with ways in which to make their system better, to better serve farmers.

I know that there has been, I think probably in the area of 1,600 claims that have been processed, so I want to start from that premise. I don't want to make that sound as if that's the end-all and be-all of this, though. I know that there are farmers that I've heard from in the areas that the Member for Lakeside has referenced.

I live in a rural area, Dauphin. In that area, in the Parkland, there have been, I think, a number of more sightings of wolves and, in fact, we've even had a cougar or two that we've noticed, probably munching on the big deer herd that we have in this province right now.

What we want to do is we want to provide for farmers and ranchers a better system to control the predators in our area. We've had meetings in places such as Moosehorn with local ranchers and local municipal people to try to work out a way in which we can be more effective in this.

We have an arrangement with the Manitoba Trappers Association. These are folks who, I'm the first to admit, know a lot more about trapping wolves and coyotes and other predators than what I will ever know. We have signed an agreement, again, with the MTA to make sure that that's in place and we've increased our funding for that, \$50,000 this year.

We want to be able to work with ranchers, with municipal leaders, with experts in the field in terms of trapping, through the MTA, to provide any support we can, even before there's an attack on a rancher's livestock, to prevent that from happening.

I don't think we can afford to go to a situation where there's a bounty on every head of every wolf, coyote and other predator in the province. I don't think that's acceptable. We have in the past

approached the federal government in terms of strychnine and cyanide. We were frustrated, a number of years ago, with the response that we received from the federal government, and we decided at that time that we couldn't leave farmers totally in the lurch on this, so we moved forward with an alternative arrangement which involves humane trapping in association with the MTA.

*(10:30)

The other thing that I heard some really positive feedback on were the number of ranchers that took part in some of the workshops that we've had in every region of this province, many right in my own backyard there up in Dauphin, where we hooked up ranchers and farmers with people in our department and others. I believe the Manitoba Trappers Association are involved with that, folks from their regions as well, and talk about some very practical ways to prevent the loss of cattle in the first place.

So that's the approach that we've been taking. I think we need to, every year, look to make it stronger and every year look for other ways and creative ways of protecting cattle including changes that we make in our hunting guide every year. I think there are lots of possibilities to combine hunting opportunities, packaging up hunting experiences. If you have someone up in an area and they're deer hunting and they get their deer on the first day, I think it's a very good idea to have that person have the ability to take a wolf or a coyote or—we need to be, I think, thinking creatively on this and improving the kind of protection that we can afford to farmers.

Mr. Eichler: There were about 150 claims, just so the minister has the right information; that is what MASC told me yesterday that they actually paid out. But without the carcass, they will not pay insurance out to the producer. So the concern that I have, and I've talked to the minister, you know, off the record, but I think it's important that we have it on the record that I believe very heavily in conservation. I believe that it's the responsibility of the department to take that very seriously, which, I know, the minister and his staff do. But the last thing I want to see is what I hear through the grapevine, farmers taking conservation on their own. Whenever we see farmers get frustrated and they start putting a bounty out on wolves and coyotes, especially this time of year when they're frustrated and you hear the bounties that's being paid for some of these predators, I don't think that's a good thing. So I just encourage the minister and her staff to continue to monitor this,

continue to work with the trappers, continue to work with the producers.

One thing I do think that the minister's right on and her staff is that's on education. We need to do more of that. I know that it's something that we haven't been promoting enough of. I speak as all governments and even our party. We need to do more in regard to the education as far as predators and the role that they have in trying to find that natural balance. We certainly hate to mess with nature as well, but sometimes we have to take those necessary steps.

But I would like to move on to a number of issues because we do have just today. Yesterday, I talked about the Kyoto target that's being proposed by your government. We know that there's going to be a number of initiatives that are going to be brought forward by your government and those are very aggressive. But, having said that, everything comes with a price. I would like to know the commitment that's going to be made by your department to assist producers and, in particular, the hog producers, the dairy producers, poultry producers, in upgrading lagoons, upgrading facilities. I know there are a number of bills that are being proposed. One is Bill 17 on the hog moratorium, and also with your other bill and not necessarily with the Kyoto Accord, but will fall under that, and that actually is with your Crown lands. That will fall in there as well as a result of some of your cottage developments and so on that's being proposed. So we have a double whammy here that's coming forward.

So if the minister's staff could outline for us the money that's going to be set aside to help those producers comply with the regulations that you're proposing.

Mr. Struthers: I may be biased on this, I know, but I think our government needs to be commended for taking a strong leadership position in terms of Kyoto. I know that, previous to me being the minister, some of my predecessors received quite a rough ride from other jurisdictions at federal-provincial territorial meetings when they stepped forward and actually said, we should be doing these kinds of things. That included reactions from the federal government as well.

So I think the country has come a long way in terms of understanding our contributions to greenhouse gases, our contributions to CO₂ levels. I think we've come a long way in terms of understanding that we have to get control of our

contribution to that. To a large degree, I think we politicians are playing catch up with our constituents on this. I think the population has been very concerned for quite some time now. You can see that in national polls that have the environment right up there with health care in terms of level of concern. That's coming from real people in our nation and real people in Manitoba saying, we need to be doing these things.

I also understand that there will be a cost to that. I think the member is right in pointing that out, and I think whether it's the federal government or our provincial government or a municipal level, I think we have to understand that, and we have to be able to provide the kind of support necessary to get good decisions on a government-wide basis, including on the private sector. I've always been, recently, especially, pretty impressed with some of the decisions in the private sector in terms of contributing to hitting Kyoto targets.

In terms of specifics, one of the things we have done, the member knows we have accepted the report and the recommendations of the CEC hearing that we looked into the hog industry, The member has referenced a bill that we brought forward on that. Both myself and the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (Ms. Wowchuk) have been very clear when we've met with Manitoba Pork and other producer groups that we will be sitting with them to understand the impact of not only that decision, but other environmental decisions that need to be made, and that we will work with them in terms of financial support. We have very preliminarily—if that's a word—in our budget last year put forward \$2.5 million. We flagged at the time that that was very much a starting point, and that we would work with the producers to refine that number. We need to have the federal government involved. We need to work with producers in terms of environmental farm plans and understand what that means on a farmer's day-to-day operations. We've set up an internal department group to look at the report and the recommendations of the Clean Environment Commission. MAFRI will be very involved with that.

* (10:40)

A couple of things in terms of our department. We need to be very cognizant of the role that forest fires play in terms of our Kyoto targets. As we see an increase in global warming, it's predicted that we will see an increase in the number of forest fires. You

know, when you start having to deal with an increased number of forest fires, you need to be spending money on increased equipment. Helicopters don't come cheap. We need to be, I think, strategic. We've done a very good job with initial attack crews, initial attack crews that I saw first-hand last summer in action accessing a fire way off, I believe it was north and west of Snow Lake, I think last year, where within minutes, within 10 or 11 minutes, they spotted a fire that could have been a huge fire, accessed that and put it out before it became a huge fire. Having said that, we don't fight every fire that pops up. Fire is a natural regenerative tool that Mother Nature uses for forest health, but we have to understand what that impact is on global warming.

The other night I saw a very interesting documentary based in British Columbia about the effects of the pine beetle and how the devastation that that little critter is doing to the forests in British Columbia is going to impact the provincial government's efforts to meet Kyoto targets as well. When the pine beetle goes through a forest, not only does it take away a tool to act as a carbon sink, but as it kills the trees and they decompose, they contribute back into the overall increase in greenhouse gases. I'm not going to pretend to be an expert or a scientist on that, but I thought that was a very revealing kind of a documentary to be looking at.

So what we did was that we in Manitoba, I think in a proactive way, introduced legislation that was passed last year that provided us with some tools to deal with not only the pine beetle but emerald ash borers and other pests in the forest to prevent that kind of loss in forest but also to prevent those kinds of increases in greenhouse gases and try to get out in front of an issue that could knock any government off their Kyoto commitment.

So we have to be able to see these things coming. We have to be able to act in a preventative way, and we have to be able to be in a position to help those financially who are working with us to hit these targets. That, I submit, would include the farm community.

Mr. Eichler: So, in short, you don't have any dollars in your budget that are specifically categorized for upgrading lagoons, for upgrading the requirements that you're proposing in some of the regulations in regard to livestock in particular; if the minister would care to respond to that.

Mr. Struthers: First and foremost, our role as a department is the regulator. *[interjection]* And we're good at regulating. I'm glad the member points that out. I'd like to think we're good at our job.

When it comes to dollar amounts, that ends up being a provincial government commitment. It may not be out of my department that those dollars flow, but we have made commitments in the farm community to be helpful when it comes to providing support in that transition, from what they do today, what a farmer does today, to what the farmer would be expected to do in order to help meet Kyoto targets.

But I want to be very careful with that. I don't want to sound as if farmers are out there getting up every morning to go out and mess up the environment. Some of the best environmental practices that I've seen have emanated from day-to-day activities out on the farm. I think farmers get that, and I know that I will receive support for our commitment to plant a million trees every year. That commitment will come from farmers. It'll come from municipalities. It'll come from people who want us, for all the right reasons, to be planting more trees and to be using that as a way to work with school groups and 4-H clubs and whoever else as an education tool, because I think the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) was right earlier when he keyed in on education. Maybe this is just the old schoolteacher in me, but I always think that's a very important part of anything that we do as leaders, is to educate as we go along.

There could be some possibilities through applications that we receive through the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund. That's one tool in which we can support groups out there who are doing good things in terms of meeting Kyoto targets. The Clean Environment Commission made some very good recommendations in terms of further research, and I fully support researching, whether that be in terms of hogs, which is specific to that report, or any other area of activity that the provincial government gets involved in. There is a moratorium in place, but that doesn't mean we stop researching. That means we continue to learn more and more all the time about our impact on Mother Nature.

Mr. Eichler: The minister had talked about the Sustainable Development Fund. Is your department responsible for any portion of that? Do you put funds

into it? If so, what's the process in order to access those funds?

Mr. Struthers: The Sustainable Development Innovations Fund does a lot of good work every year. Groups can apply, can get applications on-line. Groups can call into the department and be set up with applications. Those applications are reviewed by a board that makes decisions on the criteria that are set out in the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund.

There's about \$3.4 million a year available through the SDIF and a number of categories I can just quickly read out for the member: Eco-tourism; Ecosystem Conservation; Environmental Technology Innovation and Demonstration projects; Northern Community Development and Environmental Issues; Sustainable Agricultural Practices; Sustainable Community Development; Understanding Our Environment; Green Building Policy; the Environmental Youth Corps; Manitoba Climate Change Action Fund; Waste Reduction and Pollution Prevention fund; the Water Stewardship Fund; the Bear Smart initiative; Manitoba Forestry Association Woodlot Program; and the Orphan Mine Site assessment program.

That gives the member a little bit of an understanding of the broad kind of issues that SDIF deals with. I'm very pleased with the kind of uptake that we get every year from Manitobans, and I really feel good about the kind of projects that we've been able to support throughout Manitoba.

Mr. Eichler: The one that I'm particularly interested in is the Sustainable Agricultural Practices. You got \$3.4 million, as is my understanding, from looking at the summary that you had just provided me with.

What portion of that will actually be used for agriculture, because you've got a number of initiatives here which, I'm sure, are very expensive and are going to cost us a substantial amount of money. Whenever you look at Bill 17, in what you're proposing to do there, we need to know how much money is going to be available for our producers in order to meet those requirements.

* (10:50)

Mr. Struthers: I need to be very clear that we're not through SDIF. We wouldn't be able to fund all of that transition, and that's why I said at the beginning that kind of transition funding he's looking at would be funded on a corporate basis, across the provincial government with different funding departments.

We have a possibility here through SDIF. It would depend on the projects that are sent in through their application forms. What we do is we make these available, we work with the groups who want to know how they can apply and what the criteria are. If it's an agricultural group looking to participate, then our department is absolutely committed to working with that group to make sure they have every possibility of success.

But I don't want to leave the impression that this is the only avenue that the farm community can look at because, quite frankly, there's a ton of applications that come in every year, on all of those different categories that I've read, so we can't solve that problem on the basis of this fund alone. But that doesn't mean it's not there to be used. Last year, \$85,810 was applied for and received at the sustainable agricultural practices part of the overall fund. That is a reflection of the number of applications that came forward. I want to stress that this is driven by the applications that come forward.

Mr. Eichler: I thank the minister for the answer there, but it doesn't go far enough. When you look at the number of initiatives that, in fact, need to take place within Bill 17, in particular, with lagoon covers and that type of thing, which we know, you know, agitators and that type of thing that we actually need to be looking at in order to make those requirements that are necessary to meet the needs that the minister is proposing, I'm very disappointed in the fact that there's not enough money in order to move forward in a significant way.

The minister talks about other departments and other accesses for those agricultural producers to access, but having come through Estimates yesterday with the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), she very clearly stated that I need to lobby the other departments for those funds. When I hear a number of \$85,000, roughly, and 810, that's disappointing. In order to meet those needs, this government is going to have to find some creative way in order to expedite those dollars and make sure they're there so the producers can meet the needs that the government is proposing and, quite frankly, forcing on them through your Bill 17.

Mr. Struthers: I understand the point that the member is making. *[interjection]* You never know. Don't sell opposition short. Every country in the world has a government, but not every country in the world has an opposition. It's a key part of democracy. I think you're doing a very good job in opposition.

So I wish you long years and much success in opposition. Enough of that.

The member makes a very good point, and we've understood that from the beginning and not just in terms of the farm community. As the regulator, we put some very clear markers down for the city of Winnipeg, in terms of its responsibility to take care of human sewage that gets into our lakes and rivers and, in particular, Lake Winnipeg. We have indicated at the same time, not through this department, but through other departments, through the provincial government, that we were willing to cost-share, moving forward with those upgrades that they need to make.

If we are committed, as I'm assuming all 57 of us are, as legislators, in terms of protecting the environment and protecting water and getting a handle on what's happening in Lake Winnipeg and other bodies of water, then it's going to cost some money. The member shouldn't assume that the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund is going to be that silver bullet that solves the problem. It has \$3.4 million available across the spectrum and \$85,000 of that was applied for by farm groups and \$85,000 was granted to farm groups. *[interjection]* That's not going to, as the member says, solve the problem. I'm throwing this out as one possibility to add to providing a solution.

What I'd like to do is encourage, if the member knows of groups out there, farm groups that are interested, if they have projects that fit the criteria of the SDIF to encourage them to work with us to make sure we understand their projects so that we can work with them to at least meet those needs. We have committed and we have met with Manitoba Pork and with others that we'll be at the table when it comes to transition funding. My colleague the Agriculture Minister and I have been very clear; the Premier (Mr. Doer) has been clear; and so I would encourage the member to keep advocating on behalf of the farm community.

Mr. Eichler: Well, I don't know if the minister wears a hearing aid, but if not, he should maybe get one because he's not listening to the producers. In fact, what you have done is you've hampered the producers, in particular the pork producers, as a result of your Bill 17. When you talk about science, you talk about the CEC report that has been brought down by that commission, which is under your jurisdiction. Nowhere, nowhere in that report does it say the word "moratorium." There was never a

recommendation by that committee to put a moratorium on. What you have done is picked out one particular group, obviously for political reasons, but you're not basing it on good science. Yes, I agree; there is more to be done. There were 12 recommendations in that report of which you had an opportunity to expand on. What you did is you hampered that particular industry to bring forward new ways, new technologies in order to make that industry more viable. So as a result of that, now you put a moratorium on, and now they can't expand; they can't bring in the best feeding mechanisms; they can't bring in the best lagoons. Yes, they can upgrade the existing ones, but that costs money. In order to do that, you've got to increase animal units.

So, on one hand you're saying, yes, we want better-managed projects, but on the other hand, you're hampering the ability for those producers to do so. And so I think the minister, in all good will, should re-evaluate Bill 17 and let these producers do what they do well. They're very good stewards of the land, and you have regulations in place, through municipal, through your own government regulations, in a way to screen these upgrades and, quite frankly, putting the moratorium on has done nothing but move this backwards rather than moving it forward, which I think the government wants to do. But, instead, what you've done is hampered those operators to move forward.

Mr. Struthers: Well, obviously I don't agree with much of what the member just said. First of all, I will assume that the member has read the CEC report and that he came across the term "regional imbalance." In the report the CEC has very clearly indicated that there are regional imbalances that have grown throughout Manitoba in terms of the pork industry. This is an industry that throughout the 1990s and around the turn of the century expanded at a tremendous rate. We need to, and probably should have done this before, take a planning perspective on this, not just let things develop helter-skelter, not just let things develop at the rate at which they were developing without a lot of forethought as to the impact on certain regions. The CEC report was absolutely clear in pointing out that there are regional imbalances in the province and that the provincial government should do something about it.

* (11:00)

My job as the environment minister, as Conservation Minister, is to protect the environment, and that includes water. So my job is to provide a

framework in which the industry can grow but not mess up another part of our province that is near and dear to people's hearts and near and dear to our gross domestic product, and that is the water resource. We can't have one industry put at risk other industries. So it might be fine in opposition where you have all the fun and none of the responsibility to say things like, we're picking on pork. You know, I've heard that from the Pork Council when I've met with them, but I very clearly, a few minutes ago even, mentioned the kind of approach that we're taking with the City of Winnipeg, not just the City of Winnipeg, with other municipalities whom we've been working with to upgrade their water facilities, their sewage facilities. That costs money too, and we need to have a comprehensive approach.

We've been working with conservation districts over the course of several decades to work with farmers to take cattle out of rivers, off rivers in the wintertime, to take them out of riparian areas and water their cattle away from the rivers so that they're not contributing. We've had a tremendous amount of success.

Our government and previous governments have had a tremendous amount of success working with producers to move cattle out of rivers. It's not just Manitoba Pork that is being picked on. We have a comprehensive strategy to protect Manitoba's water, and we are implementing that. Manitoba Pork needs to play its role. Cattle needs to play its role. Municipalities need to play their roles. Cottagers, I've heard from cottagers who aren't very happy that we're making them become more environmentally responsible with their waste when they have lots along rivers and lakes.

It makes no sense to me that people with faulty septic fields should be allowed to contribute to the problems on Lake Winnipeg, so we're dealing with them as well. So what we have here is a broad comprehensive, I think, effective path forward, and we're taking that path forward.

I want to assure the member that the other thing that was very clear in the Clean Environment Commission's report was that the framework that we had put in place was not sufficient to protect Manitoba's water. I couldn't as minister just sit back and ignore that. I had to do something about that. That was in the report. I mean, if I hadn't done anything about it, either this member or one of his colleagues would have been pounding their fists on the table saying, the CEC report says your

framework is not sufficient, what are you doing about it, and that would be totally acceptable. I mean, a legitimate complaint from a member of the Legislature.

So we've acted. We've moved forward. We're addressing regional imbalances. The member knows that, in some rural municipalities in the southeast, there are a ton of hog barns. There is a problem finding sufficient spread fields for hog barns in areas like Hanover and La Broquerie, Ste. Anne, De Salaberry. Those are R.M.s that come to mind.

You know, there are recommendations coming from the Phosphorus Expert Committee about a special management area up through the Red River. We can't ignore the fact that the Red River floods every now and then, big time, sometimes, and that that contributes to nutrient loading into Lake Winnipeg. We can't just stick our heads in the sand and pretend that that doesn't happen. We have to do something about it. We have a responsibility to do that.

When we get up into the member's area, he knows the Interlake well. He knows the sensitivities there in terms of the land and the proximity of water. It would be irresponsible for us to sit back and think that there are no problems with the karst topography in the area. It's Interlake, inter, between lakes. You're in close proximity to Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg. You're right in the middle of it. It would be irresponsible for us to not move forward and do it in a fair way, which I believe we have done, and take some action in terms of those areas.

So I understand that the member may not be very happy with Bill 17. He needs to understand that it was based on the Clean Environment Commission, and that both the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) and I have spoken with Manitoba Pork in terms of transitioning into that new framework. *[interjection]* Oh, did you? We've got you surrounded now.

Mr. Eichler: Well the minister's made a lot of comments there, and, yes, it is the province as a whole that is responsible. If you look at the City of Winnipeg, you give them to 2020. Instead, what you've done is you picked out one particular sector, that being the pork industry, and targeted that as your saviour that's going to save Lake Winnipeg, save our lakes, save our streams.

If you look at the science, it's 1.5 percent that's actually being contributed as the pork producers the

science that you should be basing your decision on and, unfortunately, that result is what you should be basing your decision on. The government has a moratorium on now. You don't need legislation to put a moratorium on. To put a permanent moratorium on, what you've done is put a signal out there to the general populace that pigs are bad. Pigs are not bad. They're actually probably the most aggressive when it comes to making sure, through regulations because they are very heavily regulated. In fact they are the heaviest regulated industry that we have out there when you look at the other sectors. Unfortunately, what you have done is started the ball to kill that industry. I know that wasn't the intent. It was not the government's will, if you want, to pick out that particular industry, but you have by putting a permanent ban on that sector.

I know that the minister has great intentions when it comes to trying to clean up Lake Manitoba, Lake Winnipeg, the rivers and streams, and we agree with that. But you don't have to do that in that way that you are doing it. There's other ways. I mean, if you want a moratorium, you can certainly still do that. You don't need a bill to put the moratorium on.

Having said that, if you are going to segregate out that industry, then you should give them the same time lines that you talked about with the City of Winnipeg, some of the others, when you look at the cottage developments that you talked about, which your government is being very aggressive on. There're numbers of those. In fact, if you go down to the southern part of Lake Manitoba, a lot of those are just 45 gallon drums thrown in the ground. That's their holding tank. I can tell you, segregating out just the pork industry, is very, very wrong in my opinion. There are lots of other contributors that are significant. Yes, that industry needs to continue to base science on making improvements through feeding systems, but, unfortunately, the signal that's being sent out there is the wrong signal.

Mr. Struthers: Well, I think the member should be careful what he asks for sometimes because, if he is going to rely on comparisons between our approach to the City of Winnipeg and the approach that we have with the farm community, I want him to know a couple of things.

* (11:10)

First of all, the date that he goes with in terms of 2020, isn't correct. It's 2014. All three plants will be by that date removing nutrients, phosphorus and nitrogen, not a half job like has been recommended

to us by some. Brandon is going to full nutrient removal right away. Winter spreading of the sludge that the City of Winnipeg is doing, whereas with farmers winter spreading, the CEC has recommended 2013. The City of Winnipeg is 2011.

Based on what the member has just said, should I meet with KAP later on and say, you know, the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) has said we're too weak on you guys, that we should be moving that up a couple of years, get everybody winter spreading by 2011? The member has to be very, very careful in his comparisons.

He talked about good science. Who gets to determine what's good science? I have had scientists—very smart people who know a lot more about science than I'll ever know; they've got Ph.D.s behind their names that I'll never have—who have come to me and said, you know, Struthers, you're way too tough; the science doesn't say that you should be moving forward with a moratorium. Then the next scientist with as many Ph.D.s down his arm comes to me and says, Struthers, you're being a little wimpy here; you could do a lot more based on the science.

What's a poor little ex-principal to do when he's got all these very smart people sitting at his table, one of them saying go further; one of them saying you don't go far enough? I guess the member has a monopoly on what the good science is. Maybe he's got that knowledge of Solomon, the wisdom of Solomon to figure out what's good science and what isn't.

I'll tell you another one. Some scientists come in to me and say, yes, it's 1.5 percent that pork contributes to the overall problem. I had one scientist come to me and say, it's 32 percent. Now, I'm not in any position to decide who's right, but I am in the position to say to people, whether it's 1.5 or 6 or 14 or 32, everybody who contributes to the problem needs to contribute to the solution. If we accept the fact that it's 1.5 percent, that doesn't mean that we're going to do nothing in terms of working with farmers and pig producers to lessen their impact.

I believe that pork producers are very responsible. I know the research that they've been doing. In terms of environmental protection, some of that research allows you to not have to cook your pork on the barbeque right through. You can leave a little pink now, and the pork tastes great. That's because of research. There's good and valuable things that come out of research. I know that.

It's not correct for a member of this Legislature to determine what's good science and what's not good science. We are public decision makers. We have a responsibility to protect water and to make sure that everybody does their part to protect that water. It's going to take I think some very courageous decisions in terms of setting goals, and it's going to take a lot of discipline to make sure that we all work to meet those goals, meet those targets, by the dates that have been recommended to us by the Clean Environment Commission.

The other point that I think needs to be made, I made points about Brandon and about Winnipeg, but Portage la Prairie is moving—their municipality is moving towards removal of phosphorus. They're doing a feasibility study now. We're working with them to make sure that they are in a position to remove their nutrients and help us solve this problem.

So it's not that we're singling out one industry. Pork producers need to do their share but everybody else needs to as well, and we have a broad-ranging comprehensive plan to make sure that that happens.

Mr. Eichler: Like I say, the debate on Bill 17 for the House, obviously we're not going to agree, but on the licensing of the existing lagoons for not only the hog industry but the dairy industry as well, what is the procedure that is going to be followed there in the moratorium areas that's been outlined in Bill 17 for issuing those permits for upgrades, for size and leakage?

As we know, these lagoons get older and they need to be upgraded. Will those permits be reissued and what would be the policy that the department's going to follow for those?

Mr. Struthers: The overriding premise that we will have in terms of making decisions is water protection. We're not out to ratchet down the industry within the moratorium areas that have been designated.

If a producer has a fire and loses the operation and wants to rebuild, that will happen. We won't be replacing a 2,000-animal-unit operation with a 5,000-animal-unit operation, but that farmer will be able to rebuild to the level that he was at before. If the producer is looking to make environmental improvements, then that would be taken into consideration. Again, in the moratorium areas, if a producer can show that they're going to have an improved way to handle the manure that they're

dealing with and it's not going to be an environmental threat to water quality, then that won't be squashed by Bill 17.

For example, if a farmer wants to get into anaerobic digestion and the director in our department can look at that, and if we're convinced that that's something that's positive, then that can be okayed. But, as people have pointed out, and back to one of the member's original questions, on the farmer's part that takes money. That's where we've been meeting with Manitoba Pork and with others to determine what kind of role the provincial government can play in terms of helping that to happen.

Mr. Chairperson: Just before I recognize the next speaker, I wouldn't mind canvassing the committee. We are in Estimates as opposed to bills. Now, if the committee wants to explore a particular bill in detail, then that's fine, but we do need to make sure that everyone is all right with that before we go back and forth on, you know, a specific topic on a piece of legislation.

So I recognize the honourable Member for Lakeside, with that in mind.

Mr. Eichler: We thank the Chairperson for his advice. When you're talking about a particular bill, we were talking about Finance and how that bill would be financed. So, when you get into the Estimates process, I certainly don't want to correct the Chair, he's the Chair, but, when you talk about Estimates, that's part of the process of which we're talking about. So I guess we'll have to disagree to agree. Unless you override me, Mr. Chair, we'll continue to do our Estimates process that way unless it's out of order.

Mr. Chairperson: No problem with what the member's just stated. I appreciate drawing the connection between the finance process of Estimates and the legislation that both parties are making reference to.

So, with that said, Minister, do you have any comments on that?

Mr. Struthers: No, I'm having fun doing what we're doing. That's fine by me.

Mr. Chairperson: Okay. Very good. With that understood, we will proceed.

Mr. Eichler: In regard to the permit, we know those permits cost a huge amount of money and, when we

move forward on these others that are outside the moratorium area, will that process be followed the same as what it has been in the past, or will the permit policy change as a result of Bill 17 or any of the other amendments that have been proposed?

* (11:20)

Mr. Struthers: Yes, a couple of things. First of all, I want to add a point to my last answer that I intended to make. One thing that the CEC did talk about as well is the impending country-of-origin labelling and stressing that we need to have some thought put into and some action taken in terms of providing a level of protection for farmers. Along those lines—here's one of these situations that is, actually, I don't like the term, but it is a win-win. When we announced money for hog processing capabilities in Brandon and in Neepawa, we won on the side of the farmer because that allows us to take some steps in terms of providing that kind of protection and ability for the Manitoba hog producer, but it also gave us an opportunity to make sure that we were taking the environmentally prudent steps in both Neepawa and Brandon to protect Manitoba's water. So I think that's worth mentioning.

In terms of permits and those sorts of things, we have an interdepartmental committee led by Conservation, Agriculture's involved with that, Intergovernmental Affairs, Water Stewardship, that will be looking through the whole CEC report, including the 48 recommendations, and looking for ways that we can implement those recommendations.

The member knows that in terms of licensing in our processes, we've also accepted the report of the Auditor last fall and view that report as a way to improve our system, our permitting and our administrative components to our program, and that we are moving to put people in place to be liaisons with producers, to provide inspection services that can, in the end, help the producer. I think that, you know, we made some changes in terms of engineers and putting remediation plans in place and working with the farm community to do that.

I think it was quite telling when we introduced our phosphorus regulations—I believe it was November of '06 as we introduced the pause—the CEC looked at what we had done, I think understood that we were in the right general direction but that we were still not providing a strong enough framework for the industry. We knew we needed to act.

Knowing that our prime focus is water protection—that's the underlying goal—we will do that in such a way that we co-operate with the producer. What we don't want to have happen out of all of this, if we're putting new regulations in place and the rest, we don't want a different inspector from every different department showing up every second day on a farm site, harassing farmers. We know and we're working towards a very smooth, very efficient way in which we can actually implement these regulations without it being a pain in the neck for the farmer. Again, always understanding that our goal is to protect Manitoba's water.

Mr. Eichler: I'd like to move on to livestock disposal. If there was a foreign animal disease on a massive scale, what's the department's plan as far as handling something like that? We had the avian flu breakout in B.C., and we certainly hope that Manitoba would never be exposed to that, but what is the plan that's been put in place by this government?

Mr. Struthers: Well, first and foremost, I guess, nobody hopes we ever have to go there, but understanding that we have to be ready if we ever have to deal with a huge disaster, working with departments such as Agriculture and other departments, Emergency Measures Organization, we have in place a plan if we need to go to that. A lot of work has been done on that, and I want to pay particular acknowledgement to the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), who has been a leader in terms of being prepared for these kinds of outcomes if we need to go there.

Our Web site is available to people if they need to properly dispose of carcasses, they need to properly dispose of anything that could be a problem. There's information on the Web site. There's four sites around the province in which they could be handled. We do have a plan in place, should we need to go there.

Mr. Eichler: I asked what the plan was and you say you have a plan in place, but you didn't tell us what it was. So I guess that means you don't have a plan, but you do have a plan, but you didn't want to tell me about the plan. But I guess we can go the Web site and practise our reading and then let the minister know himself.

The tire recycling. I know that the department has looked at that. There have been a number of changes, and if the department would upgrade the

House in regard to what programs you're doing to recycle, in particular, the farmland tires. I know there's been a surplus of tires that's been mounting up and certainly one that we're very concerned about.

Mr. Struthers: This is a topic that I actually am quite proud of the work that we've done over a period of time. It was, I think, prudent that our government undertook redoing—not just the Tire Stewardship stream of waste, but all of the different streams that we have to deal with. In this case, the last thing we wanted to have happen was have our municipal landfills and farm sites and everything else filled up with old discarded tires. We worked very well with municipalities because municipalities didn't want this becoming a catastrophe in their backyards.

One month ago, actually, one month ago today, the new Tire Stewardship Board got up on its feet and began operations. We, for the first time in our history, included agricultural tires in that new approach because at one point, the revenue stream for the Tire Stewardship Board was simply passenger tires. It was very clear that if something wasn't done, we would lose our ability to do the proper thing with old, spent tires. So we worked with municipalities.

I'm really especially proud of the work that we did with the Keystone Agricultural Producers. Like with many things, I guess the easy thing would have been to do nothing, but we didn't have that luxury and I think we really worked well with KAP—the new board especially—to negotiate with KAP in terms of the levies set with agricultural tires. I would actually refer the member to a news release that KAP put out at the time that I think very well—I was tempted to hire some of the people at KAP to write the news releases on the part of the department. It was such a good news release, and I think it encapsulated the kind of approach that I really, really wanted to see come from a review of the Tire Stewardship program.

So the new board is in place; it's up and running, and I expect good things will happen. I expect we won't be dealing with crises out in rural landfills and rural farm sites of tires piling up and becoming a nuisance.

* (11:30)

Mr. Eichler: As you know, continental tire and recycling in Winkler went down, and, of course, we know the number of tires that they did recycle. What is the balance that's now left in that fund, and how is

that money used to dispose of those tires that are collected?

Mr. Struthers: The advantage of this new approach to this waste stream is that it involves people in the industry who are actually working in terms of tires and working with farmers and with others who need to have this kind of service.

The money that was in the account under the old board was in the neighbourhood of \$300,000. The commitment that I made was that that \$300,000 would be used to pick up and process those tires that are out in landfills now, that are out on the landscape, so that they don't become a nuisance. That will catch us up. That will mean that we have got to the point where there's not a bunch of tires out there on the landscape; they will have been picked up and processed. The new board is working with us on that and contributing an amount of money to help in that round up of stray tires around the province.

Mr. Eichler: The anticipated income on the passenger tires and farm-use tires, are there going to be additional costs that the Province is going to have to incur in order to process the used tires?

Mr. Struthers: I think I need to take just half a minute to explain the difference between the board that is there now and the one that was there before. What we have moved from is a board not representative of the industry. What we have moved to is an extended producer-responsibility model that is driven by the industry, the people who are actually involved in picking up, processing and putting in place a system by which we take tires out of the landscape and dispose of them properly or reuse them properly.

This is an industry-led board. These are the folks who are in from day one. We're saying to the industry, you have a responsibility, when you make a tire, to be responsible for the life cycle of that tire. It's your responsibility to do something with it when you're done. You have every ability to implement a fee to do that, to pay for that valuable service which you will be doing. It's made up of industry members, this new board is, and they will make those kinds of decisions. I think that's better than this minister or any other minister imposing those kinds of decisions on industry. I'm confident that this new model will serve Manitobans very well.

The other thing I want to mention, I neglected to mention in my previous answer, was the reference to

the plant at Winkler. That Winkler plant was bought by new owners and, I understand, is in full operation.

Mr. Eichler: I'd like to move on to the Crown Lands. As we know, producers are having to run more livestock in order to be viable. I know we talked about this last year, in particular in Ste. Rose, the minister's area and up in the Interlake area as well. We've seen a number of operations where they have to have more Crown land in order to increase the herd size.

I wonder if there have been any changes, other than what you're proposing in your new bill, 30, through regulations that would encompass those operators that do need to run more animal units, whether or not the department's going to be making those changes in the near future.

Mr. Struthers: Mr. Chairperson, the member is referencing agricultural Crown lands. The policies that dictate the actions within that area are set by the Department of Agriculture. We certainly work close together with them in terms of agricultural Crown lands, but the Department of Agriculture has done a very good job in being open and flexible to the needs of farmers. What we do, then, is we become the transactional arm within the provincial government. We have a Crown Lands deputies committee, very ably chaired by my deputy, that then looks at providing that transactional support, but those policy decisions are made, I think, by the people in the best position to do that, and that's Manitoba Agriculture.

I do want to put in a plug here for The Crown Lands Act that I introduced in the House for first reading that will facilitate our ability to move quickly in terms of the transactions. When I became minister, I was totally amazed at how long it took sometimes, whether we're talking Ag Crown lands or whether we're talking others, to get a simple transaction through, and I know that was providing a great level of frustration on the part of, not only farmers, but other folks that were interested in very quickly purchasing Crown land, or leasing Crown land, or whatever it is that they wanted to do.

So we've been looking for ways in which we can improve that whole system. A couple of years ago we launched a review of the Crown lands, and I think made some very good improvements. There was a huge backlog of appeals at one time which, I believe, we've whittled down to pretty much nil, and we've worked to make sure that the process in place doesn't cause an inordinate amount of time on the part of those wishing those transactions to go through.

But I want to say we still have a responsibility as a provincial government to do our due diligence when dealing with the people's land. It is the people's land; it's Crown lands. So we want to make sure we have a process that's efficient, but we want it to be laced with due diligence as well. So we think we're moving in the right direction, and we think that direction's good.

* (11:40)

Mr. Eichler: On a constituent question in regard to the Gunton Bull Test Station, I know there have been a number of constituents that have contacted me in regard to whether or not that's going to be sold off by your department and, if so, what the process is going to be followed there if it, in fact, is going to be sold off.

Mr. Struthers: I'm trying to think of a witty way to work the word "bull" into my answer, and I can't do it, so I'll just not do that. We're not aware of any plans to sell the bull test station. He may need to look elsewhere for that answer.

Mr. Eichler: Well, it would have to go through your department, so I'm sure that you would, in fact, let us know. Certainly, as the MLA for the area, I would appreciate any updates on that if, in fact, it does go to tender process and the process would be outlined.

I know my colleagues are anxious to also ask you some questions, and I thank the minister and the staff for their co-operation in bearing with me for the last hour and a half, so thank you.

Mr. Cliff Cullen (Turtle Mountain): I thank the Member for Lakeside for allowing me the opportunity to ask a few questions.

Just referencing an article that appeared this week in the *Brandon Sun* in regard to Assiniboine Community College. They have a land and water management area there, portfolio, where students undertake different land and water management principles. The concept there is to put in a wetland area on provincial property just adjacent to the ACC complex. I'm wondering if the minister was aware of that proposal and if anyone from ACC has approached the government on that particular proposal.

Mr. Struthers: I think we have to do much more to utilize what Mother Nature had put in place in the first place as these great filters. There are lots of ways in which we could utilize swamps and marshes and the rest. One of my worries is that, with the price

of wheat, we're going to lose a lot of these areas that are so valuable to our province. I would certainly encourage folks in Brandon to approach our regional staff out in the Brandon office. They will give them help in terms of if it's something that would qualify under the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund. I would certainly be open to recommendations from the committee working on SDIF if they would come forward with that.

The Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation has done some very good work in terms of supporting these kinds of projects. I think his own government, back in the '90s, passed some very good legislation in terms of easements that maybe could be explored as well. So I think there are lots of opportunities for these kinds of projects, and the folks at the college should be talking to our regional staff in Brandon about any of the possibilities to help out.

Mr. Cullen: In terms of your Sustainable Development Innovations Fund, I want to reference Killarney Lake. Killarney Lake, along with other lakes in the province, obviously, has some influence of some algae growth from time to time. I know there's a group, an individual there, actually, a schoolteacher who's been quite active in trying to do some remedial work around Killarney Lake.

He's got his biology students involved in a process where they remove the cattails around the lake, in essence, trying to get rid of the phosphorous loading. He's also kind of taking that one step further. He's made application to do some research on algae, actually taking algae and turning algae into biofuel. My understanding was he was turned down on his request for funding. I'm not sure that was through your department or not, but I'm just seeking some clarification. Is your fund somewhere where that particular project might be applicable?

Mr. Struthers: What I will do is undertake to see where that project is; if there are ways in which our environment officers, our regional staff, can work with that school teacher. Maybe there were deficiencies in their proposal or maybe there's some information that they can add to the proposal and resubmit it. We offer that kind of a service to people. I would recommend his constituent get a hold of our regional staff and follow up, see if there's any way they can improve the proposal or, maybe, if they need to change the project. I don't know. But, if he could advise his constituent with that, I'll advise the department. I'll give them a heads-up that this

constituent's coming back again and that there's work to be done.

Mr. Cullen: I appreciate the minister's comments. I know the individual will be meeting with the town, as well, the municipal committee there, and reviewing some issues going forward. So I certainly will bring the minister up to speed on those discussions and see if we can move that project ahead.

In my view, Killarney Lake is a tremendous lake that we could study because it faces the same sort of pressure that Lake Winnipeg does, just on a smaller scale. I'm hoping that we can get the right people with some money and kind of the expertise to maybe do some work around that lake. It will, I think, ultimately, give us some of the knowledge and the science that we need when we're looking at the issues around Lake Winnipeg.

Mr. Struthers: I think that's a very good approach. We get into these discussions about nutrient loading and we tend to focus on Lake Winnipeg, which we need to do. I think everybody understands that. But there are lots of lakes and rivers and streams out there that we need to be looking at, as well. Killarney Lake could be one of them.

I know Lake Dauphin is another good example. We have a fairly shallow lake, with the Mossy River flowing out through the north and seven tributaries flowing into Lake Dauphin. We've done our best over the years to straighten out those tributaries and not interfere with Mother Nature. We load them up with nutrients and we rush them into the lake as quickly as we can. We form alluvial fans of some of the best topsoil in the world out at the mouth of each of those tributaries. Then we have problems with spawning pickerel; we have trouble with algae blooms. Dauphin Lake loses most of its water, not through the Mossy River, but through evaporation. So we're contributing to the whole water cycle with nutrients that should just as well be picked up by a crop of wheat rather than end up fuelling a crop of algae out on the lake.

So there are lots of lakes around, I think, that we can learn from, and Killarney Lake could be one of them. On lakes such as Killarney Lake, I think we can learn a lot about on-site waste water. I believe, if I have it right, Killarney Lake has a good supply of cottages, and a contribution that way. We want to be serious about on-site waste water. We want to learn what we can about ways in which we can decrease

the impact that they have on lakes like Killarney Lake.

So I'd be open to suggestions in terms of what we can learn from Killarney Lake.

* (11:50)

Mr. Cullen: I appreciate the minister's comment. You do mention the waste-water issue and, not only is Killarney Lake quite a cottage development, Pelican Lake and Rock Lake, at both those lakes, there's been a real significant increase in the amount of buildings going in there. I think the new buildings certainly are up to code and up to spec, and I think they're monitored fairly closely. Where I think we need more attention is maybe in some of the older ones and some of the waste-water systems that aren't being managed properly by the individual homeowners.

I'd like to get a sense from the minister of what role his department is going to play in regulating some of those areas.

Mr. Struthers: To me, that's very good advice from the member. Our role is again as the regulator; we need to be putting people in place that can work with cottagers and others. In the Estimates, we've hired two new positions in terms of environment officers, specifically for onsite waste-water capabilities. We have been looking for ways in which we can increase our ability to inspect and, by inspect, I don't mean hiding behind a tree someplace, just ready to jump out and pinch some cottager.

We really take seriously our role in educating and then seeing what kind of follow-up action we can collaborate with in terms of onsite waste water. Of course, if we come across blatant examples of people taking action that's detrimental to the water quality, we have the ability to fine and that sort of thing. I don't think a guy should be able to install a septic tank and then poke a hole through the bottom of it, so that he doesn't have to pay to get it cleaned out, that sort of thing.

I think we all understand that somebody, in our case it's our department, needs to be able to deal with those sorts of things. So our role is as the regulator. We put in place a strong framework to protect the water and then put in place our capabilities to make sure that framework is followed. We have increased our capability to fine people who are not cooperative and increased our capability to find those people who think that they can get away with dumping their sewage into the people's rivers.

Mr. Cullen: Where will these two new individuals, where will they be located?

Mr. Struthers: Actual locations for these two haven't been decided, but I want to make a couple of points. First of all, wherever these positions end up being located, that frees up people in other parts of the province and increases their capabilities to deal with other areas of priority. Secondly, I want to be sure that, with these two new positions and the others that are in the department, I want to be able to respond to the hot spots in the province.

Capital Region, that's a hot spot. With the kind of development that is happening in some of the R.M.s around the city of Winnipeg and everybody likes to live on a river, there's a responsibility to live on a river without polluting that river. We have to have the capabilities of doing those inspections. So we want to target cottage areas that we know there are problems at. Wherever these staff are located, we want them to have the capability to move quickly to areas where they're most needed.

Mr. Cullen: I believe that there should be some kind of an inspection process there. I know we have a lot of people that aren't abiding by the rules, and I'm just wondering if the minister is entertaining or looking at some kind of a systematic inspection process, taking a given lake and just getting out there and seeing what is actually going on.

Mr. Struthers: I think it's important to note that what we have is our environment programs branch that co-ordinates around the province these kinds of services. Like I said before, we want to be able to target those areas—in a systematic way—target those areas where the need is the greatest. That would include parks. That would include the Capital Region, cottage areas. We want to be able to get to the places first that are causing the most harm to water quality.

That department that I just mentioned is also responsible for training. We need to have people out there in the landscape representing our department who know what they're doing and are trained to do that. That will work in co-ordination with people in each of the regions of our department, in every region, to co-ordinate the kind of work that we do in terms of inspections.

I'm confident that we're moving in the right direction. I'm confident that we're getting the people in place that can actually let me know what is actually happening out there in each of the regions.

Mr. Cullen: Well, I understand where the minister wants to go. We've had specific situations brought forward by local governments, and there seems to be an unwillingness on behalf of some of your staff to move forward in terms of fining some of these individuals. I don't know exactly why that is, if there's a loophole in the system or they're afraid to write tickets or just what the issue is, but there is specific situations out there. Unless we make an issue with one or two of these people that are not playing by the rules, these things will continue to go on so I think there is onus on your department to take issue with some of these individual ones, and especially when they're being pointed out by a local municipality. It's not their responsibility. In my view, it's your responsibility as a regulator to take those issues on.

Mr. Struthers: Well, if there's information that the member has to bring forward to us, we'd really appreciate knowing those kinds of details. We have busted people for making bad decisions. There have been people in this province who have been ticketed by us, have paid fines for thinking that they were above the law in terms of this. As much as we can, we try to get the bad guys. We rely on a system out there of people letting us know what's happening on the landscape. We have people in every region of the province. We have very good people who know their way around every part of our great province, and if there's information that the member has that could be helpful to us or that municipalities in his area have, make sure that that's being brought to the attention of our regional staff so that we can follow up on it.

Mr. Cullen: Well, I appreciate the minister's response, and we'll certainly follow up on our discussion.

Mr. Chairperson: The time being 12 noon, I'm interrupting the proceedings.

The Committee of Supply will resume sitting this afternoon following the conclusion of routine proceedings.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, May 1, 2008

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY		Resolution	
PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS		Res. 6–Specialty Wine Store in the City of Brandon	
Second Readings–Public Bills		Borotsik	1461
Bill 216–The Personal Information Protection and Identity Theft Prevention Act		Caldwell	1464
Taillieu	1451	Graydon	1466
Gerrard	1453	Swan	1467
Cullen	1453	Pedersen	1469
Rondeau	1454	Maloway	1470
Borotsik	1456	Gerrard	1471
Faurschou	1458	Dewar	1471
Mitchelson	1460		
		GOVERNMENT BUSINESS	
		Committee of Supply	
		Conservation	1472

The Legislative Assembly of Manitoba Debates and Proceedings
are also available on the Internet at the following address:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/legislature/hansard/index.html>