



First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Seventh Legislature**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Constituency</b>	<b>Political Affiliation</b>
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
ASPER, Linda	Riel	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky, Hon.	Inkster	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew, Hon.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
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DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
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FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FILMON, Gary	Tuxedo	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean, Hon.	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
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MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PENNER, Jim	Steinbach	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Joy	Fort Garry	P.C.
SMITH, Scott	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA**

**Tuesday, July 4, 2000**

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

*PRAYERS*

**ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS**

**ORAL QUESTION PERIOD**

**Income Tax  
Federal Reductions**

**Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (Interim Leader of the Official Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier (Mr. Doer). On July 1, Canadians celebrated, with enthusiasm, the birthday of our great country. For most of the country, it was not only a time to celebrate our nation's birthday but also a time to celebrate the first round of federal tax cuts. Needless to say, Manitobans had nothing to celebrate. We had the unique distinction here in Manitoba of being the big losers. Can the Premier please explain to Manitoba taxpayers why his government clawed back \$30 million in income tax cuts and robbed Manitobans of more money in their pockets so they could make the choices on how to spend their hard-earned dollars?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely shocked that the Leader of the Opposition would say that we in Manitoba had nothing to celebrate on July 1. I think the negative tone of the Member opposite certainly is opposite to the people that members on this side encountered, Manitobans that we encountered over the holiday weekend. Manitoba has the lowest unemployment rate in Canada. We can celebrate that.

Manitoba has just been recognized as reducing hallway medicine better than any other province in Canada. Let us celebrate that fact. Manitoba has some of the cleanest water anywhere in the world; surely we can celebrate that. Manitoba has some of the greatest festivals of anywhere, again, in the world. We were out at those festivals. Surely we can celebrate that fact. We have a lot to celebrate, Mr. Speaker. Maybe

the Tories do not have anything to celebrate, but Manitobans do.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** It is obvious that the Premier does not understand the impacts of his clawback tax policy, Mr. Speaker, but Manitobans do know that they are now the highest taxed Canadians as a result of his government's budget. That is a pox on all our houses. It is clear that his government failed to acknowledge or even understand that keeping Manitoba's income tax competitive will allow Manitoba to meet the demands of the future and the new economy.

Mr. Speaker, can the Premier please explain how we are going to be able to keep our much-needed professionals like nurses and doctors and computer specialists when Manitoba has the highest income tax across Canada?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, this is the Member who fired over a thousand nurses in the last four years in office. This is a member opposite **who was** opposing the reinstatement of the RN program which has made up 85 percent of the dedicated nurses here in Manitoba working on front-line medicine. That is how we plan on recruiting and retaining nurses, by training nurses and doing something the members opposite did not do, by keeping them working in Manitoba hospitals instead of firing them. That is a different way of approaching this challenge.

Mr. Speaker, the \$102 million in income tax cuts on top of our election promise to reduce property taxes with the property tax credit we introduced—over the period of time that those \$102 million in income taxes have been announced, we certainly will be presenting much more than members opposite did in their so-called 50-50 plan, which was not believed by Manitobans.

**Mrs. Mitchelson:** Mr. Speaker, this is the Premier and the Government that promised to end hallway medicine and failed. They did not live up to that promise. This is the Government that promised to reduce wait lists for diagnostic

tests and failed. This is the Government that promised to reduce wait lists for cancer treatment, and not only are they sending more people to the States, they are sending doctors to the States. This is the Government that promised to hire more nurses and has failed to do that. This is the Government that promised to open more permanent beds, and they have failed to do that.

\* (13:35)

This is the Government that had made all kinds of health care promises during the election campaign, and they have not lived up to one election promise. I am ashamed to admit that we have to sit in this Legislature day after day with a government that has failed to live up to their election promises. I would expect that this premier and this government would be a little humble when we are seeing other provinces right across the country that not only passed on the federal tax cuts but implemented tax cuts of their own.

Even their own polls indicate that 82 percent of Manitobans say that lower taxes would help Manitoba keep more of its residents and attract more new business, or almost 60 percent of Manitobans say that there is no reason why Manitoba could not cut taxes the way Ontario and Alberta did.

Mr. Speaker, what does this premier have to say to the condemnation that was expressed by Manitobans in their own poll?

**Mr. Doer:** Well, as the former premier used to state, the only poll that counts is the one on election day, Mr. Speaker, and I will use that as our measure for our future. But the Member opposite, in her rambling, incoherent preamble, made a number of inaccurate comments.

Mr. Speaker, we have announced the new prostate cancer centre as part of our cancer strategy, and we are proud of that. We have made announcements on cardiac care, which members opposite were opposed to. We are going into the next century with improved cardiac care. We have announced plans to train nurses, which members opposite are opposed to. They fire nurses; we train and hire nurses. Some

1500 young people have applied for the new RN program. That is the optimism we see every day.

We have kept our election promise to reduce property taxes by—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, we have kept our election promise to lower property taxes by the \$25-million investment in property tax credits. Beyond our election promises, we have introduced tax reduction measures of \$102 million more than the members opposite ever did in a budget that they introduced in this Chamber. Thirdly, we have also provided hope to young people.

When I was at a graduation ceremony last week, young people who want to go to community colleges, who want to go to universities, who do not want to be denied those opportunities based on family income alone, were delighted to hear that we were reducing tuition fees in universities and community colleges. That is the balanced approach Manitobans want, and that is what we are giving them.

### **Income Tax Federal Reductions**

**Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte):** Mr. Speaker, on July 1, the majority of Canadians began to benefit from the federal tax cuts that were passed along from all of their respective provinces. The exception, of course, is Manitoba. Thanks to this NDP Government's unwillingness to pass on the full benefits as a result of their decision to delink a year early and set rates that meant Manitoba's taxes would go higher—that was done by the Finance Minister—Manitobans were not among the group that received this tax relief.

My question to the Minister is: Can he explain to Manitoba taxpayers why he decided to withhold the full benefits of federal tax cuts, or does his leader's pledge that a promise made is a promise kept not apply to this situation?

**Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance):** Once again, we have lived up to our promises, and the first one was to bring a property tax

credit relief of \$75. That was the promise we ran on. That was the promise we delivered.

\* (13:40)

Over and above that, we shifted to a tax on taxable income system this year. In so doing, we passed on \$10 million of changes from the federal government in the base. As well, the Member opposite has continually made the allegation that taxes have gone up, and in fact all the independent evidence shows taxes have gone down.

**Mr. Loewen:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask this minister, when over 80 percent of Manitobans have clearly told this government that they believe reducing taxes will help keep people from leaving Manitoba for greener pastures, why did he decide to set the tax rates so that Manitobans would pay \$20 million more in personal income tax than if he had done nothing.

**Mr. Selinger:** Once again, Mr. Speaker, the evidence is clear. Taxes have been reduced in Manitoba, and unlike during the 12 years of the members opposite, people are coming to Manitoba in greater numbers than they ever had in the last decade.

**Mr. Loewen:** Mr. Speaker, given that the recent Dimark poll shows that 61 percent of people feel that this government should give a much higher priority to tax relief, I would ask this minister when he is going to make a decision to pass along the full benefits of this year's and next year's and the year following's federal tax benefits. When is he going to pass that on to Manitobans?

**Mr. Selinger:** It is amazing how the Member selectively chooses questions from the poll. The No. 1 priority in the poll was to address the health care and education issues, and that is what we have done. Manitobans know that in the following years, starting in the years 2000 and 2001, they will receive significant personal income tax relief.

#### **School Divisions Amalgamations**

**Mrs. Joy Smith (Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, both the First Minister (Mr. Doer) and the

Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) have said they will force school divisions to amalgamate. The Minister said this even though on December 14, 1999, when asked by the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), he told this House he would not force school divisions to amalgamate.

Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are not sure the Minister of Education can keep juggling so many issues without dropping the ball in education here in Manitoba. Does the Minister stand by his statement of December 14 when he was asked by the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) if he would be forcing Manitoba school divisions to amalgamate and he categorically said no?

**Hon. Drew Caldwell (Minister of Education and Training):** Mr. Speaker, of course the whole issue of school division boundaries and amalgamations has been one in this Legislature that has been active for the better part of a decade. In the province of Manitoba right now, it is recognized that, in some sectors, classroom delivery is suffering because of issues of sustainability. The position of the Government has not changed. We encourage amalgamations of a voluntary nature. We will be pursuing that more aggressively in the years to come. But we do have, in this province, a desire to have resources freed up for the classrooms of the province of Manitoba. The next opportunity to have a restructuring of the constellation of school divisions in this province is the fall of 2002, and we are determined that resources will be freed up by that date.

**Mrs. Smith:** Mr. Speaker, what evidence does the Minister have that this move will increase the quality of education and reduce the cost of education in Manitoba, and will he table the evidence he has for this House?

**Mr. Caldwell:** Mr. Speaker, the best evidence is the Prairie Spirit School Division and the St. Boniface School Division.

**Mrs. Smith:** Mr. Speaker, could the Minister please outline specifically what has changed his mind so critically in the past six months to cause this flip-flop without explanation to Manitobans?

**Mr. Caldwell:** Of course, Mr. Speaker, there is no flip-flop. Of course the position of this government has been consistent since day one. Members opposite may want more school divisions in the province of Manitoba. I suppose they are not really concerned with classroom deliveries, but we on this side of this House are determined to have the best quality of education available for all Manitobans, and part of our agenda is to make sure efficiencies take place within divisions.

### **First Nations Casinos Operations Managers**

**Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale):** Mr. Speaker, since the selection committee of Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Freedman released their report, three of the five proponents have changed their managing partners that were presented at that time. We have seen management groups from North Dakota, Saskatchewan, British Columbia and also from Miami in the United States.

\* (13:45)

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs: Does he not see the contradiction in proposing these casinos where support-management fees are as high as 60 percent? This money will travel outside of the province of Manitoba and not back to the proponents where it was intended to go.

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

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** No, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Reimer:** I did not hear any answer, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry, there was—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I am having difficulty hearing the question.

**Mr. Reimer:** Why?

**Mr. Doer:** If the Member opposite reads the report, he will find issues such as commissions as one of the conditions to still be developed.

**Mr. Reimer:** Mr. Speaker, the report, the "bible" that Nadeau and Freedman went by says, pursuant to section 207 of the Criminal Code of

Canada, only a provincial government shall manage and conduct a lottery scheme which is operated on or through a computer, video device or slot machine.

The RFP says that they, pursuant to section 207—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

### **Point of Order**

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** On a point of order, this is the second supplementary question of the Member, and *Beauchesne's* Citation 410 says that supplementary questions require no preamble, a rule that is well known to the Member, Mr. Speaker. Would you please ask the Member to succinctly put his question.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the Honourable Government House Leader, he does have a point of order. *Beauchesne's* Citation 490(2) advises that a supplementary question does not require a preamble.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Speaker:** I would ask the Honourable Member for Southdale to please put his question.

**Mr. Reimer:** I did start the question with "Can the Minister," but I will ask then: Can the Premier not understand and not agree that, according to the Criminal Code, section 207, only a provincial government may conduct and manage a lottery scheme which is operated on or through a computer, video device or a slot machine? Why is outside management looking after these casinos when clearly the "bible" of Nadeau and Freedman says it has to be conducted by the provincial government?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the Member has read the report properly.

### **Chief Electoral Officer Annual Report Review**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Mr. Speaker, my question to the Premier. I am

concerned about the state of democratic processes in Manitoba. A variety of problems have emerged, including ignoring The Sustainable Development Act.

Today, I would ask the Premier about the requirement under section 10 of The Elections Act and subsection 99 of The Elections Finances Act: If an annual report contains recommendations, it must be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections within 60 days after the report is put before our Legislative Assembly. Since it is now the 67th day since the tabling of the annual report of the Chief Electoral Officer, when will the Government stop breaking the normal democratic rules of this House and call the committee together to review this important report?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, we are working and implementing changes that had been made by the Chief Electoral Officer years ago. For example, third-party issues were raised by the Chief Electoral Officer. Year after year, the Chief Electoral Officer recommended that the Cabinet be removed from the appointment of returning officers and in fact that those returning officers be hired by the Chief Electoral Officer, a recommendation that we are implementing with the proposed changes in the election laws themselves.

I will take as notice the specific question on the days and the privileges, the matter being referred to the privileges committee.

**Mr. Gerrard:** Ma question supplémentaire au premier ministre: Quand est-ce qu'il suivra le processus démocratique de notre législature?

*[Translation]*

My supplementary question to the First Minister: When will he follow the democratic process of our Legislature?

\* (13:50)

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I will take the specifics as notice in terms of the Committee on Privileges and Elections.

Having said that, we are following through on specific recommendations. It is a very major

recommendation to remove Cabinet from the appointment of returning officers and then to allow returning officers to break the tie. We have taken the Cabinet out of appointment of returning officers, as recommended by the Chief Electoral Officer. In terms of breaking a tie, it is democratic because the people will break a tie.

### **Regional Health Authorities Board Elections**

**Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights):** Au premier ministre:

*[Translation]*

To the First Minister:

*[English]*

In the interests of better democracy, since we seem to move from the music of the Guess Who to the Government of the guess when: When will the Premier carry through his other election promise to elect members of the boards of the regional health authorities?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health):** Je voudrais répondre au député de River Heights. Nous sommes en train de développer un processus pour faire ça.

*[Translation]*

I would like to respond to the Member for River Heights. We are developing a process to do that.

### **Rural Recovery Coalition Meeting Request**

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** Today the Premier waxed eloquently about all the celebrations that he had attended in Manitoba, as most of us did. However, there are a group of people, farmers and businessmen in this province, that were not celebrating. There are some that have lost their farms, and there are some that have leased their farms, and there are some that do not know whether they will be able to pay their bills this fall or not.

Will the Premier explain to this House why it has taken eight months before he and his

Cabinet have decided to meet with the Disaster Recovery Coalition in this Legislature?

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Highways and Government Services):** Mr. Speaker, as the Minister responsible for emergency measures, along with the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk), we have met with numerous groups. We have responded positively to requests for meetings. We have met in this Legislature and outside this Legislature with groups in the affected area. In fact, when I was in Ottawa a number of months ago, I made a point, as minister responsible for emergency measures, of not only meeting relevant federal government officials but also the group that was there from the southwest. In fact, the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) was part of that delegation. We do take very seriously our obligation to meet and talk to all Manitobans, and we have done that in regard to groups in southwest Manitoba.

#### **Flooding Agricultural Disaster Assistance**

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** I would like to ask the Premier why he and his government have not taken any actions at all. When the Swan River flood was on in 1988, when the fires in the Interlake were on in 1988-89 and when the '97 flood was on, the Province of Manitoba made a decision. Why has this premier failed to recognize the disaster that happened in 1999, and why has he and his Cabinet not made a decision to support those families that are still suffering and suffering severely because of those floods? When will he stop blaming the federal government for not being partners?

\* (13:55)

**Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Highways and Government Services):** I am very disappointed, once again, at that member opposite who, in his preamble to his question, put on the record a number of incorrect statements.

First of all, southwest Manitoba has been declared a disaster by the provincial government. That has in fact been confirmed by the federal government. What has happened is, despite the fact that the Province of Manitoba has put in \$70

million, \$20 million of which is 100-cent dollars, we have seen the federal government refuse to act on the DFAA designation beyond the \$23 million that is there for damage to property.

The fault lies not with the provincial government but with the federal government that has not gone as far as they did in 1997, the Red River.

#### **Rural Recovery Coalition Meeting Request**

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** I find it very interesting that the Premier will not get up and answer questions on this very fundamental and important question, the livelihood of the people of his province.

Will the Premier confirm to this Legislature that he is going to be part of the delegation or the Cabinet that is going to meet with these people, and is he going to give them an answer? Regardless of the outcome of discussions in Ottawa or in eastern Canada today when the ministers meet, is he going to assure these people that Manitoba will come to the table and that Manitoba will provide funding for those people in the southwest?

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** There are about four questions in the statements made by the Member opposite. Will I be at the meeting? I believe, if I am not mistaken, that last Thursday the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire) asked the same question in the House, and I believe I affirmed that I would be there. I believe we are scheduled to meet today, if I am not mistaken, at five o'clock, and I will be at the meeting with the Minister responsible for disaster assistance.

I also believe that the Member opposite asked the question would we be at the table. Manitoba has been at the table, and I think it is important to note that.

Thirdly, I have raised this with the Prime Minister; the Minister has raised it with the federal Defence Minister. The Conservative Member for Brandon-Souris has raised it with Mr. Eggleton. In committee, Mr. Eggleton gave the Conservative member, Mr. Borotsik, an



answer in a negative answer. He would not provide any more funding. The Member for Brandon-Souris, I believe, if I recall Hansard, asked would it be under the 90-10 formula. The federal Defence Minister said no to the Conservative Member of Parliament. Then he asked him, Mr. Speaker, would there be anything available under the 50-50 program. The Conservative Member for Brandon-Souris asked the federal Defence Minister; the Liberal federal Defence Minister answered no. So I think it is—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, we believe in a national disaster assistance program. We believe that people in southwest Manitoba should be treated in the same way as the people in the Saguenay and the people in the Peace River, the people in the ice storm in Ontario and Québec, and I hope our voices can be united that the federal government cannot have a federal disaster assistance program unless southwest Manitoba is treated the same way as people are treated in Québec and Ontario.

#### **Minister Responsible for Gaming Control Act Conflict of Interest**

**Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, we notice whenever a government has something to hide, they put out a press release during Question Period. We just received a copy of a news release in which the Premier now has had the Minister of Consumer Affairs (Mr. Lemieux) relieved of his responsibility for gaming as this side of the House has been asking for for weeks.

\* (14:00)

Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Premier to confirm that the legal advice he in fact received was such that the Minister was in violation of the conflict-of-interest legislation.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, the legal advice we had received, the advice certainly has been that the Minister, and I have made this statement in the House before, was not in a conflict of interest.

**Mr. Praznik:** If the Premier has in fact received that advice, as he now tells the House, we would ask him to put his words where his mouth is and table that advice to this Legislature.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the independent committee was an arm's-length independent body from the Minister, made the recommendations on sites. They were clearly recommendations made by Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Freedman independent of the Government. I think it is very important. I believe strongly that the Minister was not in a conflict of interest. I also know that the allegations of conflict have—*[interjection]* Members opposite have no difficulty in smearing individuals, but members opposite should know—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The request for the change in assignment came as a result of the Minister and his spouse discussing the impact that the allegations were having on her business as a lawyer. I certainly honoured the Minister's recommendation to me, but I am confident that the Minister has always, always, always exercised his duties as a Cabinet minister of this government completely in compliance with the conflict-of-interest laws of Manitoba.

**Mr. Praznik:** Mr. Speaker, given that this minister had been assigned to negotiate those contracts, which is not the issue the Premier skates around, I would ask the Minister again, for the sake of everyone concerned. He said to this House he has a legal opinion. Why is he hiding it? Why will he not table that legal opinion that, just a few minutes ago, he admitted to all Manitobans he had?

#### **Point of Order**

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I am just surprised the Member reiterated that question. I am sure it is well known to him that you cannot ask for a legal opinion to be tabled in this House. That is contrary to a long-established convention and tradition in this House and, as well, the rules of parliament.

Mr. Speaker, *Beauchesne* is very clear that Question Period is about seeking of information, not about opinions. *Beauchesne's* Citation 408 says "questions should . . . not require an answer involving a legal opinion. Citation 409 says a question asked "ought to seek information and, therefore, cannot be based upon a hypothesis, cannot seek an opinion, either legal or otherwise." Then *Beauchesne's* Citation 410 says "Questions should not seek a legal opinion or inquire as to what legal advice a Minister has received." The rules are clear.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on the same point of order.

**Mr. Praznik:** Mr. Speaker, this is a case where the First Minister (Mr. Doer) of this province has just told the people that he had legal advice that his minister was not in violation of an act. We have asked him very simply to table that information, to provide it to the people of Manitoba, to say very clearly that the Premier is in fact telling us the truth. If the Premier is not prepared to do that, then let him say that to this House. But to say that it is not within the rules of this House for a Cabinet minister, the First Minister, to be asked to table a legal opinion he says that he has that apparently tells us that his minister was not in conflict after his minister has now resigned is preposterous and not within the rule that the Government House Leader has brought out.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to look at this very carefully and canvass all the authorities before you rule.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Minister of Health, on the same point of order? With new information?

**Hon. Dave Chomiak (Minister of Health):** Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. The Member was wrong in three statements he made during the course of his diatribe. First he denied the fact that it was a rule in this House that dealt with that. Secondly, he said that the Premier said he had a legal opinion; the Premier did not say that. Thirdly, he said that the Minister resigned, which is not in fact factually correct.

I think if the Member is going to try to argue points of order, he should at least try to argue the points of order factually.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Honourable Official Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Opposition House Leader):** I can see damage control in this House happening in a big-time way here.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to peruse Hansard. I think once you peruse Hansard you will see clearly what the First Minister put on the record. It was very clear that he said he had received legal advice. I would ask you, before ruling on this point of order, that you peruse Hansard to see exactly what the First Minister did say.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Government House Leader, I thank all members for their advice. I will take the matter under advisement to peruse Hansard and consult the procedural authorities, and I will report back to the House.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I recall, I think it was, going by memory, the former Minister of Finance moved a file from Linnet Graphics from one person to another, one Cabinet minister to another. I recall also that the Member opposite did not move the golden share until a later Cabinet shuffle.

Mr. Speaker, this was a decision made by the Minister and his spouse in a recommendation to me. I challenged members opposite to utilize section 20 if they felt that there were any decisions that the Minister made that were wrong. I said last week, and I will say this week, that the Minister has always, always followed the advice and followed the law of conflict of interest. Members opposite disagree. They have the recourse of section 20.

This minister has practised an independent process with the appointment of Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Freedman. He has done an exemplary job. It is very unfortunate, I believe, that his wife has been drawn in by members opposite. I regret that.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on a new question.

**Mr. Praznik:** Mr. Speaker, on a new question to the First Minister. It is important that the First Minister set a tone for his Cabinet. I want to ask the First Minister a very simple question. Is the First Minister fully aware that within his government there is an outside counsel who is available to all Cabinet ministers and MLAs to seek advice on any potential conflict of interest? If he is aware of that, I want to ask him why he did not have his minister seek that consultation on this particular issue.

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I say to the Member opposite that, if he believed last week on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday there was any violation of The Conflict of Interest Act in Manitoba, he could have used section 20. He did not, because he cannot.

**Mr. Praznik:** Mr. Speaker, I have to ask this premier, given that he is the First Minister, he is in charge of his Cabinet, why he did not ask his minister to seek that advice that is available to all members of Cabinet, and is this the kind of standard that he is setting for the future?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, the Minister and his spouse, having gone through the allegations and what I would consider, not he, smearing from members opposite, decided to ask for a change in the file, even though there was never a conflict of interest for that minister. I am proud of the work he has done, and I regret the allegations have affected his family.

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on a new question.

\* (14:10)

**Mr. Praznik:** It is unfortunate for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Lemieux) that the Premier (Mr. Doer) has put him in this position, because, Mr. Speaker, the Premier could very easily have had this matter dealt with several weeks ago, to no one's embarrassment and pressure, if he would have simply used the lawyer that is available to all of us. I want to ask the Premier: Why would he not have availed himself of that particular service, and if he did, if he now says he is, will he make that report available to all members?

**Mr. Doer:** Mr. Speaker, I recall when the matter of the golden share was being debated in this House, I do not think I saw a golden legal opinion tabled in this Chamber, because—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Doer:** And maybe, Mr. Speaker, stock options will be a matter in the future in this House, given the new standard established by members opposite.

### **First Nations Casinos Public Consultations**

**Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden):** Mr. Speaker, the recent poll finds that two-thirds of Manitobans oppose this government's aboriginal casino plans. The pollster indicated there was a substantial "level of deep-rooted opposition to the Government's proposal." Given this high disapproval rate and the Government's complete mishandling of this issue, the need for public consultations on expansion of gaming is critical and long overdue.

Mr. Speaker, will the Minister responsible for gaming, whoever that may now be, define what this government considers to be an adequate level of public consultation with affected communities before any casino project will be allowed to proceed?

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Hon. Gary Doer (Premier):** Mr. Speaker, I remember the same polling company finding I think the number was 51 percent of people did not believe the 50-50 plan of members opposite. Even Tories did not believe the 50-50 plan. One of the—

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

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. I would like to remind all honourable members again of *Beauchesne's* Citation 168: When rising to preserve order or to give a ruling, the Speaker must always be heard in silence.

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

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The fact of the matter is that many of the promises and commitments we made in the election campaign we are following through on. We believe, over a number of issues, some of them popular, some of them unpopular, over the long run, if we make a promise and we keep a promise, there will be credibility with those that are responsible in government to keeping our promises to the people. That is our long-term goal. We made a commitment in the election campaign, and unlike members opposite, we are going to keep that commitment.

**Mr. Speaker:** Time for Oral Questions has expired.

### Speaker's Ruling

**Mr. Speaker:** I have a ruling for the House.

During Oral Questions on June 21, 2000, I took under advisement a point of order raised by the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. Mackintosh) concerning the use of the word "hypocrite" by the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) while addressing a question to the Honourable First Minister (Mr. Doer). The Honourable Government House Leader expressed the view that the word was unparliamentary and requested that the word be withdrawn. The Official Opposition House Leader (Mr. Laurendeau) spoke to the point of order and indicated that the word was not out of order because it appeared on the list of parliamentary words contained in *Beauchesne's* Citation 490. The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet also spoke to the point of order. I took the matter under advisement in order to ascertain the precise words that were used and the context that the words were used.

I thank the honourable members for their contributions to the point of order.

As I had ruled in the House on June 8, 12 and 19 of this year, a word is not in or out of order simply because of the appearance of the word on a list of parliamentary or unparliamentary terms. Much depends on the

tone used, the context of the situation, and the amount of disorder generated. The guiding principle for Manitoba Speakers to primarily follow is Manitoba precedents in conjunction with the context of the usage of the word.

The words in question spoken by the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet were: "I ask him not to be a hypocrite." The word "hypocrite" has been the subject of interventions in the past by Manitoba Speakers. On April 29, 1993, the word "hypocrite" was voluntarily withdrawn after a point of order was raised. On June 23, 1993, Mr. Speaker Rocan directed that the word "hypocrite" be withdrawn, while on September 20, 1995, Madam Speaker Dacquay similarly ruled that the word "hypocrites" be withdrawn.

I would like to caution the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet that he had used the word "hypocrite" for a second time in speaking to the point of order that was raised. I would like to advise that it is not good parliamentary practice to be repeating language complained of when speaking to a point of order, especially when the language is the subject of the point of order.

Given that the word in question was directed at a specific member, and given that the word has been ruled unparliamentary by previous Manitoba Speakers, I would respectfully request that the Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet withdraw the word.

**Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, I would withdraw that word.

**Mr. Speaker:** I thank the Honourable Member.

\* (14:20)

### MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

#### H. P. Tergesen & Sons

**Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to comment on a Gimli business that has received numerous accolades over the last year for its remarkable longevity.

H. P. Tergesen & Sons has been in business since January 1, 1899, spanning 101 years and four generations. The store has been located in the same location on the corner of Centre Street and 1st Avenue. The building has been designated an historical site. This was not the only historical accolade that the business has received. Last year H. P. Tergesen & Sons was named one of Manitoba's century businesses by the Manitoba Historical Society.

Hans Pjetur Tergesen, an Icelandic settler who arrived in Manitoba in 1887, founded this family business. In time, he was joined by his sons, Joe and Robert, and the business added "& Sons" moniker. Over four generations, the Tergesen family owned and operated the store in one form or another.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate Terry Tergesen; his wife, Lorna; their son, Stefan; and their late son, Soren, for their effort and vision to ensure that H. P. Tergesen & Sons remains an institution in the Gimli community. Thank you.

### Day-care Workers

**Ms. Bonnie Korzeniowski (St. James):** Mr. Speaker, our government gave special recognition to day-care workers in its budget this year. The Budget adopted a new funding model which enabled centres to improve salaries for early childhood educators, a move which demonstrates the respect we hold for these people.

One day-care worker received special recognition in quite another way last week when the Governor General awarded him a medal of bravery.

Ron Blatz, the director of the Discovery Children's Centre in my constituency of St. James, saved the life of a woman in very hazardous circumstances. He was skating at The Forks on Christmas Day, 1997, with his wife and three children, when he noticed that a woman had fallen through the ice. Instinctively, and without any thought for his own safety, Mr. Blatz went to the rescue. He stretched out on the unstable ice and crawled forward to pull the woman out of the water while another Good

Samaritan, Gordon Holloway, held him by the legs. Only after several tries did they succeed in rescuing the woman.

"You just do it," said Mr. Blatz afterwards, "you do not think about it until it is all over." His colleagues in early childhood education circles say he is the type of person you would always describe as just an all-round, really nice, good guy.

On behalf of the caucus, I would like to congratulate Mr. Blatz on his decoration for bravery. I know that all day-care workers have a selfless streak in them or they would not be in that profession. It is good to see that selflessness brought to the attention of all Canadians through this award. Thank you.

### Dr. George Dow

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to rise and put a few words on the record about a doctor in the community of Killarney who retired in the new year. The community has had a couple of celebrations.

I just wanted to put on the record that Dr. George Dow has retired after years of service to the Killarney and area community. A large group of community and former doctors that worked in the community attended a social evening in his honour. It was a very interesting story to hear the history of George Dow and his accomplishments, not only as a medical professional in the community of Killarney but also in his community services. He has been involved on school boards, town councils, has served as the mayor, was the chairman of the committee that built the new hospital in Killarney.

One of the comments that was made at his retirement recently was the fact that he is a vanishing breed in the province of Manitoba. Very, very rarely again, I think, we will see people of his calibre enter our communities and spend their entire lifetime offering health care and services to the people of the community and the surrounding community. It was of great note that the doctor with whom he opened his first practice in Killarney, when he came to

Killarney, returned home for the weekend from B.C., British Columbia, and told the stories of George and getting his first start into practice.

I, too, on behalf of all the people of the constituency of Turtle Mountain, the town of Killarney—and I would think I would be safe in saying on behalf of all Manitobans—we just want to thank Dr. George Dow for his lifetime of service to the community and wish him and his wife, Ruth, all the continued good health and success in their future endeavours. Thank you.

### **Flin Flon Constituency Events**

**Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon):** Mr. Speaker, this past weekend, my wife, Lisa, and I were both honoured and pleased to participate on three separate days in the superbly organized celebrations in Flin Flon.

Flin Flon's 50th annual Trout Festival coincided with the Year 2000 Homecoming. The population of the city almost doubled as an estimated 6000 visitors, many of them former residents, joined us in a weekend of joyous celebration. There was a huge agenda of events, to name a few: Main Street Days events, Phantom Lake events, Beaver Lake Days events, Homecoming block parties, Millennium Madness Dance Party and Rock Revival, Bigger than the Bigger than Boxing Day Bash, numerous contests, including the Queen Mermaid Contest, two performances of the unique musical *Bombertown*, a wine and cheese party, a homecoming cabaret, a huge homecoming social, a teen dance, a voyageur rendezvous, and much, much more.

The Canada Day Parade was the biggest ever. All kinds of records were broken as Flin Flon and the surrounding area hosted a giant party in the finest of traditions of northern hospitality. All of us had a great time. There were numerous games and events and entertainment for youngsters. There were endless barbecues and fish fries and singing and dancing. It was undoubtedly the largest party in the history of Flin Flon, and it was well deserved.

We have many reasons to be thankful in the Flin Flon area. We live in one of the most scenic

places in Canada. We are marching into a new millennium, and the future of our region appears secure. Our people are industrious, creative and generous. We work hard, and we celebrate hard, too.

**An Honourable Member:** And modest.

**Mr. Jennissen:** Yes, and we are modest, too. Well done, Flin Flon.

A big thank you to the hundreds and hundreds of volunteers who made Homecoming 2000 and the 50th annual Trout Festival such a smashing success.

### **Trans Canada Trail Relay**

**Mr. Frank Pitura (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I would just like to draw the attention of all members to a series of landmark events that took place in the Morris constituency in the communities of St. Malo, St. Pierre-Jolys and Otterburne this past weekend. What it encompassed was the welcoming of the Trans Canada Relay 2000 team and the carrying of the Arctic and Pacific Ocean water carriers coming into their communities.

But what was really significant about the whole event is the dedication of that portion of the Trans Canada Trail, which is known as the Crow Wing Trail on that side of the river. This trail has a lot of history to it. As the development of the Red River settlement took place, the Métis and the Red River oxcarts used that trail to transport goods and services from the Red River settlement to St. Paul, Minnesota, and, in turn, brought goods back. In fact, I think if you look into the history books, Louis Riel used that trail many times. I believe that after he was elected as an MP for Provencher, he had to make his way into the United States to avoid arrest by the arresting officers here in the Red River settlement.

I would also like to take the opportunity to congratulate all of the organizing committees for the three communities and the host of volunteers that were required to put an event like this together so that we could celebrate this historic occasion in that part of the province.

Mr. Speaker, just in summing up, this trail, your Crow Wing Trail, has a lot of historic significance for the province of Manitoba. I know that many individuals, when they are using the Trans Canada Trail for recreation purposes, will sense the history and be able to relive the history of this great province as they sojourn along this trail. Thank you.

## ORDERS OF THE DAY

\* (14:30)

**Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader):** Mr. Speaker, would you please call debate on second readings on Bill 46.

### DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

#### Bill 46—The Interim Appropriation Act, 2000

**Mr. Speaker:** On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger), Bill 46, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2000 (Loi de 2000 portant affectation anticipée de crédits), standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), who has 15 minutes remaining, and also standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), who has 15 minutes remaining.

Is there leave to keep it standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Morris? *[Agreed]*

**Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain):** Mr. Speaker, just to finish out my remarks, I guess what I would like to do is perhaps summarize what has been discussed throughout the past several days in regard to Bill 46.

I think at the point where we finished I was talking about agriculture. We have a Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) who just fails to recognize the issues facing the southwest region and the other regions of the province who suffered from the immense moisture conditions. It is sad that we have ministers of the new government who constantly stand and tout a position of understanding and consultation and recognizing situations and the issue and yet fail to act and fail to respond to those needs and even

fail to recognize by meeting with the people, going to their communities and hearing some of their issues and some of their concerns.

I think that is a sad day. I think it reflects very poorly on a government, particularly a new government, that portrayed itself as a kind and caring and compassionate government that was going to go out and listen to the people and offer concrete solutions to some of the issues that they are facing.

We all recognize government cannot be all and end all, but it certainly can be a big part in a catastrophe situation that the people in southwest Manitoba have faced. In the government of the day we have an Education minister that in the dark of the night cut a deal with a small group of union representatives and brought forward a new bill into this House that I think and I believe they are going to find that there is huge opposition to, not only from this side of the House.

The one thing that the Government failed to do, that the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) failed to do, was to go out and consult with the taxpayers. He has cut a small deal. I challenged him in the House the other day, and I will do it again. If one of the members opposite can produce any election campaign material that said that they were going to repeal this bill, that they campaigned on this issue, I would like to see it, because we have been unable to find that type of information. I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, that the deal was made in the dark of the night and is being foisted upon the people of the province of Manitoba unbeknownst to them.

The message I am hearing from the communities that I represent and have visited is the fact that there will be strong opposition to this. It will not be from this side of the House necessarily, but from the taxpayers of Manitoba.

Again, going down the list of failed opportunities, as much as anything, we have the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), who talks about open consultation, talks about going out and meeting with the people and talking about the opportunities that people will have to put forward their ideas on the new bills that he is representing, goes as far, Mr. Speaker, as organizing consultation meetings, sets the dates.

We probably should find out if the halls were booked and paid for or just booked and the advertisements done, because the message certainly was clear to the people of Manitoba that they would be consulted and they would have an opportunity to speak on these issues.

Then what does the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) do? Again, in the middle of the night, like many things done on the opposite side, he recognized that there was opposition to what he was doing, and rather than go out and face the public, hear their concerns and work to resolve the issues, he cancels the meetings. Again, is this the type of government that the people of Manitoba voted for? I suspect not.

We have a Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak), Mr. Speaker, who made several promises during the campaign. Several of those campaign promises have been broken, and we have brought that to light and put it on the record. But, again, I think the biggest failing of this government and its ministers, and it is recognized, I think, particularly again by the Minister of Conservation, the Minister of Health, is that they failed to go out and talk to the people that their policies are impacting the most.

We have a minister who has got a board appointed in southwest Manitoba and fails to meet with them. They have made several requests, numerous requests, I am told, and the Minister ignores their pleas. They are facing severe budget restrictions this year, Mr. Speaker, and I think they want to have the ear of the Minister to discuss some of these issues. Again, he seems to duck the issues, but not only that, he hides behind the mask that he is in legislation, the Legislature is sitting and he cannot get away.

Well, we have been kind enough on this side, Mr. Speaker, to offer those opportunities to him. I spoke with several members of the board this weekend and explained our position, that if the Minister was prepared to go out and meet with them—I would offer to them, too, that they suggested that they would come in here if the Minister is too busy to travel. I said that we would certainly, on this side of the House, make the necessary arrangements possible so that he could meet with them.

This is a group of people that are delivering health care to a large population in rural Manitoba, and they are being ignored by the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak). Again, I think that is very reflective of what the Government of the day is putting forward. They are a government that is afraid to go out and meet the people. They are afraid to go out and talk to the people because they will hear the truth. They will hear not what their spin doctors are putting in front of them, but they will hear the actual truth of what the impacts of their policies are, how they are impacting the people in Manitoba.

They may not like the news. That is the very, very difficult part of being government, is not bowing down to self-serving special interest groups which they have done on a continuous basis but to go out and represent the larger population in the province of Manitoba, the population that demands and deserves the same type of health care that is being provided to people throughout the province.

Another example, Mr. Speaker,—and it is amazing as I make this list and I talk about the ministers and some of their behaviour, it certainly becomes evident that there is a pattern here: Call a meeting; cancel the meeting; do not meet with people; do not talk to people; do not go out and consult; do not go out and discuss the issues with the people that the policies are impacting; sit in your ivory towers and write your policies. Yes, with the majority that you have, you will be able to implement them, but, again, I think you are totally neglecting the people of the province of Manitoba and their concerns.

I hate to keep bringing it up, Mr. Speaker, but another issue which to some extent today was resolved, the issue of the casinos. The new Government of Manitoba in September and August campaigned the election on health care. Everyone in this House knows it. My colleagues know it. The members opposite know it. What was the first priority after becoming elected, after the Cabinet was sworn in on October 5? What was the first priority of this group of people? Let us build casinos in the province of Manitoba. Tripling the number of casinos in the province of Manitoba was their first and foremost priority.



The people of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, are disgusted with this type of performance. They have seen it time and time and time again. We talk about the casino issue and what was brought to light today. The Premier (Mr. Doer) of Manitoba puts the former minister of Gaming in a predicament where he has to offer his resignation. It is unthinkable that a premier or a leader of any party would put a member in such a position. I feel compassion for the former minister responsible for gaming, because I think that had he been given the right information at the time, he probably would have sought the information himself, but I think he was dealing with bad information and bad advice from his caucus and from his leader. Stay quiet on it; do not say anything; this, too, will pass and the people will ignore it.

Mr. Speaker, it is a very sad day today that we have a minister who has to resign part of his responsibilities because of the position that his Premier and this government have put him in, but it is not unlike the entire approach of this government. They move forward without forethought, without thinking, without a plan. Everything that we have discussed since this Legislature has opened has been trying to determine the plan of the Government, and they have none. They talk about, well, it is in the next stage, it is in the next stage, it is in the next stage, and the people of Manitoba, although willing to give them the time to prove themselves, are starting to become leery and are starting to become weary of the fact that the information is not going out to them the way it should, not the way it has in the past, and they are very concerned that many of these issues are going to be brushed over and forgotten about, and I think that is bad.

\* (14:40)

What does it all boil down to, Mr. Speaker? We have Agriculture, we have Education, we have Conservation, we have Health, we have gambling, we have casinos, we have a leadership crisis in the province of Manitoba, and it starts right at the Premier's chair. He has allowed these ministers to go out on their own without thought or without direction, and he has failed the people of Manitoba. He has put people into positions that are untenable, and it is something that as we

gaze into the crystal ball and look into the future, we can only see more opportunities for failure on the government side. We can only see more opportunities for ministers to present themselves to the public of Manitoba for what they truly are and what they truly represent.

It is a sad statement that this has gotten to this point, and I think that, unfortunately, what we have seen today is probably just the start of things to come. As I said earlier, I have compassion for the Minister, the former minister of gaming and his family, because I do not think any minister should have been put in that position, and I do not think any minister should have been put in that position by a premier or by a leader who thought that the public would just close their eyes and ignore these issues.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I can tell you this opposition is going to challenge this government on every move that they make. We are going to expose to the public every poorly laid plan that they have out there. In fact, it may be hard to uncover the poorly laid plans, because what we have found day in and day out is that this government does not have a plan. What they do is they respond to the self-serving interest groups that they represent on a one-off basis, and when you do that and when you continue to do that, they will find out that it will fail. A government of the province of Manitoba has to govern for the people of the province of Manitoba, not for the individual groups that each one of them brings to the table and represents.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to close just by saying that I look forward to the next few years with this government as they **continue** to **move forward** and offer no new alternatives to the province of Manitoba, and we will hold them accountable every step of the way. Thank you.

**Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to add a few words and comments to this important debate in this Chamber today. Today we witnessed what was for, I am sure, the individual minister involved a very difficult day in which he had to resign, the first minister of the Doer government to tender a resignation over an issue of conflict, and I am sure it was very difficult for him.

Mr. Speaker, what that event was indicative of is a deeper problem within this government, and that is its lack of respect for Manitobans, for democratic institutions, for the law that it has demonstrated. The real shame of it for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Lemieux) having to tender that resignation to the Premier for the gaming area was that it need never have happened if the Premier of this province had been doing the right thing in the first place. That resignation was the result of sloppiness on the part of the First Minister, and, you know, it is a very interesting thing when you dissect it. It is all about we do not do any wrong, spin, spin, spin. We are perfect. We are politically perfect, and my goodness we can never admit to Manitobans that we made mistakes.

Well, I will tell you, Mr. Speaker, as a member of the Conservative Party, we know that our party has made mistakes. We know what happened in the Interlake back in 1995 was wrong, and we have accepted that responsibility. We took action against the individuals who were responsible for it, and, yes, we are embarrassed by it as a party and should be. But when we look at members opposite, when we look at this administration, we see a government so caught up in control of information and spin that it is prepared to sacrifice doing the right thing, even the cautious thing, even prepared to sacrifice the law of this province for saving some spin. Let us just look at how this resignation took place today. Did this press release get issued in the morning? No, it got issued during Question Period. What a great time to hide it from questions that day. I mean, just to look at the spin doctors in the Premier's Office, like somehow this is going to be hidden. Even how they released the information of a minister's resignation, they had to try to hide it again by putting it out during Question Period.

Mr. Speaker, in the resignation itself, the Minister says for personal reasons. Well, I am not going to challenge him on that, but I am sure that this past weekend the Premier (Mr. Doer) and his spinners finally said, you know, we had better check with a lawyer. We had better actually ask some of the Legislative Counsel if there is a problem here. I am sure, and I would speculate that that is what happened. On Friday

or over the long weekend, the Premier and his staff did a little checking and were told what we recognized when we read the Act. It was not a point that the Minister's spouse was not working on casino issues or that the Minister had not yet made a decision on them or that he had filed under The Conflict of Interest Act that his spouse was a lawyer. Those were not the issues. The real issue was the Act, and the Act said very, very clearly that the Minister could not act where a dependent—[interjection] The Minister of Family Services (Mr. Sale) talks about section 20, and I am going to get to that in a moment because he should be ashamed. He should be ashamed that the people of Manitoba have to rely on section 20 because his own leader will not do the right thing and still is hiding to this day.

Mr. Speaker, so here is the Act. It says very clearly that if you are acting with an outside interest and your spouse is employed by that interest, you have to refrain from doing it. That is what the Act says, and the Minister admitted that was the situation and those were the facts. The Premier (Mr. Doer) even today somehow insisted that he was not in breach of the Act because he never read it, never read it, and all of his answers to questions in this House would certainly make any observer say that the Premier had not read it or was trying to deny it.

So what do we think? What did the public see today? What they see is probably over the weekend the Premier finally chatted with someone in authority who understood the Act, had a strong sense that they were in big trouble and this was about damage control, and you know the shame of it is the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is a new minister in this House, and, as we have said over and over again, and I as someone who has worked with his spouse, they are honourable people. Nobody has accused them of doing anything untoward but that they have been in breach of the Act.

This could have been easily dealt with by this Premier (Mr. Doer) a week or two weeks ago if this Premier had just done what is available to every MLA in their own circumstances, consulted with the outside counsel that is made available to all of us. The facts could have been put to that counsel. They would have

had a legal opinion. If the Minister had come back and said, you know, we have checked with our lawyers, and, yes, there is a potential problem here, and I am asking to step aside from this portfolio, we would have hailed him for doing the right thing, and, you know what, no blemish on his career.

But, no, the Premier of this province, just stubborn and arrogant, dug in and said, no, no, no. Then today, in the House, we hear, well, we have consulted with the legal authorities, but we will never table that, because it probably confirms what I am suggesting here today, that when the Government finally got a legal opinion, it was very, very clear that they were in trouble, and this was about damage control, right down to spinning out the news release during Question Period so they would not have to face questions about it today.

The Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Sale) talked about using section 20. Section 20 is there when you have a stubborn government who refuses to do its own work, and that is what we now have. You know, Mr. Speaker, every single MLA and Cabinet minister, by simply picking up the phone and speaking to Shirley Strutt, can get the name of an outside counsel, who for no charge to that individual minister and member will review the facts and provide them with a confidential legal opinion, with a course of action. Even if the Minister or MLA made a mistake following that opinion—opinions are not always the be-all and end-all—they could say, well, listen, I took the proper step; I consulted with that outside lawyer and I am following the advice that was given.

\* (14:50)

You know what? I think the public and this House would accept that, but it takes the step, the first step of a Cabinet minister and an MLA to go down and do the right thing, pick up the phone, speak to Shirley Strutt and get the opinion. What did we have here? A minister who would not do it, I suspect being told by the Premier's Office not to do it, and a premier who refused to have it done.

Well, Mr. Speaker, their reply is, well, you can go and do it under section 20. So what does that say to Manitobans? That Gary Doer, the

First Minister, really, quite frankly, will never check on conflict of interest. He will not be cautious. He will not use that lawyer. He will not instruct his ministers or MLAs to do it, because the Premier is always right, he tells us. He knows, but he will not table an opinion.

So, Mr. Speaker, that is what is so horrific about this, is that the First Minister is setting a tone that he will not be cautious in cases of possible conflict. He will not check and use such a simple, confidential procedure as the one that has been provided for years in this House. That is really the crime here. That is really the shame. That is really the insult to Manitobans, is that they will not use that counsel to check. That is what speaks volumes about this Premier and this administration.

Then, Mr. Speaker, we go a little further. We go to how does this government deal with freedom of information, a party that in opposition cried out for greater freedom of information, cried out for a privacy commissioner? The Member for Lord Roberts (Ms. McGifford), then the member for Osborne, day after day in this House said we need a privacy commissioner who can clamp down when there are abuses, when government does not provide the information, who will have teeth to punish.

Well, you know, I understand her comments better today. She knew herself and her own colleagues. They would need to have that heavy hammer over their head to do the right thing. That is why she wanted it. Now I understand, Mr. Speaker. So what do we see? Manitobans are treated to the spectacle last week of the First Minister getting up in this House, not even really knowing that his own staff, his most senior staff, were in violation of the law. Then, when he learned about it, what did he say? Well, his staff, they said: The problem is not with us breaking the law; the problem is with the law. Well, is that not interesting. So what does that say to us? If we do not like a piece of legislation that their government passes, we can break it. We do not have to follow it because the problem is not with us breaking the law; the problem is with the law. Does that mean that any hog producer out there who does not like the environmental regulations can break it, because the problem is not breaking the law; the problem is the law? This is the new

standard that the Premier of Manitoba and his senior staff are taking.

Again in this House, when he was questioned about this, the First Minister, well, he got very defensive. He did not know about it. He sort of hemmed and hawed. Then he walked out of this Chamber, got a microphone put in front of his face, and what was the first thing he said? I am taking steps to make sure this does not happen again. Okay, fine. So we come into the House the next day, and we ask him a simple question. What steps are you taking? Well, I am not really taking any now, he says. There is no microphone in front of me. The media are not hounding me; I do not have to do anything. My people are right.

What is this, Mr. Speaker? What is this? Is this a premier who is going to set a standard and strive to keep it a high standard, or is this a premier who is going to spin, spin, spin? Well, we should not be surprised that the architect of the now slogan of this government—the problem is not with breaking law, it is with the law—is the chief communicator, the chief press secretary to the Premier. Well, has the Premier done anything to reprimand him or his Clerk of the Executive Council who was involved in this? Has he put a letter of reprimand on their file? Has he disciplined them in any way? Not at all. Not at all, Mr. Speaker, because in the world of this Premier, it is the spin that is right. There is no other right or wrong. That is the message that they are sending to Manitobans. That is the message.

Now today, we saw it happen again. The Leader of the Liberal Party, the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard), asked a very good question in this House. He said, under the law, upon receipt of the report of the Chief Electoral Officer, the Government is obliged under the law within 60 days to call a committee to hear the report. It is a right of every one of the members of this Legislature to have the law respected by the Government. As the Member for River Heights pointed out, today was the 67th day, and he asked why was the Committee not being called.

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

Well, you know, the Premier (Mr. Doer) could have got up and very easily said an oversight on our part. We are a new administration, we are busy, lots going on. It is an oversight. We will have a committee called by the end of today. You know what? There would not have been an issue. But what does the Premier say? Well, we do not have to obey the law again, because we are bringing in some changes on our own. We do not have to obey the law, because it is not the way we want to do things. That is what the First Minister said. Well, we do not have to call it. We have a bill before the House, so we do not really have to have the report. Besides, you did not take his recommendations from previous years. Well, what does that have to do with it, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Recommendations are there. They come to the Committee. They can be accepted or rejected, but they came to the Committee under the law. So, even if this committee was called together and it had no recommendations, or it did not accept the recommendations, at least it was acting within the law, and the rights of every member of this Assembly who sits on that committee to speak to those recommendations would have been respected, but heavens to Betsy, the Premier would actually want those rights respected.

So we are—[interjection] Well, the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith) says you can go and challenge it under section 20. Well, for his edification, I just want to remind him again that section 20 is there to protect the people against a premier who will not do the right thing. It is there to protect the public when you have a dictatorial government who will not do the right thing, that they can be dragged kicking and screaming into court when they should have done it on their own.

The Member for Brandon West who, again, is new to this House should just realize how easy it is for him or myself or any member of the Cabinet or any member of this Legislature just to check. You pick up the phone and call Shirley Strutt, and she gives you the name of the independent counsel. You run the issue by them, and they provide you with a written opinion. It takes three, four, five days. That is all, a very simple and easy process. But the Member for

Brandon West says: We will not do that. You have to drag us into court. Citizens cannot expect this government to actually check on themselves. Drag us into court.

Well, you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would suggest that the new members of that party, they do not have to listen to me. Listen to the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). I learned a great deal from that member in my years in the House. He always reminded me that if you may be a bit wrong or you are accused of being wrong, just check. It does not cost anything. If you are, just admit it and take the right steps. It is always easier than being dragged forward until finally what was a relatively small issue becomes a big issue.

You know what? This is a classic case. The Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Lemieux) and the Premier (Mr. Doer) who were faced with this issue some weeks ago could have easily dealt with it if they had gone and got an opinion. In fact, we went to the Committee and we said that to the Minister. We said to him that we understood, we were not accusing him of pocketing money or any of those things, but we said to him, just go get the opinion. If it says there is not a problem, we will respect that. If there is, he will take the appropriate corrective action, issue over.

\* (15:00)

But they would not, and he would not I suspect—I think he wanted to. I think he wanted to do the right thing, but the spinners in the Premier's Office, we can never admit we are wrong, and dragged the thing on and dragged it on until damage control. Well, he should be thankful. At least he is out now because we were going to pursue section 20. We would have been going to court, and the first decision would have been a judge ordering it to a hearing. The Government would have had a very bad story that day as it said: Judge orders hearing. That would have been the headline, and then they would have had the hearing.

#### Point of Order

**Hon. Tim Sale (Minister of Family Services and Housing):** On a point of order, Mr. Deputy

Speaker, I am sure we are all enjoying this ramble by the Member opposite, but the matter under debate is the question of Supply and the Budget. The Member at least occasionally might pay reference to the subject he is debating at the present time which is not conflict of interest, it is not aboriginal gaming, it is not anything to do with the change in responsibilities.

So I would ask you to ask him if he could at least be momentarily relevant to the matter under debate.

**Mr. Praznik:** Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am glad that the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Sale) is enjoying my comments, although I suspect deep down he really is not.

But I want to say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I am saying is highly relevant. This government is coming to this House for a vote of Supply. This House has a right to debate and discuss the demeanour of the Government, the way in which the Government acts, the arrogance of this government. We have a right to discuss how this government operates, because if we do not think it is fit to govern, I as a member of this House have a right to vote against its Supply, so what I am speaking about is absolutely relevant to whether or not we should be voting the Supply.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** On the matter raised on the issue of relevance, normally we may have some leeway, but at least the Member should touch on the financial aspects of the issue.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Praznik:** I will. Any government that behaves this way is not worthy of the Supply granted by this Legislature. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am attempting to demonstrate that this government is not worthy of having these dollars voted to them. I keep hearing members opposite saying, why not use section 20 in a smear campaign? I want to say very clearly here that no one on this side of the House accused the Minister or his spouse of gaining any benefit out of this. In fact, I would be the first to defend him. I know, I got to know the Minister. I have worked with his spouse. They are honourable people. His spouse is one of the best land claims lawyers in the province of Manitoba. What we

accused them of is on a reading of the Act of being in breach of the provisions with respect to spouses and indirect pecuniary interests. The Act is there. It is the law of the province.

Quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the whole incident would have been ended if the First Minister (Mr. Doer) had just done the right thing and got the legal opinion. It was members opposite who have inflicted great personal pain on the family of their colleague, because they would not do the right thing because they were too stubborn and too arrogant to do the right thing. That is the reputation that they will come to be held for, that is the reputation that they will come to be known for. That is the real shame.

So here we have it. We have the breach of The Conflict of Interest Act, we have the breach of The Freedom of Information Act, we have a breach of The Elections Act with respect to the calling of the committee, and we have a premier who just simply will not get up and say we have made a few mistakes here, we are going to correct them. Oh, no, this premier can do no wrong. This premier is Mr. Perfect in his own eyes—and there go the clapping members.

But some of their colleagues know what went on last week, some of the veterans who have been here before who saw this party suffer some of the same pains whenever we failed to admit we were wrong when we were wrong. That is the lesson to all of us, because all governments are not perfect, all governments make mistakes. But the question is when you make them, are you prepared to discuss them, admit them and take the corrective action? That is the real issue.

What the Premier has proven in the last few weeks is that he is not capable of admitting a mistake. He is not capable of taking corrective action. He is not capable of doing anything else than digging himself in and being stubborn and arrogant. Who paid the price for it? The Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Lemieux) and his family, they paid the price for it. They paid the price on what could have been a relatively small matter.

I will tell you I am actually pleased that the Minister got out when he did because when we had filed section 20, and members often talk

about it—*[interjection]* The Member says we would not do it. Well, I say to the Member for Dauphin-Roblin (Mr. Struthers) that the Act provides for an application. One has to obtain counsel, one has to prepare that application. We are in the process this week of doing that. We have even had discussions with the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Gerrard), because he believed how important it was as well.

Do you know what? I think why we had this happen today—and, again, this comes back to the demeanour of the Government who is asking for Supply of this House; it comes back to the demeanour. I think why we saw the events of today was pure damage control. They finally checked with a lawyer because, you know what, we were already hearing from the lawyers within government who were already whispering to us that they knew that the Minister had a problem. They knew, so maybe this premier opened his ear just enough to hear those whispers.

They realized that we would go forward with a section 20, and it may be joined by the Liberal Party, so now you have two parties taking them on. You would have had the first judge's decision, which would have ordered a hearing, so you would have had one big bad headline saying minister ordered to hearing. Then you would have had the hearing. Then you would have had a decision against the Minister.

\* (15:10)

At that point, it simply would not have been a matter of giving up the responsibility for gaming. At that point, that minister would have had to resign as a member of the Executive Council. Because at that point, it would have been demonstrated how bad his judgment was and the judgment of the Premier (Mr. Doer) not to have even checked this. It would not have been a matter of simply giving up responsibility as the Act required; it would have been a matter of leaving Cabinet.

So I am glad that—*[interjection]*

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. It is the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) who has the floor.

**Mr. Praznik:** Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am glad because I am sure that minister has been

following the advice of his Premier's Office and the spinners on what to do, and he has learned a very hard lesson. This is a lesson that every rookie in that caucus should learn, too: that when you are serving a premier whose spin is more important, who is not prepared to do the right thing, you will be the one who is sacrificed, not him. You will be the one who is sacrificed, not him, and that is the lesson for the rookies who get up today like pawns to defend their Premier in the hope of a Cabinet portfolio no doubt. We see it today, you know, members getting up to defend the Premier when the Premier was wrong. Part of that please-put-me-into-Cabinet routine.

Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to use the few minutes remaining to me to make a few comments about health. Because I know the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) has, in Estimates debate, suggested that perhaps I might want to join the Estimates at some point to have some discussion with him. I am certainly looking forward to the chance to do that. I would say to him just a few observations.

He was very critical of, I think, my criticisms of his announcements with respect to the heart program. I just want to say that my concern with that announcement with respect to the heart program was that Dr. Brian Postl, who served the Winnipeg Hospital Authority, was appointed to his then-position as head of medical services when I was minister, sat in my office on numerous occasions and made the very strong argument for one program, one site. In fact, we brought him to Cabinet and he made that recommendation with his program team, not him alone, with his program team, in consultation with the various providers of that service, with not only the physicians but the nurses, the allied health workers on his team.

He came and made that presentation to Cabinet, just as it was his recommendation with respect to the changes at Misericordia. We accepted them because they were based on the premise of doing what is best for health care delivery in the city of Winnipeg and the province of Manitoba and not on the politics within the hospital system that provides that health care.

Now, what is interesting is during the election campaign, we understand that the New

Democratic Party candidate in St. Boniface, now the MLA for that area, promised heart surgery would return to St. Boniface. After the election, it is obvious work was done to then change that proposal of Dr. Postl. Of course, Dr. Postl now comes up with, well, a few of these things change and are positive, but the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) would not have known that when he made the promise back during the election campaign.

So it is very evident that the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) and the Government made a decision based on the politics of the Winnipeg hospital system and of St. Boniface, rather than what is best for health care. That is my criticism.

Now, if Dr. Postl is comfortable in working under a minister and a government who would rather deal with the politics within the Winnipeg hospital system than what is best for health care, then so be it, but I am very disappointed in Dr. Postl. He is not the individual I thought he was. What is interesting is he seems to have distanced himself now from that argument. He said very clearly to the media it was a political decision. He did mention that the fact that St. Boniface is buying this program for \$6 million is part of it. So it is obvious what has happened here, a political decision, St. Boniface buying the program with \$6 million, and the Government going along with it.

If that is what the Government is comfortable with, that is fine. Manitobans will pay the price for it in the long run, but I just say this to the Minister of Health, one bit of advice from someone who has been there. That is, at the end of the day, the politics within the Winnipeg hospital system will bring down whatever he wants to do. It will bring it down.

At some point, if members truly believe in a public health care system that is publicly administered, they are going to have to come to grips with that issue. We tried. We were not as successful at it as I would have liked. I admit that.

Yes, there are a lot of interests there that work against it, but this government has now sent a signal to every other board of directors in

the city that services are for sale, that this government is prepared to deal in politics, not health care. Although the Minister will take his credits from the Grey Nuns and the people at St. Boniface and their board of directors, every other hospital facility now knows that the decisions made by this minister are based on politics. If they can come to the door with a piece of cash to buy what they want, his door is open. What is best for health care delivery in Winnipeg is only secondary.

I do not believe that this Minister of Health is entirely comfortable with this. I think he understands that, but, again, I think his Premier, his calling from St. Boniface, and the politics of the moment have led to this course of decision. Time will tell, but the signal sent to everyone else is that health care in the City of Winnipeg is now determined by the political agenda set by the eternal politics of the hospitals and their organizations and not by a long-term vision of what is best for the patients, what is best for health care delivery, but, rather, what is the politics within that system.

I will tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there will be long-term repercussions from that signal. Now, maybe the Minister will pick another place to draw a line in the sand. Maybe he will pick another place to stand up for what is best for the system. Sometimes those interests converge, but many times they do not. He will have to choose. But I can tell him there will be a path beat to his door by everyone else wanting their piece for their political interest, small "p" political interest, in the health care system.

Perhaps we can have this discussion in Estimates. Perhaps it will have to wait until he is no longer minister. When that time has come, with the kind of second thought that being out of that office can bring, perhaps he and I someday can commit our respective thoughts to pen for the benefit of those who watch this health care debate. But that is the warning I make to him. I think deep down he understands and appreciates those comments.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have taken most of my time. I am very pleased to have contributed to this debate. I just want to say to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr.

Lemieux) that it was a difficult day for him. We certainly felt what he must have gone through. I am personally pleased that it has not gone so far, that he can remain in Cabinet, because I do believe that as a new minister he is a very capable individual. It is regrettable that his colleagues let it go so far that it came to the point that it did. Thank you.

**Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell):** I, too, am pleased to rise today to add some words to this important debate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, because it is a very significant debate in the House. Interim Supply is not something that any member in this House takes for granted or takes lightly. It gives us an opportunity to be able to express our thoughts and our opinions with regard to how the government, indeed, is conducting itself and how it is living up to its obligations as a government.

This House has now been sitting for some time, and we have seen a government bringing in a budget that, I think, has surprised and shocked many Manitobans. Indeed, many Manitobans today are wondering what has happened to the good stewardship of this province and where it has gone, especially since the Budget was introduced in this House.

I say that quite seriously, because for the last 12 years, we had a government in this province who believed in balanced budgets, who believed in spending within our means, and who believed in getting the financial house of this province in order. I remember very clearly when we came into government, the kind of situation that was inherited, and, no, I am not going to blame any members on the other side of the House for that situation, because although it was an NDP government, it was a different government and one that I think this particular government wants to distance itself from. Nevertheless, it has to be said that that particular administration left one of the worst messes, financially, that this province has ever seen in its entire history.

\* (15:20)

It took our administration a significant amount of time to get the financial house of this province in order. I think it is recognized even beyond the borders of our province. Even



beyond the borders of our province, it is recognized nationally. I believe that indeed there was a government in this province that did get this financial house in order. As a matter of fact, it has been recognized by the lending institutions, the lending houses, if you like, of this nation and of America.

When this government took office, I think it did itself a disservice in many ways. One of the more significant ways that it did itself a disservice was by launching into a campaign to try to discredit the former administration in terms of its financial accountability. They launched into a review of the finances of this province, and even before that review was done, there were utterings about a \$400-million deficit that was left by the Conservative administration.

Time proved that indeed this was a falsehood, that it was an attempt to hoodwink the public, if you like, about the true finances of the province, because there is nothing truer than the audited financial statements of a province. When the Auditor comes out with his quarterly reports, which show that, instead of the deficit, this province enjoyed a surplus, it does show a little bit of the kind of witch hunt that this administration was on in terms of its first action as a government. I think Manitobans recognize that. No matter where you go and you talk about this, Manitobans recognize that this was a government that tried, but failed to run a deficit when there was not really a deficit there.

This government ran on five promises, as it calls them. One of the most important promises that it ran on was health care, and it was a promise to, No. 1, do away with waiting lists, do away with what is termed "hallway medicine," and to put in place adequate staff and to put in place adequate hospital beds to deal with the issues. The Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak), who was then campaigning, said that they could do it all for \$15 million.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the Minister of Health has failed miserably in terms of addressing the issues of health care in the province because waiting lists still exist. Hallway medicine still exists. As a matter of fact, I have, unfortunately, several constituents who today have been forced to seek medical

help in the United States because of the fact that they were on such long waiting lists that they would not have had their medical situation dealt with probably before life ended for them. Secondly, I have a family member who has now been obliged to seek medical assistance outside our province because there is no room in our province today.

So has it become better? As a matter of fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, an elderly person who just broke her second hip, unfortunately, is now in a position where she may not get her situation looked after for several days because of the fact that there are such a number of waiting lists out there in this area.

Now, I am not blaming this administration for that because waiting lists are waiting lists. We try to do what we can in a province to try to deliver services to people. But I think what happened was there were some false promises made by this administration in terms of what they thought they could do.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in health care remember the Connie Curran issue? That is one that our government took significant criticism from the members who were in opposition at the time. As a matter of fact, the now Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) would become so animated about Connie Curran, there were times when we felt he might need medical attention himself.

Well, as time passes on, what do we find has now happened? Well, the new Minister of Health who was so opposed to the American health care system is now sending patients where? To the United States. He is sending patients as the Minister of Health to the United States because our health care system cannot look after them.

Now, is that not a tragedy, Mr. Deputy Speaker? The man who himself said that we were trying to Americanize our health care system is now sending our patients to the United States. He was the one who headed the opposition to Connie Curran and the recommendations that were made by that firm to the health care system in Manitoba. So, I hate to say this, but it appears that sometimes people speak with

a forked tongue in terms of how they address issues within our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us look at education. Now, true, the education system in our province is one which has always been one that has had the interest of the public. Indeed, the new Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) came forward with a budget to the education system that pumped additional dollars into the education system to ensure that indeed the quality of education would be maintained. However, after his announcement, when the analysis was done, many school boards around the province would tell you today that indeed the amount of money that was injected into education was certainly not near what the announcement was that had been made by the Minister. We know how that works because on both sides of the House we have had people who have worked in the education system and understand how the finances work in the education system. It, again, is not an easy system to administer.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the most devastating area, I think, is in the area of post-secondary education. Now, this government said that it wants to double the spaces in our community colleges, a laudable goal. But let us be realistic because we know that you have to have the infrastructure in place, you have to have staffing in place, and you have to have programs in place if, indeed, you are going to double the number of spaces in our community colleges. We do not have the capacity right now to be able to do that.

But what is even more dramatic is the effect that this government's budget has had on post-secondary education in the university area. Now, we have always prided ourselves as Manitobans, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we have a high quality, a high calibre of university education in our province, that the University of Manitoba, a research facility, one that deals with complex issues in many faculties has been able to attract not only to its staff but indeed to the students of our province some very high-calibre individuals.

What has happened is the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) tried, or this government, I would say, tried to deal with the issue of student tuition fees. Unfortunately, they

did not project their thoughts far enough, and they got caught by it because they have frozen tuition fees all right for universities. They have decreased tuition by 10 percent for students, but what does that do when the university cannot afford to offer the programs that they once did because they no longer have the ability to increase the revenues for that university to maintain the high quality of staff, to maintain the programs and to maintain the equipment that is so needed?

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you yourself know that area because you are a member of a faculty at the University, so therefore you understand the importance of not cutting the tuition levels to such a point where universities have no flexibility, and they have to cut programs, have to cut staff, they have to cut equipment. Now maybe that is okay for one year, but what does that mean down the road? What does that mean five and ten years down the road? What does that mean to students who are looking for world-class institutions to enrol in? It means that the University of Manitoba is not going to be able to compete, as our other universities will not be able to compete with other universities in other provinces for the high-quality staff, for the high-quality faculty members and the high quality of students.

\* (15:30)

So it also impacts on that student who got a 10% decrease in his tuition fees, because where is that student now to go to seek those programs and those opportunities that they are looking forward to? That means that they will be leaving our province. Unfortunately, for my family, we have two young men who have decided to seek their educational opportunities outside our province. It saddens me, because I am very proud of our province. I am very proud of the institutions of our province. But that is happening not only to me. It is happening to many families in Manitoba. So the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) is going to have to answer to students in this province, to our universities and to the people in general, what negative impact his freeze on tuition fees and his reduction of 10 percent on a tuition fee is going to have on students who are looking for an education in our province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what about the doubling of tuition fees or doubling of attendance to our community colleges? What plan has this government come forward with to show us how they are going to implement the doubling of enrolment at our post-secondary community college institutions? Now we see Red River was talking about and had plans for a downtown campus. Today, the Government is politically trying to manoeuvre that building of that structure to be linked with the University of Winnipeg.

Now, I have to ask myself what is the real plan here, because the Government has not laid out a plan in terms of what it wants to do with, for example, our universities and our community colleges. Now, our administration had a plan. We had a plan that we shared with everyone, and it was to ensure that the universities articulated with the community colleges that indeed we were able to offer post-secondary education through the video or the computer link. It was through distance education. There was a plan, and we moved on that plan on a continuous basis.

But I am still waiting for a plan from this Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) with regard to post-secondary education, because all we see is a knee-jerk reaction to some pressure that was put on by some people with regard to tuition fees and a knee-jerk reaction in terms of capping the tuitions of universities. Where is that going to lead us in the long term? I do not think it is going to provide for the opportunities for those students who are seeking post-secondary education in the province of Manitoba.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

I want to spend a few moments in talking about agriculture, because the area that I represent is certainly one that is quite heavily dominated by the agricultural business, and, Mr. Speaker, unfortunately, we have not seen any kind of policy or direction in a positive manner from this government with regard to agriculture. Now, we know the kind of hurt that is being experienced by farmers in the southwest part of our province. We know that, as a result of the 1999 flood, there are producers out there today who still have not been able to seed some of that

land, who today are still suffering the results of the loss of income in 1999. The only glimmer of hope they have had was that little bit of assistance that they received from the former administration of \$50 per acre.

Yes, Mr. Speaker, there is an obligation from the federal government to insure that these farmers are treated in the same way as farmers south of Winnipeg were treated. But having said that, this administration has an obligation to those farmers, to those producers as well. All we have seen from this Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) is the fact that she continues to put the blame and put the responsibility on the federal government without accepting any responsibility for this government by the Minister of Agriculture. That is sad because the people of Manitoba voted this government in to look after those urgent needs of Manitobans when they are struck by such disasters as a flood or a fire or whatever that might be.

So, when this government was elected, I remember very vividly the ~~now~~ Minister of Agriculture during the election campaign would meet with groups of farmers, and because her constituency and mine were neighbours, I know what she was saying to those producers. She was telling them that she would look after them. She was telling them that if her government was elected and if she were the Minister of Agriculture, she would insure that those farmers were treated fairly and equitably.

Now, once again, I said the Minister of Education has failed, the Minister of Health has failed, and now the Minister of Agriculture has failed, as well, Mr. Speaker, failed to address those very important issues that are being faced by many Manitoba families. These are families that work hard, and they are out there on the land every day trying to make sure that they can provide the needs for themselves and to produce a high quality of food that we are noted for throughout the world. These people do not have the time to be sitting up in our gallery and to be lobbying the Minister on a day-to-day basis. They know that they have sent the message to the Government, and that the Government has an obligation, but to date the Government has failed in every way to respond to those pleas from

these Manitoba families to come to their assistance.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture is meeting with her counterparts across Canada today, and she is also meeting with the federal minister. Before she left, she told me that she would be addressing this issue once again, but it is not good enough just to call in the federal government for assistance without putting your own money on the table, and to date we have not heard, we have not seen anything that would give us any comfort that this government is serious about addressing the needs of southwestern Manitoba. As a matter of fact, my colleague the critic for Agriculture, the Member for Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner), has called on this minister to come to southwest Manitoba. The Member from Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed) has asked this minister to come out to the southwest corner of Manitoba. I have asked this minister to come out to the southwest corner of Manitoba to deal with our farmers. *[interjection]*

Well, the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) says she was there during the flood, but where has she been since she became the Minister of Agriculture? I recall that when the disaster hit in the Swan River Valley—that was in, what, 1988?—we were there. The Minister of Agriculture was there. The Minister responsible for emergency measures was there. The Minister of Conservation was there. The Minister of Rural Development was there. The Minister of Education was there. The Minister of Health was there.

Mr. Speaker, every minister who had any responsibility to try and improve and tried to help with the situation as far as it relates to families was there. I call on this government to do the same, to show some compassion for the people of southwestern Manitoba, who have suffered immeasurably. It is not very difficult to forget when you sit in this Legislature or when you are in the city of Winnipeg about what the people outside are experiencing, because I know firsthand, when I come into the city of Winnipeg and I am involved with the issues here, it is not difficult to forget about the pain that people outside the city in a particular part of Manitoba are experiencing.

You know that, Mr. Speaker, because you come from an area outside of this city and you understand those issues. I call on the Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk) and the rest of the members of this government to show some compassion for those people. I call on the Minister who is responsible for emergency measures and for disaster situations, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), to indeed go out there and talk to the people first-hand about what their needs are.

\* (15:40)

It is not what their wants are; it is what their needs are, because if we as a governing body, as a government, cannot address those issues in a time of crisis and a time of need, then I submit that we are not doing our jobs as stewards of the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about Interim Supply, we have to look at issues in the various departments. Another issue that I have to talk about is the issue as it relates to the government Department of Conservation. Now, this used to be the Department of Natural Resources, now changed to the Department of Conservation. Indeed this minister made a commitment to Manitobans that he failed to live up to. He said to Manitobans that before he would introduce legislation into the House with regard to the penned hunting, if you like, that there would be consultation throughout Manitoba.

As a matter of fact, he set up the meetings, he advertised the meetings. He said this is where I will be to discuss this very important issue with all Manitobans.

I want to put something on the record that I have not spoken about before. That is that governments across this country asked rural people to diversify their economy. They asked rural people to get away from growing simply one commodity and to diversify their economy. So in my area, where I live in an area which could be described as parkland in a part of my area, people diversified into what they called hunt farms. Now, this is not penned hunting.

These are hunt farms. Now, you have to go out to a hunt farm to be able to understand it.

You cannot understand it sitting in the Legislature. You cannot understand it in the city of Winnipeg. You need to go out there and walk through a hunt farm and take a look at what actually happens.

In the province of Saskatchewan, where there was an NDP administration, they allow for hunt farms. They allow for people to come in and hunt on these enclosed areas where only a selected animal can be taken, not just any animal, but a selected animal can be taken. That is a boost to the economy of those rural areas.

Now, every time you attack an issue like this, you are attacking the livelihood of people in rural Manitoba. But this government does not seem to care about that. I do not know if the Minister understands what the issue around the hunt farms is, but there were some lobbyists and some activists who came to this government and said, you have to do away with penned hunting.

Where did that phrase come from? Well, it certainly did not come from the industry. It certainly did not come from the people who were engaged in that activity. But you tell me the difference between luring an animal by setting out some bait and sitting up in a tree and waiting for it to come to that bait and then popping it in the head. I think there is more hunting skill involved when you go to a hunt farm where you have to actually pursue the game, and your chances of getting it are not necessarily guaranteed.

So, Mr. Speaker, I have an issue about that, but this minister refused to go out to the hearing. As a matter of fact, he cancelled all of the hearings. Why did he cancel them? Because I think he was afraid of the pressure that he might be getting into when he went out to these meetings. Then he changed his tactic and he said, well, everybody will have an opportunity to come and make representation before committee. We know that. That process is always open to the public. But he was the one who committed himself to public meetings before he would put the bill into the House.

Mr. Speaker, another promise broken, another commitment not kept, another failure by another minister of this government.

**An Honourable Member:** One after the other.

**Mr. Derkach:** It goes one department after the next, if you analyze it carefully. Look what happened in the Department of Highways. Talk to any of the contractors out there today. They ask you: What has happened to the Department of Highways budget? Why is it cut back by \$10 million? Well, I live in an agricultural part of the province where we depend very heavily on truck transportation because our railways have been let go. Our railways have been abandoned. So, therefore, the municipalities for years have been struggling to try and address the deterioration of our road system. They have called on government to help them to try and restore the transportation routes especially for these heavy trucks that find their way on our highways.

I am going to talk about a couple of highways. One of the highways is Highway 16 that leads through our province, and it goes right through my community. I travel that highway at least twice a week. I will take Highway 16 once, then I will take Highway No. 1 once. The traffic on Highway 16 is just unbelievable. It keeps increasing by the day. If the Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton) checks his statistics, he will know that the percentage of truck traffic is highest on Highway 16. It is higher than it is on No. 1. If we look at the condition of that highway, we have to address it on a yearly basis. We cannot let it go for a whole year without adding a chunk of reconstruction to that highway or else we will be in great difficulty down the road.

Why would we cut back the Highways budget by \$10 million, especially when the revenues of this province are going up?

**An Honourable Member:** And increased the northern spending by 20 percent.

**Mr. Derkach:** It is obvious. This minister will understand in a couple of years what he has done but not just now. *[interjection]* He says we have increased spending in the North—by how many percent?

**An Honourable Member:** Twenty percent.

**Mr. Derkach:** Twenty percent increase in the North. That is great. You know, I have driven

those roads in the North. I know they need addressing, but if you are going to do that, then increase the global budget of Highways. Do not take from one, do not steal from one, to give to the other. Increase your global budget. You know that the spending is required. Highways spending is good spending. *[interjection]*

Mr. Speaker, we hear from across the way: How much did they put into equipment? How much did they put into that? We have 17-year-old graders out there; we have old equipment out there, but the reality is that the money was going into the infrastructure where it should be going. *[interjection]* We have been through that. We have been in the middle of snowstorms, and nobody in this House drives more kilometres than I do with regard to going back and forth. I have been in storms and I have had the Highways Department out there pushing the snow.

I have been out in the middle of the road, and they have done a good job, Mr. Speaker, but it is the priorities of government. This government has decided that its priorities are different. They are not maintaining the infrastructure for the highways that carry the traffic. Their focus is not on ensuring that indeed those important links continue to make our communities viable and make them survive. So department after department, we can see how there is deterioration in the state of our economy in Manitoba.

Now we go to the first priority that this government chose for itself as a new government, and that first priority was to build casinos. It was not to look after the health care system. It was not to look after the education system. It was not to look after the social services of our province. It was not to look after the economy of the province. It was to look after building more casinos in the province of Manitoba. That was his first commitment, his first priority, to expand the casinos in our province by threefold. Mr. Speaker, what kind of thinking is that? If we continue to listen to the lobby groups that press for things and if we keep responding to them by allowing for things of this nature to take priority, we are going to end up in an awful mess in a few years.

Mr. Speaker, yes, I have been in the Minister's Estimates where we question the

Minister with regard to the conflict as it related to the allocation of casinos. I have to say, as well, with my colleague from Lac du Bonnet, we said time and time again that we did not fault this minister's wife nor this Minister for that situation, that, indeed, this minister found himself in a situation because his Premier put him there. All we were asking for through the Estimates debate was to get the Minister to get some legal advice and to table that legal advice and then to take the appropriate action whether it was to carry on. And as the legal advice would have indicated, there was no conflict. That was fine, we were prepared to move on. We told the Minister that. We told him we were giving him time, we were flexible in our approach. We were not demanding his head at the time nor have we done that to date. Now, the government, as it should, should have looked at this issue and asked for legal advice. The Member for Lac du Bonnet has laid out very clearly what that path is, how you would determine whether or not there is a conflict on an issue.

\* (15:50)

Somewhere the Government has had to receive some advice that said this could be an issue for the Government down the road, so the Minister has done the honourable thing. He has given up that file, as he should have done some time ago because of the perceived conflict, or, in fact, it could be a real conflict. We still do not know. We have asked the Premier to table that advice. But, you see, this Premier takes the attitude that he is right about everything and that we cannot question him on anything because he is right about everything. When we look at the FOI issue, again, the Premier says he is right. The law may be wrong, but he is right, so he is above the law.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I tell you that this Premier is going to get himself in a lot of hot water if he continues to take that approach, because he must listen to the law, he must abide by the law, and, indeed, it is his responsibility to ensure that his ministers do not find themselves in situations as this Minister did. I do not fault this Minister. As a matter of fact, I have a lot of time for this Minister because I think he shows that he has a lot of potential in being able to

contribute not only to his government but being able to contribute to the people of Manitoba.

So it is a difficult issue for this Minister and I respect that and I know that. I know that he will move on and still continue to contribute in a positive way to the people of Manitoba and to his Cabinet because he has taken the right steps at this time. What is so regrettable is the attitude that this premier has about this issue and about issues like this. I do not fault anyone except the Premier of this province, because I think he is setting a poor standard. He is setting a very low standard. He has continued to indicate that his attitude toward the law is one where the law does not necessarily matter. Indeed, it is his view of the situation that matters. I think that is going to land this Premier in hot water down the road.

Mr. Speaker, the Government is asking for Interim Supply now. It is asking of this Legislature to pass this bill so that indeed the economy of the province and the business of this government can continue.

But there are some issues that will not go away. One of those issues is some of the approaches that this government has taken on issues like health care.

There was a time when a government approached the professionals in health care to give advice to government and then that advice was followed. But nothing was more politically blatant, Mr. Speaker, than the reinstatement of the cardiac unit at St. Boniface Hospital. I think every Manitoban knows what really happened on that issue, that this is not a prudent administrative decision, that indeed this is a politically motivated decision where the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) and his government have decided that to ensure that they live up to a commitment that was made by a candidate of their election that they would reverse a decision and politically move a unit into the St. Boniface Hospital at considerable cost to the taxpayers.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the decision that was made previously to consolidate cardiac surgery and cardiac care in one hospital was not a light one. It was not made by a group of politicians who got together and decided that that is the way we should go. It was done with due diligence,

with careful study, and with careful advice given to the Government by professionals working in the system. All of us want to be able to deliver the kinds of services that Manitobans need in the best and the most efficient way that we can.

It is somewhat sad that a decision has been taken in a backward sense to live up to a commitment that was made even before any analysis was done. It was done through the election campaign by the Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Selinger), who said that he would reinstate that program. And, indeed, what do we see after the campaign was concluded and the Government took its place as the Government of Manitoba? That decision became a reality.

Now, how do you justify that? How do you justify that when the leading professional, Dr. Brian Postl, had come to our Cabinet, had come to government before and had made a very strong recommendation that all of the cardiac surgery should be consolidated in one unit? There were no ifs, buts, or maybes. That was the direction that he said we must go if, in fact, we are going to maintain the integrity of the care in the province of Manitoba. Government took that direction seriously. Yes, it was painful for government. It was painful for the Minister. It was not a popular move. The easy route is the popular way to go.

I was somewhat surprised during the election campaign that the Member for St. Boniface was indeed campaigning on a promise that he would put cardiac care back at St. Boniface when no research had been done on his part to ensure that it was the way to move. And what do we see the new Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) doing? Moving precisely in that direction.

So, Mr. Speaker, I see my light is flashing. I have to say that it is difficult and it is sad that indeed the Government has taken these actions in these various areas. So that gives us some concern and I think it gives Manitobans a lot of concern.

Although I was pleased to speak on this matter, I have to say that I am somewhat disappointed that the Government has indeed chosen this path at this time.

Now, they are a new government, Mr. Speaker, and maybe in time some of these things will be improved and some of the direction will be corrected, but at this time I have to say that we on this side of the House, and I as a member representing an area of our province, would have to say that I am not in support of the direction that this government has taken at this point in time.

With those few comments, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for giving me the time to speak this afternoon.

**Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson):** It is a pleasure to rise in the House again after having been off my feet for a couple of days now, I guess almost a week since Estimates ended. I think we spent a significant amount of time in Estimates reviewing the operations of the Department of Agriculture and probably to the point that it had never been reviewed in that manner before. I found very interesting some of the comments that the Minister made in her efforts to address some of the questions that were put forward. It was very similar in many respects to what we have heard from the Minister of Health (Mr. Chomiak) and the Premier (Mr. Doer) from time to time when they defend their actions in this whole health fiasco that we have seen this government attempt to address. My colleague from Russell just finished talking about some of the things.

I think that this government will truly learn what it means to make a commitment and then keep the commitment or even attempt to keep the commitment. I know that this Minister of Health has said on a number of occasions: We will fix hallway medicine in six months. I find it very interesting that today you hear some of the actions that they are taking. They would make some of the people in this province cringe if they only knew what was happening. I mean, it becomes very evident that it becomes almost impossible to be committed even if you are relatively sick.

\* (16:00)

We just saw an article in the paper very recently where a person who is very seriously ill could not get into a hospital. That is one way of

fixing hallway medicine, not allowing admittance, giving the orders not to admit more than you can handle. Now, is that what the Minister and the Premier did? One day they went out right after Question Period here and visited hospitals, visited with management, I understand, of the hospitals. Is that the order they gave? Do not admit any more than you can handle; do not admit any more than you have rooms for. Is that the order they gave? Well, we can only speculate.

We do know, however, that almost immediately they made a decision to export our health problems, to send for diagnostic purposes across the line to North Dakota.

**An Honourable Member:** To reduce the waiting lists.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Oh, yes, the honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) says to reduce the waiting lists. Well, how did the NDP condemn the previous government's actions or even when they discussed the possibility and even when Connie Curran came to Manitoba and made suggestions as to how to change the system, and some of the systems that were discussed were exactly what the NDP Government are doing today? The previous Conservative government did not do this. It is this NDP government that is moving in that action.

They are exporting our health care dollars on a daily basis, and they are doing it on the auspices of reducing waiting lists. Well, if you have ever seen a double standard, this, in my view, takes the cake. I think you could empty all the hospitals in this province. There would not be a person in the hallway, nor would there be a person in any of the rooms if you gave the orders to the doctors and the physicians.

You know, I remember reading a story not too long ago in one of our local newspapers saying that even now this NDP government was considering sending doctors to the United States to treat patients that we were exporting to North Dakota because the people in North Dakota did not have enough physicians to take care of them. So now we are going to pay the doctors, the physicians to go to North Dakota to treat Manitobans that we are exporting to North



Dakota, and then do what? Boy, well, Mr. Speaker, truly, truly an innovative way to fix hallway medicine. It is a wonder that our reporters of the newspapers and the television cameras that are here daily do not reflect on that because that is the reality of the new NDP. That is the reality of the new health care system. That is why I wanted to speak in this debate. Because this clearly reflects on this government's budget, on the Interim Supply, of monies that are being allocated and whether we should, in fact, keep on funding the export of our health care system to the United States.

Is education next? I hear it is. I understand that they are actually thinking of doing agreements with some of the universities in North Dakota and Minnesota. I understand that they have even been talking to some of the universities in Michigan about the possibility of forming an alliance. Who is going to pay? Our taxpayers. Our taxpayers are going to next look at the export of our young people in the education system. Is that what we are doing? Well, I ask the honourable members opposite: is that why the people of Manitoba elected you to even think about exporting health care? Americanization, we would call it, of our education system.

I know that we have a few academics in the opposite benches. I believe there is a university professor in the opposite bench and there are a few people that are educators. There are very few people that have management skills, we know that, but I suppose that is the make-up of the electoral process and how people are selected to win elections.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, I think it is ironic that we have a system or we are developing a new system. It is the new plan. It is the new NDP plan. On the one side, during the election campaign, they were criticizing the Conservative government for the amount of gambling in this province. I think that is the term they used during the campaign—gambling. Now that word has been, I guess, struck from the useable language when we are questioning ministers in this House. Maybe we should not talk about the Minister responsible for gambling; maybe we should talk about the Minister responsible for gaming. I think that is probably the correct announcement we should use. However, when I

talk to some of the people that are involved with Alcoholics Anonymous, or the people that have difficulty with gambling addiction, they do not use "a gaming addiction," they use simple language. It is called being addicted to gambling.

Mr. Speaker, I say to you that when I gamble and when I lose, I know who lost the money, but when I gamble, I do not gamble with one dollar at a time. I gamble with hundreds of thousands of dollars at a time. It is probably one of the best and one of the most prolific games of chance that we play, and it is called farming.

You take your chances. You put your money in the ground, and it is called planting money. Then you go to bed at night and, just before you go to bed, you pray, you pray to the good Lord that he is going to let it rain so that money can germinate—oh, no, we turn the money into seed first. We buy seed, and it costs a lot of money to buy that seed. Then we put a bit of fertilizer in with it and a few chemicals so that the worms will not eat the seed. Then we put a little fertilizer on top to make it grow, and then we spray it to make sure it will not rot when it comes up. It is called wilt or fusarium or whatever, but in reality it is preventing the plants from rotting after they have come up.

We do all this. We spend huge amounts of money. It is not uncommon for a farmer today to spend half a million to a million dollars putting a crop in the ground.

**An Honourable Member:** I think my bill is just a bit over half a million this year.

**Mr. Jack Penner:** My colleague has just said I think my bill is just over, a wee bit over half a million. You put that into a slot, and the slot dribbles little seeds back in the ground. Then you pray for rain, and then you wait. There are no bells ringing. The only noise you hear is the drone of the diesel engine as it rumbles down the field in the spring of the year and the drone of the airplane, as it did this morning when I woke up, too, at 4:30 in the morning, the spray plane, spraying our fields just after the heads were coming out, to make sure that the rot would not set into the seed. You hear that drone and you know, Mr. Speaker, that it is pure money that is being sunk into the biggest gamble that you

could think of. By the time the combine will start rumbling out into the field, most farmers will have a half a million or more invested.

They take the gamble, and there are very few bells and whistles. If they are lucky, if the weather is right, and it rains at the right time and the sun shines at the right time, if they are lucky, they will get their money back plus a profit—if they are lucky. But the other game that they are playing right after the crop starts coming in is the game of chance that is even bigger. You put your grain in the bin and you buy all the equipment to store that grain. You put it all in the bin and then you wait and then you wait some more and your prices can either go up or down and you have no control. No control at all.

\* (16:10)

Your grain, you have laws, and this is what I want to get into in this debate, because I think it is extremely important on the Interim Supply. You have no control, Mr. Speaker, about selling your own wheat or your own barley. The Government of Canada has said that we will take that control away from the farmer and we will give it to a small board, and they are in charge of selling the wheat and the barley. That board will sell when they think your price is right.

Have you ever imagined that somebody would sit here, that we would establish a little board that would sit at the end of this Chamber and judge us daily on our performance, and then, at the end of the session, they would come along and say you deserve so much and you deserve so much and you deserve so much. But that is not the way it works. Then at the end of that discussion they would say, oh, but we will put that all into a big pot and then we will divide it all equally and you all get the same. We will give you all the same.

At the start of the session, we will give you \$3 a bushel. If you performed really well, Mr. Speaker, then we might give you another dollar at the end of the session. Maybe. We do not know for sure, because it will depend somewhat on what the sessioners do in London and what the sessioners do in Germany and what the sessioners do in France and whether those sessioners decide to spend a lot of tax dollars to

support their sessioners. We call the sessioners wheat growers. If they spend a lot of money, additional money outside of what the regular session brings and subsidized their sessioners, then we, of course, get less in here, because we are all going to be even now because our government does not subsidize sessioners.

You see, you in this Chamber do not get more. You only get what the average sessioner gets. Is that not a problem, Mr. Speaker? How would any of you in this Chamber, sitting in this Chamber, want your income to be subject to that kind of decision-making process? Well, that is what we are. That is what we are as farmers. That is the gamble.

When I talk about the Minister in charge of gambling, I am not talking about the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Lemieux) or the Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton) now. You know who I am talking about? My Minister of Agriculture (Ms. Wowchuk). She is really the Minister in charge of gambling in this province, because she is charged with the responsibility of looking after the best interest of those who produce food in this province. Yet when I listened to her in her Estimates, I cringed many times, because she told me that she had gone to Ottawa and told Ottawa that it was totally their responsibility to support those that were in extreme difficulty in the southwest.

I would like to ask some of the members in this House: How would you feel if the rains came and washed away your house and nobody would come to your aid? Would you laugh? Would you sit and laugh? Well, that is what happened to the farmers in the southwest and the southeast and all those farmers and businessmen that were flooded during 1999. They had their total income washed away, their livelihoods washed away, not just their houses, but their livelihoods washed away. We sit here and laugh in this House because of that. That is like really laughing at the Minister of gambling because our Minister of gambling is much, much larger and her responsibilities are much, much more severe than the Minister charged with Gaming in this Chamber.

The Minister charged with Gaming is only looking after a very, very small part of our

economy, a very small portion of the economy, and really has very little impact in general terms. Indeed, much of what is spent on gaming in this province, most of what is spent on gaming is loose money that people carry around in their pockets. I call it pocket change. If you want to put it into proper perspective, somebody goes out at night and lays aside \$50 and says this is what we are going to spend this night on food, on entertainment or whatever, part of that money goes into the slot machine.

But the huge gamble that is really happening in this province with weather, with a foreign, subsidized marketplace and others is the agricultural gamble, and it is much, much, much larger, much larger, than any gaming decision we make in this House. Sometimes I listen to the debate, and I wish and hope that we would have never heard the word "gambling" or "gaming" in this province. I think we would all be better off if we had not, but the reality of the situation is that, once one gets in, most of them have to or think they have to get in. Whether it is Ontario or the Maritimes or Saskatchewan or British Columbia, they all get into it. That has an effect on all of us. It has an effect on our mentality. It really does. I think we need to very, very seriously think about what that does and how we react to it.

I think this whole issue of agriculture and the huge gamble that it is needs to be clearly thought through as well when we talked about the Bill 15, and the Minister of Conservation will bring Bill 15 forward. I know many of the members sitting here have not got a clue of what that bill really entails, but, if it is brought forward in its current state and if its passed in its current state, it will actually prevent a farmer, when his whole field is under water, from making a ditch to divert that water into another ditch that it can run away. This law, Bill 15, will stop that unless he goes to the Minister and has the Minister issue a licence.

Well, let me ask you something, Mr. Speaker. I know you are from the North and you understand the environment because, where you were born and raised, you truly lived that environment. I have a great deal of appreciation for those who make their living off the land or from the sea because you understand what I am

talking about. If you were not able to, when a rain of three or four inches falls on a quarter section of land, if you could not go in and drain that water off, get it off the field, if you had no right to, if legally that right was taken away from you, would you continue farming? Why would you? Because every year we are out there at some point in time, either in the spring of the year, in the summer of the year or the fall of the year, we are out there taking water off the land. We have to take it off in order to get the crop to mature.

\* (16:20)

You have got to take it off, and yet now this government is looking at enforcing a law that I think would only have been considered maybe during the Second World War era under Hitler. He might have imposed a law like this, but I cannot see that clearly a true social-conscious government would even consider implementing, giving that kind of authority to one single minister. I cannot believe that, affecting the livelihood of every farmer in this province. I cannot believe that they would do that.

Another bill that is before this Legislature that is hard to understand is the export of bulk water. Do you know that in my area we actually imported a whole bunch of bulk water this year? Remember, Mr. Speaker, just a few short weeks ago, we were very dry. Many of crops were not germinating properly in some parts of the province. Those that had access to irrigation water—and in our area large ponds have been built, some ponds as large as 80 acres, 80-acre holes dug in the ground and dammed up on the side, and you fill them up in spring when the waters run, fill them up with large pumps, 14-inch pipes. You pump water into these ponds and store the water during the summer months for irrigation purposes.

Well, this last spring there was no run-off, Mr. Speaker. There was no run-off, so some of my friends went to the United States and asked, if we set up pumps, would you allow us to set up pumps on the Pembina River, which is in North Dakota, and pump water across the line into Manitoba, that we can fill up our irrigation pond? Importing bulk water—importing bulk

water. You know what the Americans said? They said go ahead.

You know what the Canadians said? Oh, we cannot let you run a pipe across the border. We cannot allow that. We cannot allow you to bring pipes into Manitoba. Remember this—*[interjection]* Yes, you are right, you are so right, and I will talk about that a little bit later. This farmer was a bit innovative. He found a little creek that started in North Dakota and ran into Manitoba, drained into Manitoba. He put his pipes into that creek and the water flowed naturally. So it was a natural flow of water that crossed the border. Innovativeness. Innovative.

So we imported water. Did he have to have a licence? No, Sir. He did not have to have a licence. You know why he did not have to have a licence, Sir? Because they were Americans. They believe in free range law. They believe that water that crosses your land is yours. Here we want to impose a law not allowing that to be done.

Now I will talk about the other. You say, does the pipe cross the border? Well, in 1948, the towns of Gretna and Altona were out of water. The nearest water treatment plant was in Neche, North Dakota. The town of Gretna and Altona went to Neche, North Dakota, and said: Can we buy water off of you? Neche said to them, if you build the pipeline, you can buy the water; we will supply you with the water. We have for the last 40, 50, 56 years—I can stand corrected on that number, that might not be the exact number, but roughly the last 50 years—bought water from Neche, North Dakota to supply the towns of Gretna and Altona with water. We are importing bulk water.

Here is the irony of what this bill will represent. This bill will stop Altona from pumping water to Neche. Do you know what that is going to do, Mr. Speaker? This bill will dry up the town of Neche. You see, during the last five years the Neche people were supposed to spend a mega amount of money upgrading their water treatment plant. Because we had built a large water treatment plant at Letellier which was supplying Altona, Winkler and Plum Coulee and Rosenort and Morris and St. Jean and Emerson with treated water—it is a major plant—

with treated water, Neche said do you think we could reverse the flow and flow water out of that plant into Neche?

We said yes. You know who owns the plant? It is owned by the Pembina Valley Water Co-op. But you know who is going to affect that plant by this bulk export water law? This province will. You will not be allowed to pump water through that pipe into Neche, North Dakota, to supply the city of Neche, North Dakota, with water. It will not be allowed, because it is considered bulk export of water.

I say to the members of this Legislature, think very carefully about what you do, because these are the people who supplied our towns with water for almost 50 years or just better than 50 years. Now we are going to say to them that this government will not allow that anymore. I say to you that there are some real issues confronting us over the next while and we need to very seriously think through some of the actions that we are contemplating.

The other one is penned hunting. Penned hunting is a vernacular that was developed by a few animal rights people. I can name some of them if you want, but I think that is immaterial. They are animal rights protection people that have no interest in agriculture whatsoever. They have no interest in promoting a sustainable agriculture. They have no interest in the economy. The only interest they have is ensuring that they have the control.

So we have now used the term "penned hunting." What is penned hunting? Is it a pen about the size of this room, built in a circle like this, that we sit on the fence and chase a buffalo or two or an elk, and we point a gun and, boom, shoot it? Is that penned hunting? Or is it a thousand acres fenced as we do for cows and cattle that bison roam on? The Speaker certainly understands what that means to pasture cattle, to pasture bison, to pasture elk. And when these animals get old, what do you do with them? When the bulls get old, what do you do with them? When the cows get old, what do you do with them? Do you ship them off to slaughter or do you shoot them or sell the meat? Some of the farmers have been selling a licence to hunters and say, yes, I have got a 1000-acre pasture out

there, go hunt one. That is penned hunting, Sir. That is what we call penned hunting. I think it is most unfair the way it is being portrayed in this Legislature.

I know that the Minister was going to hold hearings, but unfortunately the Minister thought that this issue would be such a hot potato that he cancelled the hearing. That is unfortunate as well, because those people that would have done the hearing would have been able to travel around this province and hear what the process was all about really. They would have learned a lot about rural Manitoba and about agriculture and how agriculture is treated.

\* (16:30)

Do you know the other terminology that I heard in this Legislature the other day was penned by one of the members, one of the Ministers as a matter of fact. She used the term "hog factories." Have you ever heard of a hog factory? I have never heard of a manufactured hog in my life. Never. I thought that the way hogs were raised were the same as about cattle. I mean, you bring a bull into a pen and a cow, and the bull breeds the cow, and nine months later it has a little calf. It is called the normal process of regeneration. The same thing happens with pigs. You bring a boar into a pen and a sow, and the boar breeds the sow, and then about four and a half months later it has little pigs. It is called regeneration.

They are all bred and raised on a farm. One of the differences is that it used to be that you could walk into any barn in this province. It was open. The neighbours could walk in, anybody could walk in. Not today, Mr. Speaker. The investment that I talked about before, the gamble that they are taking is so high that they will not allow any stranger, any city person, any country person, into those barns. They will not allow it. Do you know why?

**An Honourable Member:** Why?

**Mr. Jack Penner:** Not because the persons that walk into the barn will get sick from the hogs inside. It is just the opposite. The hogs will get sick from the person walking into the barn. They are afraid that they might have been in another

barn somewhere and carried a bit of manure on their shoes or on their clothing. Even a speck of dust can house enough germs to infect a whole barn and cause the pigs to become very sick. That is why they do not allow human beings into those barns, because most of these barns, Mr. Speaker, are disease-free.

We could not even comprehend what that would mean with human beings. You could not confine human beings into a situation where they could become disease-free human beings, but we have done that with livestock. We have had to. Do you know why? Because the gamble is so great. It is not uncommon for a hog producer to invest up to \$5 million in a hog barn, and are you going to tell me that that person would want to jeopardize that investment by one person visiting, walking into his operation and turning his whole herd sick? I think not. Think again. That is the essence of the agriculture situation.

We spend huge millions of dollars, and are they little operations? Some of them are, comparatively. There is a barn right next to my place that has roughly 800 pigs in it. You could not walk into it. They would not allow you to walk into it. But there is another barn just down the road that has 3000 pigs in it. Are they little, small? Nobody even cares whether they are little or small. They are just operations. The difference is the matter of the amount of money invested to set it up in the first place.

Do people work there? Yes. One of my good friends who has worked for the school division in the office quit her job the other day and went to work at a hog operation. Do you know why? Because there is more money. The hog barn paid higher salaries than the school division did. They paid higher salaries than the school division did. Some of these jobs are very high-paid jobs. Do you know why they are high-paid jobs? Because you have to have some expertise when you go to work for a hog barn. Some of them now are required to have veterinary licences, and most of the people who are being hired now are fairly highly trained people to work in these barns.

So why am I saying all this? You know, it takes a horrendous amount of research dollars, another huge investment. It takes a huge amount of money to change the way we have done

business. I just hope that these members of the Legislature that sit here and govern, the ministers, understand the agricultural community, and that they will not put impediments in place that will stop us from being competitive in the world marketplace, because that is where it needs to be.

It takes research dollars, and it takes check-off legislation to allow farm organizations to spend the amount of time and effort to educate not only themselves but to educate ministers about the industry. It takes a huge amount of developmental cost to initiate new cropping procedures and practices. It takes a whole different kind of investment and education to redevelop and further enhance the livestock industry. I think the cattle producers are a prime example of how the industry has changed, and we used to have little farms with five or six head of cattle, sometimes a dozen head of cattle on a farm. Today some of those farms have thousands of heads of cattle on them.

It has changed the southeast part of my province, Mr. Speaker. It has really changed the way this province does business, and it has changed the way agriculture operates. It will change the way you and I think in the future. There is no question in my mind. We all have to be cognizant of one thing. We cannot survive very long without food, and other countries such as the Europeans recognize what that means, because they were once hungry. They promised their families and their families' families that they will never go hungry again, not as long as they are there. We have not realized that yet.

So I am begging this Assembly and the ministers making decisions here: Be very careful what laws you put in place because they might, in fact, affect what you eat tomorrow. They might, in fact, affect what you pay for your food tomorrow because all of what we have talked about today affects our transportation costs, affects rail lines, and most of them are abandoned now. I know this NDP government that is governing here today indicated clearly that they would rethink that whole rail line abandonment thing. I have not heard our minister of transportation say one word about rail line abandonment or stopping it at all, and the costs of that action alone will be huge.

Hog Watch, an organization, a conglomeration of people, and I can read from the *Agri-Week* publication that a coalition of labour union, academics, animal rights, environmentalist organization is running a full-page ad.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. The Honourable Member's time has expired.

\* (16:40)

**Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague on his interesting comment there. It seemed to be so enrapturing, I could not believe that the time had already passed, that his time is up, but it gives me pleasure to rise and speak on Bill 46, The Interim Appropriation Act, 2000, in regard to the appropriation and the spending of the government's money.

It relates to the Budget, Mr. Speaker, which is one of the most important, if not the most important, document brought forth by any government. What it does is outline the spending, the proposals, the directions, the priorities, and, to a degree, the philosophy of the Government as to where they feel that it is important to spend money and which areas they feel that there is merit for them to pursue. The Government, to a degree, is judged on the merits of its budget. It is judged on the merits of how it is presented, and, as I say, which priorities they feel are important in regard to the Budget that is brought forth.

The Budget that was brought forth this last time was a budget that I must give credit to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger). It was balanced. In fact, there was a bit of a surplus. When this government first took over back in October of last year, there was that great gnashing of teeth, saying that the government that they inherited from this side of the House had spent, had overspent, that the monies were all gone. There was a huge deficit. In fact, they even ordered an audit done by Deloitte and Touche in which there was speculation that there was going to be over a \$450-million or a \$460-million deficit in regard to the overspending by the previous Conservative government.

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

Just like Chicken Little, they started to run around feeling that everything was going to fall apart on them and that they were in dire straits. All this done on a wish list that was sent around through all the departments in regard to where they figured that the money that the Government should be spending.

Naturally, the departments brought out all their old wish lists, their spending priorities, the fact of where they felt the money should be spent, and they just kept adding on and adding on. Sure enough, just before Christmas, when the Christmas stocking started to fill up, the Minister of Finance was saying: You know, this is terrible. We are going to run into a tremendous amount of money that we have not got for the Government, and there is going to be this deficit, without even going into a proper audit. They called it an audit initially, but then after a while they called it a financial review. It was amazing how you can do an audit of a billion-dollar corporation in I think it was less than four to six weeks and come up with monies that they felt this government was lacking.

As I say, it was not really that surprising in a sense because you have to look back, to a degree, to the transition team that was implemented, that was brought in to do the change-over of government. Two of the keynote players in that transition team were two former Finance ministers with the previous Manitoba NDP government back in the '80s, Mr. Eugene Kostyra and Mr. Vic Schroeder.

I should point out to some of the new members that were just elected that it was Mr. Eugene Kostyra's budget that actually brought down the NDP government back in the 1980s. It was that budget that the member for St. Vital at that time, Mr. Walding, voted against. So there was infamy again with Mr. Kostyra coming back now on the interim transition team that was brought in to take a look at the way that they would take over government.

The other person that was involved with that transition team was Mr. Vic Schroeder, who was also the Finance Minister back in the mid-'80s.

For the new members' edification and knowledge, they should be aware that Mr. Vic Schroeder was the only Finance Minister in Manitoba where the Auditor would not sign his books at the end of the year. They may not realize that, but there is a distinction there within that Finance Minister's portfolio that the Auditor at that time, Mr. Bill Ziprick, said that he could not sign the books.

In fact, in his report, Mr. Ziprick, the Provincial Auditor at the time, says: The Government has cooked the books to almost three times what the actual deficit is in that way. And he says: In no way can I certify \$165 million is the net deficit because, if I do, Manitobans will be misled to believe that our deficit is only \$165 million instead of \$428 million. So there is a distinction that this former Finance minister has for my friends across the way that they know who they are dealing with. But what did the Finance minister at that time say? Well, he says, his comments were: It is just an accountant's opinion.

Just an accountant's opinion, incredible. The head accountant for the Province of Manitoba tells them that they are cooking the books. The Finance minister says: Oh, it is just an opinion. The head accountant of the Province of Manitoba will not sign the audit, the first time it has ever been done, never been done previously or after. Here is the same person now that is part of this great transition team and being in behind the books, if you want to call it, in regard to what is happening with the present budget that was brought in with the Minister of Finance.

There are a few members on the other side that do remember that. They smile, and they nod knowingly that these things did happen at that time. They do remember. They do remember, but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am sure that it is passing strange that they may not remember exactly.

But, as I say, there are certain articles by, I believe, they may remember even the reporter, Mr. Radha Thampi who did the interviews in regard to Mr. Vic Schroeder and Mr. Bill Ziprick. Mr. Ziprick said at the time: Ziprick insists that, if the Government continues this misleading bookkeeping practice, ultimately we

will be breaking the Province. In essence, it did happen because the Finance minister right after that, Mr. Eugene Kostyra, was the one that brought in a budget that the NDP were defeated on because of the perception that it was not exactly what the member for St. Vital was going to be voting for.

So I thought that is just a little bit of history for the new members that are walking around saying that their Finance Minister is above reproach in all the dealings that he has had with them. But you have to remember who he is surrounding himself with. He is surrounding himself with people that were involved with some of the things that brought this government to one of the highest debts it ever had in its history, and a debt that has now been paid off at a rate of about \$500 million a year, just in interest.

So, hopefully, we do not go down that track again. The Minister of Finance now does have the balanced-budget legislation that we brought in, a good piece of legislation that, in fact, the Premier has said what we have done good, they will continue to do good, and they will look for other areas to improve, which is commendable. I guess imitation is the best form of flattery, and certainly the NDP now are imitating a lot of the things that we initiated, especially in balanced-budget legislation and trying to look after the priorities of health care, education and family services, which we initiated.

So there is a bit of a glimmer of hope, if you want to call it, in regard to what the Minister of Finance is doing, but there will be repercussions down the road, as has been pointed out in recent surveys, in regard to the ability to be competitive.

When you look at the tax structure here in Manitoba in comparison to other provinces, we are lagging and, in fact, we are slipping further behind, and indeed if we look over the next few years what will happen is that we will be further and further behind in our competitiveness not only in our income tax but in other areas of taxation, and this cannot be of a benefit for growth in Manitoba because everybody in all other provinces across Canada are looking at tax cuts, significant tax cuts. Even our neighbour to the west, Saskatchewan, is on the bandwagon for

doing tax cuts. The federal government just recently announced tax cuts that came into effect on July 1, and July 1 is not only a special day here in Manitoba but is a special day because it is my son's birthday, so you know, it brings to mind a lot of great memories for me personally.

I think that the tax cuts that should have been passed on to Manitobans in the amount of around \$30 million would have stimulated the economy even more. We could look more optimistically on the future of Manitoba. We do have the lowest unemployment rate. It was something that was put in place and has been the benefit of a lot of astute planning by our government prior to the NDP taking over government. Let us hope that it stays low. Let us hope that it stays to one of the lowest in Canada over the next few years because, if anything, that will bring in more revenue for the province because, if anything, the way this government is on its binge of spending now where they have spent over \$400 million over the last budget, they will need the money to spend for all the interest groups that are lining up in the hallways.

\* (16:50)

In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is the only time when you come into this building now where you cannot find a parking spot. Every parking spot around this building is filled. It is incredible the amount of people that are working in this building now. It is phenomenal. Every nook and cranny has got someone working for the NDP. I believe, to the last tally, their appointments have come up to around the 270-person mark in the short time that they have been in government. That is incredible. I believe it is around 260 or 270 people that have been appointed by this government. This government is doing a fantastic job of creating employment. They say that the unemployment is down. A lot of them are back on the payroll at the old NDP and the old NDP government. The gravy train is here and it is coming.

You go down the halls now and in front of the ministers' offices they have got these little meat market tickets where you take a number, you get in line and you go in there and get your gimme groups, because the money is there to be had, so all the payoffs in regard to all the groups that



have been sitting in abeyance for 11 years or 12 years when they were out of power, they are just waiting to jump in there. I pity the ministers. I pity the ministers because their doorways are going to be all rasped down. They are going to have to refinish them for all the knocking that is going to be on their doors. They are going to have to be refinishing them because of all the people. They will have more people at their doors looking for money than in the history of Manitoba, and they will be nodding. It will be just like those little dogs you see in the back of a car that are nodding yes, yes, yes. To anybody who will walk through their door, they will have money for them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, they have not learned how to be prudent managers. They have become prolific spenders. So I feel that they are on the road to a lot of courses that we feel that they will have to be very, very prudent in the management of their dollars and management of the taxpayers' dollars. We will question them. We will question their priorities and their spending because we feel that in a lot of the areas, these are just areas for filling up some of the IOUs, if you want to call it, to some of their pressure groups and their interest groups that are coming through this hallway.

So in speaking to the Budget process, I can relate back to when I was a Cabinet minister and I had the honour of serving Manitoba as a minister of the Crown and some of the hard decisions that had to be made in regard to budget preparation and the fulfilment of the Budget.

It seems almost ironic that we are debating this Bill 46, The Interim Appropriation Act, for the spending of money when I would think within maybe the next six weeks to two months the ministers there across the way will be already into next year's budget allocation process. It starts usually in the late summer to get ready for the Budget. So the process of spending money and managing the Department is an ongoing affair. This is why I think that a lot of the ministers will not only be getting ready for the new budget system but they will be forced with a lot of decisions that they have to make in regard to where the money is going and who is going to be getting it for the spending of it.

I would like to mention a few comments in regard to my previous colleague from Emerson (Mr. Jack Penner) in his comments about the aid to the farmers in southeast Manitoba. I had the opportunity to go down there. In fact, the Premier at that time, the Member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon), took the Cabinet down for a Cabinet meeting down there because at that time there was a crisis. There was a crisis because of the rain down there in southwest Manitoba. We wanted to see it visually and to be on the land itself to see the devastation and the hardship that was put forth to the economy and to the farmers down in the area and the townspeople in regard to the tremendous amount of water that was down in southwest Manitoba. We responded very quickly with the allocation of funding to the farmers in that area. We feel that government has an obligation to act prudently and with diligence and in a manner that is apropos to the situation of trying to help these people in a crisis situation.

I can relate back to 1989, when there were tremendous forest fires in the North. Unprecedented, they were of a magnitude where thousands of people had to be evacuated, and they had to be evacuated immediately because of the forest fires. There was no quibbling or no questioning of who was going to pay for it. The Government had to do it. We had to do it. There were planeloads and trains and private transportation and public transportation that was put into effect to get those people out of the danger zones and then they were housed in various parts throughout Manitoba and even here in Winnipeg until the fire danger was passed, and then they went back into their homes. That was the way it had to be handled.

It was then after that that the government of the day fought with the federal government—at that time it was the Conservative government of Mr. Brian Mulroney—to try to get restitution, to try to get the money back. It was not a matter of saying, well, we have to get the money before we can move these people or we can do anything about it. No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have to move and you have to make decisions because of the good of the people at the time that the situations that present themselves. We did not quibble and make excuses for not going to the aid of the people of the North at that time.

What happened here in the southwest when the flood happened there? This government here, the NDP Government, says, well, we have got to make sure that the federal government is going to be on side. We cannot just go ahead and do it and then do it. Mr. Deputy Speaker, we battled the Conservative government in Ottawa for years because we had the case to be made that this was a disaster. We had the case to say that there should be a cost-sharing of funding, and we got it. It did not come automatically, but we fought for it, and we did it because we knew that it was the thing to do.

I am disappointed that this government over here did not have that same type of gumption to get out there and do the same thing for southwest Manitoba. In fact, from what I understand, the Minister of Agriculture has not even been down there—pardon me, not even the First Minister (Mr. Doer) has been down into southwest Manitoba. It is this type of attitude and arrogance that is going to come back to haunt this government, because the tone is set by the First Minister. The First Minister sets the tone for this Cabinet and this government, how it occupies itself in the minds of the people. It is becoming very, very evident that there is a bunker mentality. There is a closed-shop mentality that the First Minister is surrounding himself with his communicators and a few advisors, and they are the people who are the making the decisions in regard to what they feel is perceptively right for his government.

I feel, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that an attitude like that for us as an opposition is good. We are glad to see this arrogance. We feel that to capitalize on that is good for our cause as opposition members, because we see a premier in his first term, in his first session, showing the arrogance of someone who has been around for years. It is that type of thing that we feel we can grow on as the session goes. We saw that just recently in regard to the direction that was taken earlier in the year when there was a settlement of a litigation that was brought forth against the First Minister and a former premier, Premier Pawley, in regard to an action that went back to 1987. There was a litigation and a lawsuit in regard to an alleged statement of claim, a lawsuit that was brought forth against former Premier

Pawley and the now Premier Gary Doer in regard to allegations of abuse of power.

Indications were from 1987 that Mr. Pawley showed some influence on Mr. Doer—pardon me, the Premier—in the decisions that were made during the time when the Member for Concordia was the Minister of Urban Affairs. The claim, as mentioned, goes back to 1988. At that time, the Province tried to have the lawsuit thrown out of court but failed. A Court of Appeal ruled at the time that the case should be heard. That is a very, very important point to be made, because the Court of Appeal listened to both sides, indicated that there must be something there that should be pursued in a court of law. So they said that, yes, there are grounds for a trial on this alleged situation between Premier Doer and the former Premier Pawley in regard to the dealings with two businessmen in the rural municipality of West St. Paul.

It was going to court. The court date was set. It was three days before the trial was to begin, and there was a settlement out of court. The Government acted on the advice of making a settlement. A settlement of \$100,000 was presented to the plaintiffs with a release form that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when you read it, it just totally hamstringing them entirely. They cannot discuss, reveal, confirm or otherwise communicate to any person, firm, corporation, entity, apart from the release's legal counsel and financial advisers. Not only can they not speak about it, but believe it or not, the papers signed also bind their heirs, their executors, their administrators, their successors and assigns, each of them the insurers, that the benefits are well to their heirs, executors, administrators, successors, that they cannot even speak about it.

\* (17:00)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government used taxpayers' dollars, \$100,000 to buy off this settlement. The Government can speak about it and put their own spin on it and say that, oh, it was for the legal costs and the perception that it is going to cost money and it is going to get dragged out. The Government in its payment to these two defendants of \$100,000 could give all the excuses, but they are literally bound hand and foot, the plaintiffs, from saying anything

about the settlement. Incredible, a gag order of the first amount by this government and this Premier on someone that was taking them to court, and they got off with the taxpayers' dollars for something that they were alleged to have done between the First Minister and the former first minister, Minister Pawley.

This is incredible, Mr. Deputy Speaker, how this abuse of power is already showing through by this first minister. It is something that is boggling in my mind.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the things that we have talked about very, very much in the last while and what is part of my responsibility as a critic is the whole area of gaming and the awarding of casinos here in Manitoba. I have to say that right from the very beginning, right after the announcement of the new Cabinet by the NDP, one of the first statements by one of the new Cabinet ministers was that there will be casinos by Christmas. That sort of set the tone for the whole scenario of getting involved with the casinos here in Manitoba.

Right from the very beginning, right from the RFP, request for proposal, the appointment of a two-person committee, the fact that there were no public consultations, the fact that it was rushed through, the fact that they are now realizing that the whole scenario and how it is unfolding is falling apart in regard to not only the implementation of it but the selection committee, the casinos that were approved, the ones that were rejected, the questions that are brought forth, the fact now that this afternoon we even see the Gaming minister having to relinquish his portfolio on that and handing it over to the Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton)—these are all indications that we have a government in turmoil over there, of not knowing what it has to do because of its IOUs to certain groups and certain commitments that it made during the election, not thinking it through and not looking at it in a broader spectrum as to what is the proper way of handling things.

The Member has mentioned that, well, you had the Bostrom report, and the Bostrom report was recommending these things.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the whole process, as I mentioned, took on a whole new direction with

each day as each question we asked in Question Period was in regard to the RFP and the fact of how it was going to go involved with gambling. As I say, the Member has mentioned that the Bostrom report is something that we initiated. Granted, we initiated the Bostrom report. We felt that there was a need to find out the background, to find out the information in regard to Native gaming and the possibility of an Aboriginal casino. I stressed that: the possibility of an Aboriginal casino.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have to point out too that the Bostrom report had nine members on it; it had nine members that were involved with the drafting of the Bostrom report. The selection committee that the Government appointed before at Christmastime, and I must say it was the day after the Legislature finished before Christmas, the very next day. In fact, it is very, very ironic. If you look in Hansard, the very last question that was asked the day before session ended before Christmas was about gaming and whether there was going to be the appointment of a selection committee, and at that time the Minister was noncommittal. He would not say at that time.

The very next morning, I believe it was eleven o'clock in the morning after the House had prorogued and was finished for Christmas, they announced the selection committee. Amazing revelation over a night, how this all came together. That is how rushed it was and how poorly planned it was. It just kept getting too much criticism, not only within the community, criticism by the Aboriginal groups, criticism by ourselves.

We had looked at the possibility of—when I say "we," the former Conservative government—two casinos under certain conditions and restrictions. There had to be compliance, total compliance under existing gaming licences. This was something that was very, very strong in our commitment to aboriginal gaming that had to be complied with. This was, as we find out later, what the selection committee—this was not complied with. In fact, there were, I believe, two, maybe even three, two for sure that I know of, that the consortium, the groups that were involved did not have compliance with the Manitoba Gaming Commission for their involvement with gaming.

So the rules change almost overnight in regard to what was happening and what was not happening in regard to gaming. I had the opportunity to be at the release of the request for proposals which was issued by Mr. Nadeau and Mr. Freedman. At that time they came out with the recommendations as to where the casinos were to be located. Prior to that there has been a fair amount of public comment as to, you know, the people did not want them in their communities.

I had the opportunity to go to Headingley to be at a town hall meeting there where there was a fair turnout of people. I believe around 200 or more people came out wanting to get more information. At that time they expressed their criticism and their displeasure of having a casino possibly located in their area. In fact, they had the opportunity of even having a vote on it, because, as it happened, there was a by-election for a reeve in that municipality. So they tagged on the question as to whether they would like to have a casino in their community. I believe 86 percent of the people said they did not want a casino in their community. Yet when the report came out by Mr. Freedman and Mr. Nadeau, the No. 1 priority was Headingley. Incredible, just incredible, how the committee itself would disrespect the wishes of the people that had a vote on it.

There were also public meetings up in the Municipality of St. Andrews which I had the opportunity to attend with the Member who represents that area, the Member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer). At that time there was a strong indication, I believe at that time there were well over 400 people that came out and said, we do not want a casino in our constituency. In fact, they even had petitions, and they took petitions around. I believe there were only 3700 voters in that municipality of St. Andrews, and yet they came back with over 3000 signatures saying that they did not want a casino in their constituency.

\* (17:10)

Those are the type of things that this government has to listen to. But you have a premier there with the arrogant idea, in fact he even said that maybe we will not necessarily

have to listen to the public on the selection committee.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are elected by the people, in a sense, to listen to what they have as their concerns. If we start to disregard them as the Premier (Mr. Doer) is saying now that he does not have to—in fact, when you look further down, just recently, with the Freedom of Information request, he says: Well, we did not do it because we do not like the law, so we did not comply with it. A flippant remark like that by the Premier of this province sends a tremendous example or a bad example to lawmakers, to people that are involved with future planning, or even business people as to the flippancy of a first minister into what these people are doing.

I have to say that a lot of the direction that the Government is taking right now is because of the arrogance of the First Minister. The First Minister seems to feel that he does not have to, he is in a position now, I know even some of the members say, well, we won the election. The people have spoken. So we are the people that got elected. We can do what we want. That is a wonderful attitude.

We as an opposition love that. We love to see that type of attitude, because that shows an arrogance that the people eventually will come back, and it will bite them. But that is for them to learn about. It is a new cabinet, it is a new government, it is a new premier. We watch with delight at some of the kafuffles that they are going through over there right now. We only hope that they continue it, because it seems that they have an attitude, they have an arrogant attitude, and that is what makes it so interesting. *[interjection]* You see, even the little heckling that they do now shows an arrogant attitude as to why they feel that it is something they—but, as I mentioned, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the interim supply act is a very, very important piece of legislation. It is legislation that outlines where money should be going, where the Government is feeling that it should be spending, and how much it should be spending.

We have heard repeatedly that this government, health care is a big concern to them. We see now that they have renamed

hallway medicine to highway medicine. It is a matter of taking the waiting lists out of the hospitals and shipping them down south, putting them into a position where when you go into the halls there is nobody there: we have eliminated hallway medicine. But you start looking at the road to Grafton. I am glad that the Minister of Highways (Mr. Ashton) said there is more money for maintenance, because in all likelihood they are going to have to start spending more money on the maintenance between Winnipeg and the U.S. border, because there will be increased traffic of their commitment to ending hallway medicine and keeping up with highway medicine. It is something that we watch with interest as to how they are utilizing the dollars that have been issued through the budgetary process in regard to health care.

It is a very important matter, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Health care in Manitoba, we knew that it was a No. 1 priority. I think, as we have said many times, it was the largest consumer of dollar bills in our budget. I believe when we left it was around 36 percent or maybe even more than that. I cannot even remember exactly. Fortunately or unfortunately, I was never the Minister of Health in this province, so I cannot remember exactly all the figures, but I do know that the health care did consume an awful lot of the dollars.

There is a benefit that has been recognized by the members opposite now of the amount of home care beds that we initiated. They are all coming on stream now over the next short while. That has eliminated some of the pressure out of the hospitals by people going into the personal care homes throughout Manitoba. So there will be a lessening hopefully of the demands on the hospitals.

At the same time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have to recognize that Manitoba has an ageing population. Some of the statistics I remember from when I was Minister responsible for Seniors is the fact that Manitoba has one of the highest proportions of seniors per population of any other province. In fact, I believe within the next three to five years, if memory serves me right, we will have the highest proportion of seniors of any other province in Canada. So that is going to put added pressure and added emphasis on proper medical facilities and

Pharmacare and the ability for the seniors to be looked after. At the same time, the lifestyle, the activity level of seniors is increasing.

*Mr. Speaker in the Chair*

If anything, with home care and the proper administration of home care, we can keep seniors in their homes longer. They can be more active. They can be part of the community, part of the contributions of Manitoba and this great country of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I think that those are a lot of the things that we as citizens of this country will all benefit from. If we have a healthier community and healthy seniors, they have not only contributed back into the community but we will be able to cut back on a lot of the medical expenditures that are coming up. Medical expenditures, unfortunately, I believe, will continue to rise because of the advancement of medication, the advancement of procedures and the sophistication of equipment. It all needs new technology, new people involved with training and the ability to make decisions. Those will all put a tremendous amount of pressure on health care in Manitoba.

I would like to just make a comment also, Mr. Speaker, on a program that was launched by this government called Neighbourhood Alive!. When I read that, I harkened back to my days as Minister of Urban Affairs, and I remember the project called Take Back the Streets. I think all they did was they reached up in the cupboard, ripped off the cover, relaunched it and they called it Neighbourhood Alive!. When I read it, I thought, my gosh, that is the same briefing notes I had as the Minister of Urban Affairs. I thought what visionaries, what visionaries, they are really thinking out there. They have adopted my Take Back the Streets program. They renamed it Neighbourhood Alive!, and now they are saying we are going to do all these things for Manitoba.

I have to admit—I stand to be corrected—they have also included Brandon and Thompson under my department. I was not the Minister responsible for that area. So what has happened with the amalgamation of the departments, they have added Brandon and they have added

Thompson into the old Take Back the Streets Initiative that we started. I can see how the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen) in her readings here—I can see my briefing notes. I can read my briefing notes on this Neighbourhood Alive!, and I see that they have overlapped part of the housing initiative in there, physical improvements, working with the neighbours, co-ordinating for community renewal.

I hope my old staff are listening to this on the monitor, because I congratulate them. They have done a marvellous job in repackaging this for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, and I salute them because they are a good staff. They are a tremendous staff. I can only go to bat for them again as I go through these notes in regard to the Neighbourhood Alive! program.

But, Mr. Speaker, I see that—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The Honourable Member's time has expired.

\* (17:20)

**Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli):** Mr. Speaker, during the Budget Debate, because of all the time that was taken by both members, I did not get an opportunity to speak on the Budget. So I want to take that opportunity now to say a few things, since we are on Interim Supply which gives us an opportunity to speak about the financial aspects of the Province and what our government is doing to—

**An Honourable Member:** Or what they are not doing.

**Mr. Helwer:** Well, I think they are doing more harm. The problem is they are doing more harm than good. That is part of the problem. One of the items in the Budget that said the big news: We are the highest taxed in Canada. Budget fails to help middle-income class. The University of Manitoba expects disastrous cuts into budget, and all these things are happening.

If you just look at, as an example, the health care. Remember during the campaign last fall, the members opposite were going around the country saying they are going to eliminate hall-

way medicine. There would be no such thing as hallway medicine anymore. Well, let me look. I just have a copy of the front page of the *Stonewall Argus* here from about two weeks ago. It says eight of the hospital's fifteen beds were closed last week.

This government is closing beds in my area, in the Interlake. It is actually the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) area but used to be my area, but it is a hospital that is used in the Interlake area. The same thing is happening in Gimli, the same thing in Selkirk, the same thing in Teulon, the same thing in Arborg. They are cutting hospital beds. They are closing beds. The Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) knows what is happening in our province. Where is this big promise, they said, of no more hallway medicine? Now they are closing the beds.

What is happening to our taxes? Where is all this money? The Minister of Health said that he is going to solve all these hallway medicine problems with \$15 million. Well, you know what happened. They spent, I think, about \$300 million or \$400 million and still have not solved the problem.

The biggest problem is we have no nurses; we are short of nurses. Last year we had a plan to bring in more nurses to solve the problems. No, they did away with that. What happened? Now we have a real problem. We have a real shortage of nurses, and they cannot bring in the nurses. Who is going to come to a province with the highest taxes in Canada? How are we going to attract doctors, nurses and professionals of all kinds? They are going to go to Ontario. They are going to go to Saskatchewan and Alberta. They will not come to Manitoba. We cannot even keep our own nurses here that take our training here. They want to go practise other places. The same thing with our doctors, the medical staff, can you blame them when there is such a big discrepancy in the taxes? We are the highest-taxed province in Canada. Actually, that is not quite right. Quebec, I guess, is still considered a little higher than we are, but we are right next to Quebec as far as taxes are concerned.

**An Honourable Member:** We used to be one of the lowest.

**Mr. Helwer:** That is right. When we were the government up until last year, in the 12 years that we were in government, we brought the rate down from 54 percent to 47 percent of the federal tax rate, which, if they were now switched to the single tax rate or de-linked from the federal, would have been about 10.5 percent, whereby we are going to be over 11 percent when it takes effect next year, in March 2001. So how are we going to attract the people we need in Manitoba, the nurses, the doctors, the teachers, professional people? Even in Agriculture, we need the Ag reps. We need people with degrees in agriculture to help our farmers in one thing or another. How are we going to attract them? We cannot because of the fact we are not competitive on the system.

I remember, during the campaign last fall, we talked about this. We have to get Manitoba in a competitive situation so that we can compete with other provinces. That was one of our problems, and we were doing that, but it did not happen. But this government has certainly done more harm, in the eight or nine or ten months that they have been elected since last September than any government that I know of in the history of Manitoba. They have not been able to balance the budget even, and they keep spending more money, but not on the proper things. As an example—

**An Honourable Member:** Education.

**Mr. Helwer:** Oh, Education. What have you done with Education? You certainly have not solved the problems there either.

I want to talk about some of the problems that our farmers are facing today, especially with this rain the past couple of weeks, rain again today. In our area of Manitoba and the Interlake area—I know the Member for Interlake (Mr. Nevakshonoff) has some problems there, too—we have had as much as eight or nine or ten inches of rain in certain places and a lot of flooding. Certainly, our farmers have had to put up with a lot. I know there will be a lot of crops lost, and they will have great difficulty coming in.

When we were the Government, we were still doing a lot of drainage work and building a lot of drains. As an example, Netley Creek in my

area, we had projects to last us three years in a row to try to improve the creek and make it wider so it would take more water, but this year, there is no contract for an extension of Netley. So the flooding that we had this past week, every time we get five or six inches of rain at one time like that, the creek spills over the banks and floods a lot of good farmland. By the time the water runs off, it is too late, and a lot of this land is lost for this year.

So drainage is certainly a big issue in my area, and that is one of the problems that we have to address. I have been working with the municipalities such as St. Andrews especially, and their councillors there are very responsible, and they have the equipment at St. Andrews municipality. They will be doing everything they can to help farmers and make the drains possible to get the water off the land as quickly as possible. Farmers are going to lose that production for this year, but hopefully we can get it back next year.

I just want to talk a minute about what the Budget does for the Highways budget. They have cut \$10 million out of the capital program and Highways budget. Well, I certainly have a real problem in my constituency, Highway 9, running from Winnipeg to Selkirk here. It is, I think, one of the most unsafe, dangerous highways in the country. I have talked to the Minister of Highways, brought it up during the Highways Estimates, and I still do not have a commitment from him that we are going to have a look at that highway to see what can be done to improve it.

This is also considered as the Selkirk corridor, also because the highway will have to be changed to build a Selkirk corridor, so it goes west of Highway 9, so that it would go through the new Selkirk Bridge and over to Highway 59, and over to the beaches, through Grand Beach and that area. So it is very important that we do something on this Highway 9 in the very near future. I will certainly be putting my effort into trying to get the Minister of Highways to recognize the importance of this road because it is a safety factor, and certainly we have to try to make this highway safer, especially in light of the fact there seems to be a lot of new subdivisions in the Rural Municipality of St.

Andrews whereby people are moving out of Winnipeg into the municipality or by building new homes, families, and one thing and another. So we have to provide the proper highway for them to be able to come to work.

**An Honourable Member:** You will not get it from them, Edward.

\* (17:30)

**Mr. Helwer:** No, I gathered that; that is the problem. Even one of their members recently told me, he said that is not uncommon, the NDP, they do not spend money on the highways or drainage. That is not a priority for them. That is right; they do not consider that a priority. That is right. They feel social programs, welfare programs and things like that are more important. I have to agree, health, education, and family services are very important.

When we were the government, we did fund these programs to the best ability. What is happening to our university programs? What is happening to the University of Manitoba? They are going to have an increase in fees because you or the government of the day have not increased the grants to universities. So, when you consider the damage that this budget is doing for health care, education, it has taken the money away from the people. It hurt the programs. So that is just another example of where we are going.

What about all the extra revenue that this province is getting from the federal government, through equalization grants? Because Ontario and Alberta have increased the tax, the revenue coming out of the two provinces, so the equalization is certainly helping Manitoba. I think they are going to have something like \$480-million worth of new revenue. That is a lot of money. Why could they not cut the taxes, at least a little bit, to help the people of Manitoba? It says: Can you taste tax relief. Read the fine print. Every other province except Manitoba, every other province, and we are still looking for nurses. They are not doing the job of looking after health at all.

Even though tax freedom day, which took place just the other day, June—what day was it? Just a few days ago. Anyway, we actually were

three days earlier than last year because of the federal government's reduction of taxes. But Manitobans are still paying more taxes even despite the three-day betterment because overall income has increased from last year.

So that slim increase that we are going to see in our paycheques in the next couple of weeks, if we get a paycheque maybe, is certainly only going to come from the federal sources. What this government has done by changing the system has virtually deprived Manitobans of getting that tax cut that was coming to them, and the tax cuts that we did get this year were the ones that were already promised and in place from the former government, the Conservative government.

So when we take all these things into consideration about the taxes that they have not given us, the services that they are not giving us, whether it be in health, education or agricultural programs. Manitobans are much worse off this year than we were last year at this time. This NDP budget fails to protect the strong economic climate that we built here in the last decade. This NDP budget fails to provide any incentive for young people to stake their future in Manitoba. How are we going to keep our professionals?

This NDP budget fails to provide any assistance to agricultural producers affected by flooding. It also fails to meet the highways and infrastructure needs of rural Manitoba. The Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) is here. I just spoke about the importance of Highway 9 between Selkirk and Winnipeg, one of the busiest highways in Manitoba, I would have to say it is. It is probably the busiest highway in Manitoba, and it is the most dangerous highway in Manitoba. There are more accidents on Highway 9—

**An Honourable Member:** And it all got that way in the last eight months.

**Mr. Helwer:** No, what happened was this area was represented by the former MLA. This is a new area for me. I just took over this area last September actually. It is a new part of my constituency, so it is important to me. It is a disgrace, though, that Highway 9. If we had that \$10 million that you took out of the Budget for



highways, just think what we could do to Highway 9. So that is just another example of this budget that the NDP presented plus now they need some money to operate till we pass the Budget. They just have forgotten about Manitobans, forgotten about the farmers and forgotten to provide the service that we need.

Another thing is when we talk about agriculture. As you know, last year was one of the worst floods in southwest Manitoba. It really was a disaster, I can assure you. Yet, even though our government put in some \$71 million to try to help the farmers there, this government has just refused to recognize that it was a disaster there and that they should have something. Instead of that, they chopped \$1.5 million from the agricultural research and development budget. Again taking away from the farmers.

**An Honourable Member:** The backbone of the country—agriculture.

**Mr. Helwer:** Yes, the backbone of the country, that is right. Just a couple of days ago, there was an article in the paper on how farmers planted seeds of change. Well, this is an example of how farmers are innovative and prepared to take on the task when grain prices—when we lost the Crow benefit for the freight, Manitoba was one of the hardest hit provinces, there is no doubt. This was another federal Liberal disaster that hurt Manitoba more than any other province in Canada. Manitoba had to pay the price when we lost the Crow rate benefit, and this was done by the federal Liberal government in Ottawa.

Here is the guy, one of the guys that took it away. That is right. As a matter of fact, he was the member for Selkirk-Interlake—

**Mr. Helwer:** —when the federal government took away the Crow rate which hurt Manitoba farmers more than any other province in Canada. Manitoba was the hardest hit.

**An Honourable Member:** You guys were right there with them.

**Mr. Helwer:** No, we were not, oh, no. So what did we do? What did the farmers of Manitoba do? The Manitoba farmers are so innovative they found ways to make ends meet, how to do things differently. They quit growing grain. They went into bison, elk and various forage crops, timothy—

**An Honourable Member:** Ostrich.

\* (17:40)

**Mr. Helwer:** Ostrich. And now what happens? This government, through Bill 5, this NDP government, through Bill 5, wants to take away those things and put them in the wild life, take them away from farmers. So we are certainly, when it comes to debating Bill 5—and I will be doing that in the next number of days, and we will be talking about that part of it, but I just want to talk about the farmers and how innovative they have become to come up with new ideas, new ways to make money and be successful farmers.

When you think of all the beans that are grown in Manitoba, all the peas, the corn, the timothy, you know, the special crops.

**An Honourable Member:** Hemp.

**Mr. Helwer:** Hemp, only in the Dauphin area. No, I should not say that. There has been some hemp too, but I do not think—not too much hemp this year, but anything like hemp though, and canola has been very good to farmers in Manitoba, but the prices this past year or two have kind of gone south.

I just want to say, though, that farmers are very innovative. So, in spite of the fact we lost the Crow benefit, farmers have found ways to make ends meet. Actually there has been a great expansion in the livestock sector also, especially hogs. I only hope that we can continue to increase hog production and that farmers will become more successful because hogs do more than help the hog industry alone. It also helps the grain farmers because the barley is the feed that the hogs are going to eat, helps the grain farmers also, so it helps everybody. I am really pleased to see, in the last six months or eight months or so, hog prices have improved, and I am sure the

hog farmers have made up for the losses that they had in 1998 when the prices were low. So I am really pleased to see that.

Also, the cattle industry has certainly expanded, especially up in the Interlake area where we have an excellent cow-calf operation. Our farmers in the Interlake produce some of the best calves in the country, and there is a great demand for livestock calves and the feeder calves from the Interlake area.

I just want to say a couple of things about casinos, and this is one area where this government is going to affect—another way it is going to affect the Budget. They are going to lose revenues from the casinos that are already in Manitoba to the Aboriginal casinos or Native casinos, whatever you want to call them.

In my area alone over 3000 people signed a petition against any increase in gambling. We knew this before. We had a moratorium on any increase in gambling. We had a moratorium on VLTs. No more VLTs, no more gambling in the province. Yet this government wants to create five new casinos. Can you imagine doubling gambling in Manitoba? Five new casinos. What is this going to do to our McPhillips Street Station or the Regent Avenue casino, as an example?

Even in Headingley where 80-some percent, 80 percent or 85 percent, of people voted against a casino, there is still the committee that approved a casino for the Headingley area. How can that be? They were supposed to go out and have consultations. They did not do that. They just went ahead and recommended five casinos for Manitoba. How is that going to help? It certainly is not. As a matter of fact, if anything, we want to be able to cut down on the gambling in Manitoba and wean the Province off that tax revenue, unfortunately, because it does more harm than good. So that is just another factor, another thing in the NDP budget that it is going to fail to do.

What is this government doing for the tourist industry in Manitoba? In my constituency, as an example, tourism is a very major industry. If you get up in the Winnipeg Beach area, the Gimli area, tourism is a big issue. I am

really pleased, though, that at least we are going to get a highway between Gimli and Winnipeg Beach. But this is one that we had in a program for a number of years, and luckily we are getting it finished this year. But No. 9 is certainly an asset for the Winnipeg Beach and Gimli area.

But, when you look at the dollars that come into Manitoba through tourism alone, it is very significant to our revenue source here in Manitoba plus jobs that it provides and the income that it provides. If you look at the area in my constituency, as an example, Winnipeg Beach, Gimli, Arnes, Camp Morton, all those areas, the R.M. of Gimli, as an example, has been the leader in building permits in the last number of years when you look at the Eastern/Interlake planning district because it takes in the town of Gimli, the R.M. of Gimli, Bifrost and those particular municipalities. But the R.M. of Gimli has been the leader, and it is because there have been so many cottages built in the Gimli area. They are not building seasonal cottages anymore; they are building homes that are insulated so that they can be used all year round. People are moving out there and driving, in some cases, to work in Winnipeg or in other places or finding jobs locally.

Another thing, the tourist industry provides a lot of summer employment for university students and high school students. These are jobs that are much needed in Manitoba for our students, and we certainly are glad to see that the tourism industry is still expanded.

So discussion on Bill 5 I am going to leave a little later. I talked about the health care, talked about the damage that this government is doing to our main services such as health care, education, and family services. Even with all the extra income they are getting, they still are not providing those services. Our health care is getting worse in Manitoba.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I am going to close off debate and—

**An Honourable Member:** More Ed, more.

**Mr. Helwer:** Oh, I can go on and talk about things that happened in Dauphin, but I want to give my colleague for Springfield an opportunity

to get started today. He will be able to carry on tomorrow. So with that, thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield):** Mr. Speaker, I know this is one of those speeches that the House has been waiting for for hours of my colleagues across the way. The Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell) I notice always graces the Chamber with his presence every time I get up to speak. You know, I do not think the members opposite are going to applaud as loudly and give me the standing ovation that they did when I got up, when I am finished. I have a feeling there might just be a few noses out of joint. There will probably be a few more unhappy faces on the other side.

I do also want to speak to this particular bill before us. Before I get too much into that, I would like to deal with an issue that certainly we find of great concern on this side of the House. I would like to refer to an article in the *Winnipeg Sun* from Sunday, July 2, 2000, and it is that wise sage Tom Brodbeck. It is an article by him, one that I know that when the paper comes out the members opposite throw themselves on the paper trying to glean all the wisdom they can out of it. The article reads: "NDP dig themselves deep hole on casino affair." Like, where does this particular author come up with a headline like that? How did he ever come up with that headline? "Kerfuffle could have been avoided with cautious approach."

Mr. Speaker, maybe he looked into the future a little bit. Maybe he looked into a crystal ball. This is from July 2, not July 4, but the headline rings ominous. You know, you almost expect that thunder in the background and that crashing when he says "kerfuffle could have been avoided with cautious approach." What kerfuffle? Well, let me read on.

"What a terrible web they weave. Manitoba's New Democrats are digging themselves deeper into the hole every week as they muck through—" Mr. Speaker, there is that word again, there is that word—"as they muck through what is turning out to be a botched native casino selection process." I stood here awhile ago and I said we on this side of the House would be more than happy, we would extend a hand, for instance, to

the Minister of Labour (Ms. Barrett) and help her out of that socialist mud and help them out of that. We would help the Minister of Education (Mr. Caldwell).

There was another article in the paper on the Minister of Education, and you know I think he is going to need more than one hand. He is going to need a whole bunch of hands. How does he keep all those balls in the air? We know he is going to drop one and drop two and drop three, but even Tom Brodbeck sees that the NDP is mired in this socialist muck, and I am quoting. I am only quoting this article.

"What should have been a well-thought-out plan to grant casino licences to First Nations most capable of capitalizing on gaming revenues has turned into a political beehive for Premier Gary Doer." You should have been outside here after Question Period. You want to talk about beehive. Boy, there was excitement and activity out there.

\* (17:50)

Speaking about the Premier of Manitoba, you have to listen to this one. Mr. Speaker, hold on tight. "He's starting to feel the sting square on his backside."

Oi yi yi, if you notice, Mr. Speaker, the Premier does not even lean back anymore on his chair. His whole back is bitten up from all those stings he has been getting. He just sits upright because this has been a pretty tough several weeks for him.

"It's been a process mired in arbitrary rule changes, charges of political interference and accusations of incompetence." Mr. Speaker, yes, you heard right: "Accusations of incompetence—all culminating in threats of court action and long-lasting political liability for the NDP."

The next paragraph shocks even me. It shocks even me to have to read this to this Chamber: "Even Gaming Minister Ron Lemieux is ensnared personally in the fracas after it was learned his wife is a lawyer for one of the bands negotiating with government for a casino licence. What a mess."

My goodness, what a difference two days will make in politics. I just flip through my papers here for a minute and, hello, Mr. Brodbeck, hello, Mr. Brodbeck, news flash, news flash here: "Ashton Takes Over Gaming Portfolio." Oh, but this newspaper article says: "Even Gaming Minister Ron Lemieux"—oh right, that was on the second, today would be the fourth—and the fortunes, the tide has changed. *[interjection]*

"Steve Ashton, minister of highways and government services, is taking over responsibility for the Manitoba Gaming Control Commission, effective today, announced Premier Gary Doer." How quickly things change. "Doer indicated that Consumer and Corporate Affairs Minister Ron Lemieux today asked to be relieved of the gaming responsibility.

"Mr. Lemieux told me that the allegations of a conflict involving his wife have been causing him great personal distress and hardship,' said Doer. 'While I am satisfied that no conflict has, in fact, occurred'—well, that would leave one in this Chamber who is satisfied—I am granting his request to be relieved of responsibility for the Manitoba Gaming Control Commission.

"I have asked Mr. Ashton to take responsibility for this portfolio,' said Doer. 'He has agreed to accept the challenge.'"

I do not know if Mr. Ashton agreed to accept the challenge or the death penalty, the political death penalty.

"Mr. Lemieux has rendered exemplary service in this portfolio. He has helped launch the independent process for the First Nations' gaming strategy"—yeah, right—"that will create jobs for aboriginal people"—okay—"said Doer. 'Mr. Ashton will continue to oversee the implementation process for this important initiative.'"

Mr. Speaker, this is very, very amazing. Two days ago Tom Brodbeck writes: "And all this could have been avoided." *[interjection]*

Do you want to hear that again? I think we should repeat that again: "And all of this could

have been avoided had Doer proceeded slowly and with caution on native casinos."

This, Mr. Speaker, was not necessary and that is, I think, the most unfortunate thing. You know what? Maybe it is Tom Brodbeck's fault. Maybe if he had written this article maybe six, seven months ago we would not be in the mess—the government would not be in the mess they are in today.

If you are looking for somebody to blame, I mean, you have run out of the federal government. I mean, how much more can the federal government shoulder before they are going to crack under the stuff you have thrown onto them? Really, people are so tired of what you are throwing at the previous government, they are not buying that anymore. Poor, little, lonely Glen Murray—and I mean, you guys throw enough blame on that poor man.

You have taken care of all the RNs and the school boards. I mean, Drew, you have got to stop pushing around them school boards. Come on.

Then it is amazing, what Drew cannot blame on them, he makes them do—*[interjection]*

### Point of Order

**Hon. Becky Barrett (Minister of Labour):** All members in the Chamber should be referred to by either their title if they are a minister or their constituency if they are a member. The Member for Springfield knows that full well because I believe he has been called on it before.

**Mr. Schuler:** On the same point of order, I do not believe you have ever called me on that one, but the Minister is right, and I will see to it that I, from here on in, refer to my esteemed colleague across the way as the Minister of Education.

**Mr. Speaker:** On the point of order raised by the Minister of Labour, she does have a point of order. All members are to be addressed by their constituencies and ministers by their titles. I would ask for the co-operation of all honourable members.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Schuler:** You know what, maybe if this government is now looking for somebody else to blame, maybe it is Tom Brodbeck's fault. I think you should just blame the whole thing on Tom because he did not come up with this article sooner. There, at least for the next two days you can say that all of this is Tom Broadbeck's fault, and then you have to look for somebody else to blame in the days to follow. Because there is incredibly good advice in here. Again, two days earlier Tom Brodbeck said: "And all this could have been avoided had Doer proceeded slowly and with caution on native casinos."

He goes on to say: "Instead, the NDP slapped together a request for proposal within three months of taking office, shrouded the process in secrecy and ignored key issues like public consultation . . ."

When this whole session started, that was the socialist buzzword, "consultation." So what is the Government going to do with cutting the grass? Oh, we are going to have consultation with goats. What is the Government going to do about dust bunnies? Well, we are going to have consultation with brooms. You could not get a straight answer out of the Government for at least the first three months because everything was consultation. But on the big issues, on the issues that matter to people, on the issues that matter to the public, what does this government do? This government ignores key issues like public consultation on all issues, all issues.

It was a recipe for disaster right from the start. They added all various ingredients that were bound to create the recipe for disaster, and they mixed up the pot.

"Bands could not talk openly about their proposals for fear of disqualification, making it impossible for them to consult with the public." Talk about putting together a system that was absolutely doomed to fail.

"And they had only a month to seek clarification on the RFP after receiving it and a mere 10 weeks to put a proposal together."

"The process was supposed to be independent of government, yet there were several provincial departments involved in the assessment process."

"The selection committee had to determine whether 'material issues' and 'concerns' of adjacent local government had been satisfactorily addressed by bands."

"Yet the committee was not allowed to communicate with any local government and could only consider information contained in the RFP."

"Had they been able to communicate with, say,"—for instance this reporter throws out—"the RM of Headingley—the top site chosen for a casino—they would have discovered that all material issues were not addressed after area residents voted overwhelmingly against a native casino in an April plebiscite."

**Mr. Speaker:** Order. When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member will have 26 minutes remaining. Also, when this matter is again before the House, it will stay standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Morris (Mr. Pitura).

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 4, 2000

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