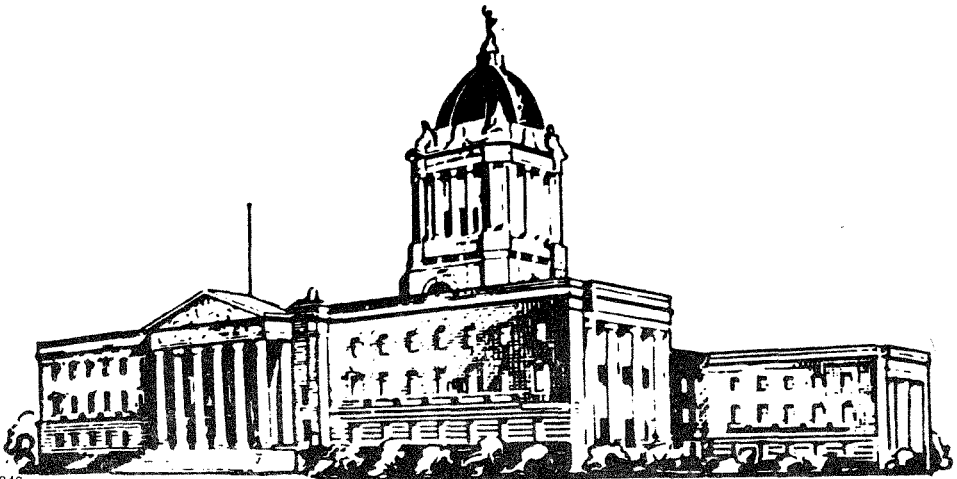




Second Session — Thirty-Second Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba
DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS

31 Elizabeth II

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The Honourable D. James Walding
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Second Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

Name	Constituency	Party
ADAM, Hon. A.R. (Pete)	Ste. Rose	NDP
ANSTETT, Andy	Springfield	NDP
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BANMAN, Robert (Bob)	La Verendrye	PC
BLAKE, David R. (Dave)	Minnedosa	PC
BROWN, Arnold	Rhineland	PC
BUCKLASCHUK, John M.	Gimli	NDP
CARROLL, Q.C., Henry N.	Brandon West	IND
CORRIN, Brian	Ellice	NDP
COWAN, Hon. Jay	Churchill	NDP
DESJARDINS, Hon. Laurent	St. Boniface	NDP
DODICK, Doreen	Riel	NDP
DOERN, Russell	Elmwood	NDP
DOLIN, Mary Beth	Kildonan	NDP
DOWNEY, James E.	Arthur	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert	Emerson	PC
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	PC
EVANS, Hon. Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
EYLER, Phil	River East	NDP
FILMON, Gary	Tuxedo	PC
FOX, Peter	Concordia	NDP
GOURLAY, D.M. (Doug)	Swan River	PC
GRAHAM, Harry	Virten	PC
HAMMOND, Gerrie	Kirkfield Park	PC
HARAPIAK, Harry M.	The Pas	NDP
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	NDP
HEMPHILL, Hon. Maureen	Logan	NDP
HYDE, Lloyd	Portage la Prairie	PC
JOHNSTON, J. Frank	Sturgeon Creek	PC
KOSTYRA, Hon. Eugene	Seven Oaks	NDP
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MANNES, Clayton	Morris	PC
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RANSOM, A. Brian	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Burrows	NDP
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STEEN, Warren	River Heights	PC
STORIE, Jerry T.	Flin Flon	NDP
URUSKI, Hon. Bill	Interlake	NDP
USKIW, Hon. Samuel	Lac du Bonnet	NDP
WALDING, Hon. D. James	St. Vital	NDP

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, 16 December, 1982

Time — 8:00 p.m.

MR. SPEAKER, Hon. J. Walding: Order please. Can the Government House Leader indicate the next item of business?

HON. R. PENNER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would you please call Bill No. 3, The Farm Lands Ownership Act.

SECOND READING - GOVERNMENT BILLS

BILL 3 - THE FARM LANDS OWNERSHIP ACT

HON. B. URUSKI presented Bill No. 3, The Farm Lands Ownership Act; Loi sur la propriété agricole, for second reading.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, certainly I am very pleased to present to the honourable members Bill No. 3, The Farm Lands Ownership Act.

As members recall, Bill 54, the original Farm Lands Ownership Act, was first introduced in June of this year - 1982: however, due to considerable misunderstanding and misrepresentation on the bill, it was withdrawn.

In withdrawing the Act from the last Session, I undertook a commitment to consult with farmers and other residents of Manitoba before reintroducing it. I am pleased to advise all members that discussions have taken place with the Manitoba Farm Bureau, the Women's Institute, the National Farmers Union, and the legislation has been discussed throughout our province.

In considering the farm lands legislation, a number of questions really need to be asked. Are we concerned with the preservation and strengthening of owner-operated family farms? Are we concerned with the costs of absentee ownership, including escalation of farm land prices, which has contributed to the current financial crisis faced by many farmers? Finally, are we concerned about ensuring an opportunity for existing farmers and future generations of farmers to acquire and farm agricultural land in our fair province?

Mr. Speaker, the objective of Bill No. 3 is to preserve and strengthen the family farm by curtailing absentee control and speculation in farm land. Restricting speculation in land will, I believe, contribute significantly to the development of agriculture in our rural communities.

The Farm Lands Ownership Act is being introduced for two main reasons.

Firstly, this government believes strong legislation is needed in order to deal seriously with the problem of land speculation; and secondly, the existing farm lands legislation in Manitoba, known as The Agricultural Lands Protection Act, is a poor, ineffective piece of legislation.

How serious is the problem of absentee control of

farm land? Research conducted at the University of Manitoba shows that during the 1970s, there was a dramatic increase in the amount of Manitoba farm land owned by non-farming interests. Between '71-77, holdings of non-residents of rural Manitoba increased from 1.1 million acres to 1.8 million acres, an increase of about 60 percent. Between 1978-81, approximately 450,000 acres were alienated to non-residents of Manitoba and to non-farm corporations.

Much of this land is prime agricultural land. The alienation of huge amounts of farm land to non-farming interests should be a concern to members on both sides of this House. The activities of non-farm corporations and individual speculators result in the imposition of serious social and economic costs from the people of rural Manitoba.

Dr. Daryl Kraft has shown that purchases of land by absentee owners, including non-farm corporations and foreign speculators, has contributed significantly to the inflation of land prices during the '70s. He has shown, for example, that absentee owners were directly responsible for inflating land prices by 12 to 25 percent in municipalities with significant non-resident holdings.

Rapid inflation of land prices hurts many farmers, including young and beginning farmers. Increasing prices and the direct related problem of higher mortgage values, significantly increasing operating costs, and many producers find it almost impossible to acquire land, especially if they must compete against large Canadian and foreign speculators.

Mr. Speaker, I recognize that land prices have levelled and even declined in some areas, but experts predict that they will rise again before long. Members should be aware that the current financial crisis faced by many producers can be attributed in high part to the high interest rate policy and the inflated land prices of the late '70s and early '80s. To a considerable degree excessive inflation of land prices has been caused by absentee owners and speculators.

Absentee owners also extract huge amounts of capital from rural communities. Each year Manitoba farmers pay out \$50 million to non-residents of rural Manitoba in the form of rental payments. These are monies which might otherwise be used to support the development of rural communities.

Another problem is that the absentee landlord usually offers tenants relatively short-term leases, often one to three years, and in my view, Mr. Speaker, that's too short of time to provide a tenant with adequate security.

Furthermore, short-term leases tend to discourage conservation and improvement of land. Continued acquisition of land, especially by non-farm corporations, could drastically change agriculture in Manitoba. Instead of owner-operated family farms, large blocks of land may be held by a few people.

In future, Mr. Speaker, farms could be operated, not by owners, but rather by managers and employees who are hired by the owners. I'm sure that's not the kind of situation that Manitobans and members in the House want to see. Mr. Speaker, to address these very serious problems associated with absentee owner-

ship and speculation, decisive action is now required and that is why we have introduced Bill No. 3, The Farm Lands Ownership Act.

Mr. Speaker, in his reply to the Speech from The Throne, the Leader of the Opposition advised our Government to consult with farm organizations and others. After all, he told us that he wants to fight this legislation because Manitoba Chambers of Commerce want that and the Manitoba Farm Bureau wants that. Mr. Speaker, I'm happy that he considered the opinions of the Manitoba Farm Bureau and the Chambers of Commerce. Why didn't he make any attempt to consult with the farmers of this province and other farm groups? He tells us, Mr. Speaker, that farmers give good advice and I have to tell you wholeheartedly that I agree. But I have to tell you that I'm puzzled when farmers and farm groups advised the former Conservative Government, was it then not good advice, Mr. Speaker? We even now have the Leader of the Opposition, some of his members and some editorial writers complaining that there's a reverse onus clause in this legislation. Would you believe that it was they, when they were in office and brought in The Farm Lands Ownership Act, that introduced the reverse onus clause in this legislation and now they are going around this province and harping that it is a bad section. —(Interjection)—

The Member for Pembina really points this out, Mr. Speaker, he really points this out that they are the only ones that are fit to govern in this province; they can be trusted and no one else can. That's why they're sitting on that side of the House. —(Interjection)— That's why you're sitting on the other side of the House, because you haven't listened and you really don't represent the views of the people that you're supposed to be speaking to here.

Mr. Speaker, farm organizations and farm representatives on the Tory-appointed board strongly recommended that the acreage limitations be placed on non-farm corporations. Whose board, Mr. Speaker? The former Minister's board. And today, Mr. Speaker, they didn't like that there were letters distributed, yesterday and today, that were written not to myself, not to members on this side; letters that they say they weren't aware of that were distributed to the press and to the people of Manitoba that they weren't aware of; letters that were written to their government, which were missing from the office, because there wasn't one file left when we came into office.

The Member for Turtle Mountain today accused the former Minister of Agriculture that the amount of files that were left in the office were the same that were left to our government. Mr. Speaker, that is untrue; that is totally untrue.

Mr. Speaker, in 1969 when we came into office, there was not one file in that office of the Minister of Agriculture - not one file. My colleague said that he asked the former Minister, the Honourable Member for Arthur. —(Interjection)— Your colleague, Doug Watt, was the Minister. He said, look, these files that we're dealing with, with people who had problems with government that we could respond to. You know what he told my colleague? He said there were no problems in Manitoba when we were in office, so there were no letters, Mr. Speaker. That's what he told them.

Mr. Speaker, when we left office all the working files

were left for the member who then became the Minister of Agriculture. The Cabinet files and the documents that were sensitive, you know where they are? They're in the Archives Building. They were taken out by us and I would expect any Minister to do that. The fact of the matter is, when we came into office, there was not one shred of paper left in the office. —(Interjection)— Mr. Speaker, they didn't like to hear the information . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Does the Honourable Member for Niakwa have a point of order?

MR. A. KOVNATS: It's on a point of order, Sir. I came down tonight just to listen to the Honourable Minister speak on Bill No. 3. When is he going to speak on Bill No. 3, instead of condemning the former administration?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. R. PENNER: That is clearly a spurious point of order. There is no rule that prevents Ministers from speaking on any particular aspect of the bill with which he chooses. It is the Opposition who have made an issue about the availability of information. Clearly it has become, if for no other reason, relevant to the remarks of the Minister of Agriculture.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In a letter dated January 23rd, 1980, the Farm Bureau strongly urged the former Minister of Agriculture to place acreage limitations on non-farm corporations and to require that these corporations obtain approval from the Agricultural Lands Protection Board before being granted title to that land, Mr. Speaker.

The Women's Institute of the province, in a letter dated February 6, 1980, put forward similar recommendations to the then Minister.

Mr. Speaker, and then in a letter of December 22, 1980, the Agricultural Lands Protection Board, which was appointed by the then Conservative Government, also advised the former Minister to impose an acreage restriction on all non-farm corporations.

Mr. Speaker, furthermore, this board also called for acreage limitations to be imposed on all non-farming individuals. All socialist people, Mr. Speaker - the Manitoba Farm Bureau, the Women's Institute and the Tory-appointed Agricultural Lands Protection Board - all marxists, as the Leader of the Opposition would say, all reds on this side that would have recommended that to him. So you see, Mr. Speaker, not only did the Conservatives refuse to consult with farmers before they introduced their Act, but they also refused to listen to farmers and their representatives when advice and recommendations were offered.

The majority of farmers of this province did not agree then and they still do not agree with the basic principles of the old legislation. They want tougher legislation, Mr. Speaker, even in the terms of its very limited objectives. The Agricultural Lands Protection Act is a very poor piece of legislation. It does nothing

to prevent foreign speculators from buying land in Manitoba and, Mr. Speaker, I draw the attention of members to some major loopholes in the legislation.

Firstly, non-residents of Canada are authorized to acquire unrestricted amounts of farm land in Manitoba. The Agricultural Lands Protection Act employs a peculiar definition of the term "resident of Canada." In contrast to legislation in P.E.I., Quebec, Ontario and Saskatchewan, Manitoba's Agricultural Lands Protection Act does not require residents to reside either in the province or in Canada. In fact, land investors and speculators, for example, may secure their Canadian citizenship and then take up permanent residence outside of Canada, and it's been pointed out, Mr. Speaker, in the recent court case of the Manalay Corporation, that an individual who has landed immigrant status only has to show up in Canada once every 183 days to be eligible to own the land that he's had.

Mr. Speaker, although in reality they have become non-residents of this country, these individuals qualify as eligible persons under the Act. In other words, they can acquire unlimited amounts of farm land in this province.

Mr. Speaker, in the December 22nd, 1980, letter referred to, the former Minister of Agriculture was advised by his own board that the issue of residency was becoming a very serious problem; that the issue of residency was becoming so serious, but the former government chose to ignore the concerns expressed by farmers and by their own board.

Legal advice indicates that the definition of effective control of corporations in this Act is ineffective. Foreign speculators may secure control of a corporation which is buying land in Manitoba through the use of management agreements, articles of incorporation, administrative bylaws, control over election of boards of directors and so on.

Once again, the former government was advised of this serious loophole but they refused to take action and to plug it. Legal advice also indicates that Section 2(2) of the present legislation authorizes any Canadian to purchase land on his behalf or on behalf of non-resident individuals or corporations provided that he does not act as a trustee for non-residents. As members can see, this is a very serious loophole. The Conservative-appointed agriculture board advised the former Minister of Agriculture in a letter dated January 16, 1980, to delete this subsection, and what was his response? No action. He didn't do a thing about it, Mr. Speaker.

Finally the Conservative Government opened up a few more loopholes, during the year 1981, when we were going to plug all the loopholes to foreign speculators, Mr. Speaker, the year when all the loopholes were supposed to be eliminated. I would have to say that it was a classic example of the cure being worse than the disease. As a result of the 1981 amendment, the Act does not include as a landholding, any land or an interest in land held by way of security for a debt or other obligation. A foreign speculator therefore can put up all the funds to buy farm land through a mortgage agreement, exercise effective control over the use and disposition of that land.

The Farm Bureau advised the Department of Agriculture that this amendment would provide ample opportunity for individuals to circumvent the objec-

tives of the Act, but once again the Conservative administration chose to ignore the advice of those farmers, Mr. Speaker. I could continue to identify more loopholes and more occasions on which the former administration neglected the advice of farmers, but on the basis of this advice and information, I think the evidence is clear enough, even to the Members of the Opposition.

The existing Act does not and was never intended to prevent speculation in farmland by non-residents of this country. It is tailor made, Mr. Speaker, to suit the interests of foreign investors and speculators. That's as clearly as it can be put.

The province then proposes to repeal The Ag Lands Protection Act and to replace it with a meaningful piece of legislation. The proposed Farm Lands Ownership Act is similar to, though less restrictive than the legislation in Prince Edward Island, Quebec and Saskatchewan. Mr. Speaker, members may also be interested to know that the proposed legislation places restrictions on purchases by non-farm corporations similar to those in place in North Dakota and Minnesota.

In withdrawing the Act from the last Session, I undertook a commitment to consult with farmers and other residents of Manitoba in order to obtain their views before reintroducing it. As a result of that consultation process, several significant changes have been made to distinguish this bill from the previous legislation. In contrast to the general prohibition section contained in the previous Act, Bill No. 3 affirms the right of all Manitoba residents to own an unrestricted amount of farm land in our province. This is a change in drafting style rather than a change in principle, Mr. Speaker, because the previous bill also did not restrict Manitobans from buying unrestricted amounts of farm land.

Secondly, farmers will, because of The Farmlands Ownership Act, be able to transfer agricultural land to relatives outside the province. In this respect the bill is more lenient than the existing legislation.

Thirdly, there has been a relaxation of provisions related to farm corporations. Now, even if a major shareholder retires, the farm corporation will still be able to retain its holdings.

Fourthly, civil liberties have been strengthened in the new Act in contrast to Bill 54. Before a hearing or investigation can be undertaken, reasonable grounds must be proved.

Mr. Speaker, before a divestiture order can be ordered, anyone affected by such an order is entitled to a hearing. Anyone who is dissatisfied with the decision can appeal his or her case before the courts. As I have pointed out, the Act attempts to deal with the issue of farm land ownership in a logical and sensible manner.

The main provisions of the bill are as follows - and in case the honourable members want to relate to the information that was provided to them, some of them attended, and I repeat that again, Mr. Speaker, some of them attended and heard those remarks at meetings that were held in Portage la Prairie, in Beausejour, and in other areas that I have been across the province.

Mr. Speaker, residents of Manitoba and family farm corporations have the right to acquire unrestricted

amounts of farm land. Non-farm corporations are restricted to aggregate holdings of 10 acres or less. Investors and speculators, who do not reside in Manitoba, are restricted to aggregate holdings of 10 acres or less. The legislation is not retroactive. Anyone who purchased land legally under the previous Act will be allowed to retain that land.

I realize that there are differences of opinion about this Act. Most farmers agree that something has to be done about absentee control of farm land and about providing an opportunity for existing and future generations of farmers to farm the available land in this province. But some individuals, and I acknowledge also to some degree the Farm Bureau, believe that no restrictions should be placed on Canadians who reside outside of Manitoba. On this matter, Mr. Speaker, it is important to understand, first of all, the aims and content of the proposed legislation. While some investors and speculators will be disadvantaged by the Act, many non-residents of Manitoba will be allowed to acquire and own farm land in this province. These include the following: individuals who have farmed for 10 years or more will be entitled to retain their holdings, even if they take up residence outside of Manitoba; family farm corporations have the right to retain their holdings; if a shareholder, who is a farmer, retired from farming and takes up residence elsewhere; farmers, or retired farmers, will be allowed to transfer land to relatives, even if the relatives reside outside of Manitoba; bequests of land by residents of the province to non-residents will be exempt from the legislation; and anyone anywhere in the world will be allowed to purchase farm land in the province provided that they undertake a commitment to reside here.

In brief, Mr. Speaker, then many non-residents of the province will have the right to acquire and own farm land. Investors and speculators, whether they be Canadian or foreign, will not have that right, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, if our children are robbed of the opportunity to purchase agricultural land, will they feel better that they are robbed of a future in farming by Canadian speculators rather than foreign speculators? If the price of farm land is driven up as it undoubtedly will be in the long-term, will future generations be happy that it was at least driven up by Canadian speculators, Mr. Speaker?

My view is that Canadian speculators, like foreign speculators, impose severe costs on agriculture in rural communities, Mr. Speaker. Is it any better that we have a Canadian corporation, an Eastern lawyer, who personally has secured about approximately 13,000 acres valued at approximately \$8 million in rural municipalities in this province, in Grey, Cartier and Lawrence, and he has openly admitted that the funds that he has used - he's a Canadian - is offshore money, Mr. Speaker? Is that any better that he is a Canadian, Mr. Speaker? Or a Winnipeg lawyer, in terms of setting up through the avenue of non-farming corporations, has purchased about 25,000 acres of land valued at over \$9 million. Is he any better, Mr. Speaker, if he was offshore? Is he any better as a speculator in the Province of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker? Or there is another firm controlled by a Canadian citizen who lives abroad, Mr. Speaker, who purchased

over 4,400 acres of land in this province, resides practically all the time in Italy. Are they any better? They're Canadian citizens. Or, Mr. Speaker, another firm controlled by a person, who resides in Eastern Canada and part-time in Switzerland, purchased over 7,000 acres. Are they any better because they are Canadians in terms of speculating in farm land? Mr. Speaker, there is another corporation controlled by a Canadian investor who secured approximately 5,000 acres in the RMs of Brokenhead and Lac du Bonnet. They are Canadian citizens, and they are speculating in farm land, and they have raised the prices of farm land in the area. Are they any better, Mr. Speaker?

There are a couple of partners, Mr. Speaker — (Interjection)— the Member for Turtle Mountain says it's unbelievable. I guess he really wants to allow all speculators wherever they come from to control and own farm land in the Province of Manitoba. He agreed, Mr. Speaker, obviously by that kind of comment that inflation of land prices which has contributed to the financial crisis now faced by many farmers in this province, he wants that to continue. He wants the acquisition of land, which might otherwise be worked by existing or beginning farmers, that that continue. To heck with those farmers, Mr. Speaker. —(Interjection)— If anyone, by implication to those comments, the Member for Turtle Mountain is indifferent to the problem of rural Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, if anyone is indifferent, it is the Member for Turtle Mountain.

Mr. Speaker, extraction of high amounts of rental income from rural Manitoba is another problem that speculators impose on rural residents and farmers and non-development of our rural communities.

Mr. Speaker, the activity of non-resident investors and speculators is becoming an increasing problem for rural Manitoba. I have to tell you that when it comes to a choice between supporting Canadian and foreign speculators or supporting existing and future generations of farmers our sympathy and support is with the farmers of this province.

Two of the reasons for using residency in Manitoba as the basis for our legislation are to effectively enforce the legislation. It is necessary from time to time to investigate possible contraventions of the Act, but residents outside of Manitoba are not bound to furnish information which may be needed to make sensible judgments re: suspected contraventions.

Mr. Speaker, our legal authority is very limited when dealing with people outside of Manitoba, and we know, the Conservatives of all people should know what that means. They were involved, not in farm land purchase, they were involved in a transaction in which the people of Manitoba invested in excess of \$100 million in a pulp and paper mill to a non-resident of this province. We have spent millions of dollars trying to get information from that individual, and have we succeeded, Mr. Speaker? Should they in fact now say, no, it's okay . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member for Virden on a point of order.

MR. H. GRAHAM: No. Will the honourable member permit a question?

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister

of Agriculture.

HON. B. URUSKI: The honourable member will certainly have a lot of time to debate the bill. He will have his 40 minutes and he'll be able to ask me, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, am I limited, in introducing the bill, to 40 minutes, or do I have time to go beyond that to finish my remarks?

MR. SPEAKER: I believe there is a reference in our rule concerning the status of a Minister introducing a bill where he is not limited to the 40 minutes.

HON. B. URUSKI: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I hope not to go beyond that amount of time but in the event that I do, Mr. Speaker, I'll take longer.

Mr. Speaker, we have just had an interesting case again come up in the Rural Municipality of East St. Paul of what is happening in terms of trying to obtain the information or the legal background or the ownership of people who have invested in farm land, where the land has turned over a couple of times, increasing in prices of somewhere close to \$170,000, but the ownership of that land cannot be traced. People don't know who their owners are, Mr. Speaker.

Using residency in Manitoba gives us a sounder constitutional base in which to found legislation, Mr. Speaker. We have legal advice which indicates that the Act will not violate Canada's Charter of Rights, Mr. Speaker. The Charter does not contain any sections dealing with property rights; the mobility rights section deals with discrimination against individuals who wish to take up residence or work in a province. Our legislation, in fact, Mr. Speaker, encourages people to come to Manitoba; it does not discriminate against them.

Mr. Speaker, the Province of Prince Edward Island in the '70s had the same provisions and has had it and they've gone even further than that, but their legislation was tested in the courts. The Supreme Court of Canada - and I'm paraphrasing, Mr. Speaker - ruled that legislation was not unconstitutional on the basis of residency, of requiring that ownership of farm land be limited to residents of that province. But they even went further, Mr. Speaker; they limited the amount of land that any individual can own within that province.

Mr. Speaker, I can understand the Opposition's concern about this legislation; they fear it because they know it is sound and it is timely. You know, they really wish that they could take credit for this legislation, and since they can't, they'll do everything in their power to discredit The Farm Lands Ownership Act. Mr. Speaker, if it were up to them, they would let the problem of speculators in Manitoba farm lands escalate until at least half or more of the farm land in Manitoba is owned by non-Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, you know the Member for Arthur is trying to make the case that 23 million Canadians are going to be deprived of rights in this legislation. That is a totally phony argument, Mr. Speaker, because how many Canadians are wanting to purchase land? I gave him examples of which Canadians are coming to purchase land in this province - speculative Canadians - people who are fronting for speculators. Obviously, the Conservative Party is not in favour of

ownership and the rights of people. They are in favour of speculation, Mr. Speaker; that's what they are in favour of in terms of the comments that they are making with respect to this legislation. They are the speculators' party, Mr. Speaker.

Just how serious and widespread does the problem have to be before they decide it's time for action? What my honourable friends across the way can't comprehend is that once there is speculative land buying in an area, it doesn't take very many purchases to drive the price of land out of reach of most farmers, Mr. Speaker. It doesn't take very many, Mr. Speaker; it takes one. —(Interjection)— Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Arthur asked me how many does it take. I told the honourable member that it will take only one major purchase in an area which will then set the pattern. —(Interjection)— Well, Mr. Speaker, is 25,000 acres a small purchase? Mr. Speaker, is 13,000 acres a small purchase? Is 4,400 acres a small purchase? Is 7,000 acres a small purchase? Is 5,000 acres a small purchase? Is 7,000 acres a small purchase? Is 20,000 acres? All by Canadians, Mr. Speaker. Are those small purchases? If those have not set the trends of land prices in this province, I really don't know what will, Mr. Speaker, or what has, and that's what they have allowed. Mr. Speaker, it really doesn't matter if the speculator causing the problem is Canadian or foreign. Speculation drives up the price of farm land, and that's a point I can't repeat often enough because the Opposition, Mr. Speaker, can't seem to comprehend that simple fact.

Reaction to the Farmlands Ownership Bill could best be summed up, Mr. Speaker - and you know, even the Member for Arthur who was at that meeting at Portage but he didn't want to talk about it - that reaction seemed to be summed up by one, I would say, who said at the meeting, "I don't happen to be an NDP or a Liberal." One would deduce in Manitoba politics that he would be a - he indicated that he does support another political party, a self-confessed Conservative supporter who attended the farm lands meeting in Portage - that individual, Mr. Speaker, said that he could see no problem with the Act. He went on to say that if the legislation had been introduced by the Conservatives, it would have been recognized as worthwhile legislation.

However, he made the point, Mr. Speaker, that since The Farm Lands Ownership Act was introduced by the NDP, it was going to be examined very carefully, but he did say that Manitobans and he supported that piece of legislation. The Honourable Member for Arthur well knows who and I think the Member for Portage knows who I'm speaking of. I mean, it was summed up very nicely. All they have to do is pull the article from the Portage paper; and that is, Mr. Speaker, as it should be.

I would like to see the debate on this legislation that deals with the specifics of the Act; not one that involves what I would consider scare tactics and emotionalism; not one that talks about this government wanting to take over all the agricultural land in this province. That approach indicates, Mr. Speaker, the level of deceit that the Opposition is capable of and which we have come to expect from them. Mr. Speaker, I find it most interesting that they are so opposed to the government owning any land. Yet, Mr. Speaker,

they are not opposed to the banks and other financial institutions owning land. Yes, Mr. Speaker, anyone who has a mortgage on his land and if a bank has the mortgage on it, they own the land.

Let's just understand what is being said, Mr. Speaker. The honourable members opposite indicated that why didn't we release - and I want to deal with some of that - why didn't we release the comments that were made by the Manitoba Farm Bureau? Mr. Speaker, let's deal with that submission that they made to us in October.

Mr. Speaker, if you look at that brief and analyse it, the first half of that brief deals with the total inadequacies and the pitfalls of the present legislation that we have in the province today. Mr. Speaker, let's deal with that question about Canadian ownership that is contained in the bill, because the Member for Arthur was very selective in his comment about what the Manitoba Farm Bureau was saying. He accused us of being very selective. That brief, Mr. Speaker, was made public by the Manitoba Farm Bureau to all the people of Manitoba after they presented it to us. Well, let me read from that bill, and they underlined it. They said, "The vast majority of farmers in Manitoba simply do not want any restrictions on Canadian citizens with respect to the ownership of farm land in Manitoba," and that's the part that the Member for Arthur spoke about. Mr. Speaker, let's go one sentence further. "Without doubt, a very large part of the concern in this regard stems from a belief that other members of farming families, wherever resident, should be entitled to purchase or receive as gifts, portions of the land or shares belonging to their family farm." Those were comments made to the former legislation. Mr. Speaker. Those concerns dealing with the land to farm families and residents outside the farm are dealt with in this piece of legislation, are covered in this piece of legislation.

That's how we talk about selective information, Mr. Speaker. Maybe the honourable members talk about deceit and misinformation to this House. I did acknowledge, I acknowledge again and I apologize to the honourable members that the information that my staff put together was not available to them and it was not available until I got it into my hands at the press conference but they would have had it. They had that information in their hands, yet they went on. Those remarks, the Member for Turtle Mountain talks about the remarks in the speech. His member, the Member for Arthur, and the Member for Portage heard those very remarks in Portage la Prairie in terms of discussing the principles and the discussion that we had with the former piece of legislation, Mr. Speaker. What other information —(Interjection)—

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. Does the Honourable Member for Arthur have a point or order?

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the member refers to the fact that we saw a piece of information exactly like he tabled tonight or is speaking from at Portage la Prairie. He just told us about two minutes ago that he did not have that information even available in the House because his staff hadn't had it ready yet. Now he's telling us that it was available.

HON. B. URUSKI: Mr. Speaker, obviously the member doesn't know what he speaks of. The printed, put together of that information was available to him. All that information, in terms of the letters that were attached to them, were available to everyone who attended the meeting in Portage. Mr. Speaker, not only that, the honourable member came to the press conference as well and he heard those remarks and he heard them twice. I agree that the Member for Turtle Mountain was not at the press conference but they received that information, Mr. Speaker. It was sent by my office and I say to the honourable members, and I did apologize to them, that is my error, and I admit that and I said that today, but with respect to that information not being available, it was available.

Mr. Speaker, the worst part is that those letters were tabled publicly; the media had them. In June of 1982 they were made public to this House and if it was letters to me, but it was letters to the Conservative Government, to the then Minister who took all the files out of that office. He had that information. He's the man that had that information and he's saying that information wasn't available. To his own caucus, that letter was there, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, there is also some misinformation already floating around in terms of the editorials dealing with, I'm advised by staff, cases of owner-speculator cases and I checked it out. The editorials go on to say that there are only 17 genuine foreign-owned speculator cases that could be identified. I don't know where the Manitoba Farm Bureau or the editorial writer received it, Mr. Speaker. I checked this out today with staff and I'm advised that the board has ordered staff to ask information and advice and they are investigating over 50 Canadian corporations presently who they believe may have violated the present legislation. but because of the loopholes, I doubt whether very much will be done so that there is some further misinformation on this legislation now, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, this bill is here before this House to assist the farming community of the Province of Manitoba. We know where the Conservatives stand and they will certainly bring it out in the next few days that they are the party of the speculators; they want that to continue. They talk about rights, Mr. Speaker, the rights that they talk about are the rights of individuals who have fat wallets. Those are the kinds of rights that they take care of. Those who have fat wallets have all the rights in this world to purchase all the land they want in this province. That's the kind of rights that they want, Mr. Speaker. This bill will prevent that because we want the widest range of individuals to have the opportunity to farm and own farm land in this province but they should come here and farm it. That's what this legislation aims to do.

Thank you.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this bill with a certain amount of disappointment in the Minister of Agriculture who reminds me of some of my school days when we used to play a little bit of ball and the individual, who maybe couldn't win under the present rules and lost the ball game because those

rules weren't to suit him. would go to any length to have those rules changed so that he could win the next ball game. Mr. Speaker, I have to tell the Minister now that he's had quite a few strikes and I think that the end of his ball game, particularly dealing with this legislation and the people of Manitoba, particularly rural Manitoba, pretty well point out that the end of his game is trying to fool the people of Manitoba, and the rest of the people of Canada aren't too far from an "in", Mr. Speaker.

I have a disappointment, Mr. Speaker, and I won't refer to it at this particular time, only in the fact that I would have thought that the Minister of Agriculture would have, at tandem or in tandem or at the same time, introduce Bill No. 23, which I invite the members of the media to take a pretty close look at, because Bill No. 23 has some pretty particular hooks in this bill, An Act to Amend the Real Property Act. You'd have thought, Mr. Speaker, at the same time that Bill 3 was introduced that Bill 23 would have been introduced and explained at the same time because there are some pretty severe and heavy powers in here which require anyone wanting to buy or trade or to have any involvement in the purchase of farm land to have to fully disclose all their corporate holdings, all their land, their leases and the whole thing. So I would invite members of the media and particularly the farm community to understand what goes along with this particular Bill No. 3 and it is pretty severe kind of legislation.

Mr. Speaker, in coming back to Bill No. 3 from Bill No. 54 one has to fully appreciate, as has been pointed out in the last few days, the procedural attempts that were made by this Minister not to face the Manitoba Legislative Assembly, to the elected officials, particularly those who truly represent a large amount of land base that is going to be so much affected by this particular legislation. That is very disappointing because I said earlier today, in dealing with Bill No. 3, we would have liked to have had all the information possible tonight when it was introduced so we could have responded.

The member, Mr. Speaker, referred to meetings throughout the province and the principle of those meetings - of course, he told us last spring that he was going to meet with the different farm people.

I have on the Order Paper, Mr. Speaker, some written questions to the Minister to ask him how those meetings were advertised, how they were called, where those meetings were held, who all was invited and the outcomes of them? Because if you're going to get a true hearing, Mr. Speaker, from the people of Manitoba in regard to such major legislation, then you should set up a proper mechanism that goes truly throughout the province, not on a political fiasco or a political trip through the southwest as the Premier of the province did. By the way, his Minister of Agriculture did not join him until the final day of that three or four day tour in Virden, Mr. Speaker. The tour that he took, Mr. Speaker, I'll tell you what the outcome was that I heard because I wasn't invited. I would ask any member of this Legislative Assembly who was invited to go to those land hearings that he's proposing now to have held throughout the province to get a base from which to work so that we can all understand where we're coming from. But he didn't do that, Mr.

Speaker. The Premier took a political tour through the southwest. He said because no one brought it to our attention or wanted to discuss Bill 54 - and when we did bring it up, everybody said, so you know, we don't need it, that type of approach - that they take for granted that it's the perfect kind of way to go: that that's a given, that now they have the right to come back and introduce that kind of legislation. Well, Mr. Speaker, that isn't the way rural people are.

I'll tell you, Mr. Speaker, the difficulty in rural Manitoba today is not a foreign investor trying to buy the land. The difficulty in rural Manitoba today is a drop in farm income of some 28 percent as it is in the rest of Western Canada, a drop of farm income as reported in the Winnipeg Free Press, 28 percent drop forecast in '82 farm income. That's the issue that is out in rural Manitoba today, a 28 percent drop in farm incomes, not the fact, Mr. Speaker, whether other Canadians are trying to buy rural farm land.

Mr. Speaker, let us put it into perspective. The Minister makes the statement there are some 500,000 acres have been bought in the last few years by absentee owners, not by foreigners, not by other Canadians, but absentee owners. He isn't prepared to explain what an absentee owner is and he can't substantiate it.

He does one other thing, Mr. Speaker, again which goes back to point out what the difficulty we've been having with this Minister. He refers to a Mr. Daryl Kraft, who has done some work, to point out that in the early '70s there were some significant increases of 12 to 15 percent in farm land prices due to foreign speculation or investment - he calls it speculation - I'll deal with the speculation that he refers to. I refer again to the media, the press, the public of Manitoba and to all the members of this Assembly, Mr. Speaker - and this is an analysis of farm land price changes by Daryl F. Kraft, Associate Professor of the University of Manitoba, and I'm sure the Minister will understand who I'm talking about. Mr. Speaker, here is one of the things that Mr. Kraft said, "The behaviour of farm land buyers and sellers has been influenced by many economic conditions and the majority of sellers and buyers were farmers. Absentee buyers were more prominent in the 1970s but local farmers, even in areas where absentee participation exceeded a third of the transactions, the farmers were responsible for most of the sales." That came from Mr. Daryl Kraft, Mr. Speaker.

Another point that has to be made, Mr. Speaker, "What causes buyers to change their attitude on farm land investment? In Manitoba over 90 percent of the buyers reside in rural areas." Ninety percent of the people reside in rural areas, Mr. Speaker. You know, where is this great problem, because we're working on a land base of some 18 million acres? Mr. Speaker, the point that has to be made is this, that land prices generally throughout Manitoba are not influenced, or if influenced any or very little, by any foreign or any other Canadians, particularly Canadians trying to buy land in Manitoba.

This study points out, Mr. Speaker, that it is the economy of the grain industry and the agricultural industry that dictates the rise and fall of land prices. We are currently at this time on the verge - and we are seeing it - of a reduction in land prices of a significant amount because of the low returns that

farmers are receiving.

Further to substantiate that, Mr. Speaker, I will turn to a well-known farm paper. It's referred to as the farmers' bible in which you'll find quite a few farm ads, not them all, but what we have in this particular newspaper - it's the Manitoba Co-Operator. Most of you know it, maybe some of the rural members don't but I would advise that they should at least consider looking at it. How many farms are advertised for sale in this particular farm paper, Mr. Speaker? I would say roughly - it's the most recent issue - there are approximately 100-and-some farms listed under real estate, privately, or anywhere else. These are farmers who feel because they are retiring or the economic conditions, possibly bank pressures, that they want to sell their land, Mr. Speaker. That's not all the farms that are listed in Manitoba, but that's a pretty good coverage of the general. How many ads, Mr. Speaker, are there in there of people wanting to buy farms? Mr. Speaker, "Farms Wanted" - there are three ads. Three ads, Mr. Speaker, of people or any individuals wanting to buy land.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the problem is not foreign land ownership or Canadian speculation. Mr. Speaker, I ask the Minister, can he tell this House what is the difference between a Canadian speculator and a Manitoba speculator? He says, it's fine for anybody from any part of the world to come to Manitoba, and if he wants to speculate and buy all the land with the money that he brings with him, he doesn't care, but he's bad when he leaves the Province of Manitoba. Mr. Speaker, There's something wrong because he's a Canadian. Canadians aren't second-class citizens, Mr. Speaker, Canadians are first-class citizens and we're all one of them. Don't try and split that up, Mr. Speaker, because this country has had enough division as it is. We don't need people like him trying to bring in legislation that further divides this nation and that's exactly what he's doing. There are 23 million Canadians that are having their rights taken away by this piece of legislation that no one should be seen carrying around the building in this particular place.

Mr. Speaker, I am certain that the points that the Minister makes are coming from particularly one farm organization. Mr. Speaker, we have the National Farmers Union brief which was presented to our caucus the other day. —(Interjection)— Well, Mr. Speaker, if he wants me to get into the United Church, I can do that. I'm a member of the United Church and I'm not particularly happy about some of the direction that they have been going in the last few years as well. Mr. Speaker, they have made some statements of policy that I don't always agree with. Because it's the United Church, I don't think that I have the sole obligation to totally agree, as I don't think that I had to agree at any particular time with any farm organization, nor does this Minister have to agree, but why doesn't he at least stand up and present it? Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture did not refer to the National Farmers Union . . . —(Interjections)—

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Member for Roblin-Russell on a point of order.

MR. J. MCKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would like very much to hear what the Honourable

Member for Arthur is putting into the debate of this House. With the yattering that's coming over, you can't hear yourself think in this place. I hope you can give us some order so I can hear what my honourable colleague is saying.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I also would like to hear what the honourable member has to say.

The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, the member refers to having met with the National Farmers Union, and we have a copy of their brief. I'll just read briefly from Page 17 of that brief, "We urge the early reintroduction of The Farm Lands Ownership Act with a view towards curbing increased absentee and foreign ownership." The same kind of information that, by the way, we received two days after the media received it, the 1.8 million acres and all the statistical information comes from that same document, the Farmers Union.

When we met with the Farmers Union, Mr. Speaker, I asked the individual who was there, for the benefit of some of those individuals who did not know what their policy may be, what is your policy related to Bill 3? - because we, too, wanted to know. They said, we do not believe that anyone but Manitoba farmers should have the right to own Manitoba farmland, Mr. Speaker. They do not believe that anybody but Manitoba farmers should have the right to own farm land, Mr. Speaker. Now that, I think, is more to the truth from where this Minister comes from than he's really telling us as well, because I would also say that it's not uncommonly known that this Minister has been a lifetime member of the National Farmers Union, and was also a member who helped put this together. — (Interjection)— He's indicating, Mr. Speaker, that yes, he is a lifetime member, and he's not denying it.

Mr. Speaker, let us refer to one other farm organization, not a farm organization, but pretty much farm people involved and a lot of municipal people. This, again, is an article in the Winnipeg Free Press dated November 25th. The Union and municipalities, which I think represent pretty broad numbers of people throughout rural Manitoba, and I'll quote just one part of it. Here's Dauphin Reeve, Russ Phillips, I have a lot of respect for that man, even though we maybe don't agree always on political philosophy, but at least I think he's coming out and being honest, not playing politics, and I'll quote what he said. Dauphin Reeve, Russ Phillips said, "Such a measure in the government's proposed Farm Lands Ownership Act would Balkanize Canada." I have to read the earlier part, Mr. Speaker, "Municipal politicians yesterday expressed displeasure with the province's plan to restrict ownership of Manitoba farm lands by non-residents." Then Dauphin Reeve Russ Phillips said, "Such a measure in the government's proposed Farm Lands Ownership Act would Balkanize Canada."

Mr. Speaker, this is the government that went out and talked to the rural Manitobans. The union of Manitobans came to Winnipeg to tell them this, Mr. Speaker. They listened, but they didn't hear. They listened but they didn't hear, Mr. Speaker, what the farm community had been telling them.

They make a big issue about speculation. Well, again, Mr. Speaker, if it's speculation they want to

stop, then stop it with a speculation tax or some other mechanism other than to try and fool people that they're going to do it by restricting the rights of people. There are other alternatives to doing it. Mr. Speaker, they say, why didn't we do it? Mr. Speaker, what did we do? In 1977 we were elected to this House, and the first thing we did was take the restrictions off other Canadians. We took the restrictions off the amount of land they could own. Do you know why? Because we had the guts of our conviction to do what we said we would do on our election, not like what the promises the First Minister is doing with the people today.

We moved, Mr. Speaker, and did those things that we felt were important to protect the freedoms and the rights of people. A body of a legislative group of people to keep a balance in society, not to narrowly pick out any certain group or take away or remove or give certain privileges to. Fairness and equality, Mr. Speaker, and we have a leader here who has demonstrated that time and time again. Time and time again, Mr. Speaker, and it's principle that these people stand on, not a bunch of people led and guided by a news service that tries to direct and manipulate the people of this province because they haven't got anything at the head of it to give it any firm direction. That, Mr. Speaker, is what we stand for and we weren't ashamed to stand to the people in 1981 on Farm Land Ownership Bills. We didn't mind saying that we weren't going to make it tougher for other Canadians; we in fact said we'd protect other Canadians.

You know, they make the case, Mr. Speaker, that other provinces have done it. Well, I'll tell you, in Saskatchewan, we know who the Government of Saskatchewan was that implemented this. It was that Allan Blakeney Government that happened to have the same political stripe of these people. I, really, at this particular point, don't think that another wrong will make all the other ones right. I think that we've got to continue to maintain a firm belief of Canadians if we're going to continue to survive in that great community spirit of joining together as the Premier pleaded today, we have to join together. Well, let's join together with other Canadians, not by kicking them out of Manitoba, let's deal with them and deal with them honestly on the same rules as everyone else. How many times have we heard this "join together," Mr. Speaker?

Let us deal with the economics of the community. He deals with these great large holdings of a few people. Is the Minister aware that several weeks ago there was a large farm holding sold in Brandon, Manitoba? It was all over the front page of the Brandon Sun. I don't happen to have a copy of it with me, and I use his name because it was known publicly. It was a public auction mart; it was Ross Mitchell sold his farm by auction. The land sold in a range from - make sure you make note of this, Mr. Speaker, to the members opposite - as low as \$32.50 an acre for marginal land, \$32.50 an acre. Mr. Speaker, where were those speculators? Where were those non-resident Manitobans, those other Canadians? Where were those foreign investors that have been such a problem to this province? Where were they, Mr. Speaker? I think Mr. Mitchell would have liked to have seen somebody at the sale.

One of the things that he stated though, Mr. Speaker, and I have to be fair because that's my job as being a fair person, he said it probably wouldn't have been quite so bad a sale if foreigners could have come to buy land. He is telling us. The Minister is telling us our legislation was no good, and yet a farmer who had a sale who took as low as \$32.50 an acre said, where are they, Mr. Speaker, they can't come to my sale, they can't buy. Where were they?

He's making the case, first of all, Mr. Speaker, that big farmers are a problem. Today in the Province of Manitoba it is the big farmer, the man that's had a heavy accumulation of land that's in serious serious trouble. The problem is correcting itself. There are going to be more land holdings available, as I point out it's listed in the Manitoba Co-Operator, than there's ever been before.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister again refers to the fact that here we are, and he can't say other Canadians, he says speculators. The minute they're a non-Manitoban, they're a speculator. He says I'll keep working on that and working on it. Mr. Speaker, that's been a rhetorical kind of comment since Day One with the people from the party and the Farmers Union where he comes from. So I make no further comment about it.

He refers to the Portage meetings which no one really in this House had an invitation to, which was totally out of line, his procedure was wrong. The information which he's provided so far has not been accurate, Mr. Speaker, he refers to documentation which he tabled or he provided to us. Here we are, the board, as well as recommending restricting non-farm corporations, and they should have known that we weren't for that policy because we removed it when we came in, Mr. Speaker, we didn't make any bones about it. But he says, our board. Our board, Mr. Speaker. The Chairman of that board was Mr. Harold Sneath who was their Chairman of the board before we ever got into office. We didn't boot him out of the board chairmanship because we were Conservative and he'd been appointed by an NDP. No, Mr. Speaker, we left him in as board Chairman and they are the ones that put him out. Go back to the Portage meeting, Mr. Speaker, just to see how fair these hearings were. Who chaired the meeting in Portage? I think it was the Chairman of the Farm Lands Protection Board if I'm not - (Interjection) - It was the Chairman of the Farm Lands - and that's a fair and open hearing. You have the Chairman of the Farm Lands Protection Board. Who spoke out in favour? He made one reference to the fact, he didn't mention his name, but he grows a lot of vegetables.

Mr. Speaker, there was one other individual at that particular meeting who spoke out in favour of the legislation. He was also a board member of the Manitoba Farm Lands Protection Board. He did not say that there was a farmer there, who I have a brief here presented, saying that it took away all the rights and freedoms of Manitoba farmers. He did not say the farm business group were there speaking out in opposition to the restrictions of his land, Mr. Speaker, and from what I'm hearing from the hearings throughout Manitoba, he did not get the support that he's trying to tell this House and the people of Manitoba that he got.

Mr. Speaker, we're dealing with a government who said that we are angry because we didn't bring in this

timely and sound legislation. We aren't disappointed that we didn't bring this in. In fact we're proud that we're able to stand here —(Interjection)— and stop it this last year, correct? But to further put our opposition forward, to further try and tell this Minister of Agriculture that the priority item in rural Manitoba today is not foreign investment, not other Canadians. I'll give the Minister this much credit, he is concerned about it as we were concerned about non-resident people coming here from outside this country or owning it and not coming here. We never changed our principles on that; we said it from Day One and we still believe in that, Mr. Speaker.

The big problem is, and the Minister has fallen prey to it, he's fallen prey to the political trap that he's in because he thought that it was going to be a big issue with the people of Manitoba. The second one is the staff that is working for him. The Director, Mr. Speaker, and he's been a career civil servant and done his best, the Director of the Farm Lands Protection Board has been an individual who, if you look at his history, was a long-term dedicated civil servant, but he is a typical person working for government. The more laws you have in legislation, the more regulations you have. The more you make the people come to you and sit before a board in judgment, the happier they are, because it takes some of the responsibility away from them.

That same individual, Mr. Speaker, was the man who was going to centralize the dairy industry in Canada. He was going to have one big dairy plant in Manitoba. That was his job, Mr. Speaker, and today we didn't change him from the job of being the Director of Farm Lands Protection. We told him if we didn't believe we should move in that direction but this Minister didn't and that's why he got into the mess on Bill 54 because he listened and he didn't sort out for himself what all the people in Manitoba want. He just went with the Farmers Union and some of the staff who work for him who think that they have to have this perfect legislation so that all their work and problems are solved.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, we're concerned about individuals who are living in offshore lands or other places with large pools of capital who are buying land up. That's not happening to the degree in which this Minister is trying to play it up, Mr. Speaker. In fact it's not happening at all any more. Mr. Speaker, if he wants to go through some of the information that I have pointed out, like the Daryl Kraft study, not just pointing out part of what Daryl Kraft is saying but pointing out the fact that it's the farm community and it's the economic activity that takes place throughout Manitoba that puts the price of land up and down. These problems of large farmers owning large tracts of land will solve themselves because I think it's been in every paper in the last few months - the numbers of real large farmers that run into difficulty.

It was in the 1970s, Mr. Speaker, a good hedge against inflation and it was inflation that put the price of land up. The price of grain and the price of everything else that's produced on the farm is going down. I don't know too many investors that are prepared to take 4 to 6 percent that I think is pointed out of a return on their investment, if they can make that much at this particular time, off of farm land, Mr. Speaker. In fact, I

think what they will be doing is trying to take that capital out of farm land and put it elsewhere that can earn them more money, possibly in the bank. We all know that bank interests are something like 10 to 12 percent, or have been in the last while for investing money, without any worry about the maintenance of land.

I'll deal a little bit with the Minister who says that the land is not being well taken care of. In most cases, Mr. Speaker, leased land, if a farmer is farming his own land, he normally looks after that leased land whether it's one, two, three, but they're normally long-term leases, equally as well as he does his own property. Not quite, because he still doesn't have that same personal feeling about it that he does if he owns it. Not quite, but he sprays it, Mr. Speaker, he works it, he tries to make it produce to its maximum. He works a lot harder for another individual than he would work if it was the government-owned land as this Minister would sooner see it. The incentive is there; first of all, for privately-owned land, for people who are leasing other privately-invested land and thirdly, the government comes in number three.

There is one other point and I hope my colleagues will bring it to attention, that there's one other thing that we have to go to, Mr. Speaker. The Minister keeps referring to the fact that we're restricting young farmers with this large amount of capital that is coming in from elsewhere. The Minister of Agriculture sitting right here tonight has taken away, or removed the ability of MACC, Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, from lending money to buy land. He has taken away the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation funding to be loaned towards land purchases and if I'm incorrect in that statement, I hope the Minister would correct me. But it is my understanding that MACC today does not have one dollar to lend to a farmer to buy a piece of land and he removed that, Mr. Speaker. How can a man sit here today and say that everything else is wrong and he's right and he's for the family farm. Probably one of the best programs in the province has been stopped by this Minister of Agriculture.

Could I have some indication of my time left, Mr. Speaker?

MR. SPEAKER: The honourable member has 12 minutes remaining.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources on a point of order.

HON. A. MACKLING: Yes, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I'm having great difficulty in hearing the honourable member speak. Members from his side, his colleagues, are turning their back on him, engaged in conversation and it is very difficult for me to hear him.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. I would hope that all members would extend the same courtesy to the honourable member that they would expect for themselves.

The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Mr. Speaker, I realize that the Minis-

ter of Agriculture has done his best to try, again, to drag as many red herrings out to try and defer from what he really is attempting to do with the farm community. As I have earlier stated, it just won't wash with the House. It just won't wash with those people who represent this Assembly and I hope that the information that I have provided here tonight has been of some help.

If there's one thing that I think has to be pointed out and pointed out very accurately, and I will try and conclude my remarks on this particular point, and that is, as close as I can determine at this particular time, Mr. Speaker - I'll say this in a general sense - that he has made a comment that individuals from anywhere in the world can come to Manitoba as long as they give a commitment to live in Manitoba. Well, Mr. Speaker, I don't know who's going to make that judgment on what commitment is expected to be made to allow them to buy land in Manitoba. I don't know whether it's a commitment to support a particular political party, or it's a particular commitment that they are going to stay and take a hoe or a plough and actually work that land, or whether they have to be here for any certain period of time, Mr. Speaker. That commitment isn't told to us at this particular time. We don't really understand what the commitment is, but it would now appear - and I'm saying appear and I think this point has to be very clear - that this new legislation is probably making it easy for people from offshore, foreigners to buy land, to use the instrument of either coming here on a commitment of something that no one in this House understands; but what it is truly doing, Mr. Speaker - as I've said it before and I'll say it again, and I'll say it again - it is making it easier for everyone else other than Canadians. Mr. Speaker, that is the key. It has now made it so that anyone else in the world can come and buy Manitoba land as long as they have a commitment to this government. What kind of a commitment? We don't know, Mr. Speaker. We're repassing, or asked to pass and debate legislation that there's a commitment to the government that they're going to do something and I don't know what it is, but they'll allow them - I guess reside in Manitoba is what he's trying to get at, but we don't know what the commitment really is - but he's restricting other Canadians, Mr. Speaker.

The present legislation, Mr. Speaker, as I've tried to point out, is effectively - and the Farm Bureau made a good point, they said there are regulations that can be put in to keep on with the reporting of corporations or other Canadians on where they're at with their companies and everything else. We, Mr. Speaker, applied to the Federal Government and approved that under The Citizenship Act. Why, Mr. Speaker, hasn't he proceeded with the regulations?

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons that we didn't proceed with it, because a Minister to a certain point depends on people like his director of agricultural lands to provide and produce and bring forward those regulations so that he can pass them. I, to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, never saw those from the Director of the Farm Land Protection Board. I didn't have those regulations brought forward. I didn't go after them in any big way, Mr. Speaker, because the priorities were the incomes of farmers with the high costs that they are facing - that's what our priority was

- was trying to better the lot of the farm community, not restrict the rights of Canadians. So we have a government today that have made it easier for foreigners to buy land, restrict all other 23 million Canadians and their rights to buy this land and force them not to be a part of what we feel is a nation. That, Mr. Speaker, is not very much in the best interests of anyone.

The Minister makes a big issue, Mr. Speaker, that there are some \$50 million being taken out in leases. Mr. Speaker, if the Minister was concerned about the amount of money that was going out of the farm community, I can point out to him where he should be dealing with it.

My colleague, the Member for Pembina, and supported by all the Progressive Conservative members last year, asked this Minister of Agriculture, through a resolution, to have the federal fuel taxes removed from the farm community. Do you know how much the fuel tax is for those farmers today that are probably spending as much as \$200 to \$300 a day just for their tractors that they're running in those fields? Over 50 percent of the costs of that fuel, Mr. Speaker, is Federal Government tax. That is a lot of money; that is the big cost in farming today are the input costs. But, Mr. Speaker, did we have support from this Minister of Agriculture who is now so worried about the \$50 million he says that is leaving? Who got the money that those people brought into this country, Mr. Speaker? It was the people who farmed for their lives and took that money and invested it in what they wanted to, whether it was a house in Winnipeg - that money that is going out, Mr. Speaker, isn't all going out, they're paying municipal taxes, they're paying those kinds of road taxes that everyone else is.

I'm not speaking here today, Mr. Speaker, in support of foreign absentee ownership. I've been clear on the record; we've made amendments to the old Act so that it in fact would do that. I think, Mr. Speaker, to a large extent it has. I think the Minister is moving on a political motivation. I think he is trapped into having to force this on the people of Manitoba. I think that he has no right to remove the rights of 23 million Canadians, making it more difficult for them to be a part of this province and allowing in wholesale movement of people to come in, just because of a commitment that he asked them for as a Minister to give him so that they can come in.

That, Mr. Speaker, is a challenge I have to the Minister and I would hope in all sincerity, if he is working in the best interests of farmers that he will again withdraw this bill. Again withdraw it, Mr. Speaker, because we in all our efforts and power are going to try and stop this bill in any way we can.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Emerson.

MR. A. DRIEDGER: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, the normal approach is, you know, the expression of being glad to enter into the debate, and I have a little difficulty with that today. I'm actually sorry that I have to get into this kind of a debate.

I have very emotional concerns about this kind of legislation that is appearing here today and because I feel very strongly about it, I probably won't cover all

the points that I want to today, but I can guarantee the Minister of Agriculture that this bill will be debated and debated and debated and debated, so it's going to be a long time. So if I miss any points here today, I intend to have many opportunities to come back and debate it again.

Last year we made a very sustained effort in trying to get the Minister to withdraw the bill and finally we succeeded, but because I feel very emotional about it, I want to assess why is this bill necessary? Like, what are the problems really? Then you start looking at - you know, we want to be realistic about it because the Government of the Day has the right to bring in certain bills - and then I want to ask, like why is it necessary? What basically is the reason?

I've been looking for the reasons that the Minister has indicated in the release he gave that he tabled in the House here - not the press release - but the one that he tabled in the House. It says, "Agricultural Minister Bill Uruski said the legislation has been presented in response to advice and requests from individuals in farm organizations."

"It is intended," he said, "to strengthen the position of owner-operated family farms and ensure the future viability of rural communities." And that to me is very important, because I represent a constituency that has approximately 40 small communities: nothing major, the biggest one is 1,500 people, all agricultural oriented. So this kind of legislation hits home to a layman like myself and I'm very concerned about it. I wonder why, like when he indicates individuals. Individuals have presented requests or farm organizations and then I ask, which one?

The previous Minister of Agriculture, the Member for Arthur, indicated like the position of the Farm Bureau, the change of position that they've had, which the Minister of Agriculture unfortunately managed to leave out when he was making his press release, that the position has been changed in terms of Canadian ownership. So I've been sort of wondering, what is this all about? And I say to myself, well, being from the small community, I believe that part of the reason is, and I would assume that this is the thinking of the Minister, to allow young farmers to get on to the farms. What other reason could there be for this kind of legislation?

Because when we consider the fact - Mr. Speaker, I'm sorry, I always have a tendency to sort of speak to the member that is presenting these things, I should address my remarks to yourself as you indicated to me the other day. But why do we have this kind of thing? And when the Minister indicates he's consulted with the various groups, farm groups, the people that are most affected are the municipal people, and in some of his propaganda that he's been promoting, he's illustrated three municipalities within my constituency, the Rural Municipalities of De Salaberry, Franklin and La Broquerie. He illustrates that in the R.M. of La Broquerie, 60 percent of the land within the R.M. of La Broquerie is owned by non-Canadians. —(Interjection)— non-residents. Thank you for the correction. And that 20 percent and 21 percent respectively within the R.M.'s of De Salaberry and Franklin are also owned by non-residents.

Then I check with my councils out there, and I say, what is your concern, is there problems with this thing

especially? Now there's a little difference and I have to clarify that, because when we talk of the R.M. of La Broquerie we have more marginal lands. In fact, there was acres and acres and acres of land that never was developed until non-resident owners moved in and developed it. As I indicated, there are points that I probably won't be covering today, but we'll be doing research on this to find out what happened to the assessment in the R.M. of La Broquerie from the time that non-resident owners moved in and started clearing land, and this is the kind of thing that the Minister should have checked out.

I think my colleague from La Verendrye will probably elaborate on this as we do research on it, but we understand that in the R.M. of La Broquerie, approximately 30 parcels of land owned by non-residents are up for tax sale this year. Most of the land, Mr. Speaker, that is owned by non-residents and European owners is for sale right now, and he's flaunting that as the prime example. That's why I've had difficulty finding out why do we have to have this kind of legislation? Really, why do we have to have it?

I'm looking around, and then I ask my municipal people why, what is your feeling on it? And I daresay this Minister has not consulted with the R.M. of La Broquerie, which he uses as a prime outstanding example of 60 percent non-resident ownership. Then I asked the R.M. of Franklin, and I talked with the council members, they say, you know what - and I'm not promoting the fact, Mr. Speaker, that we should have European buyers or non-Canadian residential people coming in and buying land, I'm not promoting that, but I'm just trying to indicate some of the concerns that the municipal people have indicated. They say they're not opposed to Europeans coming in and buying land, because they come in and they pay a good price. They pay a good price for land, market price, and they rent it to our young farmers who then go out and borrow money just for the capital investment of operating, and they make a go of it.

I'd like to illustrate the little community of Arnaud, a very small community, one little store, one dealership that is in trouble, partly thanks to this government, that's all there is, and a bunch of farmers that are living there have the land outside. Many of the young farmers in the little community of Arnaud are renting land from Europeans, and it's working well. —(Interjection)— Yes, but it not government. It is not government. It is in private hands, and to me there's a big difference.

This is the problem I have with this kind of legislation, when the Minister gets up here, and I think he's a desperate Minister, this is the first time in five years - I haven't been here that long - but the Minister, when introducing a bill has used full 40-some-odd minutes to introduce the bill and camouflage and red-herrings all over the place, all over the place, but not concentrating on the facts. I have great difficulty with that.

Like I say, sometimes when I get back home people say, how come the Opposition is always so negative, and then I have to explain why we have to be negative, because when we have the kind of leadership that we have opposite there, and many things including this kind of legislation, that is why we have to be negative.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to recommend to the Minister of Agriculture, because this bill is not going to

pass for a long time, not for a long time, I would like to recommend to the Minister, when he puts up the facade of where he's been meeting with all these groups, individuals and groups, why hasn't he met with the municipal people? The Member for Arthur indicated there was a hearing in Portage; I think there was one in Beausejour. How was this advertised? There's many things that we're concerned about, and the fact that this Minister took 40 minutes to try and explain a bill, you know basically if it was a good bill, if he wasn't concerned about it being contentious, shouldn't have taken that long to explain because in essence, to some degree, when the past Minister of Agriculture introduced the Farm Lands Protection Bill, limiting the land that non-Canadians could own, I think there was consensus on that. They went out prior to the last election and said, we will tighten up this thing. We will tighten up this bill. And now we look at what has actually happened, and I have great concern.

In conjunction with Bill No. 3, things are moving pretty fast, and I think this Minister would like to just sort of float everything through nice and easy and fast, you will have a long long fight before this Minister is going to get this bill through, because we've just got introduced to Bill 23 today and we have not been able to analyze that bill, which is a direct relation to this Bill No. 3. Mr. Speaker, I will not debate Bill 23, I'm just making reference to the fact that we have another one coming up that is related to this and actually I think the two of them should be debated together.

We knew beforehand that this bill was coming up, to some degree, we didn't know what was in it - and I wondered about this whole thing because the Minister of Agriculture indicated to us during question period that the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, and the Member for Arthur touched on it, is not allowing or not lending money for the purchase of land.

I want to just dwell a little on the other side of it, the seller. When we consider that the average age of our farmers in Manitoba is between 55, 56, these are people who have basically built this farming community, have worked hard all their life, and are at the point where they want to possibly consider retirement. They'd like to retire with dignity, have done without many things, and Mr. Speaker, if we travel through the country we see some nice homes, yes, but we also see places where people have worked for all their life, done with very little and now are at that point where under the system they would like to sell their assets and retire with a certain amount of dignity. That is their pension plan. Other people work at a job, pay into a pension plan and then when they reach a certain age they draw on their pension. This is the only pension plan that most farmers have. And what is this Minister doing? And this is what bothers me a little bit. Here he's saying we will control, not just non-resident Canadians, we're going to control Canadians in terms of buying farm lands. We're going to control corporations.

Now, for example, if my friend and colleague from Niakwa and his wife, assuming they had a corporation, formed a company, which is allowable, and they wanted to buy some farm land, or just straight land, 160 acres. He can't do it, he cannot do it. The Act will not allow that, because he's not a farmer. Now why?

And he's a resident of Manitoba and so is his wife, but because they decided to form a company, they will now not be able to buy land. There's so many aspects of this thing that the Minister of Agriculture I don't think he's given this any thought. It was a political promise that was made and he charges off again. He did the same thing last year; he decided that he'd made a mistake, withdrew it, and I would encourage him for the sake of all Manitobans to do it again, because this is going to be a long long run that we're going to have here.

Mr. Speaker, now let's just envision this farmer that's been working 40 years, 50 years. He's at that point where the children are all gone; he and his wife have gotten to the point where they have to make major investments further or else they try to sell. Now what market is available? And the Member for Arthur just briefly alluded to the fact about the number of farms that are for sale. But who is going to buy? Who is going to buy this farm?

Mr. Speaker, I have to say that I have a little real estate company. It hasn't been doing well at all for various reasons, including the interest and many economic conditions, but I can talk with experience as to the people that would like to buy, the people that can buy and the limited market that is there and I'm very concerned about this.

For example, you have many of these grain farmers, beef operators - whoever it is - if they want to sell their land, who are they going to sell to? For eventually the Minister of Agriculture who says he is trying to help the young farmers get into it, he's putting limitations on who can buy land, has stopped lending money to the young farmers for the purchase of the land. A hypocrisy. It is. The people he says he's trying to help, he says you can't borrow money for land. Now, who should they borrow from? You know I have grave concerns about this.

Now let's consider the poor farmer and you know what bothers me? I spend a lot of time thinking about it. You know what? I have doubts about this government; I really do. Mr. Speaker, I have grave doubts about them, because last time when they were in government, they ran around and they were buying up farm land and one of the reasons they had very few seats in the rural area was because of the farm state land policy that they had. Now, that backfired on them and I've been trying to think, well, why would they use this approach now to - you know - this controlling the sale of farm land?

Now, can you just envision? The average age of a farmer is 55, 56 in the province, and all of a sudden we have limitations as to who can buy. You know, we are putting a lid on these things. We don't allow money for it and these farmers want to get out and retire. Who are they going to sell to? Mr. Speaker, I feel very strongly, who are they going to sell to? I can envision - the Minister of Agriculture is sitting there chuckling and thinking it's a joke - but you know what; I can envision that possibly after a suppressed market, the prices will go down, farmers will be desperate, that some will probably be knocking on his door and saying, "Mr. Minister of Agriculture, buy our farms; we want to retire; we can't get buyers; buy our farms."

That is what bothers me, that is what bothers me dramatically, Mr. Speaker, that this Minister I think -

you know - I don't underrate these people. Following their philosophy, their thinking, they are very shrewd people, and this is one way to get back exactly to what they did last time, except last time they did it stupidly. Now I suspect that they are doing it in a different approach, because they'll cut off the market and the farmers will be coming to this Minister saying, "Please, Mr. Minister, we can't sell our farm; young fellows can't buy it because you're not borrowing them money; you've cut off the Canadian market; you've cut off the non-Canadian market. Who is going to buy it? Please, Mr. Minister, would you consider buying the land, maybe leasing it?" And we're right back to where we were the other time, and I have grave concerns about that. Mr. Speaker, when I looked at some of the things, the rationale that the Minister is trying to give, and I think after he took that embarrassing drubbing over withdrawing the bill last year, I would think that he would have done his homework a little better.

When I look through this in the edition of the Winnipeg Free Press of December 16th - you know, where their farm bill still offends, there's articles in there - and I look and how is this Minister going to administer this bill which I don't think he'll get through, but I suppose we will test that out as we go along in the debate here, but the things of setting up a commission - he doesn't illustrate how the commission is going to be established - possibly he'll appoint the normal guy that they always appoint. Who is this fellow that — (Interjection)— well, I won't necessarily mention it, but they have a few favourites that they always appoint - they're annual. When they were in government they had these fellows in - you know, just like in the beef program - the same people have surfaced again, and I assume these kind of people he will be appointing, but the criteria is not defined as to how they will operate.

Mr. Speaker, I know it's not proper to talk about other things as well, but when we saw how the Minister of Agriculture after a year of fudging around with the beef program, you know, what finally came out and then when we finally read the regulations, that beef group or the commission has more power than any marketing board right now. I suspect, Mr. Speaker, that if this Minister has his way, he'll be setting up - he's indicated - he'll be setting up a commission and he'll be setting up something that is going to control all activities.

As I indicated before, I don't want to touch on Bill 23 at this stage of the game; we'll have time to debate that one, but the relationship of that bill to this bill, I would actually like to see if we could debate those both at the same time. The powers that are given through some of this legislation and that is why, Mr. Speaker - you know, I don't have the legal ability to assess all these things but I get offended as an average layman and as a farmer for some of the stuff that is trying to be passed onto us in this legislation here —(Interjection)— well, the Member for Elmwood says stay cool, and as I indicated before, when I assess how many of the members opposite actually own farm land, I wonder where their genuine concern comes from. Really, I wonder where their genuine concern comes from and I've been trying to look across the benches and see how many of them actually own farm land. They indicate, oh yes, there is a need.

This party on our side, the Opposition, has always been known to represent the rural area and we do that as is represented here right now. Why? If it was good for the rural areas, why would we not be supporting it? Why would we be fighting this? Many bills, Mr. Speaker, get introduced in this House that don't get any flack - they flow along - we accept these things. Why would a bill like this create so much controversy when we are representing the rural area? Why? These are things that - you know, the Minister of Agriculture obviously doesn't care - it was a political promise by the now Premier at that time and the campaign, it sounded good. We'll tighten up the farm lands thing and we have lots of time; we'll be bringing forward statistics in terms of how it has been affecting each municipality, exactly what has happened - something that this Minister should have done before he brought this stupid legislation into this House.

We will again be asking this Minister to withdraw it and we will debate this, Mr. Speaker. I hope nobody's planning on long summer holidays because we're going to be here for a long time debating this bill. That's a fact. I'll be repetitive to some degree and I'll be back and I'll repeat again, Mr. Speaker, but when talking to the - with all due respect - the previous Clerk of the House at one time indicated to me, repetition is the key of legislation. We want to repeat these things and repeat these things and show what an unknowing, uncaring Minister of Agriculture we have.

I pleaded the other day with the First Minister, ask this Minister to resign because he's done nothing for the agricultural community.

When we look at the Throne Speech Debate, when we look at that document, and I covered that a little bit then, this Minister hasn't done a thing for the agricultural community. And those few members that represent rural areas there, they promote the idea. The Minister of Finance got up the other day and he said, roads and drainages are going to be priorities that are going to be cut. And they stand there and say yea, yea, yea. They bring in this kind of legislation, I can't understand it. I can't understand it. How do you expect to pass a bill like this when you have rural people, the kind that we have represented here, that are opposed to it. It is a fallacy.

Mr. Speaker, as I indicated before, I have many points that I will cover as I do my homework a little later, because this bill, I intend to speak on it again. There will be changes in it, so I'll have opportunities, with all due respect, and we will be debating it and debating it, and this Minister of Agriculture who has been an embarrassment, I think he has been the worst Minister of Agriculture this province has ever seen, and I'm serious about that, because he, himself, hasn't done a thing for the agricultural community and we will illustrate that point in this debate with this bill.

Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. D. ORCHARD: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I certainly welcome the opportunity to speak to this new and wonderful bill that the Minister of Agriculture is bringing to the farm community. I have to note in the Minister's notes that he used in introducing the bill to the press conference downstairs, those notes that he

didn't table with us in the House and which he only partially quoted from directly tonight, the second paragraph in that says, "However due to considerable misunderstanding and misrepresentation of the bill, it was withdrawn." He was referring to last year's bill.

Here's the Minister in his introductory remarks of his new bill, talking about considerable misunderstanding and particularly, misrepresentation. And then he follows it up with 10 pages, six of which are misrepresentation and half-truth of the real situation on farm land ownership and some of the problems with it. Then he tries to blame misunderstanding and misrepresentation on withdrawal of last year's bill.

Mr. Speaker, he has got a problem. His own statement identifies a number of problems that he's got in bringing this legislation before us —(Interjection)— I will tell the Minister of Agriculture. He talks about consultation with farmers. Now he had these meetings, the Premier and he were out in the southwest of Manitoba; they were talking to farmers. I would suspect they might have talked to 10 farmers, and I don't think they posed the real question to those farmers about whether they wanted a bill that would restrict them to 10 acres of ownership in its first and foremost clause, and then make exceptions thereafter if this board the Minister was going to appoint deemed them fit to own the land, they didn't tell them that. That message came in loud and clear and the Minister, and I give him credit, withdrew that 10-acre restriction he had in his first bill. That's about the limit of the improvements he made to that bill.

Now Mr. Speaker, the Minister talks about land price inflation in his remarks and he traces this land price inflation primarily, in his estimation, to the speculator who is buying land. Mr. Speaker, that just is not the case in the last few years. It has been farmers competing with farmers who have driven up the price of land. You know, the Minister knows that, he knows that full well, but yet he continues to misrepresent in his statement introducing this bill, he keeps putting the misrepresentation out there that it's absentee ownership that raises the price of land. That's not correct. Because if it was speculation and absentee ownership that was raising the price of land, why is it going down today? Land prices have not just levelled off, they have dropped, and they're going to drop more because no one is buying land at today's prices even, that are lower than what they were a year or two years ago.

The Minister makes another misrepresentation in his opening remarks. He talks about this phenomenally large figure of \$50 million that flows out of this province because of land rental payments going to absentee landowners in the Province of Manitoba. Fifty million dollars is a major concern. But he sort of never comes around to talking about the other side of the coin. The other side of the coin to that, Mr. Speaker, is simply that if he were to make a very fundamental calculation and he were to take land valued and paid for at \$500 per acre, that land, if the man was buying it, if the farmer was buying it and paying interest at 15 percent, which would be not an untoward rate of interest, he would be paying \$75 per acre per year in interest charges alone. But that \$500 an acre land that the foreign absentee owner is renting to him is probably getting \$30 to \$35 per acre cash rent

and the taxes come out of that so that the net rental is probably in the neighborhood of \$25 to \$27 an acre.

And now, my honourable friend, the Minister of Agriculture - of course when you get him on a little point here he starts talking about some other gobbledegook like land-lease and he tries to misrepresent the truth again, as we've come used to, but let's take the other side of this coin. We've considered the economic benefit of that lease to the tenant-farmer, who's renting that, to get started farming. But let's take a look at what has happened to the \$500 per acre that the original owner received when he sold that land. Now the Minister decries the \$50 million that have gone out of the province in rental payments. But make one simple calculation, Mr. Speaker, take \$500 per acre and multiply it by an investment income rate of return of 10 percent only, and you'll get \$50 per acre. At least \$15 to \$20 higher per acre than the cash rent that's leaving the province is staying in the province in interest earned on that money that's invested. Now who is he trying to fool with that kind of half-truth misrepresentation and misunderstanding that he's presenting in his opening statements? Once again he tells half the story and expects people to believe him. Well, we clearly found out today that we could not believe this Minister in a lot of cases.

Let's take that \$500 per acre that the retired farmer sold, the \$500 per acre. You know what that retired farmer probably did with the money, and this is happening all throughout the towns and communities in rural Manitoba, they retire to the town. And you know the first thing they did is they probably built a 50 or 60 or \$70,000 home, the first new home they've probably owned in 35 to 40 years of hard work on the farm. Now, what did the purchase of that home do for the community? It kept the lumberyard in business, it kept the local contractors in business, it raises taxes in the town, the community, and the jobs going along with building that home. This is the other side of the \$500 per acre and the rent capital that's going out of the province. Only half the story, and only the manipulated half of the story, Mr. Speaker, that will try to prove his case. He doesn't want to talk about the other side of the case which is a benefit to the community and to the area. No, he won't mention that, Mr. Speaker, because that might prove that his legislation and his direction is not correct.

The other thing that the Minister really used in his opening remarks at the press conference was he said, "In future, farms could be operated not by owners but rather by managers and employees who are hired by the owners." This is shades of the corporate farm, the huge, massive conglomerate, corporate farm that is going to devastate rural Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell him about a corporate farm that operated entirely within the bounds of the Pembina constituency. The landholdings of that corporate farm went up for auction on Thursday of last week and they are no longer farming the land. The corporate farm with the hired help will not survive in the agricultural economy of today. They have their moments of glory and they had them from 1974 to '77 and from '78 on they went downhill and the majority of them are no longer operative in this province, and that is the red herring, the half truth, the misrepresentation that the Minister of Agriculture is dragging out as

proof for this kind of legislation that we have in Bill 3. A phony argument, Mr. Speaker, and of all people on that side of the House who should know how phony it is, it should be the Minister of Agriculture who should know what is happening in the farm community today. But this Minister of Agriculture doesn't. He is hidden in the Interlake and he doesn't know what's happening in the rest of Manitoba and in the farm community of the rest of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I want to deal with one other little matter here that the Minister referred to tonight and these are also out of his remarks that he used at the press conference when he introduced the bill. This is what he says: "While some investors and speculators will be disadvantaged by the Act," and here's the important part, Mr. Speaker, "many non-residents of Manitoba will be allowed to acquire and own farm land in this province." Then he goes on to make some examples, Mr. Speaker, and I want to tell you that is the most misrepresented half-truth statement in this document. He says, "Non-residents will be allowed to acquire and own," i.e., the implication clearly being that non-residents from outside of the province can move in here, buy land and continue to live in Alberta. Oh, but that's not the example he uses. Do you know what the examples he uses are? People that already own the land in Manitoba; they farmed here for 10 years and they move out of the province and he calls that acquiring land in the Province of Manitoba. He's going to allow them to move out of the Province of Manitoba and retain the land that they farmed for at least 10 years? Well, Mr. Speaker, if that isn't a misrepresentation of the intent of this Act and its presentation to the Manitoba public, I don't know what is. Those people are moving out of the province and are being allowed to retain what is rightfully theirs and surely we're living in a country free enough to allow that to happen, Mr. Speaker; surely we are.

The other one that he refers to is the right to acquire and own farm land as if it's in the case of a farm corporation and the major shareholder retires to Victoria. He's going to allow him to continue to own his shares in Manitoba farm land. Well, whoopee doo, Mr. Speaker. He is allowing him to own something that he has owned for all of his life and that, he says, is allowing non-residents to acquire and own land. How much more misleading can this statement be? This Minister is shameful.

He also talks about how farmers or retired farmers will be allowed to transfer to relatives, who are outside of the province, farm land in Manitoba, and he classifies that as, once again, acquiring and owning land by a non-resident. Those people are exercising their right under the last will and testament of their parents, or their aunt or their uncle, and he is saying that I am a good guy, I'm allowing them to acquire farm land. Misleading, Mr. Speaker, to the nth degree, and now you wonder why we have matters of privileges censuring this Minister of Agriculture. Well, you know, he sits there and laughs and I don't expect him to understand it, I really don't expect him to understand it but that is the phoniest piece of shenanigans in a press release I have ever seen.

The real good one, Mr. Speaker, is where in No. 5 he says, "Anyone anywhere in the world will be allowed to purchase farm land in the province providing that

they undertake a commitment to reside here." Well if that isn't the most giant loophole in this legislation to have absentee foreign speculators come into this province and acquire land, I don't know what is. "Undertake a commitment." That means that the West German investor will come to the Minister of Agriculture and say, "Mr. Minister, I think I like Manitoba; I think I want to live here; I think I'm going to move here," and then he'll go out and buy up 10 sections of farm land, the very example that the Minister has been decrying in some of his misrepresenting statistics.

You know, Mr. Speaker, the Minister says we told him they don't want to do that. Now he wants the other side of the cake, too. He's saying we need this to protect us but we don't need to protect it. We do need this, we don't need that. The Minister cannot make up his mind and he's leaving one of the biggest loopholes possible in this legislation and I predict that loophole of undertaking a commitment to reside here will be a bigger loophole in this new legislation than we've ever had before and, Mr. Speaker, it will bring with it a lot of painful restrictions and unpleasant restrictions on the right for Canadians to own land in this province.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the other phony example that this Minister of Agriculture uses in justifying his bill and his legislation is the case of Prince Edward Island. He refers to Prince Edward Island and he says, "Well, you know, our legislation is better because it's not as restrictive as Prince Edward Island." Well, Mr. Speaker, I want to tell you something about Prince Edward Island - you've probably been there - but Prince Edward Island is one of the smallest and most beautiful places in the world, bar none. It is a jewel sitting in the Atlantic. —(Interjection)— Well, Mr. Speaker, I will bow to the infinite wisdom of the Minister of Agriculture who says it's not in the Atlantic Ocean. I will bow to his infinite wisdom of geography of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, the amount of farm land that is available for ownership in Prince Edward Island would fit into two of the larger municipalities in rural Manitoba. I guess maybe when they've got an island with beautiful red soil, green vegetation, a decent climate, a beautiful climate, and it's productive, not like some of the red soil we've got across the hall here, it'll grow potatoes at least. But, Mr. Speaker, that is a very beautiful island; the beaches are beautiful and the people are beautiful and anybody, including myself —(Interjection)— yes, the Government in Prince Edward Island is beautiful too, a re-elected Progressive Conservative Government. But anybody who has seen Prince Edward Island would give their eyeteeth to buy a quarter section of land there and live there, in their retirement or otherwise. When they have as much agricultural land available to their residents as two municipalities in Manitoba, I guess they want to protect it. But that's not the circumstance in Manitoba where we have to say to other Canadians, you're foreign to our province. That's not the circumstance in Manitoba, but that is the blindered view of this government and this Minister of Agriculture to Canadians.

On the one hand, I'm sure even the Attorney-General will say that Canadians should have rights in freedoms, but not when they come to Manitoba. "When zay come to Manitoba zay must play by our rules."

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Attorney-General - I don't

know, maybe he really believes that Manitoba should become an island unto itself; maybe he really believes that, but there are a lot of farmers in Manitoba that don't. Those farmers are represented, Mr. Speaker, by the Manitoba Farm Bureau, and the Manitoba Farm Bureau has said in a brief that the Minister of Agriculture conveniently did not make part of his information package to the media, "The vast majority of farmers in Manitobasimply do not want any restriction on Canadian citizens with respect to the ownership of farm land in Manitoba."

Is that part of the consultation that this Minister of Agriculture undertook to draft this bill? Is that part of the consultation and the meetings and the opinion-seeking that he did with the farm community? Who are the major organizations in this province representing? Probably 90 percent, Jim, of the farm organizations in the province have told him this. They represent everybody but the National Farmers Union, as far as I know, in the Province of Manitoba, and he has thrown out the opinion of the Manitoba Farm Bureau. That's how much consultation that this Minister of Agriculture did for the Province of Manitoba.

MR. SPEAKER: Order please. The time being 10:00 p.m., when we next reach this matter, the honourable member will have 21 minutes remaining.

Order please.

The House is accordingly adjourned and will stand adjourned until 10:00 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).