

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

**Official Report**  
**(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Ninth Legislature**

| <b>Member</b>            | <b>Constituency</b> | <b>Political Affiliation</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
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| ALTEMEYER, Rob           | Wolseley            | N.D.P.                       |
| ASHTON, Steve, Hon.      | Thompson            | N.D.P.                       |
| BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.    | Gimli               | N.D.P.                       |
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| GRAYDON, Cliff           | Emerson             | P.C.                         |
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| HOWARD, Jennifer, Hon.   | Fort Rouge          | N.D.P.                       |
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| JENNISSSEN, Gerard       | Flin Flon           | N.D.P.                       |
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| LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.       | La Verendrye        | N.D.P.                       |
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| SWAN, Andrew, Hon.       | Minto               | N.D.P.                       |
| TAILLIEU, Mavis          | Morris              | P.C.                         |
| WHITEHEAD, Frank         | The Pas             | N.D.P.                       |
| WIEBE, Matt              | Concordia           | N.D.P.                       |
| WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.    | Swan River          | N.D.P.                       |

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, May 11, 2010

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

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

## INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

**Bill 34—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Negative Option Marketing and Enhanced Remedies)**

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Attorney General (Mr. Swan), that Bill 34, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Negative Option Marketing and Enhanced Remedies); Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur (commercialisation par abonnement par défaut et amélioration des recours), be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Mackintosh:** This bill prohibits negative-option marketing, which occurs when a supplier provides a consumer with goods or services that the consumer did not ask for and requires the consumer to pay for the goods or services unless the consumer informs the supplier that the consumer doesn't want them. A consumer is not required to pay for the goods and services received under a negative-option marketing scheme. The bill also increases fines under the act and enhances the option of court-ordered restitution. This bill is part of a new multiyear consumer protection strategy called, Let's Make a Better Deal.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

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

**Bill 36—The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2010**

**Hon. Andrew Swan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Blaikie), that Bill 36, The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2010; Loi corrective de 2010, be now read a first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Mr. Swan:** Mr. Speaker, this is the traditional annual statute law amendment act that deals with a variety

of bills requiring technical and other minor changes and repeals two obsolete acts.

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

**Bill 228—The Consumer Rights Day Act**

**Ms. Erin Selby (Southdale):** Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Rossmere (Ms. Braun), that Bill 228, The Consumer Rights Day Act; Loi sur la journée des Droits du consommateur, be read now for the first time.

*Motion presented.*

**Ms. Selby:** This bill would proclaim March 15th each year as Consumer Rights Day in Manitoba.

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

## PETITIONS

**Ophthalmology Services—Swan River**

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

These are the reasons for this petition:

The Swan Valley region has a high population of seniors and a very high incidence of diabetes. Every year, hundreds of patients from the Swan Valley region must travel to distant communities for cataract surgery and additional pre-operative and post-operative appointments.

These patients, many of whom are sent as far away as Saskatchewan, need to travel with an escort who must take time off work to drive the patient to his or her appointments without any compensation. Patients who cannot endure this expense and hardship are unable to have the necessary treatment.

The community has located an ophthalmologist who would like to practise in Swan River. The local Lions Club has provided funds for the necessary equipment, and the Swan River Valley hospital has space to accommodate this service.

The Minister of Health has told the Town of Swan River that it has insufficient infrastructure and patient volumes to support a cataract surgery

program; however, residents of the region strongly disagree.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the Minister of Health to consider rethinking her refusal to allow an ophthalmologist to practise in Swan River and to consider working with the community to provide this service without further delay.

This is signed by C. Sawchuk, S. Shulmosh, M. Hempel and many, many others, Mr. Speaker.

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

### Bipole III

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

The background to this petition is as follows:

Manitoba Hydro has been forced by the NDP government to construct its next high-voltage direct transmission line, Bipole III, down the west side of Manitoba, a decision for which the NDP government has not been able to provide any logical justification.

Since this will cost Manitoba ratepayers at least \$640 million more than an east-side route, and given that the Province of Manitoba is facing its largest deficit on record, the burden of this extra cost could not come at a worse time.

Between 2002 and 2009 electricity rates increased by 16 percent, and Manitoba Hydro has filed a request for further rate increases totalling 6 percent over the next two years.

A western Bipole III route will invariably lead to more rate increases.

In addition to cheaper—in addition to being cheaper, an east-side route would be hundreds of kilometres shorter and would be more reliable than a west-side route.

West-side residents have not been adequately consulted and have identified serious concerns with the proposed line.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider proceeding with the cheaper, shorter and more

logical east-side route, subject to necessary regulatory approvals, to save ratepayers hundreds of millions of dollars during these challenging economic times.

And this petition is signed by S. Wasilka, D. Jackson, K. Dreger and many, many other Manitobans.

### Mount Agassiz Ski Area

**Mr. Stuart Briese (Ste. Rose):** I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

For several decades, the Mount Agassiz ski area, home to the highest vertical between Thunder Bay and the Rocky Mountains, was a popular skiing and snowboarding destination for Manitobans and visitors alike.

The operations of Mount Agassiz ski area were very important to the local economy, not only creating jobs, but also generating sales of goods and services at area businesses.

In addition, a thriving rural economy generates tax revenue that helps pay for the core provincial government services and infrastructure which benefits all Manitobans.

Although the ski facility closed in 2000, there remains strong interest in seeing it reopened and Parks Canada is committed to conducting a feasibility study with respect to the Agassiz site and future opportunities in this area.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the appropriate ministers of the provincial government to consider outlining to Parks Canada the importance that a viable recreation facility in the Mount Agassiz area would play in the local and provincial economies.

And to request that the appropriate ministers of the provincial government consider working with all stakeholders, including Parks Canada, to help develop a plan for a viable, multiseason recreation facility in the Mount Agassiz area.

This petition is signed by M. LeGall, M. Theoret, R. Roulette and many, many other fine Manitobans.

### PTH 15–Traffic Signals

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba.

These are the reasons for this petition:

In August 2008, the Minister of Transportation stated that traffic volumes at the intersection of PTH 15 and Highway 206 in Dugald exceeded those needed to warrant the installation of traffic signals.

Every school day up to a thousand students travel through this intersection in Dugald where the lack of traffic signals puts their safety at risk.

Thousands of vehicles travel daily through this intersection in Dugald where the lack of traffic signals puts at risk the safety of these citizens.

\* (13:40)

In 2008, there was a 300 percent increase in accidents at this intersection.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request that the Minister of Transportation consider the immediate installation of traffic signals at the intersection of PTH 15 and Highway 206 in Dugald.

To request that the Minister of Transportation recognize the value of the lives and well-being of the students and citizens of Manitoba.

This is signed by P. Dobson, C. Cariou, E. Cook and many, many Manitobans.

### Multiple Myeloma Treatments

**Mrs. Heather Stefanson (Tuxedo):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to present the following petition to the Legislative Assembly.

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Health Canada has approved to use the Revlimid for patients with multiple myeloma, a rare, progressive and fatal blood cancer.

Revlimid is a vital new treatment that must be accessible to all patients in Manitoba for this life-threatening cancer of the blood cells.

Multiple myeloma is treatable, and new, innovative therapies like Revlimid can extend survival and enhance quality of life for the estimated 2,100 Canadians diagnosed annually.

The provinces of Ontario, Québec, British Columbia, Saskatchewan, Alberta have already listed this drug on their respective pharmacare formularies.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

That the provincial government consider immediately providing Revlimid as a choice to patients with multiple myeloma and their health-care providers in Manitoba through public funding.

And Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by J. Smith, R. Nafostowicz and C. Pelda and many, many others.

### Waste-Water Ejector Systems

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

And these are the reasons for this petition:

Manitobans are deeply committed to protecting the environment, and they wish—and they want to be assured that provincial environmental policies are based on sound science.

In early 2009, the provincial government announced that it was reviewing the Onsite Wastewater Management Systems Regulation under The Environment Act.

Affected Manitobans, including property owners and municipal governments, provided considerable feedback to the provincial government on the impact of the proposed changes, only to have their input ignored.

The updated regulation includes a prohibition on the installation of new waste-water ejectors and the elimination of existing waste-water ejectors at the time of any property transfer.

Questions have been raised about the lack of scientific basis for these changes, as a Manitoba Conservation official stated in the October 8th, 2009, edition of the *Manitoba Co-operator*, quote: "Have we done a specific study? No." End quote.

These regulatory changes will have a significant financial impact on all affected Manitobans.

We petition the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba as follows:

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider immediately placing the recent changes on the Onsite Wastewater Management Systems

Regulation under The Environment Act on hold until such time that a review can take place to ensure that they are based on sound science.

To request that the Minister of Conservation to consider implementing the prohibition on waste-water ejector systems on a case-by-case basis as determined by environmental need in ecologically sensitive areas.

To request the Minister of Conservation to consider offering financial incentives to help affected Manitoba property owners adapt to these regulatory changes.

And Mr. Speaker, this petition is signed by G. Harrison, F. Faucher, C. Druwe and many, many others.

#### **Medical Clinic in Weston and Brooklands Area**

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

The background to this petition is as follows:

Community-based medical clinics provide a valuable health-care service.

The closure of the Westbrook Medical Clinic has left both Weston and Brooklands without a community-based medical clinic.

We petition the Legislative Assembly as follows:

To urge the provincial government to consider how important it is to have a medical clinic located in the Weston-Brooklands area.

Mr. Speaker, this is signed by R. Alexander, M. Alexander and L. Corbin and many, many other fine Manitobans.

### **MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS**

#### **Chantelle Chornoby**

**Hon. Eric Robison (Minister of Aboriginal and Northern Affairs):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great sadness and also great pride that I rise today to pay tribute to a young Manitoban. Twenty-one-year-old Chantelle Chornoby of the War Lake First Nation battled cancer for much of her life. But through pain and exhaustion that I can only imagine, she kept her faith in God, her glowing smile and her determination to show others that they have the power to save lives.

She had the spirit of a warrior woman. Chantelle first beat cancer when she was 10 years old. In 2007, she found out it was back. She was diagnosed with a form of leukemia that can only be treated and cured with bone marrow transplants.

These transplants require a complicated set of matched genetic markers, usually from a donor of the same ethnic group. The Canadian Blood Services' OneMatch marrow network has about 220,000 people registered to be potential donors, but less than 1 percent are Aboriginal people.

Recognizing the great need, Chantelle set up a Facebook group called Chantelle's Promise to raise awareness and recruit Aboriginal people to register as donors. Last year, I attended a registration drive she organized. I found out nine other Aboriginal people in Canada have the same disease. Two of them are in Manitoba. I pray that I am not suffering for nothing, she said then, I hope I'm able to speak for others in the same situation so they can have a better chance at finding a match too.

Chantelle passed away last weekend. Her match never came. But she never stopped hoping to find a cure, even asking that her body be donated for research. Her determination shows how well she deserved the title of National Aboriginal Role Model, which she was awarded recently. Her last words to her grandmother, she said: God is awesome. Tell everyone I love them.

I offer my sincere condolences to Chantelle's family: her grandparents, James and Edna Chornoby; her parents, Horace Saunders Jr. and Candace Laliberty; her partner, Jonathan Osborne; and their son, Cheveyo, a child that Chantelle trusted God for, even when doctors said he would never be born. He turns one year old tomorrow.

We know Chantelle left her family with peace in her heart. Now it is up to us as Manitobans, and Aboriginal people particularly, to leave her a legacy. Please visit Chantelle's Promise on Facebook and invite your friends to join. Then follow the links to [www.onematch.ca](http://www.onematch.ca) and find out how to register to be a donor. By donating bone marrow, you could be someone's one match for a second chance at life.

In closing, I'd like to borrow the words of Chief Dan George and say to Chantelle: May the stars carry your sadness away. May the flowers fill your heart with beauty, and may hope forever wipe away your tears. Ekosani.

**Mr. Gerald Hawranik (Official Opposition House Leader):** I'd like to thank the minister for his ministerial statement today because I believe that it raises awareness about this important issue for all Manitobans and, of course, because of the recent tragedy involving Chantelle Chornoby, for all Aboriginal people in the province.

For many individuals who are suffering from debilitating diseases or who are involved in tragic accidents, often their lives hang in the balance waiting for the generosity of others. And often these others are complete strangers who willingly donate blood, organs and bone marrow. For many individuals and their families, this period of waiting and hoping is understandably a time of significant stress and anxiety. Those who come forward to donate organs, donate blood and marrow need to be commended and encouraged, Mr. Speaker, and their actions literally save the lives of our family and friends.

\* (13:50)

The impact of these donations and their generosity cannot be overstated, and as legislators we have to work to ensure that these individuals are aware, first of all, of their opportunity to donate. The Canadian Blood Services has taken a leading role in working to ensure that donors can be connected with those who need their donations and has been—as has been covered in the media, there's an increasing need for donations of bone marrow for individuals of Aboriginal descent. As a province with a growing Aboriginal community that makes significant contributions to our province, it's alarming that of the 249,000 potential donors registered with the Canadian Blood Services data base, that less than 1 percent, only 0.9 percent of those donors were Aboriginal.

We need to work with all stakeholders to ensure that the Aboriginal community, and, in fact, the wider community, have an adequate and available supply of donors, Mr. Speaker, and we also must remember those who have not been able to receive donations and have subsequently passed away.

We, too, in this side of the House, offer our heartfelt condolences to the family of Chantelle Chornoby.

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

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

**Some Honourable Members:** Leave.

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

**Mr. Gerrard:** Mr. Speaker, let me first express my sympathy and condolences to Chantelle's family and friends. Chantelle had a life in which she was battling, as has been said, for much of the time with a form of leukemia, a cancer. She has done remarkably well in bringing awareness to the need to have additional people who are of Aboriginal descent ready and willing to donate bone marrow and to be typed so that they can be matched.

As a pediatrician and who spent a lot of time looking after children with cancer, I know exactly the sorts of problems that are involved here. And I certainly—my heart goes out to Chantelle, who found herself in the situation without having a match, and it certainly would have potentially made a huge difference if we could have found that match. And it should spur us onwards, all of us, to not only get the word out, but to encourage others to donate, because you never know where that one match will be, and it's pretty important to a person like Chantelle.

So I hope we have a minute of silence remembering Chantelle, and all of us can look forward to, oh, a better future thanks to the efforts of people like Chantelle.

**Mr. Speaker:** Is it the will of the House to have a moment of silence in remembrance of Chantelle? *[Agreed]*

Okay, please rise for a moment of silence.

*A moment of silence was observed.*

### Introduction of Guests

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, prior to oral questions, I'd like to draw the attention of honourable members to the public gallery where we have with us today, we have students enrolled in the nursing leadership course at the University of Manitoba, who are the guests of the honourable member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger).

Also in the public gallery we have from Dakota Collegiate, we have 24 grade 9 students under the direction of Ms. Kirsty Dunlop. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister for Education (Ms. Allan).

And also in the public gallery we have from St. James Assiniboia International Students program, 30 students under the direction of Ms. Alexandra Humphries. This group is located in the constituency

of the honourable Minister for Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors (Mr. Rondeau).

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

## ORAL QUESTIONS

### Manitoba Hydro

#### Bipole III West-Side Land Acquisition

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, with a provincial record, provincial debt of \$23 billion and climbing, Manitobans are concerned, quite understandably, about the impact of the growing debt problem in Manitoba on front-line services as debt servicing takes up a larger and larger part of the provincial budget.

Mr. Speaker, we already knew that through the Premier's (Mr. Selinger) interference in Manitoba Hydro, Manitobans were going to be asked—were going to be taken to the cleaners for an extra \$1.75 billion on the west side, which is about \$6,000 for every Manitoba family.

We've now learned, Mr. Speaker, that, in addition to this, because of their mismanagement of the route-selection process, land access or acquisition costs are now accelerating and are in addition to the \$1.75 billion in extra costs on the west-side route. The minister said that the final route will be selected shortly, and yet, not one landowner on the west side has yet had a proposal put before them.

I want to ask the minister, who has completely destroyed their ability to bargain: How could they have mismanaged this process so completely and totally, and will they apologize to Manitoba families for taking them to the cleaners to the tune of \$6,000 each?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act):**

Well, Mr. Speaker, we know what the member opposite would do. We know that under his plan we would lose \$20 billion in sales over 20 years. We know that he has flip-flopped his position several times now about the length of time that it will take to complete the line. In fact, he said—one day he said that it would be 2017, and then he said 19, then he said 2017, and then he said he could do it sooner.

I will rely on the people at Manitoba Hydro who are doing the engineering, the people who are selecting the route, and there are now three proposed

routes. When this route is picked then people will be—have begun the negotiations. You can't negotiate—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, the minister has just made the exact point that we are concerned about. They're picking the route first before they even begin negotiations with landowners. They've said that they're not going to expropriate land, and so they put themselves in a box where they have no negotiating power as they go into the land acquisition process, exactly the result that was recommended against by Manitoba Hydro—not recommended by Manitoba Hydro, and so they're not taking the advice of the experts and the officials.

Manitobans are already being taken to the cleaners for \$1.75 billion. How many tens of millions of dollars more are they going to take from health care, from education, from public safety and out of the pockets of Manitoba families in order to pay for their flagrant mismanagement of this entire project?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, it's real interesting, Mr. Speaker, that the member opposite is suddenly interested in nurses and keeping nurses at the bedside when we know their record.

Mr. Speaker, we know, when he was chief of staff for the previous Premier Filmon, we know what they did. They were the ones that cut nurses, cut college positions, and now he wants people to believe that he would actually keep nurses at the bedside. Members opposite remember the record of the Conservatives and they know exactly what they do. We can hear—we heard from their words they would balance the budget over one year, make dramatic cuts and will not support a five-year plan to help Manitobans recover from this recession.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, I think it's too bad in light of the very significant decisions currently being made that the minister refuses to respond to the question and deal with the issue at hand.

The minister I know—I know she's obsessed with the 1990s; she's entitled to be obsessed with the 1990s. I know that she's on the fringes of Manitoba society with her obsession with the 1990s, but I wonder if I can just bring her to 2010, to May of 2010, where we stand today and ask if she'll look at the issue in front of her today and acknowledge that they're badly mismanaging this Hydro project and it's going to cost tens of millions of dollars to Manitoba



families and potentially have an impact, a negative impact, on front-line services in Manitoba.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I know the member opposite would like to forget about the '90s, and I know he'd like to forget about their record with Connie Curran. I know he'd like to forget that and I know Manitobans haven't forgot about it.

\* (14:00)

But we are not going to put at risk the reliability of supply for Manitobans or put at risk our sales for \$20 billion worth of sales over 20 years for revenue for Manitobans. Mr. Speaker, we are not going to put that at risk, and we are going to take—continue to take the advice of Manitoba Hydro, and when they select the route, then negotiations will begin.

Member opposite knows full well we aren't going to waste time negotiating with people on three different lines, and then when the time comes, drop all the others off. We will wait till the line is selected.

#### **Manitoba Hydro Bipole III West-Side Land Acquisition**

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West):** The foolish west-side bipole decision forced on Manitoba Hydro by this NDP Premier (Mr. Selinger) hasn't even considered the cost of land acquisition. The additional 400 kilometres of the line will require an additional 1,100 towers. The majority of these towers will be placed on private land. Private-land owners, first of all, do not want these towers on their land, and secondly, if they are forced to accept these towers, land costs will be based on market value and that will drive up the costs.

To the minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable member for Brandon West has the floor.

**Mr. Borotsik:** To the minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro: Does the minister not see the logic in developing on provincially owned Crown land on the east side of the province?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act):** Well, Mr. Speaker, we can see where the member opposite stands. He won't—he won't put—he would—he won't—he doesn't want the line to go on private land where there is a negotiation process and people will

be compensated. He'd rather put it on First Nations land and not bother negotiating with First Nations. That's what the member opposite would do. He would put the UNESCO site at risk. He would ignore all the comments that have been made via those 80 meetings of First Nations people on the east side of the province.

Mr. Speaker, we consulted and we will respect the people. We will work with them to develop tourism and real jobs, and we will negotiate—or Manitoba Hydro will negotiate with the farmers who own private lines, when the line is designated.

**Mr. Borotsik:** The east-side line can be developed on, listen to this, Mrs. Minister, on Crown land, Crown land owned by the Province of Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, it's hard to argue logic with an unarmed minister. Obviously, the minister is blind to logic.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Let's pick our words a little more carefully. All members in the House are honourable members. They will be addressed by their constituencies or ministers by their titles, and let's just keep the decorum where it should be and pick our words carefully.

**Mr. Borotsik:** Mr. Speaker, obviously the minister is blind to logic; common sense has never been an NDP strong suit.

Mr. Speaker, 27 percent of the west-side line is going to impact agricultural land, 40 percent of the west-side line is going to cross private property, almost 100 percent of the east-side land is owned by the Province, you and me; it's Crown land. Rural municipalities on the west side are already sending in resolutions saying, not in my backyard.

Will the minister not let logic prevail and convince her Premier (Mr. Selinger) to do the right thing and let Manitoba Hydro build the line on the east side where it should be?

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I would remind the member opposite, that the land on the east side of the province that we are talking about is Treaty 5 land, and it—there are a lot of First Nations that are involved in this treaty, and we have to respect those people. That's why we did consultations. We went to 80 communities. That's why we've respected the words and we have said we will work with them to get a UNESCO heritage site in that area. We will work with them to enhance tourism. We'll work with

them to get access into that area. We will work with them.

The studies show that there is more development on the west side of the province. We will—there is more intact boreal forest on the east side of the province that we want to continue to have recognized, not what the member opposite wants, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Borotsik:** Mr. Speaker, let the record show 15 out of 16 Aboriginal bands on the east side want the development on the east side, not the west side.

Mr. Speaker, wasting \$1.75 billion doesn't seem to be enough for this NDP government. Now they are content to pit neighbour against neighbour, municipality against municipality.

The land acquisition of private property is going to be extremely difficult. If landowners refuse—which they will—is this government prepared to expropriate prime agricultural land just because of their own demented ideology?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Speaker, I would encourage the member opposite to substantiate those facts that he has put on the record with 15 bands that are supporting, because that's not accurate.

We know from the public meetings that were held there, Mr. Speaker, that people on the east side of the province want true economic development. They want to see the UNESCO Heritage Site preserved, and we want to see the boreal forest there preserved because this is one of the biggest carbon sinks that there is and it is recognized around the world.

You have to look at what happened in other jurisdictions, Mr. Speaker. Look at what Danny Williams, the Premier of Newfoundland, had to do. He had to move a line in order to save a boreal forest. The same happened in British Columbia.

#### **New West Partnership Agreement Provincial Exclusion**

**Mr. Hugh McFadyen (Leader of the Official Opposition):** Many Manitobans have been expressing concern about the NDP government's mismanagement of our trading relationships and the threat to future job creation here in the province of Manitoba.

Yesterday, the Conference Board came out and said that Manitoba will have the slowest growth west of the Maritime provinces, and Manitobans are

asking why this government is not participating in the New West Partnership which could be an opportunity for job creation.

I received an e-mail, which was also provided to the Premier, which says as follows: Mr. Premier, I recently read a story about the New West Partnership created by B.C., Alberta and Saskatchewan. I noted that Manitoba was not asked to participate. Why were we left out? He goes on to say: I would appreciate your explaining your position on this issue. Please provide a substantive and not a political answer. And I'll table the e-mail.

Will the minister provide a substantive and not a political answer as to why it is the NDP government is threatening jobs in Manitoba by isolating us from our trading relationships?

**Hon. Peter Bjornson (Minister of Entrepreneurship, Training and Trade):** It's rather an interesting question that the member asks, when you consider that the Stats Canada report on last Friday suggested that we have more Manitobans working than ever before, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the data was 619,000 Manitobans in the work force, and when the member references—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Bjornson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, and—[interjection] Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

The Conference Board of Canada has also stated that the unemployment rate in the province was the second lowest, but now, of course, as of Friday, we're the lowest unemployment rate in the country, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. McFadyen:** Mr. Speaker, they—he seems to be having trouble addressing himself to the question that's been asked. It has to do with trade relationships and the future prosperity of western Canada. And so I'll ask the question again—and it's not just a question from opposition politicians; it's a question from a regular Manitoban who e-mailed the Premier. And I'll read the e-mail back and he can either choose to give a political response or he can try to address himself to the question that's been asked.

Mr. Speaker, he goes on to say: Even if we were not asked, why did you not attempt to take part? I'm not an economist, but it seems that our province will suffer because we are not a member. We are already stigmatized because we receive significant transfer

payments and this omission may further marginalize our province.

The request from this Manitoban, Mr. Speaker, is: Will he respond to the question directly or will he continue to give his meaningless political responses in this House?

\* (14:10)

**Mr. Bjornson:** Indeed, we've been engaged in a number of discussions with jurisdictions all over Canada, all over North America, all over the world, Mr. Speaker, advancing the Manitoba interests, and we'll continue to do so.

We're a partner with the Western Climate Initiative. We held our first-ever joint Cabinet meeting with our colleagues from Saskatchewan, Mr. Speaker, and the members opposite should note that on that agenda was also discussions about potential hydro sales to Saskatchewan, which would require transmission down the west side.

So members opposite are all over the map on this particular issue, Mr. Speaker. And I've had the privilege—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Bjornson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. We've also had delegations to trade missions in Washington. We continue to support manufacturers who are doing excellent work here in Manitoba.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. McFadyen:** And again, it's a typical NDP response of confusing meetings and news releases with actual progress. I know they travel a lot. I know they go to a lot of meetings and they issue a lot of news releases, but the issue here is that western premiers have signed agreements. They're changing their regulations. They're consolidating their government tendering processes. They're seeking investment from other parts of the world in order to build their economies, create jobs and move forward.

I want to ask the Premier (Mr. Selinger), who I know attends a lot of meetings and goes on a lot of trips, what he has to show for those meetings and trips other than news releases which seem to come out of the government.

And will he respond to the question asked by this regular Manitoban and give a direct response? Why are we outside of the New West Partnership?

Will he respond to that directly or will he continue to give us meaningless rhetoric?

**Mr. Bjornson:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite have little credibility when it comes to internal trade because they were wrong when they said that a labour mobility deal would not be reached.

Now, they asked about the results. Well, the results of one of the latest trips by the First Minister included the fact that we have new MOUs with Queensland and Australia and better ties with Wisconsin as well, and that is—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. Can I ask the honourable members kindly if we could have some decorum in here? We have a lot of the guests here that have come down to hear the questions and the answers, and there's a lot of noise coming from both sides here. I'm asking all honourable members to please show a little respect for our guests, and let's have some decorum so they can hear the questions and the answers.

Let's continue on.

**Mr. Bjornson:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. In February, as I said, we met with the counterparts of the Cabinet in Saskatchewan. We are hosting the next joint meeting in Brandon. We are working with the Council Ministers of Security Regulation to improve securities regulatory system. We recently went on a trade mission to Washington and addressed issues of countries-of-origin labelling among other things. And we have a long-standing and active MOU with our neighbours to the north, Nunavut and—thank you very much.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

### **Football Stadium Memorandum of Understanding**

**Mr. Rick Borotsik (Brandon West):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot, for the life of me, understand why this Premier (Mr. Selinger) continues to make such expensive decisions based on a political agenda, a bent political ideology, and not on fact.

For example, Mr. Speaker, the first line in the stadium memorandum of understanding goes: Canad Inns Stadium is in a serious state of deterioration and will require a minimum of \$52 million in public investment in order to make it safe and functional.

This doesn't seem to be the facts. Safe and functional would cost only \$14.4 million for the next 10 years.

Why the misrepresentation? Why the Premier—why was—the Premier not made aware of the options available to him when he made his flawed decision, Mr. Speaker?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Deputy Premier):** Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that the members opposite voted against the MTS Centre; they didn't want it. And when the MTS Centre was opened, they were there to celebrate.

I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we have made a decision and we have worked with the university and the City of Winnipeg. The stadium will be built at the University of Manitoba, and I know the members opposite will be there to celebrate when it's opened and attend the games.

**Mr. Borotsik:** Well, Mr. Speaker, there's no celebration with this government's mismanagement of taxpayers' dollars. Everything this Premier (Mr. Selinger) touches turns to mismanagement: deficit budgets; \$1.75 billion wasted on Bipole III; and, now, the Premier gets his knuckles rapped on a mismanaged stadium deal. Not only was the deal justified for the wrong reasons, he can't even follow proper tendering procedures.

Mr. Speaker, \$115 million of taxpayers' money is put at risk because he doesn't know you could have more than one bid on a project. The normal legal process is to have an open tender, not to award a project by simply saying, here's the money, fill in the blanks. Why so reckless, Mr. Premier?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the members opposite want to talk about Bipole III and the spending that's going on there. We know where the members opposite would be. The members opposite would put at risk—they would put at risk \$20 billion in sales to the U.S. They would put at risk a UNESCO Heritage Site, and, in fact, they do not—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I kindly, once again, ask—so we can hear the question and the answers, please. Please. Please, you know, control yourselves so we can hear the questions and the answers. If there's a breach of a rule, I'll have to make a ruling, and if I can't hear it, I don't know how you could expect me to make that ruling. So, I'm asking the co-operation of all members, please.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. We know they'd put those things at risk, and we know that they don't value recreation as we do. As a government, we have made investments in recreational facilities throughout the province, and we have committed to help with the stadium and make an investment in the stadium at the University of Winnipeg because it's important for the Bisons team. It's important for the athletic clubs. It's important for the Blue Bombers. It's important for Manitobans to have these kinds of facilities so that they can improve their health through recreation.

**Mr. Borotsik:** Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate your call to order and the call for decorum, but it would be nice to have an answer to a legitimate question.

Mr. Speaker, the stadium deal was and is this Premier's fiasco. There's no meaningful public investment. There's no meaningful public consultation. There's no competitive bids. There's no other viable options that were considered. Property tax funding that has no business being used for anything but education, and, now, a total—total—misrepresentation of the facts.

Mr. Speaker, why did the Premier not follow a more diligent, legal and more professional process to make sure taxpayers' money was protected?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Well, Mr. Speaker, we know that the members opposite said the same thing when the MTS Centre was being done. They said at that time there was mismanagement. They said that it wasn't going to work and, in the end, they were there drinking the wine with everybody else and celebrating because the MTS Centre was built. And I know that the—many of them enjoyed going to those concerts, those new concerts that have come to Winnipeg, and the same thing will happen with the stadium.

Mr. Speaker, we, as a government, have made a commitment to invest in the facility. And we hope to see—and the sod turning has happened—and we hope that we will see all of the other steps take place, like the new development at Polo Park, which I'm looking forward to as well. All of those things are important for the economy in Manitoba.

#### **Children's Advocate Minister's Notification of Leave**

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East):** Mr. Speaker, and I wonder if the Minister of Family Services could inform the House when his office

received notification that the Children's Advocate was on leave.

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Minister of Family Services and Consumer Affairs):** I believe that has happened in the last several weeks, and my notice would have received notice along with the Speaker's office, I presume.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** And I would like to ask the minister whether he's satisfied that the Children's Advocate's office currently has the capacity to deal with the important issues facing the most vulnerable children in our province.

\* (14:20)

**Mr. Mackintosh:** Well, first of all, the member opposite should know that the Children's Advocate is actually the watchdog of Family Services and Housing, not the other way around.

Second of all, the member should know that in terms of the funding of the Children's Advocate office, that is the responsibility of the Legislative Assembly Management commission, of which members of this Chamber are members of. And I can also remind the member that I believe the funding for the Children's Advocate office has actually increased, I think, about 600 percent since we came into office.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Speaker, but I'd just like to remind the minister that presently we don't have a child advocate. We have an acting child advocate in that position, and the legislation states that, where the term of the Children's Advocate will expire within 12 months, a Standing Committee of Legislative Affairs will be called so as to make recommendations on a suitable replacement.

Can the government indicate when this committee will be called so as to ensure there's permanency in the Children's Advocate's office?

**Hon. Bill Blaikie (Minister of Conservation):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the honourable member for the question, and the member will know that the Children's Advocate is on leave. This is something that members of her party were aware of as a result of their participation in the LAMC. And certainly, whatever obligations the government has with respect to filling a new position, should that need arise, we will live up to those obligations.

### Multiple Sclerosis Treatment Programs Government Support

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, I've been receiving a number of inquiries—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I've been receiving a number of inquiries from concerned Manitobans regarding Dr. Zamboni's research into MS and chronic cerebrospinal venous insufficiency or CCSVI. They're extremely frustrated and disappointed with this government's lack of leadership around MS, especially since Manitoba has one of the highest rates of MS in Canada and in the world.

I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to tell these people, who are so concerned about her leadership, where is her leadership on this issue?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for the question. I think the single most important thing that a politician can do in matters such as these is to take advice from the medical experts.

We know that Dr. Zamboni, himself, has in recent weeks issued caution around this procedure. He absolutely advocates about the importance of randomized clinical trials on this issue. And, at the same time, it would be very important for anybody in the role of Minister of Health to consult with our local experts, as I have done, and will continue to do with our MS clinic and the Manitoba division of the MS Society. We're going to continue to work together to ensure that when these procedures are deemed to be safe, because patient safety must be paramount, that Manitoba is well positioned to do all that we can do for those living with MS.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, I wrote to the Minister of Health back in March asking for an update about her government's plans for screening for CCSVI and conducting research trials. The Minister of Health couldn't be bothered to respond.

Sharlene Garlinski, who has MS and is in the gallery today, wrote to the Premier (Mr. Selinger) weeks ago and he couldn't be bothered to respond to her either. I guess he was too busy fast tracking the football stadium.

Mr. Speaker, can this government tell us why they can't be bothered to respond to those people that are writing to them about MS.

**Ms. Oswald:** Mr. Speaker, indeed we have corresponded with many people in our community that are living with MS and have come forward with very passionate letters about these issues. I do concede the point that we have corresponded with patients living with MS in advance of the member from Charleswood, but I do commit to her to provide her with a written response as well.

I can tell her that I do have an upcoming meeting scheduled with Mr. Thornton who has been the subject of much media coverage. I think he has many important things to share. It's my understanding that Ms. Garlinski may be part of that meeting. She is certainly welcome to be with Mr. Thornton's consent.

I'm really interested in what she and others have to say. I'm sorry that I sent letters to MS patients before I sent them to her.

**Mrs. Driedger:** Mr. Speaker, her answer and her arrogance is astounding, considering that Sharlene Garlinski's in the gallery right now. She has MS, and she's been waiting for a response from this Premier (Mr. Selinger) and hasn't gotten one.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba has one of the highest rates of MS in the world with over 3,000 people in the province being diagnosed with the disease. There are student nurses in the gallery today, and they want Manitoba to be a leader in MS research and treatment.

So I'd like to ask the Minister of Health to explain why MS patients are being denied access to ultrasound and magnetic resonance venography. Why are people like Sharlene having to mortgage their homes to go elsewhere in order to just get this simple diagnostic test?

**Ms. Oswald:** And I'm very pleased to inform the House that, for the first time in history, the Canadian society for MS is coordinating a national approach on research concerning CCSVI. They've never done this before. And the reason that they're doing this, Mr. Speaker, is because they don't want a second to be wasted, or jurisdictions going off conducting research independently when there could be a co-ordinated approach so that we could move more quickly, should indeed this therapy, CCSVI, prove to bring forward all the promises that it has claimed to prove.

We are going to continue to work with the national body, with our provincial body, and, most importantly, Mr. Speaker, we're going to listen to our physicians and take their advice, so the most important therapies and treatments available for MS do not get derailed by one approach. We want to make sure that it's a co-ordinated approach.

Mr. Speaker, Dr. Zamboni himself issues caution. Why is it, once again, the member opposite claims to know more than everybody else, including Dr. Zamboni?

### **Civil Service Commission Conflict of Interest Guidelines**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, a question to the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission: Today we have rules, which are very explicit in completely forbidding the hiring by one MLA of the spouse or children of another MLA; however, when it comes to the situation of a spouse or child of a Cabinet minister working for the government, we have not been this explicit toward banning this.

And so I would ask the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission: What precautions are taken to ensure that the spouse or child of a Cabinet minister who is employed by the government of Manitoba, is working in the best interests of the people of Manitoba and not primarily for the best interests of the close relative or of the best interests of the NDP party?

**Hon. Rosann Wowchuk (Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission):** Mr. Speaker, we have, through the Civil Service Commission, very strong conflict-of-interest guidelines. When people become employed, they have to declare their conflict through this—through the conflict-of-interest guidelines. And I believe they have been followed very closely. But if the member opposite happens to have a specific case that he is referring to, I'm not aware of it, and I'd be happy to discuss it with him.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Well—thank you. I would appreciate perhaps if the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission could give us a list of where there might be conflicts of interest, and I would ask the minister: What ongoing assessment of the situation is being made to ensure that those who are close relatives of Cabinet ministers are, in fact, acting in the best interests of the people of Manitoba and not in the best interests of close relatives or the NDP party?

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Mr. Speaker, there are rules through the conflict-of-interest rules and guidelines that all us as MLAs follow. And, again, if there is something specific that the member opposite is referring to, then he can share it and it can be investigated.

\* (14:30)

Mr. Speaker, we have a Civil Service Commissioner who works very closely and works on these issues. But, again, the member is talking, I believe, because he had—didn't—if it's a hypothetical situation, we can share with him the rules. If he has a specific case, we would be happy to investigate it for him. But conflict-of-interest guidelines are followed very closely.

#### **City of Thompson Need for Pediatricians**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday I asked the Minister of Health a very serious question in regards to the children in the Thompson area and surrounding area, 20,000 children that are in need of a pediatrician; there is no full-time pediatrician. We are having to fly part-timers coming in at great expense in order to provide a service, a service that's being provided to Winnipeg children virtually on a day-in, day-out basis, and that's a very critical issue. The minister stood up, ignored the question completely, ignored the 20,000 children and went to give her government applause for some other program.

My question for the Minister of Health is, will she tell the residents of Thompson and the surrounding area when can they anticipate a full-time pediatrician in that community?

**Hon. Theresa Oswald (Minister of Health):** The program I made reference to was about bringing doctors to the north. I can tell the member that an international medical graduate has been secured through the process and will go through some evaluation and will start immediately after that.

#### **Hometown Manitoba Grant Increases**

**Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas):** Mr. Speaker, main streets are the hub of Manitoba's rural and northern communities. Rural and northern communities—Manitoba communities are—across this province are working hard to revitalize these important community centres. Could the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives please inform

the House as to how this government is supporting the rural and northern Manitoba communities?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** You know, Mr. Speaker, we see it every day in this House, all the negativism, all the complaining, all the whining from across the way. That is in stark contrast to what I see every day in rural communities in Manitoba, in the north and rural parts of our province, every community in this province. Those are the people we want to help, we want to support and want to work with.

So today I was very proud when we announced \$450,000 in grants to 285 rural and northern communities right across this province, including some even represented by members opposite who complained about these things. Hometown Manitoba has three different categories: meeting places, main street enhancements, tree planting. Since 2004, we've provided 1,300 grants for \$1.9 million, more support for rural and northern Manitobans.

#### **Highway 32 Project Status**

**Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina):** Provincial Highway 32 is the main highway passing through the city of Winkler, connecting PTH 14 and the U.S. port of entry at Walhalla, North Dakota. Could the Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation give us an update on the four-laning of this project?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation):** Mr. Speaker, I'd like to believe that the applause is for the fact that we have a record construction budget second year in a row, \$366 million, which is four times what it was when the Conservatives left office.

And, Mr. Speaker, I was very pleased in Estimates to take numerous questions from members opposite. And there's an irony: They voted against the budget that is part of that, but each and every member opposite seems to be advocating for highways work in their province. I'll guarantee one thing: Under the NDP there's more highway work in every part of the province, including the member's constituency.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The honourable member for Pembina has the floor.

**Mr. Dyck:** All I want to know is what's happening to Highway 32. Is it being four-laned or not? Thank you.

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, Mr. Speaker, again, we just went through Estimates, I had Tory MLA after Tory MLA come in and I undertook to answer each and every one of their questions. And I just want to repeat for the member, because I'm not sure really which side he's on in terms of highways in his own constituency, because if he does support what he's advocating for in terms of this particular highway, why does he keep voting against our budget?

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for oral questions has expired.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Leona Nickel

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** It's my pleasure to rise today to put a few words on the record regarding one of my constituents. Nominated by the Town of Altona, Leona Nickel of Rosenfeld, was the recipient of the 2010 Premier's Volunteer Service Award in an individual category. Leona is the epitome of volunteering—of a volunteer. Volunteering is a huge part of her life, giving of her time, care and love.

She was instrumental in organizing a support group of families for dealing with Alzheimer's in 1994 when her mother was diagnosed with the disease and continues to work as a volunteer facilitator for their monthly support group meetings organizing workshops, making contacts and planning the meetings. She co-ordinates fundraisers such as the Memory Walk in June, bake sales and raffles, and promotes Alzheimer awareness to grade 3 classes.

Leona is an active volunteer in the Eastview Personal Care Home arranging for musical groups and jamborees, preparing Christmas programs, a fall bazaar and many other activities. On a weekly basis, she bakes buns with the residents providing a means for them to be active and be a part of something.

Mr. Speaker, Leona has been a bereavement support volunteer in her involvement with the palliative care. She provides support to help ease the passage and is involved in a follow-up program of families for at least a year after their loss. She, along with other volunteers, run grief support groups enabling grieving people to express feelings in a safe place, discussing coping mechanisms and assessing resources when needed.

Leona is a very active member of the Altona United Church. She helps organize and co-ordinate the church's fundraising, which supports the outreach program to the Roseau River nation—first—Roseau River Native reserve. She has led a weekly lectionary-based Bible study for more than 20 years and has been the presbytery representative, a member of the church board, as well as serving as a Sunday school superintendent and teacher.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

### Northern Aboriginal Festival and Community Awards

**Mr. Frank Whitehead (The Pas):** Mr. Speaker, the Opaskwayak Cree Nation community was recently brought together in celebration of the Seventh Annual Northern Aboriginal Festival and Community Awards, an event that recognized individual acts of accomplishment and mentorship and paved the way for success for the younger generation. I had the privilege to attend and was overwhelmed with a sense of pride and achievement felt by these admirable community members.

One of the key components of this year's festival was a career fair. Youth from Swampy Creek Tribal area communities came to learn about future career opportunities, finding out about their interests and passions in the process. Committed to embracing culturally relevant programming, the festival capped off with an evening of a powwow demonstration and round dance.

Over the course of the weekend, educational workshops were held. The agenda focussed on the holistic well-being of the community and challenged the young participants to reflect upon their lives and care for themselves and each other better. Community members shared their thoughts on issues such as gender roles, interpersonal development, youth violence, substance abuse, teen pregnancy and the intergeneration effects of residential schools. The goal was to provide role models and information to youth who often struggle with making sense of their lives and troubles, and to help them find their place in a community while transitioning to adulthood.

That evening the community awards ceremony was held. Youth, some as young as 12 years old and adults deserving of recognition for the changes they have generated that make their communities better places, were celebrated.

Mr. Speaker, I was humbled by the commitment these individuals have demonstrated, and I



congratulate them on their remarkable achievement. Thank you to the organizers of the event. It was truly an experience and a great success.

#### **Russ and Tessa Denton**

**Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie):** It is with great honour that I rise today to thank two Portage la Prairie—of—most dedicated volunteers for their years of service to the community. Over the years, Russ and Tessa Denton have become fixtures at area arenas devoting countless hours to the Portage Collegiate Institute's and Arthur Meighen High School's hockey team, as well as the Portage Pirates and Oakville Seals.

Since 1990, the Denton's involvement has grown to include all of the game-day operations for both the Portage Collegiate's hockey teams, the Trojans and the Saints. Their duties include selling 50-50 tickets, assembling first-class game-day programs, managing finances, the taking of in-game pictures and countless other tasks that ensure the smooth running of the teams.

\* (14:40)

To help finance the Portage Collegiate Institute's hockey programs, Russ and Tessa started selling ad space in the game day programs. Over the years, their initiatives have managed to raise more than \$30,000, which has allowed the players' costs to remain at a minimum, and to purchase two new sets of uniforms this year.

When asked by *The Daily Graphic* what they planned to do with their extra time now, Russ and Tessa answered that they will be redefining themselves as better grandparents, starting with them embarking on a trip to France to visit their daughter and her three grandchildren, including a newborn that they will have yet to meet.

I want to wish Russ and Tessa all the best in their future endeavours. It will be difficult to imagine our high school hockey program in Portage la Prairie without them. I invite all honourable members of this House to join in me—with me—in thanking Russ and Tessa for their many years of dedicated service.

#### **Liberation of the Netherlands 65th Anniversary**

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, I was born and raised in the Netherlands. Therefore, it is with pride that I stand before the House to honour the 65th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Netherlands by Canadian Forces in 1945. We must never fail to remember the great sacrifice made by

the young men who gave their lives in battle so others could be free.

Four years ago, I visited the Bergen op Zoom Canadian War Cemetery to place a solitary red rose on the grave of a friend's uncle. The endless rows of white headstones marked with maple leaves tell the sad tale of these brave young soldiers.

Countless Canadians lost their lives liberating the Netherlands from Nazi occupation. One of the many fierce battles fought was the one along the Scheldt estuary. Soldiers fought their way from Normandy to Rotterdam, gaining ground slowly—field by field, canal by canal. These young men navigated flooded lowlands, perilous fields rife with landmines, and deep, boot-sucking mud; the possibility of death was always looming. Liberation and victory came at a profound cost. After five weeks the First Canadian Army had taken 41,043 prisoners, but it lost well over 6,000 of their brothers.

The Dutch people will forever be grateful to these soldiers. Dutch Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende, expressed his gratitude on the eve of the 65th anniversary by stating: Our liberators. Our heroes. Forever. Dutch students learn all about the key role Canadian soldiers play in their country's history and, this year, a large number of Canadian students visited the Netherlands to learn the same.

Every year, Canadian veterans make the bittersweet journey to the Netherlands to stand in solidarity with, and in memory of, their fallen comrades. While their ranks have thinned over the years, their acts of sacrifice and valour are just as important today as ever. We will never forget our liberators. I sincerely thank them.

#### **Winnipeg's North End**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Mr. Speaker, I wanted to take this opportunity just to emphasize what I believe is an important need in Winnipeg's North End; that, of course, being the area of revitalization in providing the programs that are necessary in order to create a much better environment in which people can live.

Mr. Speaker, I have, in the past, been involved in revitalization programs such as those in the Weston community, Shaughnessy community, and have seen the benefits in terms of bringing in programs and supports that ultimately assist in the revitalization of homes.

I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the government needs to give more in terms of resources, energy and time towards the whole area of revitalization of older communities. That can take place in many different forms: through rent supplements, to home improvement programs, to infill housing. These are the types of programs that can make a huge difference in terms of housing stock. We need to complement that and work with private business to develop some of our commercial streets, and, in particular, I take a look at streets like Selkirk Avenue and Keewatin Street. And, again, the government can play a significant role, in particular, by working with different levels of government in terms of having a real tangible impact in turning communities around—those are the structures, quite often, of our communities.

What makes our communities alive or brings—gives them life, of course, is the people that live in them. And supporting people in terms of ensuring that they're able to participate in positive fashions, whether they're young children or our seniors, Mr. Speaker, developing the programs that are going to ultimately make a difference providing programs that provide a hope. And these are the types of issues in which looking forward to seeing what, as the budget unfolds, and what others are doing in terms of making our communities a better place to live. Thank you.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY (Continued)

### GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

#### House Business

**Mr. Speaker:** The honourable Government House Leader, on House business.

**Hon. Bill Blaikie (Government House Leader):** Pursuant to rule 31(8), I'm announcing that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be one put forward by the honourable member for The Pas (Mr. Whitehead). The title of the resolution is Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, pursuant to rule 31(8), it's been announced that the private member's resolution to be considered next Tuesday will be the one put forward by the honourable member for The Pas, and the title of the resolution is Aboriginal Healing Foundation.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Blaikie:** The House will now resolve itself into Committee of Supply for the further consideration of concurrence.

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, the House will now resolve into Committee of Supply.

Would Madam Deputy Speaker please come and take the Chair.

## COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

### Concurrence Motion

**Madam Chairperson (Marilyn Brick):** Will the Committee of Supply please come to order.

The committee has before it for consideration the motion concurring in all Supply resolutions relating to the Estimates of Expenditure for the fiscal year ending March 31st, 2010.

On May 5th, 2010, the Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Hawranik) tabled the following list of ministers of the Crown who may be called for questioning in debate on concurrence motion: Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (Mr. Struthers), Minister of Conservation (Mr. Blaikie).

These ministers will be questioned concurrently.

The floor is now open for questions.

\* (14:50)

**Mr. Cliff Graydon (Emerson):** I have a question for the Minister of Conservation to begin with.

Mr. Minister, there was a letter written to you in regards to the damage done by geese within the Perimeter. And I have a copy of the response, and the response was that the people could be compensated for 80 percent, but it did indicate or lent itself to the assumption that producers in this province should forgo, and be happy to forgo the 20 percent that they have lost, that it seems like that's an obligation by the producers of the province to forgo the first 20 percent.

Can the minister say to me today that he will look at what they're doing in Saskatchewan at a hundred percent?

**Hon. Bill Blaikie (Minister of Conservation):** Yes, Madam Chairperson, I certainly will undertake to look at what they're doing in Saskatchewan, and I'm not aware at the moment of what they're doing in Saskatchewan. And I certainly—the whatever letter the member is referring to, there isn't—I'm sure no

one meant to suggest that people should be—that we expected anybody to be happy to be responsible for that first 20 percent.

We understand the difficulties that people are in in that situation, but I undertake to look at what they're doing in Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Graydon:** I want to thank the minister for that. The minister did, in the letter, in all fairness, he did say what the policy was in Manitoba, what that policy really is that the producer is responsible for the first 20 percent to feed wildlife, and I don't think that that's the right way to go. But I thank you for taking a look at that going forward.

A question for the Minister of Agriculture in regards to the proposed 2 percent levy on the transfer of quota. It would—he indicated that he had had—on March 25th, he indicated that he had had discussions with the groups that were going to be impacted but, after having had meetings with these groups, it was obvious that he had not had previous meetings to this announcement.

Now, what I would like to ask the minister: What rationale was it that would prompt him to put a tax on the transfers of quotas in this province?

**Hon. Stan Struthers (Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives):** The member's not correct. I have met with all of the groups involved at the time when I said I had, and again, since he last asked this question in—back in when we were discussing Supply in this House several weeks ago, met again with the—each of the groups. We've—I've been very clear that nothing is written in stone. I've been very clear that no decision is going to be taken one way or another on this issue before I meet again with all of these groups. We want to be sure that what we do is fair. We want to be sure that we do it in such a way to protect supply management, which has been very successful in this province, which is something that this side of the House very much will stand and defend.

I hope that the member for Emerson and his colleagues across the way would do the same thing when the time comes, because that time will come, along with the fight over the single-desk selling advantage of the Canadian Wheat Board. I'm really hopeful that our friends across the way will see the light and not push the federal government, or our trading partners around the world, into a position where they would do harm to supply-managed

sectors and the single-desk advantage that the Canadian Wheat Board gives to Canadian farmers.

So we—I have certainly done what I said I was going to do, and that is meet with these groups. I made the undertaking to each of these groups that there won't be any decision until we've thoroughly met. Our officials, including myself, will continue to meet with these groups to talk about several angles in terms of the proposal that the member for Emerson keeps questioning me about.

**Mr. Graydon:** And I'll remind the minister that if he would do the things that he said he would do, we probably wouldn't have to continue to question him. However, that's not the case. A lot of times, the minister will say things that he hasn't followed through on.

And I will go back to that March 25th *Hansard*, and I will quote: While I appreciate the administration of this test of Agriculture Minister, I'm going to promise the member from Emerson and, instead of me going through the list and forgetting one, I'm going to take the safe route and I'm going to get that information for him.

However, from March 25th until May 11th, there's been no information coming forward. So I would suggest that the minister has either been very forgetful or he's been overworked, and I can't believe the last, so I'm going to suggest that he's been forgetful.

And when I say that, I don't say that lightly because he indicated on March 25th that he had met with all of the people that would be impacted. We have met with all of the people that were to be impacted after that, and their response was: We have not talked about a quota on any—or tax on any levy or quota. We have met with the minister, but that was never discussed. It was only discussed after it was announced in the budget.

So could the minister tell us what the money would be intended for that he would be proposing to collect from such a levy?

**Madam Chairperson:** Honourable Minister for Conservation.

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, first of all, I appreciate the sentiments of the member opposite and his concern about my workload. I want him to be absolutely assured that I have lots of energy to take on the workload. I am very energized by getting up and working on behalf of farmers every morning that I

come into this Legislature or different meetings around the province. So I appreciate his concern, but I want him to know that both my energy level and my memory ain't so bad for a 50-year-old, Madam Chairperson.

I also want to reiterate that he is wrong. I have been meeting with the group, with what we call the SM5 group—the supply-managed five that we have been speaking with. We've had very good, very positive meetings. I've been very clear that no decisions are going to be made without their full involvement in this. I've been good to that word and I intend to remain that way.

**Madam Chairperson:** Just before recognizing the honourable member, I want to make sure that *Hansard* had that as the honourable Minister of Agriculture.

**Mr. Graydon:** The question was clear: What did the—what does the Minister of Agriculture plan on doing with the money that he would collect from the tax on the transfer of quota?

**Mr. Struthers:** There won't be a tax on quota. The member wants to politicize and describe it in any way he wants. This is clearly not a tax that I've been talking about with these groups. What we have talked with them about is a levy on quota. There is a difference between that, and if the member—I think the members knows that, actually. I think he understands that and would prefer to play politics with this and call it a tax.

But, again, we have been meeting with these groups. I know that there's—in supply-managed side, as there is in other sectors of agriculture, the department that I am minister of expends a certain amount of public funds on supports for each of these sectors, including supply management.

\* (15:00)

When we speak with the—with groups, they understand that there are supports from the provincial government. Those supports generally come out of general revenue, provided through budgets that we debate in this House, budgets that have shown outstanding support for Manitoba farmers, whether they be in the supply and manage sector or whether they be hogs and cattle, whether they be grain and oilseeds, whether they be right across the agricultural sector here in our province.

We have talked about those kind of supports. I've spoken with turkey producers and their

leadership, and dairy producers of Manitoba—Dairy Farmers of Manitoba and their leadership, laying eggs and the egg groups, chickens—chicken producers. We've—we spoken to all of those groups, and we've talked about the supports that the Province affords to supply and manage because we think it's important. And, again, very clearly, we're not moving ahead without these groups. We'll continue to meet with them. My officials have been. I have been, and we're not moving forward with anything, without these groups being thoroughly consulted.

**Mr. Graydon:** Just for the record then, Mr. Minister, could you tell us the difference between levy and tax? Could you be clear on that?

**Mr. Struthers:** A levy is something that is applied to a group of people in a certain sector that can then be—it can be collected and it can be used in that sector.

A tax is something that is—a tax is a—is more of a term that the Tories in this House would like to use. They're far more interested in taxes than what—that what I seem to be. Madam Chairperson, a tax is a—something that is more generally applied to the 1.2 million Manitobans and all the corporations and all of the other entities that pay taxes in this province. It's collected by the Minister of Finance (Ms. Wowchuk) and put into general revenue.

There's a very basic difference between a tax and a levy. I'll give you an example—the tax—a tax is what Tories applied to small business in this province, and a tax is what we reduced for small business in this province. That's an example of a tax. We've—that's been eliminated.

**Mr. Graydon:** The minister indicates that this would be a benefit to the individuals that he would be taxing because, obviously, there's no difference between a tax and a levy. It's only in his mind.

The bottom line is they'll still be taking money out of a business that the producers run and fund themselves. They don't ask the government for any money. They look after their business and, if I read this right, and this is a quote from a Ms. Kelly from the egg people, she says: It's not like it's a fee for some kind of a service rendered.

There is no service rendered. They do their own business. They pay for their own business, and they ask nothing of government. So this, you can describe it as a levy if you so choose. It is a tax that's taken out of the producers' pocket, will be added to the

producers' produce and it will become a tax on food. There's no question.

The minister hasn't given us any indication of a specific service that he renders to any one of these commodity groups. He just sees an opportunity to come up with the 10 percent that the Minister of Finance said to him you need to raise in your department.

Will the minister, today, tell us in the House that he will scrap this tax levy on all transfers of quota in the province of Manitoba?

**Mr. Struthers:** You know, Madam Chairperson, I try and I try to help the member for Emerson, and I clearly demarcate the difference between a tax and a levy, and I give him examples, very good, concrete examples of the differences, and yet he persists in misrepresenting the discussions that we've had with the supply and manage groups and wants to, you know, his political motivation overtakes him. He wants to describe this as a tax.

Well, he—he's incorrect on that. I'm—my department and I are working very hard to work with the supply-managed sector to talk about a whole variety of different issues that we are mutually interested in taking on. We have a very good relationship—very good working relationship that we've developed.

I'm not going to move forward with any proposal of any description that the member for Emerson is—seems to be advocating today. I'm—I've been clear that I will be working with these groups. I will be consulting these groups, as I have on several occasions in the past, and I'll continue to do that. And I'll be good to my word in terms of meeting with those groups before any decision, one way or another, is taken in terms of this measure.

**Mr. Graydon:** Madam Chairperson, the NDP government surprised the industry this spring by announcing a surcharge.

Could we call that a surcharge on quota sales and purchases in the province? Would that be an adequate compromise, Mr. Minister?

**Mr. Struthers:** I—my advice would be to call it what it is and that's a levy. He can dream up all kinds of words if he likes—he can call it whatever adjective he wants to and I don't think he's—my sense is he's not going to take my advice on this—it's a levy. It's a levy that we've spoken with the industry about. There's a

lot of discussion with the industry that's taking place and will continue to take place.

I'm not going to, in his words—I'm not interested in surprising anybody. We've had lots of conversations, and we're moving forward together on this.

**Mr. Graydon:** Madam Chairperson, the surcharge really wasn't my words. Those were the words of the president of the Dairy Farmers of Manitoba—the chairman of the Dairy Farmers of Manitoba. So they really weren't my words. I was just quoting those words.

But it does seem that all of the commodity groups are alarmed. This is unprecedented in Canada.

And I know the minister always wants to be first. But nine times out of 10, he's been wrong when he's first, and that's not a good record. And I can just point out one instance that's just so blatant and glaring, and when he looks to his right at his colleague from the big house that joined us in the small house here, and the Premier of the province put him in the outhouse to take care of a situation created by the then-Conservation minister, now agricultural minister. And that was to do with sewer ejectors. You made a mistake and it's being corrected with someone with common sense. We appreciate that; we really do. So you should consult with him about this new tax, because if this isn't a tax, then the levy is on small businesses as well.

So going forward, if you could indicate what this is going to benefit—any other commodity groups and be specific what the benefits will be to any of the commodity groups.

**Mr. Struthers:** First of all, before I look across the way for advice, I will certainly look to my seatmate in the House here for advice on all kinds of different issues, Madam Chairperson.

I kind of lost track of all the houses that the member for Emerson was floating across here and—from the big house to the outhouse, I—that may be the Tory way, but I'm—I'll let them I'll let my friends across the way sort that one out.

\* (15:10)

As I said in Committee of Supply, as I said earlier today, as I said in the House, as I've said in the media, as I said to each of the supply-managed groups that we've met with, whether it be—whether they be individually, or even, as we did, in one big

group, a couple weeks ago, I've been very consistently saying to them that there hasn't been a decision made on this. There are no specifics by which we can discuss because my commitment was that before there was any specifics, we'd be speaking with these groups, which is exactly what I'm doing.

I, very clearly, say to the member for Emerson that we are going to continue to have conversations with these groups. We are going to honour my word that nothing's going forward without meeting with them again—and again, if it needs to be. I—the member used the word "surcharge" and attributed it to David Wiens, who's very capable, very good leader of the Dairy Farmers of Manitoba.

And I say the word "leader" because I see him as a leader. He did not use the word—those words with me. He was very good in the meetings, had very good advice for this minister, and had a very good approach to representing not just his farmers but the good of all Manitobans, who consume a very good product produced by dairy farmers in Manitoba.

So we'll continue to have those good meetings. We'll continue to listen to what they have to say to us and I'm not going to move forward in a way that takes these groups by surprise.

**Mr. Graydon:** How much money does the minister hope to raise with this type of tax?

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, as I said, there's no dollar amount that I have attached to this because I've made it very clear that the specifics of these—of this measure will depend on the conversation that I have with the group—with the group in the supply-managed sector.

I'm not going to prejudice any of those meetings by throwing out a hard and fast number that we have to get to. I'm not going to do that. I'm going to continue to speak with these groups and see if there's a way to move forward or if there's a way that we need to continue these discussions. So I'm not throwing down hard lines and drawing hard lines in the sand that will impact the quality of the conversations I have with these supply-managed groups.

**Mr. Graydon:** Would the minister agree that he did say that there was going to be a 2 percent tax on quota?

**Madam Chairperson:** Honourable member for Emerson, if you could just repeat that.

**An Honourable Member:** I couldn't hear you, Cliff.

**Mr. Graydon:** Will the minister agree that he did say that there would be a 2 percent tax on quota?

**Mr. Struthers:** No. Madam Chairperson, the table is wide open for discussions with all of these groups. He can portray whatever number he likes. My conversations with the five groups involved in the supply-managed sector have been different than that. They've—we've—I very much have—and my officials have met with them to listen to what they have to say to us and we'll take their advice.

**Mr. Graydon:** So the minister is saying that he—that 2 percent is not a number that he ever said, or is in the budget or—how did this 2 percent—well, did he ever, at any point, suggest how much money 2 percent would raise from this type of a tax?

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, first of all, there is no tax, Madam Chairperson. Second of all, I haven't spoke with the—with anybody in the turkey sector or the dairy sector, or eggs or chicken, about any hard and fast numbers.

I have been very clear that we're not moving forward on anything, at any percent, looking for any amount of money. I've been clear with the groups on that when we've met, as I said we would meet.

**Mr. Graydon:** So, then, would the minister say that if the groups are opposed to this surcharge tax or levy, if the groups are opposed, then he'll not move forward?

**Mr. Struthers:** Let me, first of all, congratulate the member for Emerson for using the word "levy." I'm very encouraged by that. That's, finally, an accurate description of what we've been talking about with these groups.

I have made it clear to everyone, from the member from Emerson right through to the leadership of the supply-managed groups, that nothing is written in stone, and that we will be discussing how we move forward.

**Mr. Graydon:** This is so like this minister. He starts off with no destination, no plan to get there and with no foreseeable outcome. It is very surprising that he's in the chair that he is. I really have to wonder why the member from the Interlake hasn't got that position.

However, perhaps we can speak about the Interlake a little bit. There's a situation that's arising in the Interlake that the minister may or may not be aware of. There is a rural packer in the Interlake, a slaughterhouse, that's being—that's looking at an

increase of 60 percent to haul away his offal to Brady Landfill site from beef slaughter, and because of the 60 percent increase he'll probably not be slaughtering beef. Was the minister aware of this?

**Mr. Struthers:** First of all, I want to be really clear with the member from Emerson, just to continue his analogy of driving down the road towards a destination, I'm the type of minister who, if I saw him hitchhiking along that road, I would very definitely pull over and give him a hand.

Also, there's about 36 people on this side of the House who could serve as Agriculture Minister ahead of anybody from the other side of the House. So I very much appreciate the advice that I get from the member for the Interlake. He knows his constituency well. He understands the farm issues that they face, and he's not that shy, Madam Chairperson. He takes every opportunity to approach this minister about issues that affect his constituents, and I also want to say that I appreciate when the member from Emerson—and some his colleagues do, as well—on cases such as the issue that he just raised, in terms of slaughter capacity, in terms of how we take care of the offal that we need to be mindful of.

Yes, it has come to my attention that some rules at the landfill have changed, including the amount of money that is necessary to provide this service. I have asked my officials to get me detail on that because I understand that if it was—if it plays out the way it's been presented to me, not only by the member from Emerson, but from some others in farm country, then it will be and could be a deterrent to making good decisions in terms of what we do with waste material in the province of Manitoba. I don't want it to be an unnecessary hit to the wallet of farmers. I don't want it to delay us in our determination to improve slaughter capacity in Manitoba, and that's something I think is very important and something very practical that—whether on the hog side or the cattle side, or others, that this province can participate in and actually show some benefits to farmers.

So I am very concerned that we are following up on the impacts of any decisions made in the proper handling of offal.

\* (15:20)

**Mr. Graydon:** I think it's clear that this will have an impact on all rural slaughtering facilities, and I would suggest that beef slaughtering will not be part of their operation going forward. That's the

indication that I have and so it will only impact farmers' pockets by the fact that they'll have to ship their animals farther away. It won't be in the disposal because it won't be done locally in rural Manitoba.

I'd like to move on to a topic we haven't talked about and it is pretty important to all of agriculture and it might well be answered by either one of the ministers, and that is stubble burning. And as this has been a fairly contentious issue going forward and has been in the past. We are not aware of any changes from last year. However, we're—if there are going to be changes, we'd certainly like to know about that.

It's part of the management for a number of the crops that we grow in the province. One of them is flax; another one is bluegrass. It's a—bluegrass is a big market, seed—grass seed market, in many of our low-lying areas and the other one, of course, is hemp. The hemp plant in Dauphin is going to alleviate some of the local problem in Dauphin, but it certainly won't alleviate the problem anywhere else outside of that area because it has a limited capacity.

So stubble burning is the only alternative that the farmers have at that time. The other issue, of course, stubble burning comes in when there is wet conditions and the crop does get taken off. It's mudded off but the fields are left with a lot of trash on them and it doesn't dry underneath. It doesn't dry in a timely fashion to work the land in the fall, as we've seen in the Interlake, from the flooding in the Interlake and/or in the Red River Valley in the past years. We've had some terribly wet falls and it also impacts the seeding dates in the spring. By the time the fields are dry enough to seed, it's past the optimum window for seeding and so then it affects yields, as well, which also ends up costing in crop insurance payouts and so many other things.

So does the minister of either Conservation or Agriculture have any indication that there's going to be a change to the stubble burning act that's around?

**Mr. Struthers:** We have in place a committee of people who are representatives from Conservation, from Agriculture, Keystone Agricultural Producers, a number of different groups who are interested in this issue. They meet and they pass on to us recommendations that they think make sense. We haven't received a report from that committee as of yet. I am looking forward to that. I don't expect big changes.

We have to realize that last year, 2009, was an anomaly. As the member has pointed out, it was a

wet year—wet, cold year. Many farmers found themselves backed right up to the November 15th deadline, the date by which the rules that govern allow you to burn. Many farmers found themselves in the predicament of having a lot of trash to get rid of from their fields and no time to do it.

I think, very wisely, my colleague, the minister for Conservation, extended that date to December 4th, I believe it was—[interjection] And, yeah, when the snow came along, that made all the difference in the world, but what we showed was that we were willing to work with the farmer who was—who we saw up against the wall last year and I think we used the rules that are in place to, in a very managed way, to work with the farmer to get that trash off his land but also to minimize the dangers that are presented by stubble burning.

I think there's some innovative things going on out in farm country on this, and they're working with our government in terms of supplying—helping to supply heavy harrows that can cut through the kind of trash that's left on the soil.

Working with farmers in terms of permits—on a day that might be very poor conditions near the city of Winnipeg, and there shouldn't be burning allowed; you go up to Dauphin and we have different weather conditions that would allow for burning to take place.

So we've tried to take, I guess, a case-by-case basis, a region-by-region basis. If it makes sense to allow some burning, permits are issued. If it doesn't make sense, then we don't issue those permits and we enforce the rules. The rules, I believe, are contained in The Environment Act. We think that this has worked pretty well and I think we have to give—I've said this before, I think we have to give farmers credit for the kind of improvements that we've seen over the, let's say, even the last 30, 40 years.

When I was a kid, we used to—when we lived in the Swan River Valley, I can remember Dad taking us out for a ride on these gravel roads, and there were fires everywhere. You could take that same trip south of Durban, Manitoba, now, and not see near—any near the farmers on the land, but also, not the kind of fires being set that there were when I was a kid up in that area.

We have made big improvements. I think there is still situations that we don't want to get ourselves into. We want to be mindful that there's people with asthmatic conditions who do suffer if we make the

wrong decision in terms of lighting the match, given wind conditions and those sorts of things. We also don't want to be becoming a traffic hazard on roads.

I think we can do all this in a managed way. I think we can continue to work with farmers in terms of the trash on their fields and I think we can do it in a way that takes into consideration all those other environmental and health and safety considerations as well.

**Mr. Graydon:** I'd ask the minister to maybe just try and keep to the question instead of when he was a kid and the tour through his life up in the Swan Valley—if we could try and just zero in on some of the facts that are here today in 2010, rather than back in '02.

He did say—mention permits and they're there all the time. The fact that he mentioned that there's a possibility of flexibility, we appreciate that. The farmers appreciate that flexibility.

He did mention the harrows that come under the best management farm practices. I would caution him that he should get a little bit more experience. The harrows are of no value if it's too wet to go out there. The harrows only work is that there's a lot of trash right after the combine and it's dry, and that's a conservation method. It has nothing to do with the stubble burning.

At any rate, going forward, I think it would be advantageous to the province of Manitoba to find a use for this straw. We've seen some attempts made over the last number of years. But my question to the minister is—there's a lot of straw right now stockpiled at Elie. There's been many fires out there. It's a rodent trap. Could the minister give us an update on what's going to transpire with the straw that's there and how long it will take?

**Mr. Blaikie:** Well, the member refers to the fire out there that took place just recently. I understand that that was the result of the machine that grinds—is grinding up the straw. And the current situation, as I understand it, unless I haven't had the most recent—unless there's updated information that I don't have, is that there's a need to fix the grinder. And the solution to the problem there has been that they've been grinding those bales, but it takes a long time, and they're working at eliminating the bales and then distributing the product of that grinding accordingly.

So it's—it is a long-standing concern. It goes back a long time, and we hope that, some day, all those bales will be, in fact, removed.



\* (15:30)

**Mr. Graydon:** Thank you for that. I wasn't sure whether they were going to continue—and what you'll do in the summer, when—if I understand it to date—and throughout the winter you've been spreading the chopped residue on a number of fields, local fields. I would assume that—and maybe wrongly so—but that the fields will be seeded this summer, or this spring, and will be in crop.

Can the minister indicate whether they will continue during the summer and stockpile it, or whether they will wait until fall, until there's clear ground, to resume the spreading?

**Mr. Blaikie:** Well, I certainly agree with the honourable member that it would seem unlikely that they would be spreading the straw, or whatever it's called—the post-grinding substance—it's still straw, straw powder, or whatever—to—on fields that have been seeded. It may be that there's some fields on which that aren't seeded that they can still continue to put it on. I'm just not sure, frankly, of exactly what the summer plan is. So I'll undertake to get back to the member with that.

**Mr. Graydon:** I thank the minister for that answer.

The Minister of Agriculture talks about being the friend of the farmer and the potential saviour of the family farms in Manitoba, and that he's going to do nothing to harm them, everything to save them, and in the last budget he cut the risk management credits and income support programs by \$7 million.

Can the minister give us an indication of what his plan going forward is?

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, I certainly need to keep my ego in check after listening to that description of my approach to agriculture.

I want to assure the member very clearly that I don't see myself as a saviour, and I do have many farmers who I do consider friends.

I want to—I've been very clear in this House and I've been very clear in engagements that I've had with all kinds of farm groups that I think that farmers know more about their operations than I'll ever know. And I think it's a huge mistake for members opposite to assume they know more about a farmer's operation than the farmer him or herself knows.

I think a—more of a humble approach would be well served by the members opposite. I appreciate their years of farming and their experience, and I

have valued the advice that they give me, and I listen to that. And, where it makes sense, I try to incorporate that in a go-forward approach.

The member asked, specifically, about our go-forward approach, and that is an approach that understands the value of individual farm operations to our—not only our provincial economy, but the fabric of our communities in Manitoba. I can't imagine little communities without farmers. It just wouldn't happen. We have to move, time and time again, in such a way as we can be very helpful with farmers. We have to—as I've said earlier—listen to farmers and the farm leaders, and design our programs to benefit farmers.

You know, I understand that sometimes our friends in the opposition get all wound up when we ever speak about the federal government. But, when the federal government puts in 60 percent to our 40 percent to very many farm packages, support packages, we'd better be getting along with that federal government, which is part of my approach when it comes to—

**An Honourable Member:** Hug a Tory.

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, better hug some Tories. I agree with the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen). While there are Tories around, we should hug as many as we can.

Madam Chairperson, we—our approach will be one of co-operation, whether that be with the federal minister, Gerry Ritz, who, I think, gets it. I think anytime we've approached him about an issue that's specific to Manitoba, he's listened to us. And he asks the tough questions, and that's fair. But he also gives advice and assures his co-operation. And I can say that that has worked well. That has worked well for farmers all across this province.

Our approach will be one that understands that agriculture is an important part of rural Manitoba. It's part of a whole package in terms of rural economic development. We think there are some very good models in rural Manitoba that we can learn from, very good models in every region of this province that we can learn from and then replicate elsewhere in Manitoba.

So that's how I see moving forward. That's, I think, the basic question that we have to ask. Whenever we do reviews of our programs, which is what is happening with us in my—and, you know, and the federal counterpart and all my colleagues across the province, across the country, I think the basic

question is: Is—does this program benefit farmers? And we have to work towards that goal.

**Mr. Graydon:** Madam Chairperson, the minister covered a lot of different ground there, but the bottom line is he didn't answer the question. And the question was what he would propose to do, knowing that AgriStability works on margin. I'm sure you're aware of that, Mr. Minister. It works on margin, and it doesn't work on negative margin.

And, if you have been reading the paper, I'm sure you would see that there was a cattle producer that's just 61 years old that will be starting a new career. Farmed all his life, ran 800 cows at one time. Madam Chairperson, 800 cows means that he had over a million dollars invested just in cattle, probably another million and a half in the rest of his operation, and couldn't make a living at it, in this province of Manitoba.

AgriStability is supposed to be the safety net. That's the safety net—the support program that will see people through the tough times. However, it's not working. You haven't answered what your solution would be. You put a bunch of Chanel No. 5 all over the province, but you haven't dealt with the real figure. So, by putting flowers on the grave doesn't help any of the farmers that are out of business. The cattle people that have exited the business in the province—we have lost in excess of one-third of our herd. We have lost a thousand hog producers in the province in the last few years. The support programs that were designed aren't working.

As the Agricultural Minister of Manitoba, what is your solution going forward? You know the producers aren't happy with what's there. You know that it's not working. So will you please show some leadership and, today, tell us what your plan is. We're here to help you.

**Mr. Struthers:** We're from the opposition, and we're here to help; I can't help but be a little bit suspicious about that.

Madam Chairperson, I've said all along if the member for Emerson gives me good advice, I will consider that, and we'll try to incorporate it. Because, as I said in my previous question, the key question for me is: Does it benefit the Manitoba farmer?

And if the member for Emerson gives me advice that benefits the Manitoba farmer, I'll move forward with it; I'll keep listening to the member from Emerson.

\* (15:40)

Now, if I'm spreading Chanel No. 5 around the province, he'd better up the ante and spread Love Potion No. 9, because it's going to be a much tougher sell to go around Manitoba peddling what you peddled in the '90s that really started the real downturn in terms of numbers of hog producers, numbers of cattle farmers, number of grains and oilseeds farmers in this province.

The number of producers in this province has been declining for a long time. Instead of us getting into scraps about who caused the decline and where'd the decline happen most and, you know, in the 1990s or since the—since we've entered the 21st century, I think it'd be much more beneficial for us to talk about what it is that we can do to help. *[interjection]* And why go back to the '90s? Why go—you know, the member for Emerson needs to look at the numbers that show where this decline started to happen and not get into these—not get in—not get his shirt all tied in a knot over when the date was that it started.

The fact is there's fewer hog producers today than there was in 1990. There are fewer cattle producers today than in 1990. I want to point out that while the number of hog producers have gone down, the number of hogs has gone from about two million to somewhere in the area of 8.8 to nine million and that last year there was actually a 2.9 percent increase in the number of hogs in Manitoba. Now, none of us should sugar-coat this. None of us should use our Chanel No. 5 and Love Potion No. 9 to mask what's going on. We can't do that. We have to design programs that are going to work for all of these producers. And part of that is what we're doing with the federal and provincial and territorial ministers.

We've taken on a complete review of the business risk management suite of programs funded 60 percent by the feds and 40 percent by the provinces. We want to design those programs better. The member knows as well as anybody else in this House that this is an evolution of programming that the farmers have been watching for a whole number of years. A complete generation of farmers has watched as decision makers have changed programs. We've gone from GRIP to CAIS to AgriStability to who knows what in the future.

But again, what this minister and what this government will sign on to in the end, when the review is complete, is a program that makes it better for the Manitoba farmer. That has to be at

the—premise that we deal with. I'm confident the federal minister sees it that way. I'm confident my colleagues in other provinces and territories see it that way. We're going to be at the table again in July, as we were in February, and we're going to continue to review those programs to make them work better for the farmer.

**Mr. Graydon:** That's reassuring that you're going to be working at it. The question was what are you doing. We're here to help you do it. Just tell us what you're doing. If you don't know what you're doing, then say that. That's simple enough. Just say, I don't know. And it wouldn't burn up the clock. And I have other questions I could ask you, but please answer the question.

**Mr. Struthers:** When the member for Emerson makes statements like that, I'd knock on wood, too, if I was the member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen).

Well, the minister—the member wants to know a little bit about what we've done. Well, excess moisture insurance: Here we had a situation pre-1999 where farmers were in different parts of our province at the time, especially back in the southwest corner, where I visited, where there was horrendous floods. Municipalities' infrastructure was flooding. Farmers' fields were flooding.

I met with the then-mayor of Melita, Ken Carels, who really did make the case for that southwest. We asked the government of the day, the Gary Filmon government, to do something about it. They didn't, really. We came into government. We spoke with farmers. On the basis of talking to farmers, we came forward with an Excess Moisture Insurance plan, which is what farmers wanted us to do. We brought it forward.

I'd like to see the member from Emerson, you know, acknowledge that, that it was a good step, that it was something that benefited farmers. I'd like for him to do that. Nobody across the way have yet. They've all been in denial, maybe, that there was rain back in the 1990s and that's why they didn't come forward with a program. But the facts of the matter are—is that the Tories didn't do anything about it, and this government did. That's one example.

The other day in question period—

**An Honourable Member:** There's a pattern like that.

**Mr. Struthers:** The other day in question period—the pattern continues. You know, all through the 1990s,

when the Tories had their chance to even hydro rates—

**An Honourable Member:** I was in high school.

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, high schools had—they turned the power on in high schools, and they paid.

And the member for Steinbach's high school, when he was there in the 1990s, they paid hydro rates back in them days and they paid more than the high school kids in city schools, and his government let that persist. *[interjection]* In rural Manitoba, northern Manitoba, the rates weren't fair and they did nothing about it.

This government came along and what did we do?

**An Honourable Member:** Nothing.

**Mr. Struthers:** We listened to people—the member for Steinbach says nothing. Far be it from nothing. We did what the Tories wouldn't do. We took the rates and said it's not fair for those people in Steinbach. It's not fair for those people in Vita to pay more than people in Winnipeg. It's not fair for people in Lynn Lake, and we did the right thing. We brought it to this House and we evened those rates out so that that really worked for the Manitoba farmer.

Farmers pay a lot of money in terms of hydro. It's essential to their operations. It was this government that did that. I mean, I'm—I know the member asked me what we've done for Manitoba farmers and I've just put two more on the table. We have AgriStability in place that's a federal-provincial program that puts money into farmers' pockets. Our commitment is, can we make it better? Can we make it better? Absolutely. And we're going to try to make that better by working with our federal and provincial colleagues to come up with a package that understands what farmers need, and design that package in a way that benefits the farmer.

And I could go on forever on the good things we've done on this side of the House.

**Mr. Graydon:** Madam Chairperson, I would suggest that the only fans that he has are sitting in the House. There's not many out in agriculture.

**An Honourable Member:** On that side.

**Mr. Graydon:** That's it. Yes. He's a lonesome man when he gets out of the House. However, if he could give us just a hint, just a hint of how he would like to see AgriStability changed—he talked about GRIP and

he talked about CAIS and he didn't talk about NISA. NISA was a good program, as well.

And he talked about he wanted to talk to real farmers. Well, if he wants to, he can come over here and talk to me. I've been a real farmer for 37 years. I have a fair idea what's going on out in rural Manitoba. I live it every day.

I ask the minister again: Have you got any plan, going forward, how you're going to help agriculture in the province of Manitoba?

**Mr. Struthers:** Madam Chairperson, there are a lot of real farmers who talk to me, and I don't want to diminish the background of the member opposite. I know he's paid his dues in terms of farming.

In Estimates he actually told me it was 50 years of farming, and it's reduced to 36 by the time we got to concurrence. But that's okay, the Tories haven't been very consistent on any of their numbers in any of the questions they asked. So I can—I'll forgive the member from Emerson that.

The—we—the member, quite correctly, adds in NISA. There was lots of other programs along the way over a generation of farming that were attempts to try to get it right. It's evolved into the current suite of programs that we have, AgriStability amongst them.

We've had different proposals brought forward. A group of farmers met with me and I know they've met with other provincial leaders on—with a program that is entitled AgriStability Plus, you know, a program that combines sort of the things that have evolved on the business risk side, a program that combines those—the things that are actually working with AgriStability and attempts to bulk up the things that these farmers believe aren't working with AgriStability.

\*(15:50)

So it's a top-up that they've come to talk to us about. They have plans to get that discussion on the national stage, and I wish them well with that. I know that many of my colleagues around the—in the provinces and at the federal level have taken a look at this particular program as one possibility and, in June, farmers will have a chance to make that—those cases to federal officials who are organizing consultations that are going to take place and Manitoba farmers will be part of that.

There are ideas out there that I think are worth considering, including AgriStability Plus, and I think

we should take those proposals seriously. We should make sure they're actuarially sound. I don't want to give false hopes to farmers on any of these programs and then dash those hopes. I think we've seen that—I think we've that happen in the past and that's not fair to the farmer.

But we do need to consider those sorts of ideas and make sure that they work in favour of the farmer.

**Mr. Graydon:** Could the minister explain AgriStability Plus? It's a term that I'm not aware of.

**Mr. Struthers:** Sure, Madam Chairperson. There's a number of farmers who have done a whole lot of homework. They've taken the AgriStability program and they've analyzed that program. They've said, here's some deficiencies that we think we can address. And they're proposing a cost-of-production top-up to the existing AgriStability program.

It would combine kind of the business risk management advantages that AgriStability has, with a cost-of-production payment or top-up on top of the AgriStability payouts that have been occurring. I think there's an understanding that, given the evolution from away back when, from, you know, 30 years ago when we started putting these programs together for farmers, that there's an understanding, I think, and it's evolved towards what we see as our suite of programs, including AgriStability.

We see some advantages to it, and I think farmers understand their advantages—dealing with margins, as the member for Emerson has stated—but that there is a realization that we're not quite there yet, either. And what will happen now is that federal and provincial officials will look very seriously at this AgriStability Plus proposal as one of the proposals coming forward from the farm community.

Again, it's—the premise—probably two premises—one, these farmers who are putting this forward understand their own operations better than any of the ministers sitting at that table or any MLA sitting in this House, and they understand, and they agree with us and my colleagues across the nation, that we need to make these programs better for farmers.

**Mr. Graydon:** The program that you speak of, this top-up portion, where does that come from?

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, it came from the farmers who met with me and my deputy minister. It came from the farmers who looked at the AgriStability program and wanted to make it better. They've—I mean, they're drawing people in who've got some

background in testing the actuarial soundness of farm programs. They want it to—they don't want it to lose the business risk side of this because part of this will be—my understanding is it will be paid in premiums by farmers to allow them to collect a top-up, much like any other insurance program. It's a program that seemed to me to be pretty well thought out. Not just what they wanted—what they didn't want to do was just appear to be looking for more money. They wanted this program to work and they'll have their chance to state their case.

**Mr. Graydon:** So, if I understand the minister right, this program—the top-up portion of the program will be producer funded.

**Mr. Struthers:** There will—there the—what the farmers who—are proposing in this program is that the farmer himself would assume a part of that responsibility. They would have a portion of—they would pay a portion and receive a top-up much like an insurance program that you would see in other areas of agriculture. Like I said, it's—what they're proposing is a hybrid between a business risk management approach and a cost-of-production approach. We'll see how it's received across the country.

**Mr. Graydon:** I'm certainly not arguing with what you've been proposing or what you've been telling me. I'm just trying to better understand it because I have no knowledge of it. The top-up portion will be funded, you said, by the producer, and you almost alluded to the fact that it would be also cost-shared with the other two parties, that being the provincial government and the federal government. Would that be—if I've assumed properly, would that be on the same ratio that we have today of AgriStability, the portions by the federal and provincial governments?

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, it probably wouldn't end up being the same ratio, because what we deal with is a 60-40 ratio and not a producer part of that on many of the programs. What they would propose is a combination of that, with some producer money there. The—I think the realistic part of what this group of farmers is looking at is that they don't want to set us up for trade sanctions and international trade barriers. They don't want to run any red flags up on the trade side of these programs, which is something that all ministers are very—have been very much aware of.

I'll give the member another example. Part of the discussion that took place back in February when the federal, provincial, territorial ministers got together

was an insurance program based on what Alberta has moved forward, a price insurance program on the livestock side. And we got a report from the Alberta minister on kind of the ups and the downs and the pros and the cons of that particular program. And that was something that will be part of our discussions as well. That'll come forward. I know other ministers have expressed an interest in it and have spoke to the federal minister about it. The Manitoba Cattle Producers Association here in Manitoba have been talking to us about that sort of a program as well.

Again, there's a lot of—I think there's a lot of homework that needs to be done. Whether you're talking AgriStability Plus, whether you're talking about price insurance on the livestock side, I think these are ideas that we—that deserve further investigation. And, as both the cattle producers and the, you know, supporters of AgriStability Plus have said, they need to be actuarially sound and they need to not draw international trade barrier kind of attention that would hurt us all. So there's—the farm community has some good ideas out there that we need to flesh out a little bit more, and we need to seriously consider them and see how we can make them work for farmers.

\* (16:00)

**Mr. Graydon:** I—when I asked the question, Mr. Minister, I—in my mind I was thinking the breakdown of crop insurance, that's the type of breakdown. Is that something that you were thinking going forward with the three—like a tripartite approach to the top-up portion to the full cost of production?

**Mr. Struthers:** Yeah, I want to be clear, that this is a proposal coming forward from the farm community. The—and part of what the producers who I talked to referenced was exactly what the member for Emerson was talking about. When it—crop insurance is part of the model by which they looked at this. They thought there was aspects of crop insurance that we do here in Manitoba that could be very helpful and provide some guidance in terms of setting these programs, and having them work for farmers.

I do want to make it clear, Madam Chairperson, that I appreciate the conversation that the member from Emerson's having and I'm assuming that it's genuine interest. So he doesn't need to worry that—at least at this part of our conversation—that I think he's up to something or anything like that. I know he

understands these programs and he has good advice on it and I appreciate him doing that.

**Mr. Graydon:** I believe everyone in this House has the best interest of all Manitobans at heart, and I guess I would be less than truthful if I didn't say that I had the best interests of agriculture over top of everybody else. I mean that—I am selfish in that respect and I make no apology for that.

I would suggest that the agricultural producers of this province are the backbone. The province has been built on agriculture. I would suggest, also, that the agricultural producers are the risk takers in this province to see that everyone is being fed properly, and they do it in a very efficient manner. They do it in an environmentally manner that will leave the ground that they work or the land that they own in a better condition than they got it in. That's the intergenerational message that's passed from father to son, and or daughter, and that's a goal of all agricultural producers, Madam Chairperson, that they will leave what they have used throughout their life in a better condition than they received it. And I can say that—honestly say that that has been done with the type of technology that has come forward in grain farming. It's the same in all agriculture whether that's hogs, cattle, dairy, poultry or grain.

I just need—because I'm not familiar with the program and, from what the minister said, I certainly don't oppose that type of a program. It has to be actuarially sound, after all you are dealing with taxpayers' money. And it's something that needs to be dealt with. It's a limited resource that needs to be dealt with in a responsible fashion.

I would ask the minister, then, because he has had the advantage that I haven't had, is the minister—does the minister find this approach by this group, does he find that to be an avenue, so to speak, that would rectify the situation in Manitoba, and is that something that he would pursue in the future?

**Mr. Struthers:** Yeah, just a couple of things. The—I couldn't agree more with the importance of agriculture to Manitoba. Agriculture, I think, is one very important part of a very diversified economy. In the towns that I've lived in throughout my life, agriculture has been the main source of revenue. It's been the main part of our economy. But agriculture is one of a number of very important sectors in our province.

The other thing I want to point out is that I agree with the member from Emerson that whatever

program we move forward with, it absolutely has to be actuarially sound. And it's not just that we're dealing with taxpayers' money. We're dealing with both taxpayers' money and in, quite likely, with farmers' money themselves. Now, farmers are taxpayers, too. I know that, but when a lawyer in the province who has nothing to do with farming puts money into it—that's good. When a farmer puts money into it, that's money directly going into it and showing—and I think a different message. It's a message that the farmer understands his or her responsibilities, understands that they make contributions to these programs, but in the end it has to work for that farmer.

I don't want farmers just donating money. I don't want farmers left out in the cold. It's very important, whether it's taxpayers' money or farmers directly paying into it, that these programs be actuarially sound. They have to make economic sense. They have to work to the benefit of the farmer, because there's communities in our province who depend on that—you know, farm families that depend on it, as well.

So I'm very interested in these kind of ideas that come forward. I'm very interested in receiving the analysis of these programs, whether they be by the very good staff that work within the Department of Agriculture or whether they be by the farmers who are putting these forward, putting these ideas forward themselves, because they have—to their credit, they have said to me that they're not going to push, whether it's AgriStability Plus or a price insurance scheme for cattle, they're not going to push something without first having accountants with some very specific skills in this area, take a look at it and make recommendations.

And they were totally open with me, the farm groups that I met with. They were very open. They said, if this does not make sense, it does not make—if it's not actuarially sound, they won't push it, because that would only hurt the farmer in the end. So they were very honest and very up front, and I appreciate that. These are folks who have a lot more experience working with these programs than I do and that any, I would suggest, any other member in the Legislature.

So we—so I very much appreciate the straightforward, up-front approach, a very honest approach that these farmers had when presenting their information to me. And we—my intent and, I think, the intent of all my colleagues across the

country, including the federal government, is to take that advice seriously, analyze the homework that the farmers have done, take a look at these programs, see how they would work on a national basis and then move forward if we believe that they do make sense and if they work in favour of the farmer.

**Mr. Graydon:** Thank you for that. Is there a time frame in the minister's mind when something like this would transpire? Is there a sense of urgency in the province, in his estimation, that something needs to be done?

**Mr. Struthers:** There's—I think there's two levels in terms of a sense of urgency. One is connected to the review of the business risk management plans that are being undertaken by the federal and provincial governments. And ministers previous to me taking this chair had agreed on a time frame that would be—that would unfold, and we're making good progress on that.

The next step in that time frame is the consultation that the federal officials are doing across the country, and they'll be in Manitoba in June. We are meeting as ministers in July in Saskatoon to receive that analysis, to receive that update from officials. We will be giving direction in July from ministers to our officials in terms of what the next step would be.

\* (16:10)

I think there's an urgency there. I also think there's an urgency that's outside of the review of the business risk management programs. I think there's—we have to be in a position to move in times of excess moisture, in times of drought, in times of need for the farmer. And I know there is—we made an announcement here a couple weeks ago in the northern Interlake. I know there were questions that come across from members opposite.

*Mr. Rob Altemeyer, Acting Chairperson, in the Chair*

The AgriRecovery program is part of what we're talking about and trying to make it so that AgriRecovery can work, not just to the farmers' favour, but work quicker, to the farmers' favour.

In that particular case, farmers convinced this minister, and our Premier (Mr. Selinger), and officials from our departments, that given the wet conditions over the last two years and the loss of two crop years by a number of farmers in that area, that we needed to move forward with some sort of

support and the program through which we could do that was AgriRecovery.

I know that the president of the Keystone Agricultural Producers, Ian Wishart, I read his comment saying that AgriRecovery needs to work better. And I think that's an appropriate challenge, on the behalf of that farm leader to us ministers, to look at that program and make it work better. As it stands now, the Province and federal government, myself as minister and Gerry Ritz as minister, we get together to determine whether or not an area actually requires the assistance through AgriRecovery. We became convinced of that and approached the federal government and they agreed with us. We went through the processes that we need to do in terms of being accountable to taxpayers and their dollars and were able to go forward with a \$15-per-acre payout.

So I think there's, as I said, there's two levels of urgency. One is on the business risk management side where we have to put in place programs that are responding to the needs of farmers. But we also have to be flexible. We have to be able to move when a specific disaster occurs, when a specific stress occurs, in different regions of our provinces. And I think you'll hear that from all of the ministers across Canada because we all want to respond when farmers are in need.

**Mr. Graydon:** Just for the record, I want to just go back a little bit and I want to give you a definition of levy. That is, to collect or assess money that is due. That's what a levy is. A tax is a voluntary fee levied on individuals or corporations that is enforced by a level of government in order to finance government initiatives. That's the difference. Just so you're clear and the record is clear.

At any rate, as you were saying about the Interlake and the \$15 that you just announced for the Interlake, I think, Mr. Minister, you'll have to agree that on the west side of the lake, the conditions were just as bad as they were on the east side of the lake and you omitted those in that west lake area when you were moving forward with this. Was there a particular reason that you overlooked that or was it just a mistake?

**Mr. Struthers:** Well, I appreciate the clarification in terms of levy versus tax, and, based on that, I look forward to the member from Emerson referring to the measure that we introduced as a levy. So I thank him very much for that.

I want to say too that in the—in my explanation about how the AgriRecovery program works, he would know that when the producers from the northern Interlake came forward—and not just producers, but we met with a group of people from the credit unions in the area—who wanted us to know just how bad things were in the northern Interlake. We sat down with the federal government, as their AgriRecovery rules say we should, and we talked to them about the need that was very clear in the northern Interlake. We worked with the feds to put forward an amount of money that we could.

I want to say that I think both the Province and the federal government did as best they could to try to address the—what has got to be horrendous conditions, when, for two years in a row, you can't get a crop in or out—in or off the field. It's also, I want to say, in conjunction with a number of other programs totalling about \$63 million, that we've identified in that Interlake area, encompassing not just the grain farmer, grain and oilseed side, but the cattle side as well.

Feed assistance was something that I know the member for the Interlake came forward and said his constituents were talking to him about. To his credit, the member for Lakeside (Mr. Eichler) approached us as well and said that there were feed assistance needs that farmers in the Interlake had, and so this government stepped up and made sure that we had in place programs to—made sure we had programs in place to help farmers get their hands on some feed for their livestock.

We had a forage restoration program announced since then as well, and we're talking in terms of—in—with these programs with cattle producers, in the millions of dollars again. As I said, a \$63-million relief that has been brought forward. Some of that 63 million was provincial money and provincial money only. Some of that was through AgriStability and different programs, AgriRecovery, that we cost shared, worked on together with the federal government.

I think the lesson in this is that you have to be sure that people do their homework, that you make the case for need and you have both the federal and provincial governments open to that—the advice that we got from farmers and then be able to act on it. And that's what happened with that support to northern Interlake farmers.

*Madam Chairperson in the Chair*

**Mr. Graydon:** Thank you for that, Mr. Minister. It's—I'm sure the people in the Interlake were grateful and I know they were. The feed assistance program came after many, many cattle had went to market, and it came in the spring instead of the fall. I'm not disputing the fact that you put a lot of money into the Interlake. There was a lot of money that was lost in the Interlake over the years by—or over the two years by the producers up there and many of them in the Interlake are financially strapped for cash, equally as so on the west side, and maybe there's just no credit unions on the west side that could have advised you. I'm not sure of that. I'm not aware.

However, I'm just going to turn this over to my colleague from Arthur-Virden, but I have one little tidbit that you might be interested in and that is the word "levy." And that says that—it's another definition is: an imposing or collection of a tax by authority or by force. And I would suggest that that's what you're using; your authority and doing it by force. Thank you.

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** I appreciate the definition given by my colleague, and I just wonder if the minister had any comment.

**Mr. Struthers:** You mean the part where he said, by force? Whatever the opposition wants to characterize it as, I, you know, that's fine by me. It is a levy and it is something that we've met with all of the supply-managed groups on. It—we're not going to be taking the member from Emerson's advice and moving forward in a forceful way. We will be co-operative with our friends in the supply-managed sector and I look forward to more meetings with them.

\* (16:20)

**Mr. Maguire:** I want to—I just want to ask the—a few questions, and I may go back and forth between the ministers, but probably more to my colleague, the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Blaikie), in regards to just some issues.

One of the ones that I didn't have an opportunity to ask in Estimates—of the minister—was just in regards to the process of him being in Copenhagen. I know my colleague asked the cost of the trip, and I thank him for that response. I've got that information. I just wonder if the minister could indicate to me, other than the premier of South Australia, who else they may have met with when they were in Copenhagen?



**Mr. Blaikie:** Well, actually, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and I met together with a number of people, and the Premier met separately with other premiers who were there, particularly: the premier of Québec was there; the premier of British Columbia, I believe was there; the premier of Nova Scotia. So there were a number of meetings that happened at the first minister level, and then there were other meetings that happened between ministers of the environment. And then there were a series of meetings between—with the environmental NGOs that were in attendance. There were a number of forums. That was an event, for instance, where actually—where Manitoba, along with other—some other provinces, received recognition for some of the things that we are doing here with respect to the environment.

I met with the—for instance, I met with the Minister of—for Climate Change from Scotland. In Scotland, they have both the minister of the environment and Minister for Climate Change. Climate change has been set aside as a separate ministry. And, as the member will know, I indicated this morning, when I was speaking to the Chamber of Commerce, that I had met with the Minister for Climate Change from Scotland, and was rather intrigued by their—by the Scottish promotional strategy with respect to their goal, which is actually higher than the goals that were agreed to at Copenhagen. They have set a goal for themselves at 20—a reduction of 20 percent by 2020, whereas the goals that came out of Copenhagen were generally much, much lower than that: not 20 percent by 2020, but 6 or 7 percent, in that neighbourhood.

So, I could provide a list of all the people that we—that I met with, if that's—if the member would like that, because, as I say, we met with NGOs. It was a unique opportunity. Actually, there were probably—it would be difficult to get that number of Canadians who are concerned about the environment, particularly about climate change, together anywhere in Canada, but there they were, in Copenhagen. And so it was a great opportunity for us to meet with other Canadians as well as people from other countries, some of which—some of the meetings took place were of a formal nature. And there were many informal meetings, of course, as people attended the same forums, were introduced to each other at receptions. It was a great opportunity to meet and to discuss climate change with a great many individuals.

**Mr. Maguire:** I just want to ask the minister, as well—I thank him for that response. I know that we have an agreement, a memorandum of understanding we signed with Copenhagen or with South Australia in 2006, I believe, according to the—some of the releases that the minister put out last fall around the time that he was in Copenhagen. And I just wonder—I know he attended the Climate Leaders Summit. There were many groups there, some 60 I'm told. I—so I would appreciate it if the minister could supply me with that list. I don't expect him to have all of those in his head, but I'd appreciate it if he could supply me with that list.

And I just—I guess I wanted to just expand on it a little bit. It said that the Climate Leaders Summit, you know, there were opportunities there to share strategies in regards to a number of issues: clean energy development, low carbon technology, and regional co-operation. But I wonder if he can just expand on what types of—was it—in regards to clean energy development, were they talking about hydro or was this clean coal discussions that they were having? There's a number of coal deposits in Europe, as well, in those areas. And I—and in regards to the low carbon technology, can he expand on that for me, as well?

**Mr. Blaikie:** Well, if I remember the event that—correctly—that the member is referring to, there—this tended to be a meeting of subnational governments because, of course, we were there in our capacity as a provincial premier and provincial minister of Conservation.

And one of the things that was interesting about Copenhagen was at the same time as national leaders were having difficulty working with each other and having difficulty coming to some kind of a hopeful conclusion or—of the meeting, members of subnational governments, whether they were provincial or municipal, because there were many mayors there, for instance, as well as provincial first ministers and ministers of the environment, were demonstrating a willingness to work together on a variety of fronts.

And I think, if I remember the global—the summit meeting that the member's talking about, there was mostly provincial and municipal officials. And, in terms of clean energy, well, a number of things were discussed, but from the point of view of Manitoba we were eager to let people know what was happening here in terms—both in terms of hydro,

in terms of geothermal and other forms of low-carbon production of energy.

And people from other countries had their own—and other cities or other subnational regions had their own examples of what they were doing. So it was kind of a sharing of best practices, but, of course, not everybody can adopt the best practices of every other region or city. It kind of depends on your particular geography and what's available to you.

Not everyone has the hydro resources that we have, for example, and other communities and other regions have their own advantages. So it was kind of a sharing of, you know, information sharing about what various jurisdictions were doing. That was the nature of the summit.

**Mr. Maguire:** Can he expand on the agreement with Premier Rann in South Australia and just what exactly that agreement has in it?

**An Honourable Member:** I—

**Madam Chairperson:** Honourable Minister for Conservation.

**Mr. Blaikie:** I was doing that in committee, too, Madam Chairperson. I'm just so eager to—but I would just undertake to get a copy of the agreement for the member at this point. It was not a question that I anticipated, and so therefore I don't have a copy of the agreement in front of me. And, so rather than try and wing it, I'll just get—I'll get a copy of the agreement for the member.

**Mr. Maguire:** It was a pretty important summit. At least it was advertised that way here, and so I appreciate the minister providing me with a copy of that. I'm sure I could go on-line maybe and find it. I don't know if he's got it posted on his Web site or not, but I—if I have, I haven't been able to find it yet.

I just, you know, there are a couple of other things just in the general framework that they had in the release—was that they were dealing with a couple of things to co-operate with were reducing flood hazards and developing strategies to cope with long-term droughts. And I know that we could provide them with some support in flood happenings and dealing with hazards and how to establish some of those.

We haven't had too many droughts, although I come from the dry part of Manitoba historically, in the southwest, but I wonder, can he just expand on what kind of discussions he had in this agreement with—he or the Premier had with the South Australian

premier, Mr. Rann, in regards to what could be done or what kind of discussions they had in regards to drought proofing?

**Mr. Blaikie:** Madam Chairperson, I mean—one of the reasons—I'm at a bit of a disadvantage—to my colleague from Arthur-Virden because it was some—this was an agreement and a discussion that occurred between the Premier and the—his counterpart in New South Wales. I wasn't at that meeting, and so, you know, I'm not as able to—I'm not able to say what discussions took place at that particular meeting.

I only know what came out of the meeting, and that's the agreement that I undertook to provide to the honourable member. This was a first ministers' meeting—wasn't something that the Minister of Conservation was at.

\* (16:30)

**Mr. Maguire:** I guess if I—you know, if I was to sign an agreement on something like developing a strategy to cope with long-term droughts, I'd, you know—I know that the minister is new in his portfolio. He's only been there about six months—six, seven months. I just wondered if he's aware of and what his plans are for any kind of a drought program in Manitoba. And I would relate that probably more to the agricultural region, although droughts do affect our forestry products and everything in the north as well. Droughts affect the level of our lakes for the fisheries industry and for a number of other areas.

And so I wonder if he could elaborate as to whether he and the Premier (Mr. Selinger) had had any briefings before they went to Copenhagen in regards to the kinds of—knowing that they were looking at the—I'm assuming that there was discussions ongoing before they got there. They just didn't go and look at the agreement and sign it while they were over there—make it up; it was developed beforehand. They had a chance to look at it. They'd go to Copenhagen and sign it as a subnational group, and, or subnational level of government group. And I wanted to just ask him what kind of briefings he may have had before he left to go to Copenhagen on drought proofing in Manitoba, he or the Premier.

**Mr. Blaikie:** I had no briefings with respect to that particular topic. The Premier may have had one. As I say, it was the Premier who entered into that discussion with his counterpart, and I can't speak for the Premier in that regard. But it was not something that—it was not an agreement that I was part of as far

as the lead up to it or the discussion that took place in Copenhagen. I only know the result of the discussions and the agreement that was reached, and the details of which I did not commit to memory and which I've undertaken to give to the honourable member.

**Mr. Maguire:** Yes, I guess that leads me to branch into some of the issues in Manitoba in regards to irrigation. The minister in Conservation, water is a resource that we need to manage extremely carefully, and I know the minister feels the same way. And I'm wondering what his discussions have been in his department so far or what briefings he may have had from his department in regards to how to manage, best manage, water resources in southern Manitoba particularly. And I'm only saying southern Manitoba because there is a great deal of concern around keeping the level of Lake Winnipeg up as well for our hydro purposes for export—that's one.

Another one is, of course, to manage the resources and the flow into Lake Winnipeg in regards to levels of rivers and that sort of thing, for want of a better word, anything that might lead to further production of, you know, blue-green algae and that sort of thing and other contaminants. We're looking at the issues of Devils Lake in the States, because our neighbours to the south, as well as in North Dakota, as well as Minnesota, the water comes up through the Lake of the Woods and in through the Winnipeg River. And, because the southern area is the catchment basin for at least the south end of the lake and the majority of the water, notwithstanding what comes in from the Saskatchewan River and through the northwest part of the lake, can he indicate to me just any further development that may take place or he may have in mind in regards to water storage or water management in southern Manitoba as well?

**Mr. Blaikie:** Well, I don't—Madam Chairperson, I don't want to sound evasive, but, generally speaking, the kinds of things that the member's asking me tend to fall under the auspices of Water Stewardship. The Department of Agriculture and the Department of Conservation would be part of it to some degree, Conservation particularly, where there was need for environmental licensing of any particular operation or construction or whatever that that might be part—project that might be part of a water regulation.

But the general tenor of the member's question is something that I think is to be more appropriately

asked of the Minister of Water Stewardship (Ms. Melnick), frankly, unless, of course, he's asking me about the whole question of when he talked about algae. If he's meaning the, if he wants to talk about the government's position with respect to the removal of nitrogen in order to better serve the long-term interests of Manitoba and particularly Lake Winnipeg, then that's something we can—that's something that I do have some departmental or ministerial relationship to that issue. But, in terms of management of water resources in general, whether it's for hydro purposes or for fighting drought purposes or floods or whatever, that tends not to be within the ambit of the Minister of Conservation.

**Mr. Maguire:** I only ask these questions, Madam Chairperson, because the minister was the one that went to the Premier (Mr. Selinger) to Copenhagen and, you know, according to their own release that they were developing strategies to cope with long-term droughts and they had an agreement that they signed with South Australia on that, and I just asked the question as to what plans they may have had.

The minister is indicating that he wasn't briefed on any plans to deal with drought proofing in southern Manitoba. I would think, in regards to Conservation, though, if there were irrigation strategies or water management programs and using whether it's dams built in other areas of Manitoba like the Shellmouth to control flooding and that sort of thing, that some of that comes through the minister's—it may not be directly, but certainly conservation efforts in his area would be, would fall, into that, and he would, I hope, have input into that through his Cabinet and his colleagues in that regard. So I'm only asking it as the critic responsible for this area because we're in charge of, you know, greening Manitoba and that sort of thing as well.

And my responsibilities is to look at—and I would urge the minister to look at the type of packages that could be there and what type of work we'd be doing with our neighbours west, east, and south, I guess, in regards to the work that could be done for drought proofing in southern Manitoba. We are technically—well, we've been more worried about floods in the last 10 years than we have droughts. I'm well aware of that, but, having farmed for nearly the last 40 years, I guess, in Manitoba, some of those times, I've experienced droughts, as many, not just in our agriculture community, but others have as well, and water's an extremely valuable source for not just for life but for all of our other needs besides

agricultural production, forestry and fishing and other areas. And so I'm just wondering if the minister has, because of the association here with southern Australia, been working on any kind of program, when he'll be getting back together with—or if he'll be getting back together any of the contacts that he made in Copenhagen on these issues as well.

**Mr. Blaikie:** Well, my understanding of the, as I say, of the agreement with southern Australia is that it's an agreement that was signed only—that was signed in Copenhagen, and we'll be following up with our counterparts in south, southern Australia with respect to the commitments made in the agreement.

But, as far as the role of Conservation in terms of water is concerned, it just occurs to me that, you know, one of the things, one of the roles that Conservation plays and one of the member's colleagues was raising this with me in Estimates the other day is, for instance, the situation at Sandy Lake. The member for Russell (Mr. Derkach) was concerned about municipalities there who wanted—you know, who are wanting to manage water in their particular areas and are—and need to get environmental licence to do so. So that's where Conservation kicks in, in cases like that. And, as the honourable member knows, I've arranged for people from my department to meet the appropriate officials from the municipalities and with the member for Russell to sort that out because there's concern about the process and also concern on the municipality's side about the cost of environmental assessment.

**Mr. Maguire:** I know one of the things that was discussed at a number of the meetings in regards to the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen was the discussion around, as I mentioned earlier, clean energy technology, energy efficiency, those types of things as well, that do fall under the minister's purview, if you will.

And I wonder if he can just indicate to me, given the fact that as greenhouse gas emissions have gone up in Manitoba, how they're dealing with the plan that they put forward in regards to reducing the number of greenhouse gases and, you know, what his immediate plans are to turn that around by 2012.

\* (16:40)

We've got two years left to try and meet some of the targets that his own previous premier put in place, and I just wondered if he can update me on programs that he feels they can put in place to do that more quickly.

**Mr. Blaikie:** Well, Madam Chairperson, we have a—the government has a program called Beyond Kyoto. I think there's 67 different items on the—in the Beyond Kyoto program. And we are proceeding, even though we, like the honourable member, regret that our greenhouse gas emissions have gone up in 2008 by that small percentage, but, nevertheless, going up rather than down, and at the same time as we have done many things to bring down—it's actually to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from particular emitters. At the same time as the result of population growth and as a result of some of the things that I pointed out this morning at the Chamber of Commerce, the tremendous growth in greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture in the province, from transportation. The fact that we're driving, even though, you know, that Manitobans are driving a whole lot more vehicles than they were before, and that these tend to be SUVs and vans. And we've got both consumer choices and unique, sort of economic challenges if you like, in terms of trying to bring our greenhouse gases down.

So, at the same time as we have been making progress in terms of geothermal and wind power and moving ahead in terms of capturing methane gas—something that's going to—we're going to see some real progress on very, very shortly in terms of the Brady Landfill and also, I believe, in Brandon—there are a number of things that are going ahead. But, at the same time as these very good projects are going ahead, we have a general growth in population and in—and on the agricultural side and in the use of vehicles that is making a reduction, an absolute reduction in greenhouse gases in Manitoba very, very challenging indeed.

So the government intends to proceed with its Beyond Kyoto program to implement the—not the recommendations but the things that are contained in that particular program, and we want to come as close as we can to the goals that we've set for ourselves.

**Mr. Maguire:** Well I just want to offer to the minister, I know he's been in Ottawa for 29 years before he got into his role here, and so the last 10 years of this government being in power in Manitoba, I just wanted to draw to his attention that, you know, they haven't indexed to inflation some of the things like personal exemptions from income tax and a number of those areas to keep up with inflation.

And notwithstanding what he just said about the increase, the increased livestock we've got certainly in Manitoba has been a result, as he said this morning, of the Crow benefit disappearing. Some of those areas where farmers have taken an economic advantage to try to grow in Manitoba, I hope he's not suggesting that we cut back on the amount of livestock, although his predecessor's policies may have helped that.

I just wanted to provide him with the, you know, I know he's been much more conciliatory in looking at how we can move forward with some of these areas, particularly in waste-water management and some of those types of things, in regards to where we're at. And I'm just wondering if he is suggesting that he has some numbers in regards to indexing of those greenhouse gases that would show that providing the indexing took place with a growth that we've had in the province that he talks about, that where would they be today compared to, you know, that 0.9 percent reduction that—or increase, rather, that came out in the Statistics Canada numbers.

**Mr. Blaikie:** Well, Madam Chairperson, I want to make it clear that I'm not—very clear—that I'm not faulting farmers or the agricultural industry in this province for responding in the way that they did to the elimination of first the Crow rate and then the Crow benefit.

It is something that I opposed in my former political life, but that's another debate. The fact of the matter is is that it did change the nature of agriculture here in Manitoba, and that's just that that's a fact of life. And it's something that we have to deal with, not by trying to go back to a former era or anything like that, but it is one of the things that I think we all have to—we all should be dealing with the same set of facts on the table with respect to what is producing greenhouse gas emissions here in Manitoba.

And the fact of the matter is is that there has been a very significant increase in greenhouse gas emissions in Manitoba over—from 1990 to 2008. A big portion of that has come from agriculture. Another portion of that has come from transportation. There have been other areas where we've actually had some successes in terms of greenhouse gas emissions from production of energy. So we need to look at all these areas and decide where—how it is we can respond to those challenges in a way that helps to keep—in a way that is environmentally sustainable but also has a high

degree of respect for the viability of the livelihoods of farmers who are participating in that expansion of agriculture that happened as a result of the elimination of the Crow benefit. And, you know, that's a challenge, and so is the transportation side, because—I'm sure the honourable member isn't, you know, would acknowledge just how difficult it is to—or it would be if we—if—to try and regulate or in some way beyond education—to suggest what kind of vehicles people should purchase. So we have to do what we can within the limitations that have been given us. We have to play the hand we've been dealt, so to speak.

**Mr. Maguire:** Yeah, I just wanted to add to that that I appreciate that answer, but I know in the discussions that led up to the discussions on greenhouse gas emission reductions that his former premier had put forward and his former ministers in regards to where we would be in 2012, I guess they assumed that things were going to stay flat or go down as opposed to grow, because, you know, obviously, we would hope that Manitoba will grow and grow more in the future.

I see lots of opportunity there for Manitoba just as long as we manage it correctly, and I think that, you know, if we're making statements that we're going to reduce the overall amount of greenhouse gas emissions in Manitoba, we should be taking that growth into consideration and looking at what can be done in some of those areas. So I just wanted to ask—I know the minister went to Copenhagen. There were others that went with the delegation. I know, you know, Mr. Reynolds, from the Institute of Sustainable Development. I don't know whether Mr. Reynolds was one of the members, Dr. David Reynolds, from the institute of international sustainable development. Can the minister just indicate who the experts were that went with him?

**Mr. Blaikie:** Well, there were a number of people. There were a number of people in Copenhagen from the International Institute for Sustainable Development. Just who went as part of the Manitoba delegation and who went as part of the IISD delegation, I'd have to check for the honourable member, if that's the kind of information he's looking for.

**Mr. Maguire:** Well, I'm just reading from the minister's press release where it states that the minister, the Premier (Mr. Selinger) and three experts went to Copenhagen. I wonder if he can tell me who the three experts were.

**Mr. Blaikie:** Well, we took along people—sorry, Madam Chairperson, did you recognize me? Have I got the floor?—from the government who had expertise in energy and federal-provincial relations, but I'm just not sure exactly from on the non-government side, if the reference there is to experts on the non-government side, which it sounds like it is, I'd have to get back to the member as to who was actually part of the Manitoba delegation, technically speaking, and who wasn't, because there were other Manitobans there.

**Mr. Maguire:** Well, I'm just reading from the minister's own government's press release, so it doesn't say government or non-government, it just says three experts, and maybe he can provide me with a list of the total delegation that went. *[interjection]* Okay.

Madam Chairperson, the minister has just indicated that he would provide me with that list and so I just wanted to ask another question on this before I move to another topic, quickly, and that is: How did his meeting go with the federal Environment Minister, Jim Prentice, when he was in Copenhagen?

\* (16:50)

**Mr. Blaikie:** We had good meetings, both formal and informal, with the minister of the—the federal minister of the Environment, Mr. Prentice, whom I knew reasonably well from my time in the House of Commons, so I felt that the—our meetings with the federal minister of the Environment were good ones. They kept us abreast of their position at the talks in Copenhagen, and, as we know, I think that, in some way, the outcome of the summit in Copenhagen reflected the federal government's—the Canadian federal government's position fairly closely by the end of the conference in terms of the goals that were—the targets that were set.

As you know, the federal government was not—is not a big supporter of the Kyoto agreement, so there was a difference there between the Manitoba government and the federal government. But it wasn't something that we carried on about in Copenhagen. We didn't choose to have debates with the federal government in Copenhagen like some other provinces did. We did what some national governments were invited to do there—to meet with other subnational governments, to meet with environmental NGOs, to share best practices, to network, to come back better informed about climate

change than we left. But we didn't see it as a forum for a federal-provincial debate and neither did the—so our relationships with the federal minister of the Environment were very good, I would say.

**Mr. Maguire:** I want to move on to a couple of other quick areas. I just wanted to know if the minister could just—I know he indicated the other day that my colleague was asking about his political staff, and his staff, and the number of vacancies, and those sorts of things. But the one that, I think, should be at his fingertips is probably if he could just identify his political staff for me.

**Mr. Blaikie:** Yes, my special assistant is Jessica Irvine, and my executive assistant is Andrew Clark.

**Mr. Maguire:** And so there's just the two political staff?

**Mr. Blaikie:** Unless, of course, the honourable member means also my constituency assistant, who is a person by the name of Claire Still.

**Mr. Maguire:** Can the minister indicate to me, in regards to Breezy Point and the flood buyouts in that area, how many homes were bought out, sort of, and how much the government's—his department's spent on this area?

**Mr. Blaikie:** The honourable member is finally getting to the questions that he told me he was going to ask in—when we got to concurrence. If I'd have known of his keen interest in Copenhagen, I could have had all those facts assembled here as well, but I didn't anticipate that.

But, with respect to Breezy Point, the—all 43 lot-holder settlements have been completed as of March 2010. So the buyout program provided for lot holders to receive the pre-flood fair market value of their buildings and improvements, plus a disturbance allowance based on 5 percent of the appraised value.

In addition, lot holders were offered an advance payment under the termination agreement that paid 80 percent of the 2010 property assessment. I'm not sure if that's exactly—all the information that the member's looking for. The government paid a total of \$4,474,247 in settlements to lot holders under their lease permit termination agreements at Breezy Point.

**Mr. Maguire:** And so there are no outstanding files on this case?

**Mr. Blaikie:** There are no outstanding settlements. All 43 lot-holder settlements have been completed as of March 2010.

**Mr. Maguire:** Yes, can I get an update on the proposed Tim Horton Foundation–Children's Foundation youth leadership camp proposed in the Whiteshell from the minister? I know there's been some discussion about that. I wonder what the status of the project is.

**Mr. Blaikie:** Well, the public consultation period has been completed, and the government is in the process of making a decision as to whether or not we will proceed with the proposal that's been put to us for the Tim Horton Children's Foundation youth camp at the Sylvia Lake location.

We should—we're very close to a final decision on that, and, of course, when we do or if we do proceed in that direction, then there'll be you know, other opportunities for—there'll be other things to consider if there'll be a lagoon to license. There'll be other stages in the process. But the—where we're at right now is having to make the decision about whether to actually make the commitment to have the camp go forward and everything that that entails.

**Mr. Maguire:** I just wonder if there's more public consultation going to be held on it and what the government has invested in this initiative to date, you know, vis-à-vis road work, lagoons the minister talked about or other issues.

**Mr. Blaikie:** The consultation process—there was meetings in the Whiteshell at Dorothy Lake. There was a meeting in Winnipeg for people both in Winnipeg or perhaps people who cottage in the Whiteshell who been more convenient for them to go to a meeting in Winnipeg. There was a meeting in Pinawa because the proposed site of the camp is right across the river from Pinawa, although you might not actually be able to see the camp from Pinawa because of the island in the middle of the river called—I think it's called Porcupine Island—that would, visually would make the camp hard to see from the Pinawa side of the river.

So that consultation has taken place, and there's also been consultation between the Tim Horton Children's Foundation and the Sagkeeng First Nation. And I believe that there was to be a subsequent meeting between Sagkeeng First Nation and the Tim Horton Children's Foundation because

one of the things that we would like to see if this project goes ahead is that the concerns of the First Nation in that area be addressed in some way.

**Mr. Maguire:** I just want to ask the minister about some e-mails that I know he's received in the last few days in regards—from the—over the last while actually, from the Eastern Beaches Conservation Coalition out at Beaconia Beach, the Beaconia Marsh, rather and some work that's been undertaken there on the Crown lands. There's been some concern expressed about the need to protect the beach, the wetlands and access to the artesian drinking water well in that region. And I wonder if the minister could elaborate on what actions his department is taking to address those concerns in the last while. I know there was, as late as yesterday, more e-mails came in on that one.

**Mr. Blaikie:** Yes, I'm not sure I've seen whatever e-mails came in yesterday, Madam Chairperson, but I did have the opportunity—or I sought the opportunity—to actually go out and have a look at the situation that the honourable member refers to and went out there with my departmental officials on Friday afternoon to see the piece of property in question, or at the heart of the matter, so to speak.

There's actually two things happening there in Beaconia. There's one piece of property where, apparently with the permission of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans, a person has dug a canal, if you like, or a channel—I'm not sure what the appropriate word would be—in from the lake to his property. And then very nearby, across a road, there's another piece of property which cottagers in the area are concerned might become the subject or the object of a development if, as is proposed by the municipality, that piece of property is traded for a piece of property in Grand Marais that the municipality is looking for in Grand Marais for a development there, the Destination Grand Marais and a golf course and all that sort of thing.

So they're wanting to get the property in Grand Marais and offered this property near Beaconia Beach as part of a trade. But the province has a caveat on that property and we're concerned about exactly what the nature of the intention is for that piece of property. There's a parking lot there and a road and we want to make sure that cottagers continue to—and the people in the area continue to have a place to park and access to the beach. And

this is something that we're in the process of trying to work out with the municipality.

To the extent that that—I don't know the extent to which that is related to the other project, which you can actually see one from the other but the relationship between the two, if there is one, is something that we've yet to discern.

**Mr. Maguire:** I just wonder if the minister could indicate to me then if he was there on Friday, if he met with any of the people, Mr. Crabb and others, from the Eastern Beaches Conservation Coalition and whether the—I understand there's been some

stop-work orders put in place by Water Stewardship and his department and if those are being withheld—or upheld, I should say.

**Madam Chairperson:** Order. The hour being 5 p.m., committee rise.

Call in the Speaker.

#### IN SESSION

**Mr. Speaker:** Okay, the hour being 5 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow.



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, May 11, 2010**

**CONTENTS**

| <b>ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS</b>  |      |  |              |
|---|------|--|--------------|
| <b>Introduction of Bills</b>  |      | New West Partnership Agreement<br>McFadyen; Bjornson                 | 2066         |
| Bill 34–The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (Negative Option Marketing and Enhanced Remedies)<br>Mackintosh | 2059 | Football Stadium<br>Borotsik; Wowchuk                                | 2067         |
| Bill 36–The Statutes Correction and Minor Amendments Act, 2010<br>Swan  | 2059 | Children's Advocate<br>Mitchelson; Mackintosh<br>Mitchelson; Blaikie | 2068<br>2069 |
| Bill 228–The Consumer Rights Day Act<br>Selby   | 2059 | Multiple Sclerosis Treatment Programs<br>Driedger; Oswald            | 2069         |
| <b>Petitions</b>  |      | Civil Service Commission<br>Gerrard; Wowchuk                         | 2070         |
| Ophthalmology Services–Swan River<br>Driedger   | 2059 | City of Thompson<br>Lamoureux; Oswald                                | 2071         |
| Bipole III<br>Derkach   | 2060 | Hometown Manitoba<br>Whitehead; Struthers                            | 2071         |
| Mount Agassiz Ski Area<br>Briese  | 2060 | Highway 32<br>Dyck; Ashton   | 2071         |
| PTH 15–Traffic Signals<br>Schuler   | 2061 | <b>Members' Statements</b>   |              |
| Multiple Myeloma Treatments<br>Stefanson  | 2061 | Leona Nickel<br>Graydon  | 2072         |
| Waste-Water Ejector Systems<br>Maguire  | 2061 | Northern Aboriginal Festival and Community Awards<br>Whitehead       | 2072         |
| Medical Clinic in Weston and Brooklands Area<br>Lamoureux   | 2062 | Russ and Tessa Denton<br>Fauschou                                    | 2073         |
| <b>Ministerial Statements</b>   |      | Liberation of the Netherlands 65th Anniversary<br>Jennissen          | 2073         |
| Chantelle Chornoby<br>Robinson  | 2062 | Winnipeg's North End<br>Lamoureux                                    | 2073         |
| Hawranik  | 2063 |  |              |
| Gerrard   | 2063 |  |              |
| <b>Oral Questions</b>   |      | <b>ORDERS OF THE DAY</b><br><b>(Continued)</b>                       |              |
|   |      | <b>GOVERNMENT BUSINESS</b>   |              |
| Manitoba Hydro<br>McFadyen; Wowchuk   | 2064 | <b>Committee of Supply</b>   |              |
| Borotsik; Wowchuk   | 2065 | Concurrence Motion   | 2074         |

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