

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

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

Vol. LV No. 15A – 10:00 a.m., Thursday, March 4, 2004

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Eighth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
AGLUGUB, Cris	The Maples	N.D.P.
ALLAN, Nancy, Hon.	St. Vital	N.D.P.
ALTEMEYER, Rob	Wolseley	N.D.P.
ASHTON, Steve, Hon.	Thompson	N.D.P.
BJORNSON, Peter, Hon.	Gimli	N.D.P.
BRICK, Marilyn	St. Norbert	N.D.P.
CALDWELL, Drew	Brandon East	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave, Hon.	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard	Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary, Hon.	Concordia	N.D.P.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
EICHLER, Ralph	Lakeside	P.C.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
GERRARD, Jon, Hon.	River Heights	Lib.
GOERTZEN, Kelvin	Steinbach	P.C.
HAWRANIK, Gerald	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
HICKES, George, Hon.	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
IRVIN-ROSS, Kerri	Fort Garry	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
JHA, Bidhu	Radisson	N.D.P.
KORZENIOWSKI, Bonnie	St. James	N.D.P.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar, Hon.	The Pas	N.D.P.
LEMIEUX, Ron, Hon.	La Verendrye	N.D.P.
LOEWEN, John	Fort Whyte	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord, Hon.	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MAGUIRE, Larry	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McGIFFORD, Diane, Hon.	Lord Roberts	N.D.P.
MELNICK, Christine, Hon.	Riel	N.D.P.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn, Hon.	Minto	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie	River East	P.C.
MURRAY, Stuart	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
NEVAKSHONOFF, Tom	Interlake	N.D.P.
OSWALD, Theresa	Seine River	N.D.P.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack	Southdale	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric, Hon.	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Carman	P.C.
RONDEAU, Jim, Hon.	Assiniboia	N.D.P.
ROWAT, Leanne	Minnedosa	P.C.
SALE, Tim, Hon.	Fort Rouge	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Wellington	N.D.P.
SCHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	N.D.P.
SCHULER, Ron	Springfield	P.C.
SELINGER, Greg, Hon.	St. Boniface	N.D.P.
SMITH, Scott, Hon.	Brandon West	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Heather	Tuxedo	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan, Hon.	Dauphin-Roblin	N.D.P.
TAILLIEU, Mavis	Morris	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann, Hon.	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 4, 2004

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ORDERS OF THE DAY

GOVERNMENT BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, we will move to Motions of Condolence.

MOTIONS OF CONDOLENCE

Jim Penner

Hon. Gary Doer (Premier): I move, seconded by the member from Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen),

THAT this House convey to the family of the late Jim Penner, who served as a member of the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, its sincere sympathy in their bereavement and its appreciation of his devotion to duty in a useful life of active community and public service and that Mr. Speaker be requested to forward a copy of this resolution to the family.

Motion presented.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I am sure for all of us in this Chamber and all of us in the Manitoba community, this is an opportunity to celebrate a great life, a great person. Also, I am sure all of us feel a great deal of regret of having to make our comments today about a friend and a colleague that we all served with.

I want to start on a personal note. I had a lot of opportunities to discuss issues with Mr. Penner outside of the Chamber. It was not always political issues or business issues or ideological issues. It was issues of our families, our neighbours, our friends, our community.

I recall in one of those times, in August of 2002, where we were in debate in this House in the middle of the summer. We chatted in the members' lounge considerably about missing our families, about being away from our loved ones, about not being able to spend time, in his case with his wonderful grandchildren. I was talking about my kids because we

were in this Chamber. Jim I think had his priorities right, because, as much as we have differences across the aisle, we always, I know, each and every one of us share an abiding love for the family members that we have and participate with and a love for our community and our friends in this province.

Jim, to me, was always a person who had a sharp opposition, I suppose, to some of the things we were bringing in. I noticed his speeches were quite based on his history and his analysis of the economic differences that we may or may not have, but his gentle human side was kindness and warmth and a kind of humility that certainly was opposite to the great accomplishments he achieved in his own personal life and in the life of the businesses he ran.

I did know Mr. Penner before he was a member of the Legislature, because I did shop at Penner Foods on Henderson Highway. It is always Penner Foods to me; it has had a couple of incarnations since, but I am sure members opposite—the member from River East—would have the same view. It was always Jim Penner's store as far as I am concerned, and I still call it, when I go to get something at the last minute, I am still saying I am going out to Penner's. I think it has had two names since.

Of course, Jim Penner has been recognized for being a very, very successful independent grocer. An individual who built the family business, had a number of stores—I believe it was six stores—that he ran on an independent basis throughout the period of time when there was consolidation taking place. He had over 800 employees, and I can attest to the fact that any contact I had with people that worked at Penners, basically they knew that they were part of an operation that was headed by a wonderful human being: Jim Penner.

Jim, of course, was recognized for the work he did. I think the many commentaries after his passing on January 17 dealt with this. This man was a giver to his community, to his church, to his fellow citizens and to the world citizens.

I was a former member of the Variety Club board, and I know how prestigious the Variety Club International Award was for Jim Penner in the year

2001, to recognize his charity, his contributions. Very quietly, though. This was not an individual who wanted recognition. He wanted to reinvest the great benefits he received from his community back into his fellow human beings. I applaud this life. I celebrate his great contributions to his fellow citizens.

We did not have the opportunity of Jim being in this House long, on a relative basis. But he more than made up for the quantity of time with the quality of his contributions. I know that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) and other ministers who dealt with him in Estimates felt that when they went into Estimates, the process was dignified, was intelligent, was probing, was honest and it provided what is best in the Legislature through his parliamentary activity. He raised the level of debate by his intelligence and by his dignity, and by doing so, he raised the level of contributions that this Legislature made to all the citizens of Manitoba during his period of time when he was in this Chamber representing his constituents or, as he would call them, his customers in this Chamber.

When I would go to Steinbach and visit some of the plants or operations, I always felt it was not going into an opposition seat, it was going into a Manitoba community. He would welcome us and me personally to the activities, whether it was the Chamber of Commerce then or other activities with pride in the accomplishments of his citizens, and with a sense of that we are all in this together as Manitoban representatives. I really did appreciate that, as a member, when I visited that area.

Mr. Speaker, I remember, also, all of us sharing his health challenges. We all knew, because he told us about his challenges with his health, and I know that we were all very, very deeply saddened that that led to his not running in the last election. It also led to his passing on January 17.

* (10:10)

I think there was a statement in the obituary—I was out of town and I could not attend the services; I would have attended if I had been in town—that he had a head for business and a heart for service. Those words rang very true to me, and I am sure to all members of this Legislature with the life of Jim Penner and the great, great human kindness he expressed to his fellow citizens.

I know many others are going to speak to his various accomplishments. He touched me in a very, very personal way. I will never forget my conversation and I do not even know the date in August, in the members' lounge when we shared our love of family and our love of province. In the hurly-burly activity of Question Period and debates and press conferences, we should never forget the wonderful privilege we have representing our constituents. Jim Penner never forgot that.

We should never forget the fact that, as he reminded us, we are all here to improve the conditions for our fellow citizens. That is the primary goal of all of us that are elected on a temporary basis and live in a world, that we return to our Maker. I know we have different religions in this House but as a Christian, I can think of no one that better exemplifies a good Christian life than Jim Penner. I am sure that, as we believe, he is watching this discussion or listening to this discussion from heaven.

I want to pass on behalf of our party to his wife Beverley, his daughter Judy, his sons Phil and Greg, our deepest condolences, our appreciation for a life well-lived and a life that was, in my view, shortened too early. I know his love of his family, and particularly his grandchildren, was so strong. On behalf of all of us, I want to thank his grandchildren, his children and his spouse Beverley for the contributions he made to his community, to his province, to his country and the world and today, to this Legislature by raising the level of debate. Thank you.

Mr. Stuart Murray (Leader of the Official Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to acknowledge, on behalf of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Progressive Conservative caucus, a day that will go down as something that we all remember very, very fondly, the day we met Jim Penner, the day that he joined our caucus.

I would like to put some words on the record and acknowledge the Premier's eloquent words on behalf of a man who had a tremendous impact on this Legislature and certainly broader than this, on the entire province of Manitoba. I know that, as I speak today, Mr. Speaker, we look up in the gallery and we see a very proud group of Jim Penner's immediate family; his wife Bev, of course his son Phil, who is not with us today, but Greg and Dianne and Judy and Jeremy.

I think it is important, Mr. Speaker, that I start off by making a couple of comments that my immediate connection with Jim Penner was that we are both from Saskatchewan. We used to sort of joke that it is a good place to be from. We both, of course, are proud Manitobans. Jim did grow up in Saskatchewan and moved to Steinbach where he did some incredible things that perhaps he did not see in his future and that was to be in business.

There is no question that he took a small shop and took it into a major independent grocery that we are all aware of, Penner Foods. He took it to the basis that it became an award-winning independent grocery. He was awarded for the work that he did and, of course, he would be the very first person to say it was not me, it was everybody who worked for me.

That was the kind of person that Jim Penner was. He always did things because he was trying to ultimately help people. What a way to help people, to build a small grocery store into the biggest independent grocery store, some six stores, employing I believe it was more than 800 people. That was how Jim Penner touched, reached out to help people in the province of Manitoba.

I have to recount a few personal comments. The one thing that Jim Penner brought to my life was always the sense that no matter what was happening, there was always some humour to be seen in any situation. As a newcomer to politics, I recall my first Pioneer Days Parade celebrating Pioneer Days in Steinbach. We were in the parade together. As we were going through the parade, it became very clear to me that there were thousands and thousands of people lining the main street of Steinbach. Jim was so fantastic, but it became very clear to me as we were going down there that I could hear a lot of the people sitting looking as we went through in the parade, saying, "Who is the guy with Jim Penner?" Jim heard it so many times, but afterward he was kind enough to say, "Next year maybe you ought to get bigger signs."

There was Jim Penner always trying to make me feel a part of his community. He regaled us with stories about how, when he would go to the Pioneer Days Parade, he would love to get on a unicycle and he would love to entertain people and he would love to make people smile and feel good about being there. He did it so incredibly well, and he did it because he truly believed that he was put on this

earth to serve people. I think that was what drove Jim every day, drove his decision-making, drove his love of family, drove his love of people is that he was here to serve people.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that we were so proud of Jim Penner when he was given the 2001 Humanitarian of the Year Award. It was the first time the Variety Club had reached out to touch someone who had made such a huge impact on Manitoba. It was Jim Penner whom they chose and of course we had to find out almost surreptitiously that he was getting this award because it is not why he did it. He did not do it because he wanted to be celebrated in the way that they celebrated him. Those of us that knew why he was chosen felt so proud of him, and I know his family felt so proud and the sense of joy that he had been recognized by an organization that truly makes a difference in the world, and that is the Variety Club. I know that at that award Jim was very much wanting everybody else to speak rather than he. I think that it speaks volumes about the man that we come to pay tribute to today. Somebody who is basically saying, "Let me be in the background. You are the ones who should take the credit. You are the ones this whole process should be all about, celebrating what you do, not what I do."

I share another story, Mr. Speaker. Jim, as we know, had an issue with prostate cancer. He was so wanting to share that issue with anybody because he understood what it was like to be faced with that situation, be faced with a very difficult decision and get through it successfully. Only Jim could find a way to tell about a very serious issue but bring a little bit of Jim Penner's humour and twinkle of his eye to ensure that anybody that may be suffering, or a family member who we know that may be suffering, to say, "It is okay; it is going to be all right. There are ways to see through this issue."

I know that it is clear that when we were at the celebration, as I call it, I felt when we went to the funeral for Jim Penner. I acknowledge the fact that the Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg), the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Lemieux) and the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) were in attendance. I think it shows that this was not a man about politics, he was a man about celebration of what he was able to bring to the province of Manitoba, and that celebration was a time that had a tremendous impact on me personally because of the

voices that rang out in the church, because of the way that the word was spoken.

* (10:20)

The love and affection for Jim Penner in that church was something that I have never seen before, Mr. Speaker. It was a sense of elevation that everybody knew that we had been blessed with 64 years of somebody extremely, extremely special.

I left that celebration very, very proud to know that in such a short time Jim Penner had had a profound impact on the way that we, as legislators, the way that we, as parents, the way that we, as Manitobans, should be looking at issues to try to improve the province of Manitoba. That became very, very clear to me, Mr. Speaker, why that church was so full of love, affection and respect.

I want to just close by saying that we, in politics, from time to time, come across some very, very special people. They are special in their own way because of the way that they bring their views forward, the way that they bring their ideas forward.

I think, as the Premier (Mr. Doer) said, Jim Penner was a family man. He loved his family. He loved his grandchildren, and I think the picture that we saw of him surrounded by this family and grandchildren was one that emulated what his belief and love of family was; that twinkle in his eye was so evident, so obvious and so genuine because he loved being surrounded by his family. Whether it was at Falcon Lake, whether it was his home in Steinbach, whether it was travelling abroad, that was something that Jim Penner believed in tremendously.

So, Mr. Speaker, and to the family of Jim Penner, I say thank you for allowing me to be a part of Jim Penner's life, thank you for the opportunity to have Jim Penner as a member of our political party. What he has taught us and what he has left us will be something that will never be forgotten, and I just want to close by saying, as it said in the piece in the paper, that Jim Penner has gone to be with God, but he has left our world a better place. Thank you very much.

Hon. Ron Lemieux (Minister of Transportation and Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased today to rise to reflect on the life of a former MLA for Steinbach, Jim Penner. A lot of very nice

words have been said today, and I certainly do not want to repeat those, but to certainly Bev and family members that are here today, I just want to express a couple of comments from me personally and on behalf of our party.

I had the opportunity to meet Jim Penner many years ago. It was in a different life, and the first day we came into this building as elected MLAs, Jim came over to me and he said, "You're Mr. Pampers, aren't you?" I said, "What are you talking about?" He said, "well, aren't you the guy that used to sell Pampers diapers in my store in Steinbach?"

So I kind of chuckled in that I did not realize this was the same person. So Jim began talking to me immediately at that point, stating his views on what he felt his role would be here. He expressed to me that he thought that, as new MLAs, we could make a change in how things would work here in the Legislature.

He knows that people in their daily roles in the Legislature sometimes get into a heated debate, but his approach was always, as he stated to me, to make sure that this province of ours would be a better place after we all leave here, after we are no longer elected or we choose to retire or whatever the case may be.

He wanted to make sure that when we left, the province of Manitoba would be a better place as a result of it, and that our approach to politics would be somewhat different. I think he also displayed that in the Legislature as the critic to Consumer and Corporate Affairs when I was the minister.

He just felt that politics could be different. He had his own views with regard to the economics of the province and what should take place with regard to economic development and other issues, but he just felt that we as human beings can treat each other with respect and that you can get your point across and still be able to have a heated debate but treat each other with respect all along. Yes, you have to sometimes agree to disagree, but in the heat of debate you have to treat each other with respect because a lot of Manitobans are expecting us to act accordingly.

I just want to say a couple of other personal notes with regard to Jim. Everyone who knows Jim, as the Premier and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr.

Murray) have mentioned this morning, his family was truly important to him.

I recall very similarly to what the Premier stated. One summer, I cannot remember whether it was the summer of '01, but it was very hot and we were still here in August. Jim came up to me and said, "You know, Ron, make sure you get yourself a cottage some time." I said, "Well, yes, I would like to get a cottage some time. To be at the lake on a beautiful day like today would be wonderful."

He said, "Ooh, no, no, no. This is for a different reason. I ended up getting a cottage not only because I like the lake but it is really important when you have family. When you get yourself a cottage, your children will like to come out and visit you. They will spend a lot of time out at the lake. You can just sit back and relax and you have a place for them to come and visit. I had an ulterior motive in getting a cottage because I realized that I would be able to see my family more and more as a result of that."

Being in my constituency, he often made comments about Falcon Lake and the things that needed to be improved there but made references often to his family and how important it was for each and every one of us in the Legislature never to forget that we all have families and that, no matter how passionate we are about our profession as it is today, our families really need to be No. 1 to all of us. It should be that way. I know the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Murray) mentioned in church where they showed slides and pictures of him many of them showed his family included in those slides. Some were quite hilarious.

Jim had a real passion for life. He has always been known for his philanthropic endeavours which many people do not know about. There are a lot of things that he did very quietly to help many families, not only in the Steinbach area but elsewhere. He truly had a head for business and a heart for kindness and for giving.

As the MLA for La Verendrye, I had the pleasure of meeting him before politics and during politics. When I attended his funeral and the Premier could not make it, I represented the Premier there. I believe the Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) was there as well. You truly felt a real warmth and a kindness and a real feeling of love—there

is no other way to describe it—in that church towards this individual.

I know there are other people that want to speak and there are many here and I do not want to take too much time. On a personal note, I just want to say that it was truly a celebration at his funeral. He left us in too short a time. He had a lot more to contribute, but I think what he left us with was the fact that we need to reflect sometimes. This day is a good day for it. Take a look at why we are here. Treat each other decently. We will agree to disagree, but when everything is said and done, we must treat each other with respect and do the best job possible for all Manitobans.

To Bev and family, I am pleased to be able to have spoken just for a couple of minutes about how I knew Jim and what a wonderful person he was for anyone who has met him and, in my case, worked with him. He treated me very decently as a young salesperson coming into his store. I am trying to sell him Duncan Hines cakes, Pampers diapers, Crisco oil. He sits me down on a case of Crisco oil and is talking about my family. Do I have any children and things like that. He knew I was trying to make a sale, I was trying to sell him some merchandise, and he knew he was going to buy something, but he just wanted to know how I was doing on the personal side. I have always remembered that.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

*(10:30)

Mr. Kelvin Goertzen (Steinbach): I would like to thank the Premier (Mr. Doer) for his very noble and, I think, kind words. Our Leader of the Opposition, my leader, I would like to thank him for the words that he has expressed, not only in the House here today but also privately at other times. I recognize that the Leader of the Liberal Party, the Member for River Heights, will be putting some words on the record as well. That will truly make this an all-party thank-you and a tribute to Jim.

I know that somewhere he is watching this and is very proud of the words. In his typical sense of humour, he probably would say, "Boy, I wish they would have said all those things while I was here." I know that he is very proud of the words. I am glad that his family is here today to hear those many tributes.

I have had the opportunity myself personally in this House before to speak a little bit about my own relationship with Jim. As many of you know, it goes back many years, when I was just a 16-year-old boy working at Penner Foods. The Premier mentioned that even with his own region they still consider the store which was sold to IGA and then became Sobeys Penner Foods, and we do too in Steinbach. Still, when we are going out for our groceries, we say, well, we are going to Penner's.

I think it is kind of neat that phenomenon has gone and lasted throughout the province and is truly a tribute to Jim himself.

As a 16-year-old, though, working in the store, I must say I did not have a lot of interaction with Jim on a day-to-day basis—he was busy running six stores—but you always felt that you knew Jim. You always felt that you knew him personally, even if you did not see him every day, even if you were not in upper management, because it was how the store was run. You could tell in the values that the store had, given how the employees were treated, the type of person that Jim, as an owner, was. Whether it was the remarkable Christmas banquets that Jim and Bev hosted every year, barbecues at the farm, whether it was things like profit-sharing or just paying more than the industry average, you always got a sense of the type of person that Jim was, even as a part-time employee working their way through university.

Because the store Penner Foods had more than 800 employees, I was often asked how it was that a company of that size never became unionized. Somebody once said to me, "It seems strange that you do not have somebody who is advocating on behalf specifically of the rights and the interests of employees." And the answer was always the same. We did have an advocate like that. It was Jim Penner, because he always advocated on behalf of his employees. He always cared about his employees.

There were many young people such as myself who would not have been able to attend university if Jim was not an employer, if Jim was not paying more than the industry average. So I think I speak on behalf of literally hundreds of young people or people who were young people in the province who were able to achieve other goals, to do other things because of the generosity of Jim Penner and his corporation.

I know that when Jim later decided to enter public life he did it with all the right reasons. That is really where I got to know Jim on a personal basis and got to know the Penner family. That is certainly one of the things that I appreciate. The friends that Jim had became my friends. I do not think that I can thank Jim enough in the long term for that.

My respect just grew for him as I saw how he worked hard on behalf of constituents, how he cared about the province. Jim, as we all know, was a man of means. He did not have to do this. He did not have to run for election. He simply could have retired after selling the store and gone off and travelled more of the world than he had already travelled. He was a renowned traveller. But I look to Bev and I wonder if he really knew what the word "retirement" meant. I do not think so. He truly believed that working was a virtue, working to make Manitoba better and working to improve the lives of people.

Jim, obviously, when he ran for election, wanted to be a member of the government. I think that he would have been a tremendous member in government and would have been able to bring a lot of the ideas that he had with running a company, with running a business, into government. But I was very proud because even though that goal was not met he continued to work hard. He never gave up, never gave up trying to bring forward the ideas that he thought would make Manitoba a better place. I was proud of the way that he continued to do that.

After Jim was diagnosed with cancer, I know that the world changed for Jim. Obviously, it is clear that a lot of things that were important before did not have the same significance and a lot of the things that were important before, like family, became even more important. But, you know, Jim continued to be the type of person that he was. When we would go down to the family's home after, my wife Kim and I, he would continue to do what he always did. He would grab our coats and be a host and say, "Well, can I get you something to drink?" He would be getting the peanuts out. He would be getting the cheese and the crackers out, because that was just the kind of guy he was. He always thought of everybody else's needs first. That never changed, even after he was diagnosed with cancer in those last difficult days.

I have many fond memories of Jim. Certainly some of them are of his company, certainly some of

them are political, but a lot of them are just of time spent with him at the cabin at Falcon Lake and with the family.

I remember Jim would always make sure we would go out and look at the sunset. He had a fascination with sunsets. Bev probably has at home, in photo albums, hundreds and hundreds of pictures of sunsets. I think he probably has a picture for every day that he was alive of the sunset. I think it is kind of remarkable. He loved to be out there and see the sunsets and it was very touching. In some ways Jim was emotional in that way. He had a deep sense of feeling, a deep sense of passion.

I am certainly fortunate to have gotten to know Bev, Jeremy, Judy, Greg, Dianne and Phillip, who is not able to be here today. I think Phillip and the entire family have been very strong through the last number of months. Phillip, as well, I remember at the funeral, Bev, where Phillip came up to me and said, "How are you doing, Kelvin." I said, "Well, I am doing pretty good, Phillip. How are you doing?" He said, "I am fine; I just want to make sure you are doing okay." I thought it was remarkable that, even at that time, Phillip was looking after somebody else's needs. I think that is something that he got from Jim and will live on.

I am going to take a lot of the lessons that I have learned from Jim, and I am going to try and bring them to my own family. In the years to come, I think that will be, hopefully, a legacy, and I know others will do that as well. Those who know my relationship with Jim would know that when I was at his home often, I seldom got the last word. Most often he would get the last word, and it was appropriate that he did, and I am going to give him the last word here today, as well.

In the last month of Jim's life, we spent some time reflecting on things, and he was taking some notes and building kind of a history of his own life and of the company. In one of the last months he gave me a handwritten letter that had to do with core values. I would just like to read into the record some of what Jim has written, and those will be my last words. I will defer to my good friend Jim Penner and give him the last word here today in my speech.

"I believe that the quiet influence of my thinking father needs to be explained in order for the core values that shape my life and my behaviour to be

understood. Both my mother, who led me to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, and my father, who led us as a family in bible reading and prayer every morning, showed the peace of God that comes with salvation.

"Christianity can influence our development from childhood and those foundation principles are the core values upon which our lives are built. After father at breakfast would read a portion of scripture, he would lead us in a short prayer, and then we would all join together in reciting the Lord's Prayer. A core value, which was taught to us from the Lord's Prayer, was the principle of forgiveness. Forgiving your enemy and even loving your enemy was stressed. We were not allowed to speak ill of others and hatred was considered sin. This Christian principle of loving your enemies required us to understand differences and to be tolerant and considerate of others.

"When I look back at the choices my wife, Bev, and I made over 45 years, the core values kept shining through. They are not evident on the surface. They often require serious thought to identify, but core values make the person built upon them.

"Another core value has to do with one's relationship to things. Money often seems to be a goal for some people. Money is not something we intensely wish to accumulate. Money is only worth what we can buy with it, so careful investment of available resources puts money in the category of a responsibility. A person should not be credited with acquiring wealth but rather with the responsible management and skilful investment of available resources. I was taught not to seek wealth, which tends to bring conflict, and people whose wealth has gone to their heads tend to find themselves independent from God and man. Hence the core value of wealth or the creation of wealth is what we do with what God has entrusted to us. Here again, actions speak much louder than words.

*(10:40)

"I was faced with this question while making a speech in Moscow in 1990, of how can you, as a Christian, support ownership of wealth when even in the Communist philosophy they were not allowed to be owners? I quickly amended my vocabulary to say what is really the case in Christian principle. It is not ownership we are concerned with but it is stewardship, practising stewardship. Being good stewards

and managers of what God has entrusted us to manage takes us out of the undesirable role of being rich.

"So as God's servant I felt leadership could be carried out in all aspects of life. It does not matter so much what we do but how we do it. So whether I am teaching Sunday school boy's brigade, selling groceries or practising politics, I need always to be mindful that Jesus washed his servants' feet, an act of humble servitude while teaching discipleship.

"When my father would quote, esteem the next man better than yourself, I would ask, but I am a teenager. How about treating the kids as better than myself? Dad made it abundantly clear that we esteem everyone better than ourselves, a philosophy that one understands better the longer that they live.

"I was asked on occasion to put in writing the Penner Foods story. My answer has been that we can write this story in one sentence: Treat people the way you want to be treated. If you are an average person you want to be respected. How do you get respect? You firstly must learn to give respect. If you want a friend be a friend. If you want love then love."

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by expressing my condolences to the Penner family, who are in the gallery today.

Sixty-four years is too young to die. It raises theological questions for us such as: Why do bad things happen to good people? which is the title of a book by Rabbi Kushner that I would recommend to all of us.

Jim Penner and I sat together in the Thirty-seventh Legislature. During that Legislature I sat where the Member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) usually sits, and Mr. Penner sat in the back row in the official opposition caucus. I used to go and sit beside him and chat from time to time.

We had a number of things in common. For example, he was on the board of Trinity Western University. Many, many years ago I was on the board of Victoria University. We talked mostly about Trinity Western University.

He also spoke to me off the record. There is kind of an unwritten rule here that things that are said off the record stay off the record. But I was pleased that

he trusted me to keep confidences, perhaps because I am a United Church minister, and I think he had respect for me in that role, although I would have to say that he respected everyone and treated everyone with respect. But I appreciated his candour as he spoke about his political views and some of the differences between himself and his party and his colleagues.

I admired him for his work ethic, which I think he brought from the business world to this Legislature. When he spoke he was always well prepared. He always had speaking notes and he always had thoughtful comments to make.

Last fall, along with almost every member of the Conservative caucus and my colleague from La Verendrye, I attended the appreciation dinner for Jim Penner at the Steinbach Mennonite Village Museum. I was pleased to be there, both personally and as a representative of our caucus.

Jim gave a speech at that time. It was a short speech. In it he took some shots at the NDP, which is fair game. After all, it was a Steinbach PC Association event. But I have to say that they were not very partisan comments. In fact they were very gentle. I think that is in keeping with the fact that he was a gentle man and a gentleman and we will miss him.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to say a few words in tribute to Jim Penner, who sat in this Legislature with us and represented Steinbach very well when he was here.

I got to know Jim during the time he sat in the Legislature. We talked periodically. I got to respect his calm and sincere approach to asking questions, to probing at the committee and Estimates stage, and to appreciate that he was a person who brought a lot of thought to the questions that he came with, that he brought a lot of caring for Manitoba and for Manitobans in the efforts that he made while he was here in the legislature.

I was fortunate to be able to be at the tribute to Jim Penner and at his funeral and to be able to learn more about Jim and his relationship with his family and with many of the people who worked with him and were his employees in Penner Foods.

Jim was a person with a big heart, a huge heart, incredible depth of kindness, often given in ways that

were not necessarily open, but very helpful and sincere, a concern that he showed for others, a respect for others. That concern and respect, of course, was one of the major reasons that he received the Variety Club Heart Award award, his calm and sincere and ongoing way of showing his support for individuals, for people, for his community, and for Manitobans.

I think it is significant that his kindness and his concern for his family was evident in many of the things that he did. Clearly, he enjoyed being with the family, whether at the cabin, or at many, many other occasions. I can certainly empathize with the importance of cabin in being able to foster a wonderful family relationship, because I have had that experience as well and certainly know what it is like and why it is important. One of the wonderful things about Manitoba is that we have so many lakes and there are possibilities of enjoying them in ways that can support and enhance family life and our concern about people and friends.

Jim was someone who liked to learn, to travel, and to support learning. He clearly did this in his work with Trinity Western University. He was a person who knew what it was like to be a small independent businessperson, and when he was here, he frequently spoke about the importance of government in providing a framework for small business to allow small business to flourish and grow in this province.

Jim had a passion for his community of Steinbach. He never hesitated to show that passion in his calm way and to make sure that his community was well represented.

So I would like to say to the members of the family who are here that we all have lost someone who has contributed a lot to our province of Manitoba, and we will certainly miss Jim. Thank you.

Mr. Glen Cummings (Ste. Rose): First of all, I would like to begin by extending condolences on behalf of the constituency of Ste. Rose and the people there who knew Jim, or who benefited, frankly, from his service to this province and this community.

Jim Penner was one of those politicians who gives politicians a good name. Some of us, from time to time in this House, take pride in being able to eat up the opposition or the government of the day in

debate, and there are various other phrases that we might apply to it. But that was not in Jim's nature.

Jim was a man of principle who, and I hope more and more of us would respect the concept that Jim brought here, which was that he chose his words carefully, he put them on the record in a meaningful way, and then he let his reason and his thoughts speak for themselves. He was very thoughtful when he spoke in this Chamber. He made decisions, I believe, constantly based on principle. One of the things that I learned from Jim—that was an interesting aspect of my relationship.

* (10:50)

There are probably others here who knew Jim more personally than I did. There certainly are some who knew him considerably better than I did. But serving with him briefly as a fellow caucus member, you had to listen to what Jim had to say. I had the privilege of spending some time with him at caucus functions and, you know, he never was shy to remind us of our responsibility.

Something that I have always felt that we all need to remember in this House is that we have been given a privilege and a responsibility, and, very often, we forget which is which. Jim, I think, clearly understood that when he came to this Chamber, and nothing would swerve him from the intentions that he brought to this Chamber.

I give you a personal example. I used to jokingly refer to the smaller offices that opposition members have as cell block 172, which is where Jim and I spent some quality time. I notice there is an appreciative chuckle from the Government who have spent some time in cell block 172 as well.

Jim never saw it that way. He saw it as an opportunity to come to provide additional service to the people of this community and to the people of this province. It is very seldom that we have people who come here who truly feel that way, and who have the intestinal fortitude to live it. So, Mr. Speaker, while I was not a close associate of Jim's over the years, I think that every one of us in this Chamber benefited from his presence and we appreciate it.

Hon. Steve Ashton (Minister of Water Stewardship): Mr. Speaker, over the years as I have sat in

this Legislature, travelled to my constituency each week, I have often thought that, as MLAs, we are the most privileged people in Manitoba. Not privileged in the sense of rank, but privileged to serve and privileged to get to know so much of this great province and so many great people.

I state that today because I think we all are saying one thing very clearly today, how privileged we were to know Jim Penner, those of us who sat in this Legislature and those members of the Legislature that certainly knew Jim personally.

We know that it was a privilege to sit with him. I would say a privilege in the sense that he was a very grounded person. There has been much reference to his sense of values, his very gracious personality, and one thing I have to say, as someone who is certainly proud of my community and my roots in my community, he was somebody that was proud of his community and was well rooted in his community.

It came out in pretty well everything he said personally to you, in a side comment or certainly in the form of his questions, and it really was a driving force behind what he had to say in this Legislature. I always respect that.

I must add that we may be privileged in that sense, but it is not always easy what we do. It is certainly not easy on families. I remember having discussions with Jim as we managed to go through one more July and into August. I remember we talked about how it was not quite supposed to be that way.

Jim actually told me when he ran that he was told do not worry. We are getting more civilized in the Legislature. Of course, it is only now that we have those rules that make it somewhat more civilized. I told him, "You know, they told me the same thing when I first got elected in 1981." I think it is a bit of a legacy that maybe Jim's sense of civility in those difficult times has now got us to act a little bit more civilized in this Legislature. But I think if there is one thing I really do want to stress here, and that is how much he did typify that privilege of service, because, as I have listened here today and as I watched everything that he did in this Legislature, I can just imagine how proud his family must be and his community must be.

I think the one lesson we can also take out of Jim's approach to life is that service is lifelong. In fact, Jim's time in this Legislature might be short compared to some others, and certainly I am not one to talk here, but I think he will leave a lasting memory.

As I listen to the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) talk about Jim's love of sunsets, I realize I am not alone. I have a sunset on my computer that I look at when I need a certain amount of spiritual sanity in this place. In a way, perhaps sunsets are appropriate to talk about Jim's life. Perhaps the sun has set on Jim's life on this earth; certainly, there will be many more sunsets in the future.

I think it reminds us of the fact that, as was typified by Jim and the memories that will live on, what we do in this world is very much about leaving a mark. Not a mark of the privilege of rank, but the mark of the privilege of service.

Mr. Mervin Tweed (Turtle Mountain): I would like to acknowledge that I was out of the country at the time of Jim's passing. From my wife, Bev, and myself, to Bev and her family, our condolences.

We quite often have condolences in this Legislature and we talk about people that we do not really know. We know they had a life of service. We know they contributed a great amount to our communities. In this instance, we knew Jim, a lot of us did. I think that is probably a suggestion that he went far too soon.

I think of a couple of the things that I think about Jim when I think back on his life and the time that I had the opportunity to spend with him. He always tried to relate his decision making based on his experiences and his life experiences. I can think of a couple of things that make me smile but also make me understand how he thought about things.

He used to talk about in the grocery business that around Thanksgiving it was a great turkey season. Everybody in the business, to get the customer in the door, would offer a 99-cent per pound turkey. They would come in to buy the turkeys, but before they left they would go out with armloads of groceries. When Jim was talking about that, I said, "so what are you saying, Jim?" He said, "well, I had 99-cent per pound turkeys all year round and it brought the customers in." He said it not only benefited the

people buying it, but the fact that they were going out with armloads of turkey. So he always had some thought behind it and it benefited the people around.

The member from Steinbach talked about his relationship with his employees. He did tell the story to us about the time that he was approached and his business was approached about being unionized. It got to the point when they decided that that might happen, they sat down and figured out that the employees were actually being paid more than what the union was going to be able to get for them in their negotiations.

I think that reflects highly upon the person. It certainly has been said here several times that his thoughts for his employees and his family and the people that surround him always were first. I have met some people that have had the opportunity throughout their lives to work for Jim Penner. That is always the consistent comment I hear, that he was one of the best people they have in their entire working career worked for.

I think what everyone has said today and everyone I know will say in the future is that he was a thoughtful person. His generosity was not necessarily geared to Jim Penner's life, but it was for the people that surrounded him. My wife, Bev, commented about the family picture that he sent out a couple of years ago at Christmastime, surrounded by family.

* (11:00)

I think that everybody in Manitoba is wealthier. Jim was a wealthy man, but not necessarily because of his financial situation, but because of his friends and his family. The people who would meet him once would form an opinion of him of deep respect, of high respect, but also the fact that Jim, in his position, took the time always to try and relate to those people.

I think the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Lemieux) said it best in the sense that young people coming into his store to do business with Jim, it was not just business, it was your family and your opportunities and the interest that he took in your life as opposed to just the business side of it.

I think that, while we are sad at Jim's passing, we in the Legislature, and people that got to know Jim, and Manitobans are far better off having known him and having him been a part of our lives.

I would like to just close, you know, we get an opportunity as MLAs to express some of our thoughts about people that we have met in this business, and I guess what I would like to say is, when my time comes, I hope the people in this Legislature will say half the nice things about me that they have said about Jim Penner. He will be missed.

Hon. Scott Smith (Minister of Industry, Economic Development and Mines): First, I would like to send my condolences from my wife, Val, and my daughters, Caitlin and Ashton, to Jim's family and Bev. I had the great privilege and opportunity to meet a man that we have heard about here today that I believe that all of us in this Legislature can look at, as the member from Turtle Mountain has just mentioned, as a pillar that we should try to excel to try to become part of.

Jim led a life that we have seen reflected here today that I think we would all like to live. He is all the things we have heard here today with his statesmanship, his honesty, his integrity and his wisdom.

I know as a minister, when I first became a Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Jim was the critic in that area. We developed a relationship through that time that was not the relationship after over a year, it became friends, and that is something that he found very important, that I found very important.

He sent a message to me that we should be proud of what we do here and we should do it honestly with each other, and when we speak to each other and we can be open and frank, and when we are discussing legislation and things that we do in this House, and someone has a suggestion on the opposition side, it should be taken into account, all of us are here to represent our communities.

It does not have to be with fanfare, it does not have to be his idea or my idea, but create and draft the best things that we can for Manitobans. I found a wisdom, obviously, many have talked about building a company of some 800 people and six stores, but he did that including people, and he did that not as a chattering class or wanting to be out front.

In fact, Jim confided with me that he really had a problem in here, he really did not like the public

speaking end of it, but he liked to get the message out and bring that message to communities that was so important.

He mentioned to me many, many times that we need to utilize our time in here better, which I guess is coming from a business head, saying he was a decision-maker for a lot of years, that certainly there are things we could do better. We could utilize our time better and we could bring things forward in a better way.

I remember a time when we were in here late in the summer, and Jim and I had a meeting about 4:30 one afternoon and my family had come in. He had met my wife, Val, before and he had just come into the office, and we were all running late on time. I know he wanted to get home, and the meeting was about an hour and a half and we had had some staff, and he saw my daughters, Caitlin and Ashton, and everyone was in the meeting and waiting.

Jim sat down with them, and he said, "Is it possible, Scott—I know your family is here—to have this meeting tomorrow? I do not mind getting up at 6:30 if you do not." And it just hit me that he had been asking for the meeting, had set the time away, and he found that my daughters were there to see me, that he wanted that to happen. So I said, "sure, that is fine, Jim."

That is one small example of putting families and people ahead of an agenda that certainly he had. It was information that he had wanted for my benefit.

I found when I went to his community for the opening of the \$2-billion mark of the Steinbach Credit Union. When I came to the community, the first thing for Jim was not to get to the meeting, but to meet his family that was there at the time. I know that his wife, Bev, and some of his family that were with him. As we walked along, I began to wonder how Jim could ever get anything done in his community as he went through.

Because every single person that he met along the way was not a rush. They had something to say, and Jim would stand there and talk to them. And every person that you met knew Jim, and had a story to tell. As the people met me, it was a little along the lines of the Leader of the Opposition: You are who? Where are you from? Oh, but yeah, you are a friend of Jim's. Then you are a friend of mine.

Having that type of stature in life, I believe, with a shared respect of his passion with his religion, with his openness and honesty, is something that we can all look at as something that, certainly, if we could ever achieve to be the person that Jim Penner was, I believe that would be a goal for all of us to look at. He taught every single person in this Legislature a lesson. I believe that we should probably try to follow along on the lines of what he taught us.

It was a privilege for me to work with Jim. He was a man that was taken away from us too early, and I know that his family, that he was intensely proud of, should be very, very proud of what he left this Legislature, his community, and certainly the province of Manitoba with. He will be missed by me and my family.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): First, I would like to extend my condolences to Bev and the family. I would just like to talk a little bit about Jim Penner in a sense that Jim was my seatmate here in the Legislature. It has been mentioned quite a few times when you are in the Legislature here, a lot of times you have a lot of time to just sit and talk to your colleagues. I had the privilege, and I guess it was quite an honour, really, to sit next to Jim for quite awhile, quite a few years.

To me it was not Jim Penner. I used to always call him Jimmy. It was always like: Jimmy, what's happening? or What's up? What would come from Jim were, usually, some stories. As we would sit here in the Legislature, he would tell me all these various stories in a lot of his travels and they revolved around, a lot of times, Bev or the family.

He was an amazing man. He travelled all over the place. I was privileged to hear a lot of these stories, because you sit here and he would tell me about his trip down to Disneyland, his trip with the children. I believe he was on train trips over in Russia and over in China. It was alluded to earlier everybody knew Jim Penner.

He was telling me about the one time that he was in China someplace, and he was on a river. He was going down a river in a small tour boat or—I cannot remember the exact details of it. But there were very, very few people on the boat, and as it happened some other person on the boat said, "you're Jim Penner, aren't you?" Way over in China, he says he was recognized.

Also, when we were sitting in the House here, I know a lot of us are involved with a lot of documents and things like that, but Jim liked to do crossword puzzles. I was always amazed. He would come in and he would have the crossword puzzle from the morning paper and, before Question Period was finished, the puzzle was finished. He was amazing, this man, the way he could just go through those puzzles.

I am not a crossword puzzle person. I was always looking at him next door, and he would just be filling them in. I thought, maybe he had the answers somewhere, he just went through it.

So I said to him, "Jim, you have got to teach me how to do that. I have never been involved with crosswords." He says, "oh, it is easy. Here is a brand-new one. You just look for one word, then work from here, and you work from there."

* (11:10)

He just kept filling in these words, and I thought, wow. But it was really amazing having him as a seatmate. He was very, very outward, he was very expressive in his love with his family, his involvement with the community, his dedication to the people in not only Steinbach but I think all over, everybody he met. He had an infectious smile. His jokes were not that good, though. But he was a good, good friend. He is always Jimmy to me.

I had the opportunity to meet him quite a few times with my partner, Joan. When we would be out we would run into Bev and Jim and he would always give Joan, my partner, a big hug. He was more interested in what she was doing and what she was involved with. It was a true expression of affection that he showed toward other people. I can understand how, when it was mentioned by my colleague from Steinbach, his involvement in the community, how everybody knew Jim Penner, it was because of his personality and his outward expression of concern towards people.

I would just like to say that I will miss Jimmy. He was a good friend, he was a good colleague. I had the opportunity to hear some wonderful stories, some wonderful experiences that he shared with me on a personal basis. I guess they will always stay with me. I have great admiration for a fellow that really put in a lot time, effort and dedication to his community.

Manitoba is greatly better served because of what he has left in the community. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Drew Caldwell (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to rise today to reflect on the life of former MLA Jim Penner, who all too soon passed away on January 17, 2004. I would also like to acknowledge his family, who are in the gallery, and express my sincere best wishes and condolences to them as well.

Like me, Mr. Penner was elected to the Legislative Assembly as part of the class of 1999. As the Member for Steinbach, Mr. Penner dedicated his life to his community and dedicated his time here in this building to his duties as a member of the Legislative Assembly.

As others have noted, Jim was a skilled entrepreneur whose family name as a grocer is well known throughout the province. He contributed tremendously to the economic opportunities available to people in this province. The current Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen) alludes to his own experience as a grocery clerk with Mr. Penner in his youth.

Beginning with only a small family grocery business, Jim built one of Canada's most successful independent grocers. I do not think there is anybody in Manitoba that is unfamiliar with the name Penner Foods. He and his staff won many provincial and national awards for quality of service and excellence in retail.

Jim was also known, less well known, but also known for his philanthropic endeavours, and, as has been stated, was awarded the 2001 Variety Club Humanitarian of the Year Award, and, as was also alluded to, was also an honorary Doctor of Laws from Trinity Western University.

The passing away of a person who has been a member of this Legislative Assembly is always cause for reflection on the invaluable contributions that one person can make in a lifetime through their service to Manitoba. Like everybody in this House, I knew Jim Penner as a quiet and gentle man, possessed of a great integrity, great personal integrity and a profound humility.

I would like to again extend my condolences to the Penner family. Jim Penner will be greatly missed by those of us who serve in this House and by all

people in the province of Manitoba. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mrs. Bonnie Mitchelson (River East): I too would like to put a few comments on the record and express to Bev and to your children and your grandchildren, Bev, how saddened we all were to hear of Jim's illness and his eventual passing. But, also, to remember very fondly some of the opportunities we had to spend some time with Jim.

Of course, Jim's reputation preceded my actual meeting Jim Penner. Like the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Lemieux), my husband was maybe not one of the young salespeople, but a little older salesperson that had the opportunity to meet with and to call on Jim as he sold Tylenol and other products to Penner Foods, and had nothing but positive comments to make about the treatment he received.

Many salesmen that deal with large chains and small independents do find that some of the customers that they call on do not treat them with the respect and dignity that they believe they should be treated with. That certainly was not the case with Jim Penner and Penner Foods. He felt very much well treated and respected. It is just one more thing that needs to be added to all of the comments that have been made about the type of person Jim was. In order to get respect, he believed that he must treat people with respect.

Also, Mr. Speaker, living in the North Kildonan community for many years, as the Premier has indicated, I spent many hours shopping in Penner Foods. I do want to indicate that the service that customers in Penner Foods received in North Kildonan was truly a reflection of the leadership at Penner Foods. Very often when you see very customer service-oriented businesses, it is a reflection of the leadership and what comes from the top. Truly, the employees of Penner Foods were treated with respect and, in turn, they treated the customers with respect.

I found that, because I am a bit of a shopaholic, whether it be clothes or food, or whatever, I enjoy spending my time browsing and shopping, and I had many pleasant hours and experienced contact with very many pleasant employees at Penner Foods in North Kildonan.

Jim and I did have some things in common. We did both do crossword puzzles, and we both did the

Cryptoquotes. Very often, as we walked into our caucus meetings in the morning, more often than not, if I was having difficulty with a Cryptoquote, Jim would have already solved it by the time we got into the caucus room, and he was able to share his success with me.

I also want to share one story that I have not had a chance to share with the family, or with any of my colleagues.

Shortly after Jim was elected to the Legislature, I had a call from a friend who is quite involved and does a lot of volunteer work for a church in the inner city. She was preparing, along with many other volunteers, the Christmas dinner that they always prepare. They were finding that money was a little tight and had been doing a fair amount of praying, and called me asking whether maybe I had some connections with someone that might be able to get us some turkeys wholesale. Now, of course, I thought a little bit, I did not have to think very long, and although Jim Penner no longer owned Penner Foods I thought I just might give him a call and ask whether he might still have some connections, to see whether we could get turkeys at cost.

* (11:20)

Anyway, I called Jim and he immediately said to me, "Well, what do they need?" And I said, "Well, you know, they are looking at a budget of \$300. Many of the volunteers provide many of the other things, but the turkeys are the main issue and getting the turkeys and getting someone to cook them is what they are looking at." He said, "How much do they need?" I said, "Well, about \$300 is what their budget was." He said, "I will write a cheque."

The next morning when I came in to work, there was a personal cheque from Jim Penner on my desk for \$300 to provide to the volunteers to purchase the turkeys for their dinner.

You know, I will never forget that act of kindness. Without any question he was there to help, and he wanted no recognition. I am sure there are many, many examples that maybe the family does not even know about, because Jim was not one to boast or brag. He was one that just took things into his hands, took action and got things done.

Mr. Speaker, many people have said many kind things about Jim Penner today. He will be remembered by all of us as the kind of person that wanted

to give and wanted very little recognition, or no recognition. He was fortunate, because of hard work, to become the success that he was. He rolled up his sleeves and became involved and worked very hard to achieve the financial success that he achieved, but that was not important to him. It was important for him to give back to our community what he had been fortunate enough to work hard to receive.

I have the utmost respect for Jim Penner, and I know that the family and his legacy will live on through what he has taught, not only his family, but those that surrounded him. If all of us could just be a little bit more like Jim Penner every day, our world would be a better place. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): I rise today to reflect on the life of the former MLA Jim Penner, who recently passed away on January 17 of this year, and I would like to extend my condolences to the family.

He was elected to the Manitoba Legislature in 1999 as a member for Steinbach, the same time as I got elected as a Member for Rossmere. He was known as a very dedicated member of the Legislature and a skilled businessman. He was a kind and a great person. We all know he is a skilled businessman, but I would like to comment on him as an MLA in this Chamber and a person in the community.

He was well recognized by MLAs on both sides of this Chamber for his dedication to his work in the Legislature. Whenever he rose to speak, you would see a lot of notes on his desk. As the Member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) has said, and I did not read his notes, you could see that he had done a lot of research on the issue or topic he would be addressing. He took his work very seriously. His speeches were always well prepared.

He worked hard at his new career in the Legislature, and he wanted to serve his constituents and communities as an MLA. He put the same energy into his work as an MLA as he had as a businessman. His faith taught him to be a servant and to serve others, and this was a principle he followed all his life which the family here, of course, knows.

Now, the first time I personally met Jim Penner was in this Chamber. After the first Question Period

in this Chamber, he walked over to our side of the House and he came over to me. He picked me out of the crowd of MLAs over there, and he shook my hand and he began to speak, and he spoke to me in Low German, of all things.

You know, that was a little different. So the first conversation that I had with him was in Low German. Now, I should give the rest of my speech in Low German, but there would be very few people understanding it and I think Hansard would have some trouble, eh? Well, anyway, I will not, but I would like that.

The conversation went on for quite some time. He felt very comfortable, and I felt very comfortable. I asked myself why did he address me in Low German. I was not offended, no. Maybe he wanted to test my proficiency or heard about my proficiency in the language, or maybe he just enjoyed speaking in Low German. I guess they speak that in Steinbach quite often. I do not know, but I expect.

However, I think I passed that proficiency test quite well because my parents were proficient in the Low German language. It was my first language in our home, and it was the language we spoke as long as my parents lived. I think Jim Penner's situation was the same thing. We did have something in common. We had a good relationship ever after.

Likely, I should address the family in Low German, and I just wonder if they have kept that tradition or legacy going, especially the younger ones. Maybe, after this is over, I should test them, the way your father or grandfather tested me. Very interesting.

Low German spoken.

Translation

He is a decent person and he is my friend.

He also asked me if I shopped at Penner Foods in North Kildonan—the second thing, very interesting—and I said yes. He also wanted to know if I bought any of the Mennonite or ethnic foods at Penner Foods. I indicated that I did. He even wanted to know what these ethnic foods were that I bought. I pointed out that I bought farmer's sausage, the odd

time liver sausage, cooked pork ribs and the traditional Mennonite bun which they call "Zwiebach." Okay, they are still there, in that store.

I think he wanted to know if his grocery store was in tune with the local population in North Kildonan, which he served. I will say his store was very much in tune with the local population. Many people still remember Penner Foods in North Kildonan and they liked the great service his business gave to the community. Penner Foods later became IGA and today it is known as Sobeys. Many people still shop there because of the Penner legacy, your family legacy that was known for service. Not just service in the store, but the Penner legacy is service in the whole community. You as a family, I know, are very proud of it, and it is appreciated by all Manitobans.

Jim Penner was a kind person to everyone he met, and this he practised with his employees, which has already been pointed out. His employees were well paid. They were better paid than most grocery stores, and he treated them with respect. One of his employees, whom I met at Jim Penner's funeral, pointed out that he had worked for him for 34 years. He said they had formed a lasting friendship. This portrays the kind of person Jim Penner was in the community. Jim Penner was more than just a businessman. He was part of the whole community. He was a very compassionate person and this compassion for others was a result of his Christian faith.

In the Legislature he raised the level of debate, as has been pointed out, and he could rise above politics. He treated everyone with respect. He was not caught up with his self-importance. When you spoke to him you felt like equals. He accepted you as you were. To him, family, church and the larger community were important to him.

Today is a day to reflect and celebrate the rich life of Jim Penner. He made his community and our province a better place. I thank you.

* (11:30)

Mr. Leonard Derkach (Russell): I begin by extending the condolences of the constituency of Russell and also my wife, Margy, and our family to the Penner family. I want to say that, when Jim was first elected to this Legislature, I will never forget the first few caucus meetings that Jim attended.

Although we had known the biography of Jim Penner, and it has been talked about today, when Jim took his place in the caucus he did it very humbly, and he did it as a new caucus member who was there to learn and to listen. But it was not long before we began to understand the profound way in which Jim could influence the people around him, and, of course, that has been reflected today, as to how he has influenced what happens in our House.

I think we all want to be treated in the way that Jim treated people. We all want to be treated with respect, but Jim did it as part of the course of his life. His priorities were clear. His family was the most important thing in his life, and although Jim Penner touched the lives of thousands of Manitobans and many thousands of people outside and beyond the borders of this country, the influence he has had in the short time that he was in this House is going to be felt for a long time, I believe, in this Chamber.

Because, Mr. Speaker, although Jim Penner was not a man of many words, when he spoke in this House and when he spoke in a caucus, he spoke with intelligence, he spoke with respect and he spoke to the issues. Although, from time to time, we disagree on our approach to issues, we sometimes go into personalities and we sometimes forget that it is the issues that we are to debate. Jim never forgot that.

Mr. Speaker, today we heard many kind words about the life of Jim Penner, and the way that he influenced not only the people that were around him but also people who knew of him. I am a firm believer that although Jim has left us, he leaves behind an influence that is going to be felt for a long time. If we can pay tribute to Jim Penner, I think he would say "the best thing that you can remember me by is by the way that you conduct yourselves in this Chamber, in the way that we respect people in this province, and in the way that we raise the standard of how we conduct business in this province and in this Legislature."

The number of people who have talked today, who have spoken today on both sides of the House, leaves us with a clear indication and the impression that this was a man who was important not only to the people he represented in Steinbach, but was important to all Manitobans. He leaves behind a family that I know will live their lives in the way their father lived it. He leaves behind many people who he touched, who I think are going to live their

lives just a little better because Jim had touched them. Today, Mr. Speaker, I think this Legislature is a better place because Mr. Penner was here.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Greg Selinger (Minister of Finance): I know many kind things have been said about Mr. Penner today. I would just like to add a few of my comments to the record.

He was the Finance critic for about a year. We entered the Legislature at the same time. I found, for my first contact with him, that he was a man of great decency. Even with his toughest questions I never felt that there was ever any spite or mean intentions in what he was asking. He was challenging our Government, or myself, on the specific issues that he was raising, and, in committee, I always felt he was searching to have a real understanding of the issues, and to ensure that they were being dealt with properly and fairly. Because of his approach, I tried to respond in kind. So I thought we had a good dialogue around the issues that were in front of us in the Legislature.

He projected a very positive image for the community he represented and was elected to represent. He gave a good name to the constituents and citizens of the Steinbach area that he represented because of the way he conducted himself. Many of us have had contact with his activities, whether we knew it or not, whether it was a Mac's Convenience Store or a Penner Foods store. Over the years, we saw his impact on the Winnipeg community and certainly in the region of Steinbach.

His community activities and his reputation for his commitment to the community and the family members of his community were well known. We had some friends in common, the Loewen family. Lydia Loewen and I worked together for many years at the university. She was from the Steinbach area. She spoke very highly of him, and I had a high regard for her. We had a lot in common. There was about one degree of separation in terms of people we knew and worked with over the years. I would just like to say I think he made a very positive contribution to the Legislature and he will be sorely missed but not forgotten. Thank you.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Mr. Speaker, I too would like to express our condolences and

sympathies to the Penner family on behalf of Irene, myself and our family. First of all, I do regret the fact that Irene and I could not be at the funeral, but we were on holidays at the time, and I know it is a year ago that you, the Penner family, were in Mexico as well. I know that Jim and I had many a discussion on that, and he said family needed to come first. Again, we regret that, but on the other hand, we do wish you well.

I rise today to pay tribute to the late Jim Penner. He was our colleague here for four years. During that time he served his constituency and the Assembly in the province of Manitoba with diligence and integrity.

He married the love of his life, Beverley, in 1958. The reason I am mentioning this here is that he and I had many a discussion about family and about friends that we had. He also vividly described his trip, following your wedding, to Chicago. He sort of talked about it as the Beverley Hillbillies moving from one place to the other. We discussed this at length, and that is something that impacted him tremendously. During this time, he also developed a keen interest in business. He came back and he founded six stores throughout southern Manitoba. One of those stores, of course, was in Winkler.

This was the first time that I met Jim Penner. Before I met him, you hear rumours of someone coming into a community and setting up a business and you say, "Well, this is great," but the way it was described to us in Winkler was that here was a gentleman coming. He was going to be starting up Penner Foods and would just be a tremendous asset to the community and would be a real pillar of the community. We were never disappointed. I learned to know a number of the people who worked for him during that time. As has already been said, during the period of his owning the stores, he employed over 800 people. I can affirm the fact that those who worked for him really enjoyed the principled way in which he ran his business.

I guess another way of putting it is Jim put his faith into action. Under his leadership, he won numerous awards, and he had tremendous success as an independent grocer within the province of Manitoba. Jim was a caring man. When I first met him, as has already been described here today, he would ask me about family, about friends, the things that I was involved with, the things that were

important to me as an individual. We had many an opportunity to share those experiences.

The other thing I wanted to talk about was, as we are aware, that he was on the board at Trinity Western University. Being caucus chair, and those who have been in that position know that you are asking your colleagues to at least tell you when they are going to be leaving, he found this difficult because he had been very independent all his life. The first time I suggested to him it would be nice to know when he would be leaving, he looked at me somewhat surprised, like, I have never had to tell anyone where I am going all my life, why do I need to tell you, but he took that in good humour, just showing that he came from a business background. He had 800 employees. If he wanted to go and do something, he would, and he did not have to check this with everyone else. That was another one of the experiences that I recall with Jim.

The other has been mentioned, but he liked crossword puzzles. He felt that if you were not doing something, you were wasting time. He would sit in one of the chairs here, and he would have his crossword puzzles. One time I asked him about that, and he said, "You cannot waste a moment. You have to be doing something all the time."

* (11:40)

He was a volunteer with the Mennonite Economic Development Association and a long-time supporter of the Association for Community Living and The Variety Club of Manitoba. I just want to talk about the Association for Community Living. We have an association in Winkler. I know that he assisted many times in the community, in his community and in ours and others throughout the province, and was very generous in the things that he did.

Going to *The Winnipeg Sun*, it was January 18 and I thought this exemplified Jim very well. They have a wonderful picture of Jim. It says: "Penner", and then behind that, "Giver". Certainly we knew him as a person who gave and continued to give time and time again.

I wish to express our deepest sympathies to Jim's wife, Beverley, their three children, Phillip, Greg and Judy, and the five grandchildren. We will miss Jim very much. Thank you.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, it is with a somewhat sad heart that I rise today to offer condolences to Bev and her family. I certainly miss Jim in a tremendous way in our dealings in this Legislature. As has been described by many before me, he was truly a wonderful person who touched our lives in a very deep way and he has left us far too early.

I want to echo the words of the member from Burrows. When thinking about how I might describe my relationship with Jim, it came down to one basic word. In everything he did, in the true sense of the word, Jim was a gentleman in the deepest sense. Everyone he touched, everyone he met with, everyone he dealt with, regardless of which side of the House they were on, regardless of what their business was, regardless of what their politics were, Jim treated them as a gentleman would treat them. That is a word that cannot be used to describe very many in our society anymore, but Jim carried those values with him in everything he did.

I want to relate one brief personal encounter with Jim. To be honest, I never really did meet Jim until 1999, until the election campaign, but I had a business encounter with Jim a number of years prior to that which to me is an example of the type of individual that Jim Penner was. In my previous career in the payroll business, we did the payroll for Penner Foods for a number of years. We had a very good business relationship. One year, it was I think early December, our company got a letter in the mail from someone at Penner Foods indicating that the business relationship was going to end and that they were going to move their payroll services to one of our competitors. Naturally, we were not very happy about this because we considered Penner Foods to be a prized customer in Winnipeg and Manitoba.

I picked up the phone and made a call to see if I could set up a luncheon meeting with Jim Penner to talk about what might have led to the termination of our business relationship. I got hold of Jim very quickly and identified myself, told him that I would like to have the opportunity to get together with him and talk about the situation. He very quickly indicated to me that it really was not going to be necessary for us to meet. He would love to take the time and have a lunch, but in terms of the business relationship it was a very simple explanation. In his own words he went on to explain that they were going through a period of expansion at their

business, at Penner Foods, where they were going to have to rely on one of our competitors, one of the banks, to provide them with some financing, to provide them with some funds. Of course the banks, as they did in those days from time to time, would pressure for businesses to take other services, and they were putting a lot of pressure on Jim to use their payroll service.

Jim told me again that he was not very happy with the pressure he was receiving but he did need the money, and he was going to have to go along with the bank's wishes, to use their payroll services. But in the very next breath he said, "You do not have to worry, John. I am not going to need the bank's money forever, and we are going to be back using your service as soon as we can." That was enough for Jim and it was enough for me and, true to his word, within a couple of years we got a call back that we should come back and set up the payroll for Penner Foods on our business.

That, to me, says in a few short words the type of individual that Jim was. He was respectful in everything he did, he was honest and he was full of integrity.

I think the other thing that I will never forget about Jim Penner, in addition to his somewhat corny jokes from time to time, none of us will forget those though we did appreciate them, but I think it was described by the Member for Steinbach (Mr. Goertzen). One of the truly great challenges that you are faced with in growing a business is keeping that feeling of family as a business grows from a few employees to a large number of employees. It takes a tremendous amount of effort and dedication for the values that you espouse as a small organization to continue as you grow and become a larger organization and get up to the 800- or 1000-employee level.

It takes a huge amount of effort, and it shows what tremendous respect the employees at Penner Foods held for Jim Penner that they were able to continue to espouse his values even as it became more and more difficult for him to touch their lives on a daily basis. He was still able to bring to his organization, to his company, the understanding that it was, in all sense of the word, a family business.

Again, that speaks to the importance of family to Jim, to his sincerity and to the values that he lived his life by.

Jim is missed, he will be missed. It is a sad day for me to have to stand here. As I said, he left us far, far too early, but I am comforted in the knowledge that the values that Jim has shown all of us will be carried forward by his family. Jim has touched us all and we miss him greatly.

Mr. Ron Schuler (Springfield): Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to have grown up in North Kildonan, to have lived in North Kildonan, and not know of Jim Penner and Penner Foods. Penner Foods was instrumental in the community, whether it was a cultural group, whether it was a community group. I do not think I can begin to tell you how many times I went to Penner Foods and schlepped hotdogs and drinks to a PC barbeque. We always knew we could go to Penner Foods and you would get a great price. We would go to Fraser's Grove and the Vic Toews barbecues and the River East PC Association. Penner Foods was always there.

We talk about he was a family man and how much he loved family. Well, I want to personalize that a lot more. Jim used to love when I told this story. Growing up in North Kildonan and starting to raise our family in North Kildonan, we named Penner Foods "Tante Penner's" or "Mrs. Penner's," because our children were raised you do not call people by their first names or their last names, so we always referred to it as Mrs. Penner's.

One of the things we loved the most, Bev, obviously, this was your idea, was the Cookie Club. I mean, it was such a good idea that even Revy picked it up. You go with your kids, you had to fill out the card and then you got that cookie, and the kids would munch on the cookies and you could go do your grocery shopping.

There was another idea that Penner Foods had, and, Bev, what a terrible idea it was. It was those little carts with that big pole and the little flag on top. Oh, my goodness, you would go to Mrs. Penner's, they would get their cookie. Each would take a cart and then all mayhem would break loose.

Bev, I actually never admitted this one to Jim, but on those evenings Mom would go out and say, "The kids are yours tonight." It was one of those really cold nights, and two kids in the house was not exactly what I particularly thought was a great evening. So I said to the kids, "Kids, let us go visit Mrs. Penner's."

So we would pack up, and go to Mrs. Penner's, and go to that bakery counter in the back. Each would get a cookie. They would each grab one of those carts. They had a whale of a time, Bev. They would chase each other in that grocery store. They would try to hit each other's cart. You see, some might have called Mrs. Penner's a grocery store. I referred to it as day care. It was just wonderful, Bev.

We absolutely loved Jim. We absolutely loved what he was doing in North Kildonan with Mrs. Penner's. In fact, I would often call up Tanya on a Friday afternoon and I would say, "you do not feel like cooking. Why do we not just go to Mrs. Penner's?"

Mrs. Penner's would cook for us. The deli was just unbelievable; never did get back to where it was. In fact, IGA respected Jim so much that it was referred to as Penner IGA. And you could never really get that name off of it, till finally they came to the point where they just ripped down the building and had to build a new one. Because people kept referring to it as Penner Foods, or, in our family, Mrs. Penner's.

* (11:50)

In spring of 1999, I sought the nomination in Springfield and Jim Penner sought the nomination in Steinbach. There were a lot of parallels. He had a hard-fought nomination, so did I. But after the election of '99 Jim Penner, Joy Smith from Fort Garry, the Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen), the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire), myself, we called ourselves the class of '99 or, as Jim would say "not quite perfect score." One of his corny jokes.

He loved being MLA. He absolutely loved it and we all had I think we called it cell block 172 where we all had the non-window offices. The family probably remembers them. The Member for Fort Whyte (Mr. Loewen) stuck in the corner, then myself, then Jim, then Joy Smith, and then the Member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Maguire). And you know what? There is such a camaraderie. We got elected together, and we came into the House. Within three months, we were going to change the way government ran in this province. Well, we changed a few things. But he just loved it.

I do not know if you remember the time to the family when Darren Praznik decided to move on, and the office opened and it was a window office. The five class of '99 got to draw on the office, and Jim Penner won the draw. He said to me, "I have never won anything."

He won this window office, and you know what? It was the right thing. Because Jim had this great round table with these lovely office chairs. He did not care that we all had our meetings in there. We always used to say, "Well, people are coming in. Oh, I will just use Jim's office."

Jim was such a great guy. He would walk into the bank of offices. His door would be closed, so he would go to Judy and say, "Could I have the key?" She would say, "Ron is in there with some constituents." "Oh, that is fine." It was fine by him, somebody using his office. Just the way he was.

On the day of the funeral, the Member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) and former member for Fort Garry, Joy Smith, and I drove out. I took our big, heavy van because the weather was just treacherous. In fact, that morning they had shut down No. 1. They had opened by the time we drove there. The weather was really rough. I remember the pastor saying—it is the one thing that just absolutely sticks out in my mind, because it defines Jim Penner. He said if Jim Penner would have been here today, he would have said, "Sorry for the inconvenience."

But you know, it was really fitting that in Hanover School Division they had to close the schools for Jim Penner's funeral.

So on behalf of Tanya, my family, my community, the R.M. of Springfield, the R.M. of East St. Paul, which spent a lot of time shopping in a real family, a real community store, on behalf of all of us, Bev, to you and your family, God bless you.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): I would like to extend condolences from Hal and myself and the constituents of Charleswood to Bev and her family. It is indeed an honour and a privilege for me to acknowledge a great human being, somebody I admired and respected immensely. Jim was truly one of the most admirable people I have ever met.

How can anybody properly describe the goodness of this man? How can one capture the essence of a man like Jim in such a few words? He has been

described as a businessman, a statesman, a charitable giver. He was also a friend and a seatmate. We get to learn a lot about our seatmates because, as other colleagues have said, you do spend a little bit more time talking to them in much different ways.

He was a man of great dignity, integrity and compassion, and he was there for anyone who needed his help, his encouragement, his guidance. He always had time and he always lent his ear if someone needed it.

He was a man of great faith, and once, while we were sitting together, he told me that he was a very blessed man, that many good things had come his way, and he credited his faith for seeing him through a lot. He felt that if he was blessed with finances, it was meant to be shared, that he was a steward of that money and that God had given it to him so that he could do better in the world. He was a very generous man in so many ways.

I was very grateful that Jim had Penner Foods make raisin buns, and I told him that I wished that Charleswood had had a Penner Foods, because I was driving from Charleswood all the way to North Kildonan to buy raisin buns, and when Penner Foods was sold, they were never the same.

When Jim was first elected, we sat next to each other, and he was so eager to learn and so grateful to be helped. His generosity of gratitude humbled me, but Jim was also a teacher and taught in many different ways. He loved to teach, and he taught by words, by example, and by acts. I can recall in caucus on a few occasions he tried to talk to us and teach us about selling appliances and how that unique approach could be used in our thinking to sell an idea, and it was absolutely fabulously unique.

He lived life to the fullest. He made every day count, and perhaps his bout with prostate cancer too had made him more acutely aware of how valuable and precious each day is. Jim enjoyed friends and visiting and Jim enjoyed singing. I got to see that side of him and saw a very, very different dimension of this man, and wow, did he have a great singing voice.

He really came alive with song in Mexico, as his granddaughter has mentioned. In a restaurant, on the street, and when there was joy in Jim's heart, he sang and he sang and he had an incredible voice. With his

family and with his friends, he would love to sing, and it made all of us feel so good in those times to be around him. I can honestly say that is some of the best fun I have ever had was with Bev and Jim and their friends in Mexico.

A year ago in Mexico, Hal and I spent a wonderful evening with Jim and Bev over dinner, and after several hours, I got to know a whole different Jim Penner than I had ever had an opportunity to know here. There was such a unique side to him that when one spent time with him, you really got to see the essence of this man.

His generosity of spirit shone through everything he did. It impacted us as individuals and as a caucus, and thank you, Jim, for that and for being a true servant of the people.

I think the words of St. Francis of Assisi fit very well with what Jim might have felt: Lord, make me an instrument of your peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; and where there is sadness, joy.

Mr. Speaker: I would just like to inform the House that there has been agreement to not see the clock.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): I, too, would like to offer my condolences and words of appreciation for having known Jim Penner in this Legislature and having met him first in 1999, as has been referred to many times here today, as part of the class of '99.

Jim came from the southeast and I came from the southwest. We had a lot in common from the different sides of this province, but it was very hard if you knew Jim for any more than a minute to know that he had a feeling for all the people of Manitoba and he did not mind expressing that in his daily life and every time he had that opportunity.

I want to say that I am sorry I missed the opportunity to be at the service of celebration of Jim's life that you had in Steinbach in January, as Beryl and I were out of the country at the time as well. I do want to offer our extended condolences to Bev and the family members and all of your friends from both Beryl and me, and also from all the citizens of southwest Manitoba.

* (12:00)

Many things about Jim Penner that I have learned, and some of them not from him, one of them being that, I did not realize that Jim Penner was the president of the independent grocers association of Canada. I should have known that though with his involvement in any business or in any of his charities that he worked so heavily with, and with your families. It is just another little tie in life that you have along the way because my wife's grandfather was also the president of the Canadian independent grocers association back in the days when Mr. Paynter [*phonetic*], also a person who came from Saskatchewan, at that time, was president. So you continue to learn long after.

Jim was a quiet man and obviously could make his presence very well felt at any given time, but he was unbecoming, as I have just pointed out, in many areas of his life. On many occasions I sat with him, and I know I shuffled it around in my own mind what I would do when I had the opportunity to sell a family business. I went to Jim a few times and I had a few chats with him on that and he gave me some very friendly advice on what you could do in that matter. It had nothing to do with money. It had nothing to do with, really, I guess, how I would feel about it. It had more to do with all of the people around me and he had gone through it. It was a great lesson for me to hear him just give me some words of advice as we sat in the back row here, if you will, of the seats in this Legislature.

I never had the chance to meet him, as well, until 1999, but it was a great opportunity to meet a great man and one that I will never forget.

He was a listener. He always came to us at the time of seeking support for the many number of charities that he belonged to and supported, and I think that he left a lesson for all Manitobans in that regard.

He was a giver, obviously, being on the board of Trinity Western University in British Columbia and a number of other support teams that he worked with across Canada and in his home community. But no where more than in Steinbach, in his area, will a man of his integrity, honesty and great giving be missed.

Maybe it was because I was a farmer, but he shared a couple of stories with me about times when,

long before he got into the grocery business and as he was growing up, one that I will never forget was, I do not know if he shared it with everybody or not, but it was one where he taught me about baiting a bear. Something to do with hunting a bear out east of Steinbach and the opportunities that he had in that area. He said, "Here I was setting the trap and baiting the bear. Nobody could catch this darn thing." He said, "Finally I thought I would go out and help." And he set the bait and set the traps and turned around and there was the bear. He had to level it, and he did. He said, "When you are faced with"—how did he word it—I think he said, "When you are faced with an imminent problem to a solution you have to act," and he did. Those kinds of stories that he shared with us, I think, will never be forgotten.

He held two critic responsibilities in this House that I think speak well of his time here as well as experience for Manitoba. One was in the area of finance, and the other one in rural development. He would have carried both of those out very well if he would have been minister and had that opportunity, as has been pointed out by our member from Steinbach and his colleague, in those areas. He was more, I think, dedicated to the citizens of Manitoba and the actual role of being here and trying to work on behalf of everyone to the best of his ability. I think it speaks very well for him. I do not know if many of us could do it.

We did not know it all at the time, but last April, when he came into this House, he sat in his regular position in this Legislature and listened to the Budget speech that was given by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Selinger) in this province. Unbeknownst to at least most of us, I think, in this Chamber, he had not told any of us what he was going through at that point. He sat there, smiling, chatting, and when the Throne Speech was over, he got up and nonchalantly left the Chamber and went on with the rest of his life, indicating to a number of the members of this session, of this Legislature, on our side of the House at least, that he would not be running again. He did all that that day.

He really never, sort of matter-of-factly, said, "I have got a problem. It is a terminal illness, and I'll deal with it."

He did not share that with any of us until after the Budget speech was over.

Mr. Speaker, I will end my words by saying that, as I pointed out, I will always remember him as a listener and as a caregiver. I would like to just say that may God bless Jim and Bev and all of your family and all of his friends.

Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I do appreciate the opportunity to rise today to speak just briefly to the family and to this Chamber about a gentleman. I find, at this juncture in time, a great deal of difficulty containing my emotions, as he touched me deeply.

I know, Mr. Speaker, you and I shared thoughts of Jim on the Legislature steps and I know that you will not be able to participate in today's debate, but I know that he had a very special place in your heart as well. I know that most of the descriptive words have been used today to describe a gentleman that I had immense respect for, and so I will just convey to you our deepest sadness of losing a gentleman that will leave with all of us, as I hope you appreciate today, has made a lasting impression upon us. I just hope that I can conduct myself in my responsibilities as a father, and as a husband, a community member and MLA in a reflection of Jim, because he shared with me what being a true community member was all about.

I believe that all of us in this Chamber have been deeply, deeply, touched, and I know that all of us, as we go about our daily responsibilities, will take a part of Jim with us. We thank him for that, and we thank you for sharing him with us. Thank you.

Mrs. Mavis Taillieu (Morris): Mrs. Penner and the Penner family, I would bring my condolences from myself and my family. I did not know Jim Penner, as I am just newly elected, so the first time I met him was at the Appreciation Night in Steinbach. Having said that I did not know him, I did feel a connection to him and his family.

Attending the funeral and listening to the current member from Steinbach, the granddaughters, and his colleague from Trinity Western University speak about Jim, I felt that I knew him even though I had only met him once before.

I especially was reminded of the man when his granddaughter spoke about how they had learned from their grandfather to be enterprising but also to be generous to others.

We have heard today here that he has been a man of faith, a husband, a father, a grandfather, a mentor, a friend and a very good businessman and employer. You do not go into business and be successful over 36 years by not caring about your employees. These are the people that make your business for you. So to be named in 1998 as the independent grocer of the year should be no surprise and, of course, it would not be to those who knew him.

As I said earlier, we have I felt a connection in that my father was diagnosed with the same cancer at the same time. His name was Jim and he died just a month before Jim Penner, so I can appreciate the sorrows that the families go through when you have a terrible disease like cancer in your family, but I know you will take comfort in the joy of his memory as we all will here. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (12:10)

Mrs. Leanne Rowat (Minnedosa): My condolences to the Penner family and on behalf of the constituents of Minnedosa, my thoughts are with you.

Jim, as I have been told by the former MLA from Minnedosa, was a man of quiet strength and as a new MLA I just really met Jim personally over the last few months and a man of quiet strength is the best way to describe him. I knew of Jim through his reputation as a community leader and being very active with the Community Development Corporation and the projects and the initiatives that he was so proud of and helped share with the rest of the province.

I know his legacy will live with other communities and will help in strengthening other communities within the province. I think that is something that the Penner family should be very proud of, that his vision for rural Manitoba and all Manitoba will continue and communities like Souris, which are a distance away from Steinbach, will grow and prosper because of his vision and his passion for community growth.

I also learned of Jim's being of good will through a family situation. I have a family member that lived in Ste. Anne, Manitoba, and one Christmas she came out to Russell where I grew up and shared a story of this new employer that she had. She had just gone through a separation and was raising two children on her own and was feeling very out of sorts. She spoke

of this man and she spoke with tears of how he shared a turkey with her and was bringing it to Russell to share with the family, and how this man just seemed to touch her and understood that she was going through a very difficult time and his name was Jim Penner.

So I did know of Jim and some of the good things that he had done in the past. I am saddened that I was not able to sit and be a part of the experience that so many of his colleagues have shared today. I do want to say that Kelvin Goertzen is an unbelievable MLA and I know that comes a lot from mentorship and support from Jim. I thank you for letting Kelvin be a part of our team.

On that I want to just say that the funeral was a powerful experience. It will stay with me for the rest

of my life, and I want to thank the family for sharing his story. Thank you.

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

Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: Would the honourable members please rise and remain standing to indicate their support for the motion?

A moment of silence was observed.

Mr. Speaker: The hour being past 12 noon, this House will recess and we will reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, March 4, 2004

CONTENTS

ORDERS OF THE DAY		Smith	595
		Reimer	596
GOVERNMENT HOUSE BUSINESS		Caldwell	597
		Mitchelson	598
Motions of Condolence		Schellenberg	599
		Derkach	600
Doer	585	Selinger	601
Murray	586	Dyck	601
Lemieux	588	Loewen	602
Goertzen	589	Schuler	603
Martindale	592	Driedger	604
Gerrard	592	Maguire	605
Cummings	593	Faurschou	607
Ashton	593	Taillieu	607
Tweed	594	Rowat	607