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First Session - Thirty-Seventh Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Seventh Legislature

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LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, July 27, 2000

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Gord Mackintosh (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, please call debate on second readings, Bills 43 and 35.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 43—The Sustainable Development Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: To resume debate on second readings, on the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), Bill 43, The Sustainable Development Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur le développement durable et modifications corrélatives), standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Arthur-Virden.

Mr. Larry Maguire (Arthur-Virden): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to be able to rise in the House this morning to bring forward some views and discussions on sustainable development and discuss the issues of Bill 43.

I would just like to put a few words on the record in opening about the concept of sustainable development and its importance to the development in the province of Manitoba. The Filmon government was committed to the principles of sustainable development, and it is my hope as the Environment critic that this NDP Government will continue the work begun by the Filmon administration and not let political decisions interfere with efforts to protect our province's resources for future generations.

In 1987, the United Nations Brundtland Commission published a report called *Our Common Future* that defines sustainable development as that which would meet the needs

of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs.

The ideas behind sustainable development are ideas that Manitobans and, indeed, citizens around the world have shared and embraced for generations. We all have a vested interest in ensuring that our environment is protected and our resources are properly managed. I always believe that we have an ability and an opportunity to do things right the first time.

The Filmon government recognized this and established the Round Table on Environment and Economy in 1989. The Round Table set out to seek a consensus about the way Manitoba ought to proceed to achieve sustainable development. Some people were skeptical, but they came around to the fact that protecting and properly managing our resources is critical to ensuring the continued health of the provincial economy.

Manitobans recognize that we need both sound development and a healthy environment. We cannot afford to ignore development opportunities. We need the jobs and opportunities they create, but we are also not prepared to see our environment degraded, our communities disrupted or our long-term ability to commit resources to share goals weakened. That would undermine our current standard of living and jeopardize the choices and opportunities we want for our children and grandchildren. I would hope the new government is equally committed to these principles.

Under the Filmon government, Manitoba's commitment to sustainable development was based on a vision for Manitoba of economic growth that is economically sustainable. The former government recognized that Manitoba could not continue to develop economically unless the environment is protected. At the same time, we recognized that continued economic development is needed to pay for important environmental initiatives.

We knew that the needs of today's Manitobans must be met without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. We recognized that attention must be paid to the long-term effects of both environmental and economic decisions. The principles of sustainable development provide opportunities to pursue development and job creation in a responsible manner. Because of our capacity for innovation and learning, we can have quality economic growth that is environmentally sustainable.

To achieve this, certain things must be done. For example, we have to generate more from less through the efficient and effective use of all our natural, human and financial resources. We have to promote environmentally sound, value-added processing and manufacturing of our natural resources. We have to reclaim damaged environment. We have to conserve and develop substitutes for scarce resources. Each and every day, Manitobans are examining these issues and finding new and unique ways to best utilize our province's resources.

Over the past few years, we have made significant progress in our efforts to build sustainable development into our lives and the operations of the provincial government. For example, recycling programs have been a great success, both in environmental, health and economic terms.

The Filmon government's decision to introduce balanced budget legislation has also had an impact on efforts to promote sustainable development. The balanced budget legislation ensures that government will not undertake initiatives that are not fiscally sustainable. Our public debt should not make it impossible for future governments to meet the needs of future generations. I hope this NDP Government recognizes the impact that balanced budget legislation has on the ability of government to achieve sustainable development goals, Mr. Speaker.

The Manitoba Round Table on Environment and Economy has had a number of duties throughout the years. These include creating increased awareness and understanding of the concept of sustainable development by the

citizens of Manitoba. It includes identifying, promoting, marketing and encouraging projects and activities which exemplify development practices, sponsoring and supporting seminars, workshops, conferences and meetings related to sustainable development.

The Manitoba Round Table on Environment has been successful in these endeavours, and the NDP should be mindful of its achievements. Tinkering with a proven sustainable development strategy for merely political purposes will only lead to difficulties, and when tinkering with initiatives that have such an important impact on all of our natural resources and all of our environment, the results could be devastating.

Manitoba's Sustainable Development Act was the first of its kind in North America. Under the guidance of our administration, it institutionalized the principles of sustainable development through government and the province in order to protect the environment and our future. I am concerned, because I hope that the current government respects this initiative and respects what it has accomplished. It should be noted that, in the development of The Sustainable Development Act, public consultations were lengthy and comprehensive while this act was being developed. Several years of consultations and briefings were conducted before the legislation was brought before the House.

In total, nearly a hundred submissions, both oral and written, were accepted from interested stakeholders and groups in the development of the Act. Further to this, the previous government committed to ongoing public input and reporting in the aftermath of the Act's passage. Stakeholder and consensus-based consultation continue to be used in the implementation of the Act.

Both the Manitoba Round Table and Sustainable Development Coordination Unit were instrumental in the development and implementation of the Act. The role they played was second to none in making sustainable development the cornerstone of our economic and environment agenda.

The Manitoba Round Table itself conducted five public meetings where over 20 presentations were heard. The amount of consultation that went into The Sustainable Development Act is almost unprecedented. That said, I am somewhat dismayed that the NDP Government, virtually at the earliest possible opportunity that it has, has chosen to make amendments to the Act, regardless of the amount of public input that went into building the legislation in the first place. I am also concerned at the direction of the amendments. It would appear as though the Government is intent upon removing the spirit of public involvement from The Sustainable Development Act.

Clearly, the primary focus of this piece of legislation is to do away with the Sustainable Development Coordination Unit as the administrative body to the Manitoba Round Table. The services it provided are now being handled by the Department of Conservation itself. Consequently, the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) will assume more direct control over the functioning of the Round Table.

Further to this, the Bill removes all references to the Manitoba Environmental Council and its responsibilities for The Environment Act. Some of the responsibilities of the aforementioned council are transferred to the Manitoba Round Table with the amendments to The Sustainable Development Act. With its amendments, the Government destroys the Sustainable Development Coordination Unit and makes the Government much more central in the administration of sustainable development in Manitoba. They have replaced the Coordination Unit with bureaucrats from the Department of Conservation. I would suggest that this will do nothing for the maintenance of a distinctly open and progressive public atmosphere on sustainable development in the province of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker.

*(10:10)

It is of great concern, as well, that the date of July 1 has come and gone. The Minister, at that point, was to have indicated in his announcements that he would put ministers on the Round Table for Sustainable Development. To date, we have not seen the appointment of

any of those ministers to that process. It is of great concern that while other acts and other bills are being passed in the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba, it would appear as if none of them are passing through the Round Table on Sustainable Development to see whether they meet the criteria that are required, such as the planning bill that we will discuss later this morning, The Water Rights Act changes where the Province has taken back the ability for the individual farmers to be able to drain some of their own land. They have just clawed back the court decision to allow municipalities to be able to control some of the drainage criteria in the province of Manitoba. These are just a few, Mr. Speaker, that I name this morning in regard to the changes that are there.

If the Minister is not willing to put forth the names of the ministers that are going to be part of that new Sustainable Development Act and the new Round Table, rather, how can the public expect the process in Manitoba to uphold sustainable development when the Round Table group is not meeting. I mean, I challenge whether the Minister has even met with them yet to determine what the role of the new Round Table should be.

He has certainly done away with the Sustainable Development Coordination Unit that was established as an advisory role with the Environmental Council in Manitoba. It has been drastically gutted and done away with. Some new appointments have been put forward in regard to that Council, but the whole process of reducing the secondary mechanism that was there as a watchdog to the Round Table process and the ministers involved within that, has been gutted somewhat. We feel that this will weaken the fine work that was done over the past 10 years in developing the whole process of sustainable development and having a process that was accountable, the whole process of accountability in regard to developing the sustainable development mechanisms in the province of Manitoba.

Whether it was through balanced budget legislation or not, it is clear that the Bill as put forward is transferring some of the responsibilities of the Environmental Council to that

Manitoba Round Table. As I said earlier, when the appointees have not been made to the Round Table, it is very concerning and disconcerting to our side of the House, that this whole process is moving forward without the new bodies being put in place and, in fact, without the Government even looking at any of the bills being run by this sustainable development body that it already has passed and has sent many to committee in this legislature.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to close on those remarks. I just want to caution that we will be watching this bill very closely as it moves onward into committee. We have some grave concerns with its presentation in its manner here. It seems to be reducing the ability of the citizens of Manitoba to play a greater part in the development of sustainable development in the province of Manitoba.

I have met with some of these people who have been on the Environmental Council myself. They are very, very concerned about the direction this government is going in regard to future sustainability in Manitoba. They have not always agreed but certainly enjoyed working with the Conservative government that was there in the past and in many cases were able to move forward with many sound programs, and felt anew, that they were welcomed for their input and had a great opportunity to have input into the process as well, Mr. Speaker.

So I will close by saying once more that we will watch this bill very closely as it moves forward into committee. We look forward to the Government perhaps announcing either in committee some of the players, some of the ministers who will be on the Round Table in the future or the new appointees who might fulfil the role that they see sustainable development taking in the province of Manitoba. Thank you very much.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I am privileged to put a few words on the record with respect to this bill and this initiative on the part of the Government. In so doing, I really want to speak a little bit about the efforts of the previous administration in this field.

Mr. Speaker, I say this with all sincerity and conviction. There was a great deal of effort, a great deal of conviction put on the whole matter of taking the Brundtland Report that my colleague from Arthur-Virden referred to seriously by the previous administration and on establishing a special unit within government headed by somebody that I would like to acknowledge, Mr. Bob Sopuck who, some of us will recall, put virtually his entire efforts as Executive Director of this Sustainable Development Unit to bringing this whole concept of sustainable development to the attention of the government, to the attention of all government departments and to building a structure which would allow us to take the time and to think about what sustainable development really meant.

In Manitoba, that meant the establishment, as indeed it did across the country, of a round table. Mr. Speaker, for most of the period of the 10, 11 years of the previous administration, our premier, the then-Premier Filmon, chaired the Round Table. We were very privileged, I believe, to have the service of a number of notable Manitobans, not by any means all supporters of the government but people who were acknowledged as having expertise in particular fields who sat around the Round Table.

I was privileged to be a knight of that round table, Mr. Speaker, for all those years. It used to be somewhat bothersome to me to get the rust off my armour for the monthly meetings, but, nonetheless, I considered it as one of the more enjoyable parts of service in government to attend the meetings of the Manitoba Round Table.

That round table, in my humble opinion, Mr. Speaker—well, not just my humble opinion; my opinion, of course, is always humble, but in the opinion of many others—led the nation. Very shortly, the Manitoba Round Table was being pointed out as a model for other provinces, as a model for the national round table that was created by the national government in Ottawa. Many of our ideas, many of our practices were adopted by other provinces. It was a tribute to Manitobans and an indication of the seriousness

and the dedication that the Manitoba government was prepared to put in this regard.

I believe one of the great accomplishments of the Manitoba Round Table, to put some form to this, was their awards program. They had awards for sustainable development in a number of categories in the public service, in the private sector, in the schools, in the municipal sector. This culminated in a very successful dinner, banquet, every year, generally held in, I forget, the early spring, February or March, at which time prominent speakers would come to address the audience, and these awards were presented to the recipients.

* (10:20)

Upwards to 600, 700, 800 Manitobans paid money, Mr. Speaker, to come to this annual sustainable development awards dinner banquet, which focussed the effort on what the Round Table was all about, focussed the effort, let Manitobans know that their government was actively concerned about sustainable development and was seeking ways to encourage and then to acknowledge those private companies, public institutions that, in fact, would put some of the principles of sustainable development into practice.

Mr. Speaker, I wish this minister and the Government well in this endeavour. It is certainly the prerogative of any government, particularly a new government, to establish those kinds of mechanisms and those kinds of institutions that they feel will carry out the principles of sustainable development. I just want to indicate, you know, it is really unbecoming and certainly not correct when the present government, the present minister dumps on the former round table or the former efforts on the part of the Filmon government with respect to sustainable development.

In this particular instance, sustainable development was taken extremely seriously by the previous administration. We had extremely good people sitting around that table, First Nations people, business people. We had a host of people, as I said earlier, people that were by no means always politically in agreement with the previous government, but they were chosen

for their expertise and for their knowledge and what they could bring to the Round Table.

So, Mr. Speaker, with those few comments, I certainly want to acknowledge the hard work of the staff of that Sustainable Development Unit. It would be my hope and advice that the present government looks at what that staff accomplished in the former sustainable development organization within government and utilize their experience, wherever possible, in the new arrangement that is being envisioned under this bill.

Mr. Speaker, with those few words, I wish this minister, the Government well. It is an important issue. It is long since past that we can look at developments strictly as development. We have to look at its sustainability. We have to look at the entire environmental impact of development on our environment, but we have to do it with a heavy, heavy dose of common sense, because, at the same time as we are concerned about how we continue to create wealth, and that is generally the ambition of development, that we do it in a way that we do not harm our environment, let us not lose sight of the fact that that wealth creation is necessary, because 80 percent, 90 percent of the time that we spend in this House is on how to spend more money on those things that our citizens want, on health, on education, on family services, on better highways and better roads, better parks.

So let us not, ourselves, be hypocritical about this. Let us understand that we need the ongoing forestry development in this province. We need ongoing mining development in this province. We need the ongoing agricultural development in this province. We just have to be smart about how we do it and not mess up our environment.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Jon Gerrard (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill 43, The Sustainable Development Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act. As members in this House are aware, I have been very critical in recent times of the Government's sustainable development strategy or lack of it, as I see it. I believe that this is a very important area, and

part of my criticism is to get the Government moving on this area which is of critical importance to Manitoba.

From the sound of it, I may stand alone in opposition to this measure. I stand alone in opposition to this measure because what it does is terminate, end, vaporize the Manitoba Environmental Council without having sufficient guarantees that those functions of the Environmental Council which are so critical to this province will, in fact, be adequately addressed through the Sustainable Development Round Table which has yet to be appointed, Mr. Speaker.

You know, it is an outrage, in fact, that we are having this act without even having a sustainable development round table appointed, and we should have things done in proper order and in proper time. That Round Table on Sustainable Development should have already met several times since the Government was elected in September. The fact that it has not met since March of last year is, in fact, a breach of current legislation which mandates that it meet at least three times a year.

But let me go further and let me talk a little bit about the Manitoba Environmental Council which has been in existence since at least the 1970s and has played a very important role in the environmental movement and in promoting the environment in Manitoba. It has had over the course of time many prominent Manitobans sitting on the Manitoba Environmental Council, and they have played a forceful role in promoting and in being concerned about the environment. I would speak also in recent times to the fact that members of the Environmental Council have been leaders in speaking out against this government when it did not call the Round Table on Sustainable Development earlier this year or by the appropriate timetable under the act.

It was a leader in speaking out against this government which indeed has yet to name the members for the Round Table on Sustainable Development. Indeed, it may be in part because the members have been so critical of this government that this government is now moving in a very tactical and political way to abolish the

Council so it cannot be a thorn in their side. This is a real concern of myself and others who have a major concern for the environment.

It is noteworthy, Mr. Speaker, that this bill removes all references to the Manitoba Environmental Council and its responsibilities from The Environment Act. As of the passage of this bill, the Manitoba Environmental Council will completely cease to exist. It will be ended, terminated, vaporized, gone from this province. It is also noteworthy that this act transfers some, not all, of the responsibilities of the Manitoba Environmental Council to the Round Table on Sustainable Development. One wonders about the other responsibilities. One wonders whether indeed the function that the Manitoba Environmental Council played admirably in many years when there were people in government who were listening, whether, in fact, that role will be adequately served, and that is one of the reasons that I oppose this measure.

I would suggest to you, and it is important to note that the Round Table on Sustainable Development's function clearly is to look at economic development in a sustainable way, made it quite clear what the priority is. It should be on development and making sure that as this province grows in fact things are done in a sustainable way. The Sustainable Development Round Table has clearly less of a mandate to ensure that the environment is protected, that we have preservation and other positive measures for the environment going on in this province.

Now, it may be that there will be some benefits, if there are adequate safeguards in terms of looking after the environment, to having sustainability and development within one round table and bringing together environment and industry, as it were, to one common cause in this province. But it certainly bears watching. One of the reasons I oppose this legislation is because we cannot be certain that indeed the interests of the environment will adequately be supported and maintained in this new Round Table on Sustainable Development, particularly when that round table has not even been appointed, particularly when we do not even know who is going to be the chair of that round table. So there are some major and

legitimate concerns with the actions or the lack of action on the part of this government.

* (10:30)

I want to take this opportunity to not only comment about the Manitoba Environmental Council but to comment on the position of this act in the Sustainable Development Strategy of the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin). This act was tabled the same day and was essentially part of, indeed a centrepiece of the Minister's strategy for sustainable development.

To have as a centrepiece of your strategy the killing, the vaporizing, the ending of the Manitoba Environmental Council is a rather unusual twist. Certainly if that is a mark of the future actions of this government then all who are concerned about the environment in this province need to be very cautious, need to be very alert and need to be ready to move and to comment and to come forward on quick notice, because this government does not appear to have the environment front and centre on its agenda.

Clearly, The Sustainable Development Act, as well as setting up the Round Table on Sustainable Development, and I have commented already on the Round Table, has mandated that by July 1 of this year there should be a full sustainable development strategy tabled with the component strategies so that, in fact, we know where the Government is going.

Indeed, what we had from this government was the tabling of the COSDI report as the strategy for the present NDP Government.

Well, there are a couple of important points to be aware of. First of all, and the Minister acknowledged this in his speech as he tabled the document, the COSDI process was set up specifically to look at components which related to sustainable development which were not in The Sustainable Development Act. It was looking at those which were not core to The Sustainable Development Act in the actions of the Sustainable Development Round Table and the Sustainable Development Strategy. What the Minister has therefore done is to take the COSDI process as if it were a full and complete strategy.

Well, indeed, it clearly is not. It was never intended to be. The COSDI report, inside the report, says quite clearly that one of the things that needs to be done is to set up a sustainable development strategy. So the Minister has tabled as part of his strategy a document which says we need to set up a sustainable development strategy. Well, this is going around in circles and we can only hope that the Minister will come to his senses and will, as fast as possible, table the real Sustainable Development Strategy, the rest of the Sustainable Development Strategy, so that as a province we know where the NDP is taking us.

The Sustainable Development Act says very clearly that by that July 1 timetable, the Sustainable Development Strategy should show where we are going in this province, but it should also have a variety of component strategies, component strategies looking at economic, social, resource and other areas which relate to sustainable development. None of those component strategies were developed and tabled as part of the Sustainable Development Strategy that was provided to this House before July 1. That is another reason why I was so critical of the Minister because his strategy was not a real strategy. It was not a complete strategy; it was not a full strategy.

The Minister's excuse has been that the Tory government did not do enough in preparation. Well, Mr. Speaker, in reality, there was a subcommittee set up under the Conservative government, chaired by Logan Krueger. I have chatted to Mr. Logan Krueger, and I have seen the work that he had done, the survey that Mr. Krueger had ready to be released and to be operative and to be in action in the fall.

But, of course, when the NDP Government came in, they said we do not know where we are going; we are not interested in the survey. We are going to hum and haw and are not really concerned about sustainable development. In the 10 months, we do not have a round table. We have had no movement in the development and further assessment of the component strategies or tabling of those strategies. Indeed, the process seems to have come to a halt. It is, sad to say, something of a farce, and it is a totally

inadequate excuse that the groundwork in this case was not done.

There are other instances where I have been highly critical and will continue to be highly critical of the former Conservative government, but in this case, there was the groundwork done. In this case, their positive work needs to be acknowledged. So the NDP need to look after their own house and stop, in this instance, blaming the Conservative government because it is the NDP inadequacies which are exposed here rather than the shortcomings in preparation under the Conservatives.

Clearly, there was an element in the development of that strategy, as I have pointed out, which has been missing in the Minister's strategy and the COSDI report which may be particularly critical to this province, and that is a strategy for sustainable development in the area of global warming. There are a few of our citizens who realize the significance and the consequences of the global warming process or the process to reduce greenhouse gas emissions that is taking place. The increasing levels of carbon dioxide over the last 50 years in the global air of our planet are now indisputable. They have gone up very significantly. That increase is a result of increased burning of fossil fuels, the increased development on this planet which, in fact, has created more greenhouse gas emissions. Clearly, one of the things that is needed is for Manitoba to come to grips with the Kyoto targets, what the international targets are, and how we are going to achieve those targets.

The latest figures for Manitoba have shown that from 1990 to '95, our greenhouse gas emissions have continued to rise and that if they continue to rise at the same rate, they will probably be 20 percent to 30 percent above what they were in 1990. By international targets, we are mandated to be 6 percent below where we were in 1990.

The challenge: If we were to do that solely in the transportation sector, we would have to convert every car, truck and bus in this province over to electrical fuel cells from where it is now. If we were to do that solely in the agricultural sector, we would have to convert every agricultural implement that we are using over to electricity, fuel cell, or some other basis. We

would have to address in a very serious way the production of methane. Now clearly what is needed is a strategy which is associated with reductions in emissions in part, in transportation in part, in agriculture, and in part in other areas, so that we can achieve this drastic reduction.

Although it has very serious consequences, there are at the same time major opportunities, major opportunities for provinces which get in their first in terms of being partners, leading and building the technology, leading and building the services and the products which are going to be very critical for the years ahead if the world is going to work in a sustainable way with lower greenhouse gas emissions. Now, there may be many who will say we want a warmer Manitoba, but we have to be very wary because the scenarios, the models, for global warming, unfortunately suggest that as we proceed in this direction we may have more rain, more wet weather in the spring in Manitoba, more problems with flooding. This clearly highlights the potential problems if we go down that route. Those problems are problems that we need to plan for with much better future thinking and planning in the area of drainage, irrigation, diking and so on, so that we do not get into more serious problems in the future.

*(10:40)

So the shortfall in the Sustainable Development Strategy was the fact that it was not complete. It had no component strategies. It has no global warming strategy. This was not done by July 1. Indeed, the Sustainable Development Act says very clearly that the Round Table on Sustainable Development should have been involved in producing it. Well, it has not even met. So another major problem in the Minister's strategy that his instrument, which is his round table which is very, very important in producing this strategy, has not even met. A tragedy, a farce, a very serious circumstance. That was why I have been so critical in recent times of this government which has been slow to act.

I am hopeful that in the near future we will have an announcement on the composition of the Round Table on Sustainable Development. I would hope that the NDP are serious enough that indeed they have the Premier (Mr. Doer)

chairing this, because it is right at the front and centre of the Government's agenda. The Premier should be chairing it as, indeed, the Premier has chaired the Round Table for most of its existence, with a short period of exception when the Minister for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings), who was the Minister responsible, was the chair. So we hope and encourage the Minister to produce his round table, to get it active as quickly as possible to move the sustainable development environmental agenda in this province.

But I must say in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, once more that I stand opposed to this legislation because what it does is unilaterally abolish the Environmental Council without giving us anywhere near the sort of assurances we should have that environmental concerns are going to be fully addressed.

I will, however, say one positive note to the Minister and that is on the Clean Environment Commission which he seems to be moving forward on. Has made some good appointments. I would hope that this, in fact, will be a positive move, and I look forward to its work and its actions make a contribution to Manitoba. Thank you.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Southdale): Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to put a few words on the record in regard to Bill 43, The Sustainable Development Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act, which was brought forth by the Minister in regard to some of the concerns that we may have. I listened intently to the Member for River Heights (Mr. Gerrard) and some of his concerns in regard to the direction that he feels the Government is taking, and a lot of the points that he brought up were very, very worthy of consideration and note in his speaking on this bill.

I would just like to point out, too, in regard to Bill 43, that this is an outcropping of the 1987 Brundtland Report that came out in regard to sustainable development and the environment and the concerns that we as a country and as a province should be aware of in trying to address ourselves to a sustainable environment, not only for the economic development but the environmental concerns that we all have to live with in a sense because of the position that we

are put in and the fact that the environment is a very, very delicate mechanism in the sense that what can happen to the environment can affect us directly, indirectly or for years to come. We see that now with a lot of the environmental concerns that have been expressed regarding some of the ozone layer that has been depleted.

What has come out of that is there has been the banning of certain chemicals that were commonplace for years and years in our system, and we are now finding that these chemicals are a detriment to our environment, to our atmosphere and indirectly to our society, which can lead to other domino effects in the sense that we are seeing skin cancer being more prevalent and things like that.

So there is an awareness or there should be an awareness that sustainable development and sustainability of our environment is a very, very important component of our lifestyle. I have to commend our government, when we were in government, for bringing forth one of the first acts. The Manitoba Sustainable Development Act was the first of its kind actually in North America, and it was a recognition that we have to be more aware, we have to be more conscious of what we are doing in our decision making, in the direction we feel we should be taking for development, for the direction we should be taking in regard to our lifestyle, what we are using in our manufacturing and in our adjustments to circumstances that come about, how we can be better in tune with sustainability, not only in the short term but in the long term which is very, very important.

With the Round Table that was developed here in Manitoba, it was a ground-breaking effort on this government's part, the former government, in setting up a system for bringing forth concerns to the Round Table through the Coordinating Unit, I guess it was called, and the Manitoba Round Table and the Development Coordination Unit were instrumental in the development of the Act itself. So the Act that was brought forth came about by not only the Round Table but the co-ordinating committee that was involved with it, which meant that there had to be public consultation and there had to be public involvement in bringing forth the Act, so that there was an awareness as to what was good

for Manitoba, what was good for the Act itself. So it was something that I think was right for the times. It is something that a lot of other areas are now copying in the sense of what was set in place.

I can only relate to how, on a local basis back in my own constituency, there was an awareness that was brought forth to some of the schools in my constituency in regard to the environment and looking after the sustainability of what was happening in the area, and I remember one of my schools had a project where they had to come up with I believe it was a thousand different types of environmental initiatives, so that they could get an award.

I am trying to remember exactly what the award was called, but the school in my constituency, from what I understand, when it made its accomplishment, it was the first one of its kind I know in Manitoba and it could have been one of the first in western Canada in getting this award. I was quite proud of the initiative that was taken by the students in this K to 8 school in my constituency, Guyot School, in fact, in regard to how it accomplished these things.

This was a very good initiative, because what it did, it instilled a sense of being aware of the environment, working for the betterment of the environment in young children, in young people. So, as they went into their life cycle of decision making and involvement, whether it was in their own personal life or with corporations or business or public service or anything else, they had an awareness of environmental concerns, not trying to do anything that was in harm or would jeopardize not only their future, but the futures of other people. They started to learn young that they had to live with the environment, live with their surroundings for the betterment of not only themselves but for everybody else in their community, particularly in and around their particular area.

We are a bit concerned with what is happening with the direction of the government. It has taken away perhaps the spirit of public involvement. This is of concern because, as all good legislation needs, it needs a public

involvement. We are seeing that now with our committee stages, where the public is involved with decision making. We are saying that public involvement, especially in the environment and conservation, is something that the people are demanding. They want to be aware. They want to be part of the decision making in regard to the direction the government is taking in trying to bring forth an environment which is not only conducive to a better lifestyle, but a lifestyle that can be of a benefit for children and for generations to come.

* (10:50)

So I would think that anything that takes away from any form of public involvement in the decision making is of a consequence that I think this government should be very concerned with. What it is doing is it is putting the decision making back into the bureaucracy of government for the decision making of that kind.

I must say that I am not here to criticize the bureaucracy of our government. I think the people that work for our government and the people that work in our various departments I have had the opportunity to work with when I had the pleasure and the honour of being a cabinet minister, working with a tremendous amount of very, very dedicated and very loyal people, not only to my particular departments but to government in itself, I am saying that there are good people.

I think that what it does is it puts it into a structure, the decision making into a structure format. That could possibly be of a concern. When there is not the freedom of ability for the public to be involved, to have the second sober thought, if you want to call it, by public and public people being at least aware or have the ability to be involved with some decision making.

The final decision naturally is always with government, and that is fair game. In fact, the final decision a lot of times comes down to the cabinet minister, him or herself, in regard to a lot of the things that are brought forth for recommendations. That is fair game. That is the way the structure is. But I think once there is public involvement or there has been a second

sober thought in regard to directions that are taken, that cautiousness is always of a benefit for the final decision. Because in likelihood that usually brings forth a more constructive decision or direction that the Minister or the Government will take in regard to legislation that is brought forth.

We have seen that already. We see that with this government right now. They brought forth a lot of legislation that I do not think was really thought out properly or really hammered out through the public forum in a sense of not only through the public forum but possibly even through their own caucus and through their own review committees in regard to some of the legislation, because we see too many amendments coming forth with the legislation that is being proposed right now.

It is always that rushing of decision making that usually makes bad laws. There is nothing wrong with a second sober thought. There is nothing wrong with an evaluation. There is nothing wrong with possibly even delaying decision making until there is the ability to look, research, and to make a more thorough analysis of the direction that is being proposed.

With the environment, I think it is very, very important if we are looking seriously at sustainable development, under the guidelines of the Kyoto targets, that these are some of the things that have to be very, very carefully pursued. The decision making a lot of times that is made today can have a tremendous effect down the road in the sense of where consequences might come about because of a hastily made decision or a direction that is made specifically by some sort of pressure groups or interest groups or people that are looking after wanting some paybacks or some things like that. I think it is very important that any government, whether it is this government or any government, has the ability to do some second sober thoughts on a lot of decision making in this nature.

The Sustainable Development Amendment Act is something that I feel does have to be looked at very closely. I think that, as it goes to the committee stage, there will be an opportunity for further discussion and further input by not

only the public but possibly even the Minister in looking at bringing forth the appointments that will be put to this board, who will sit on the board, who will be the chairperson of this board.

I think the public will be very, very interested in watching which way this government will be going with its environmental policy, because in a sense, Mr. Speaker, this bill is going to be part of a benchmark that people will do an evaluation of this government for its environmental concerns and environmental direction that this Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) will be taking.

People will be watching very closely as to which direction they feel the Government is taking. The people that are involved with the environmental movement are very, very vocal and very persistent in being a watchdog as to government and its direction, and I would think the Minister is aware of that. The Minister would be aware to just go ahead with a lot of decision making in regard to the direction of environmental change or amendments are things that a lot of people will be watching for.

The environmental movement, if you want to call it, the various groups that police decision making by governments and by individuals and corporations and companies are very much aware of consequences and decisions that are made hastily, and they come back to haunt not only industries but the governments and decision makers, because of the decision that is made out of possibly an advice or a direction that somebody is lobbying for. I would be very cautious and advise or recommend to the Minister that they watch that direction because, as was mentioned earlier, the Sustainable Development Round Table was set up and a tremendous amount of focus was put on it here in Manitoba, as was pointed out by my colleague the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), with the awards dinner that was presented every year.

I know there was a strong contingent that was put forth for the awards, for it to be recommended for the awards. There was an initiative that was put forth through various areas and programs and individuals that were awarded. Some very prestigious speakers were brought in to address that dinner or that luncheon.

I had the opportunity to be at a few of those dinners. I believe that they brought in speakers from various parts of the world actually to speak at that because of the importance that was put towards it. As was pointed out by the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), I believe the dinners were always sold out every year. They focussed the attention on the awards for the environment. The sustainability of what this government is doing was well recognized.

So there is a benchmark that I feel that the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin) is aware of. The tinkering of this bill will be watched very closely, because a lot of people have been involved, a lot of people have put in the time, the effort and the concern in regard to what they felt is proper in regard to sustainability and the Act itself.

Mr. Speaker, with those words I just wanted to put my comments on record in regard to Bill 43. With that we can move this bill on to committee. Thank you.

* (11:00)

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 43, The Sustainable Development Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Some Honourable Members: Yes.

An Honourable Member: On division.

Mr. Speaker: On division.

Bill 35—The Planning Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen), Bill 35, The Planning

Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aménagement du territoire), standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Fort Whyte.

Mr. John Loewen (Fort Whyte): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to put some comments on the record regarding Bill 35, The Planning Amendment Act. After digesting the comments that the Minister put on the record and going through the explanatory note, the preamble to the Bill, I am not really sure what the purpose of introducing this bill at this time is other than to slow down the process.

I think the Bill itself does not necessarily reflect good legislative practice from this House. We have a situation where one of the main thrusts of the Bill is that it requires an application that is received by a council with regard to a livestock operation greater than 400 animals to automatically be referred to a technical review committee. It is really taking the ability out of the hands of the municipal officials to manage the process as they see fit for their own particular municipalities.

I am not quite sure why the Minister sees a need for it now. She is, I am sure, fully aware that there is the opportunity for any municipality, any council, at their request to ask for a technical review committee if there are issues that they feel need to be reviewed prior to their approving the operation.

I do not understand why this government feels it is necessary to take it out of the municipal councils' hands. These are elected officials. They are elected close to their constituencies. They are the grass roots politicians that live day to day with the issues around their municipality that have to answer for what goes on within their municipality. I think they are probably the ones, well, I know they are the ones that are best able to deal with these types of issues.

I am at a little bit of a loss to understand why the Minister feels that it is necessary and her department feels it is necessary to foist upon the municipal councils a technical review committee every time somebody wants to set up a livestock facility which will be greater than

400 animals. I certainly agree with the Government's concern about the environmental effects that can arise from some of these large-scale operations, but there are regulations in place under which these operations must function. They are regulated. They are governed. There are restrictions on how they must deal with the environmental issues.

So to foist on a municipality a technical review committee and then to force that committee to have hearings after it has reported back and not to allow those hearings for 30 days, I mean, we have people in this province who want to take a chance, who want to make investments, who want to see the economy grow, who want to diversify their operations, and what message are we sending to these people? Well, we are sending to the people who want to take a risk that, well, you know, it is going to take a long time before anything comes of this, and you had better be prepared for the long haul. In this day and age, you know, with the information systems that are available, certainly any entrepreneurs or people that are interested in diversifying want to know that they can move quickly on this.

But I think, more importantly, the message that is being sent to municipal councils is that, well, you know, it is nice that you were elected, we realize you were elected to govern situations in your local area, but we do not quite trust you. We do not think you can deal with this, so we are going to, I guess, through the heavy hand of the provincial government, come in and tell you how to run your municipality. I guess in some ways it is a bit of a common theme out of this government. We have seen it in their dealings with the school trustees where they have taken a heavy hand with YNN and said: Well, yes, you are elected officials, but we do not believe you can make proper decisions, so we are going to take the decision-making power out of your hands and force our own decision upon you.

If this government really feels that is the case, you know, why do they not just do away with municipal governments and do away with school boards and do away with City Council and take over the responsibility all on their own?

I think when I look at this bill I am further disturbed by the power that it gives to the Minister. So, on the one hand, the Minister wants to control other elected officials. We saw that last night in some of the amendments to The City of Winnipeg Act where the Minister, and was quite honest about it, indicated that they were willing to make some of what she referred to as small "c" conservative amendments to that bill which really did not meet the requests that came from the City of Winnipeg on amendments to The City of Winnipeg Act. The thrust of those amendments was, again, to have control over what the City does in a very narrow scope. Instead of allowing the City to appoint its own appeal committee, the Province, the Minister and her department have dictated what that appeal committee would be. They are dictating to the City through the legislation how and in exactly what fashion they can contact people. We are seeing the same thing in this legislation.

Yet, on the other hand, in clause 53.1(6), regarding the appointment of a technical review committee, we see the legislation as being very, very permissive where the legislation says that the Minister may appoint a committee. It does not say that the Minister has to appoint a committee. It simply states that the Minister may appoint a technical review committee for each region, or she may not, or another minister may or may not.

So what do we have? Instead of locally elected municipal councillors being the ones that make the determination based on the benefits and risks to their own municipality, and these officials are accountable, very accountable to people directly in the area that they serve, directly in the area that they represent, we will now have a technical review committee which may or may not be from that district, depending on the views of the Minister at the time. It is very clear from this legislation that if the technical review committee is not set up for that particular municipality, and it may not be, though we may, in fact, have a technical review committee full of people from a neighbouring municipality, or, in fact, municipalities that are far removed from that municipality, making judgments on whether it is advisable for that municipality to license a livestock facility of this size.

So I am not sure that we should not maybe stop and review some of the aspects of this act and decide whether as a provincial body we have faith in duly elected municipal officials to make the right decisions within parameters for their municipality, for their region, or whether we just want to say well, you know, hey, we are the provincial government. We know better, and we would like to keep our staff busy managing your affairs, staff that may not even have visited the area, staff that may not have been elected. They may, in many instances, have no connection to that particular municipality. So again, we are removing the decision-making power from elected officials, putting it in the hands of the Minister, and at her or his whim, in the hands of a technical review committee which may or may not have any connection to the municipality which may have a completely different agenda.

Can you imagine the situation where an entrepreneur or somebody who either already has an operation in rural Manitoba or is thinking of moving to Manitoba to set up a livestock operation, can you imagine how they would feel if on taking an application to the municipality they were told, well, that is great, and now we are going to have to send it off to a technical review committee which, by the way, all comes from a neighbouring municipality? The consequence may be that there is a political agenda there, where they want to have livestock operations in their municipality, as opposed to a neighbouring one. I mean, the door is wide open.

* (11:10)

So I guess I would recommend to the Minister that we give this bill a sober second thought, if, in fact, they do believe, as a matter of policy, that it is absolutely critical that this technical review committee be in place for an environmental review, and I think that is admirable. Certainly, I do not have any problem with us moving cautiously in terms of environmental issues. But, at the same time, certainly we can, in all respects, make sure that the doors are open for business. That when rural Manitobans want to diversify, when people in rural Manitoba, whether it is diversifying an existing operation or moving their family and making an investment in Manitoba, that it could be done expeditiously. Certainly it is important,

and I think maybe more important that the Government ensure that there are strict rules in place that ensure that there is sustainable development in terms of these types of livestock operations, particularly as we are seeing the expansion of the hog industry in Manitoba.

We all have concerns about some of the environmental impacts that can arise out of the mishandling of some of the outputs of hog operations. We would not want to see the environment harmed, but certainly through sustainable development regulation that can be monitored. I guess we will carry this forward to committee to see if the Minister will be open to looking at this legislation, to maybe tightening up the time frames so that this process can be moved along quickly, to tightening up some of the clauses regarding the appointment of the technical review committee on two counts: One, to ensure that it is there and available for the use of the municipality when duly elected municipal officials want to use that resource; secondly, to ensure that some strategy is put in place to make absolutely sure that anybody sitting on a technical review committee has the best interests of the municipality for which this operation is proposed. It is in the government's best interests to have this type of representation on the technical review committee.

So these are the types of issues that concern us regarding this legislation. We will certainly bring these concerns forward to the Committee. We have heard over and over again from members opposite that they are willing to listen and to take some time to reflect on some of the concerns that members from this side of the House and the public have on these bills that are before us at this time. So we will be taking that forward, and, hopefully, the Minister will be open to suggestions and perhaps even open to the thought of postponing this legislation until the proper work can be done by her administrative staff to ensure that some of the concerns that I have raised today are taken care of. I think it is imperative, in this case in particular, as it is with a number of other cases, to find this out in committee before, that the administration has, in certain cases, had their agenda to deal with and with a new government, they come into power and the administration has identified some issues to them. Again, our job as

elected politicians is to represent the views of the people of Manitoba, ensure that all people of Manitoba are taken care of and that we are not just doing things for administrative ease, but we are doing things that make processes fair and equitable for all Manitobans and that we look to the long-term future of this province.

Certainly, diversification in farm operations and in rural Manitoba is very, very positive. There are, no doubt, going to be some very positive economic spin-offs from the hog industry that we are seeing and other livestock opportunities that hopefully will be presented to those people in rural Manitoba who have the ability to take advantage of them. Who knows, one of these days, we might even see a beef slaughterhouse back in Manitoba, and would that not be something to be proud of. But certainly we do not want to encumber the process to such an extent that any business, whether it is preparing beef for slaughter, or whether it is, in fact, a company that wants to establish a slaughterhouse—we do not want to put anything in the way that would slow that process down unnecessarily.

Again, I want to emphasize, with regard to the environmental impacts of these operations, we are all for regulation. We want to make sure that they operate in an environmentally safe and friendly way, and that they are sustainable over the long term, but with that in mind, we also want to see them here. We do not want to see people have to look to other jurisdictions because it is easier, because it is less onerous, or because the process is not fair.

So I appreciate the opportunity to put those comments on the record, and as I have indicated, these are issues that we will bring to the Minister's attention in other ways and hopefully have some opportunity to influence the final drafting of this legislation.

Mr. Conrad Santos, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): It gives me pleasure to rise today to address the amendments that are being opposed to The Planning Act in the province. Having been the Minister charged with the responsibility of looking after The

Planning Act for just over two years, back in '89, '90 and '91, I have a bit, I suppose, of background knowledge on how The Planning Act functions and what the role of The Planning Act is.

However, today I am really pleased to have somebody in the gallery for whom I have a great deal of admiration. That young fellow is sitting over there and his name is Michael and he is my grandson. Michael is a fifth-generation farmer. He is also a baseball player and he was just playing at The Forks, at the new baseball park, and I think that in itself is indeed quite an honour, at least for our family it is to have a young fellow in our family participate in sports to be able to come and play at a first-class facility. So we thank Sam Katz and his staff for opening his park to the young people of this province, that they are, in fact, able to enjoy and participate in a sport that I think is indeed a gentlemen's sport and has proven to be an entertainment and a tourist attraction for this province.

Indeed, Michael and his family were honoured last year with being voted the Young Farmer of the Year. His mother, Anita, is sitting up there, and she and her husband, Danny were the young farm couple of Manitoba last year. They just had the honour of being part of selecting the new couple from Grunthal. We are indeed again honoured to have people that are very close to our constituency being for two years in a row selected as Young Farmer of the Year.

The reason I say this, the reason I say Michael and Stephanie are fifth-generation farm family is because this Planning Act will play a significant role as to what their future is going to be and how their future will, in fact, be directed. This bill is probably a very innocuous bill and it is sort of a clouded grey bill, and you do not really know what the impact of this bill is until you really operate a farm. When you look at The Planning Act, The Planning Act originally was designed to allow local governments, to give local governments the power to decide within their municipal jurisdictions what economic opportunities would be available, either through the designation of agriculture, to the designation of industry, the designation of residential

development and urban development and how to sort of set aside property that you could do this on, and then say to the people, to the farmers out there, as long as you abide by these rules you are free to practise your profession.

* (11:20)

That has changed. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that has changed dramatically over the last number of years and you know who has changed it? The biggest group of people that have driven that change are special interest groups that have no consideration for the economies or the livelihoods of those young people. It does not matter to them. These special interest groups have an agenda and their agenda is not to look after the best interests of those young people. Their agenda is to fulfil their own mandate. That is their agenda.

You look at PETA and most of those people are outside of this country. The real involvement in the organization is not from Canada, although they have affected the sealing industry, they have affected the cattle industry, the chicken industry. They are the ones that have constantly pointed at the chicken industry and say chickens should not be in cages. They are the ones that say sows should not be held in cages when they are farrowing, and they are the ones that say that seals should not be hunted, and they really have no other agenda than to stop.

What do we do if we stop everything to those young people, to all our young people? If we would have applied the restrictive measures to all our industry, indeed, the people in the City of Winnipeg, if we had applied the same rules, then I dare say to you the quality of water in the Red River would be much better than it is today, but we have not. We have not applied the same rules because we are dealing, on one hand, with very few people, and on the other hand, we are dealing with a major population centre. That is not a criticism; it is just reality.

But the special interest groups are the ones that have driven the changes that have affected one group in society more than any other group, and that is agriculture. There used to be a time, when a person or a family moved into the rural

setting, that he accepted the fact that a rural setting meant living with animals, living with dust, living with green fields, living with clean air that smelled differently from one day to another, but it was clean. It smells differently, but it is clean. Indeed, allowing people the freedom to choose what they will do on their own property. Yet today, we have a water resources amendment act that will stop farmers from even removing excess water from their fields when their whole livelihood is at stake, without a ministerial permit, without central authority dictating to the farm community what they can do.

We have the animal rights movement that is dictating whether we can have chickens in our yard, and we have laws in this province that say farmers can no longer decide how many chickens they will have on their farms. That young farmer, if he decides to go into chickens tomorrow, he is limited to having 99 hens on his farm. That is all this government will allow that young farmer to farm chickens.

Now, by virtue of changing The Planning Act, we are saying that that young farmer up there, when he wants to build a barn, he can no longer make the decision himself based on the plan that the municipality has put in place. He cannot do it. This minister is now proposing that he must first ask. He must first ask the municipality. He must go to the municipality and ask for permission. Then, the municipality is directed to go and notify the ministry that that young farmer has now made an application to build a building. Then that minister must, if he chooses to, appoint a technical review committee, which normally might be made up of water resources people, agricultural people, environmental people, and a whole team of people that will now assess whether that young man's plan suits the needs of society.

So where is the freedom? Where is the freedom, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we speak about so freely, that the United Nations says that Canada has? Every bill that I have seen come before this legislature in this socialistic New Democratic government is almost tyrannical in its approach because they are now saying, these people: We will not allow the general public the freedoms that the United Nations says that

Canada has so freely. They are saying to them: We will take those freedoms away, and we will give it to the Minister.

Is that not why our people left Russia? Is that not the reason your people, Mr. Deputy Speaker, left your country? Is that not the reason, because you wanted freedom? Is that not the reason why the forefathers of all the people sitting in this legislature came to this country, because it gave them freedom? Right. And here we are taking it away. We are putting it in the hands of the Minister. And what did Germany do?

An Honourable Member: In good hands, they are.

Mr. Jack Penner: What did Germany do? I know the Member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) says: In good hands they are. And nobody argues that. I have a great deal of respect for the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs (Ms. Friesen). I have a great deal of respect for the Minister of Conservation (Mr. Lathlin), but I have no knowledge of what the Minister will think when these people leave office, what the next minister will think.

See, we put laws like this in place. We took the freedom away from people in Germany. What did one tyrant wanting total control and wanted to impose total control on the world do with those laws? He enacted the law that took away the rights and freedoms.

That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the problem with this bill. Nobody argues that the environment should be protected. Nobody argues that. Nobody argues that the municipalities should have or should not have rights. Yet this bill takes away the rights of a municipality.

The dangerous clause in this bill is the last clause in this bill. The last clause in this bill, and it sounds very innocent, yet it is a most powerful clause, says the applicant obtains every approval, including any permit or licence required under an act, regulation or a by-law in respect of the proposed conditional use and complies with or agrees to comply with any condition attached to an approval.

* (11:30)

Mr. Speaker in the Chair

Then, if you look at section 53.1(4), the last section, it dictates that at least 14 days before the date of a hearing, the notices of a public hearing must be posted and send a notice of the hearing to owners of the property shown on the assessment roll as being within two kilometres of the property. This bill now enacts that you cannot come within two kilometres of another property. Then it says in respect of which the application is being made or where the affected property is not remote or inaccessible, post the notice on an affected property in accordance with subsection. It forces you to post notice on the property that you are going to develop.

Then it goes on to say that the Minister must receive the application, a copy of the application, and council shall ensure that when an application referred to in subsection 53.1(1) livestock operation is received, a copy of the application and the accompanying material is immediately sent to the Minister.

Now, does that give ministerial power? Well, it says further in this act that all other acts will be considered by the Minister before granting approval, before the municipality can grant approval. Now, if there is another act, whether it is The Animal Care Act or whether it is The Water Resources Act or indeed The Planning Act or any other act in government that allows the Minister the authority to say yea or nay under that act, this minister has the right to put a stop.

That is the dangerous section in this act. That is the innocuous section of this act. That is why this act, I believe, has been very, very discreetly crafted, to make it appear that the Minister has no more powers under this bill than he or she had before, and yet it gives the Minister tremendous power.

I think that is the importance, Mr. Speaker, that needs to be addressed in the consideration of this bill. Therefore, I think we need to be very careful in how the Minister, in fact, or we, in this legislature, allow for approval; because it takes away the right of the individual to make a

decision on his or her own property. If we keep on passing the kind of restrictive legislation that centralizes all power in this province for the next four years, I daresay to you that those young people up there will no longer have any rights to make any decisions on their own. It will be government dictating to them what they can or cannot do.

If we keep on passing this kind of legislation or promoting this kind of legislation, even though it looks totally innocuous, I say to you, Mr. Speaker, that we are in danger of losing the status that we have in the world now as one of the best countries in the world to live in.

I want to talk a little bit about the effect on agriculture. This province has been designated, by virtue of default, in a decision made by the federal government. When the federal government chose to do away with the \$750-million subsidization to the railways for transporting grain, and it was always said we were subsidizing the farmers, that is the farthest thing from the truth at all. We were not subsidizing the agricultural community; we were subsidizing a railway, two railways. We were giving them millions and millions of dollars to maintain an operation that they, by the way, had agreed to when the agreement was first signed to develop the railways in western Canada.

The railways demanded properties, the railways demanded rights, and the railways got the rights. And they were given an amount of money, guaranteed, to haul grain out of western Canada. It was roughly, not quite \$5 a ton. And that sufficed, and that gave them a lot of money for transporting grain, until about the late '60s, early '70s. And that is when the railways started talking about saying we can no longer afford to haul for this amount of money. That is when the government started saying okay, we do not want you to stop the operation. And that is when the Wheat Board, owned by Canadian farmers, the Wheat Board bought a large number of railway cars. And the Canadian government bought a large number of railway cars and virtually gave them to the railways, and said here, we will support you in this manner.

Then, a few years later, they started topping up the freight rates, and it was called the Crow

support payment. It was always deemed to be a support to the farmer, and yet it really was not. It was only to ensure the railways would get enough money so they would keep running and put enough cars on track so that the farmers' grain could actually be moved to market.

Government had a great stake in this. The balance of payment depended on it. It was roughly about \$18-billion worth of foreign currency earned by the federal government by the sale of grain and agriculture commodities. So government had a big stake in ensuring that their balance of payment could be met. Foreign currency earnings, it is all part of it, part of the decision making.

So what did we do? By virtue of eliminating the Crow, the federal Liberal Government chose to, without question, change the lives of western Canadians, and virtually every farmer in this country supported it, and I was one of them, saying: Yes, this is what should be done. I said: Yes, this should be done; we should eliminate the Crow. However, we said the Government should ensure that there was adequate funding to the infrastructure through an infrastructure program that would allow municipalities to build their roadbeds and bridges and highways. No attention, Mr. Speaker, was paid by the federal government to do this.

They changed the Crow. They eliminated the payment to the Crow under the auspices of meeting the requirements of the trade agreement. It was totally false, because they were five years ahead of the required time to make a 30% adjustment, a 30% reduction, not a total reduction. So, Mr. Speaker, I say to you that because the federal government made this decision, the livestock industry will now automatically migrate out of eastern Canada, out of Ontario and Quebec into western Canada, because the industry will go where it becomes most economical to raise a product that they can process. So, if they can buy, be it hogs, chickens, beef in western Canada a cent a pound cheaper than they can buy it in Ontario for processing, they will. They will come here. We have always said that. Some of us have always said that if the Crow had never been, western Canada would be a different place to live. It would have developed entirely differently. But the livestock industry

would not have been centred in central Canada; it would have been centred in western Canada where the grain was produced, instead of having the At and East program and the Feed Security Program. All those were support mechanisms and subsidies to eastern Canada to ensure that they could maintain their livestock herds in competition with American corn.

* (11:40)

That will now change, and I know the Member for Rossmere (Mr. Schellenberg) sits and pretends that he knows anything about agriculture. He knows that his grass grows on his lawn if he puts fertilizer on it, but if he does not put water and fertilizer on it, it dies. He knows that. That is a good start to agriculture, Mr. Speaker; I mean, the Member for Rossmere has learned that if you add fertilizer and water, grass grows. The same thing applies on the farm. When grass grows, cows can eat, and when cows can eat, they grow, and they have little ones. They reproduce and they become herds of cows. And when grass grows, if you can grow grass, you can also grow grain, but without fertilizer, you do not grow grain. Oh, you might grow a little bit but very little, and we all know what chemical fertilizers are and what they do and how they react. So I say to you, what we should be looking at is the natural way of growing grain, and that means the most natural fertilizer in the world that you can buy, livestock manure.

Two pigs produce roughly about 70 pounds of nitrogen a year, so you could, in essence, raise two pigs on every acre of land, and they would then produce 70 pounds of nitrogen which is roughly what farmers add to the soil in chemical fertilizers, which some of the Members opposite have said we should not apply to land and I tend to somewhat agree with them, but we need fertilizer. So if you put manure on, grow enough pigs or cows or chickens to raise enough manure in this province, you then eliminate the need for commercial fertilizers, the chemicals. You eliminate the need for it. So we go back to nature's way.

However, we go back to nature's way. So I say to you, if you produced two pigs for every acre of arable land in this province alone, do you know how many pigs we would have, Mr.

Speaker? If you had two pigs for every arable acre, you would have 36 000 000 pigs in this province, and 36 000 000 pigs would only produce enough nitrogen to fertilize all the arable land in this province. Is that not interesting? Thirty-six million.

In other words, if the intent is to move towards 10 000 000 pigs of production, that only produces one-third of the fertilizer requirements for the province to meet the needs of the farmers, only one-third. So that means you could raise another million cows. That would meet another third. Then you could raise another 30 000 000 chickens in this province and geese and ducks and poultry, and only then would you meet the fertilizer requirements to grow an average crop—nothing spectacular about that, to grow an average crop.

If you want to grow a crop of potatoes, I think now the requirements for potatoes are somewhere in the neighbourhood of 250 pounds of fertilizer an acre. I know the Members from the urban part of this province, from the city of Winnipeg do not understand this, but this is reality. We are talking real numbers. So, 250, if you put this whole province in potatoes, you could quadruple the amount of hogs over the 35 000 000. So that would mean you would have to raise about 150 000 000 pigs in this province to meet the requirements to put every acre in potatoes, just in fertilizer requirements.

Now, that might sound a bit astounding to some people, but it is reality. Those fertilizers are now supplied by the Simplot corporation and the Cominco corporation. It is not that they are not applied. We utilize those nutrients, but we have to buy them in chemical form. You know the beauty of it, Mr. Speaker? They do not smell. They do not smell. The chemical industry has found a way to manufacture nitrogen and took the smell out of the nitrogen. But if you want real, natural nitrogen, natural nitrogen stinks horribly. That is the odour that you get from nitrogen. It is not nitrogen floating into the air, it is just the odour from nitrogen.

Take an anhydrous ammonia tank out to your fields someday and turn on the switch and let the gas rise out of the tank. You cannot live around a tank for the stink. It smells horribly, but

you can live downstream of the plant. Nobody cares, because it is an industrial stink. It is not a farm stink.

So this Planning Act, Mr. Speaker, only puts the kibosh on farmers. It does not speak to industry. It does not say that industry could not put a smelly operation right next door, because it would not be producing manure. It would not be producing manure. We do not even put these kinds of restrictions on town lagoons or the City of Winnipeg lagoons. We are not setting up technical review committees to establish a lagoon in any of our rural municipalities to give the towns a right to set up a lagoon, but the farmer must. The farmer must. Why? Do you know why? Because you urban members sit and listen to PETA and animal rights and indeed even your own people in the city of Winnipeg who kill more penned animals than any other group does. They call themselves a protection group for animals. Vicki Burns has been before your caucus and, indeed, our caucus. Yet you listen to her, and that causes this kind of regulation. That is the problem. That is the problem farmers face.

I think you should be ashamed trying to shut down the farm community in this country. You have no idea what value these people bring to your table. They produce every ounce of food that you consume, and you pay no attention to it. You eat the cheapest food in the world anywhere, and you give farmers no credit. You try to impose restrictions on them that will force them—*[interjection]* Well, I am only being honest. I know you have a great deal of problem being honest, but we do pride ourselves on this side of the House of being honest.

All we are saying, you spend less than 14 cents out of every dollar that you earn on food, the lowest-cost food in all the world, and now you are trying to shut it down. That is what this act says. This act says, if Environment, if Agriculture, if municipal affairs or planning and all those people cannot agree, they will recommend against it. I am totally astounded that we are going to try these kinds of restrictions on our farm community.

It really makes farmers look as if they have no regard at all for the environment. Yet there is

nobody in this room that pays more attention to the environment than the farmer does—nobody in this room. I see people in this city walking around, with their little spray cans, spraying chemicals on their lawns to get rid of the dandelions. They hire the sprayers to come in and treat their lawns and their gardens for bugs. Yet we in rural Manitoba are now going to be forced to ask the Minister whether we can or cannot.

* (11:50)

Do any of you in this legislature have to ask the Minister before you can spray your lawn? Why not? You are affecting your neighbour. But you know the stuff you put on your lawns does not smell. If you apply fertilizer to your lawn, do you have to ask your neighbour? Do you know why you do not have to ask your neighbour? The fertilizer does not smell; the companies took the stink out of the fertilizer. When the farmer applies the manure to an acre of land, it smells because it is natural. It is as natural as you can get. It is nature's way, but nature tells you when it is there. The manufactured stuff has taken the question mark out of it, has taken the notice, the quotation mark out of it, and the smell is only there to give you notice. It is nature's way, and you pay no attention to it in this legislature.

Through the goodness of your heart, you are attempting to apply rules that will protect the environment. We all agree with that. Nobody disagrees with that. *[interjection]*

The Member for Brandon only displays how naive he really is. He only displays by that comment how naive he really is. He lives and represents the area where the biggest fertilizer manufacturing plant in all of western Canada is, right in his backyard, and he represents all the people who work there. He is saying that he will shut the single-entity farmer down. He is willing to do that, but he is not willing to look at the effect of the chemicals that farmers put on the land.

I say to him: Be very careful what you say. I say to the Member for Brandon West (Mr. Smith): Be very careful what you say. You are implying by the comment that you made that the

farmers are not responsible. I say to you that they are just as responsible as ever.

Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude by saying this: If we want to get rid of our farmers there is a very simple way of doing that. That is simply by passing a law in this legislature that will say a very simple thing, you can no longer farm in this province. Simple law. Give the authority to the Minister to enforce it. Then we will have done away with all the environmental problems in rural Manitoba or the perceived environmental problems in rural Manitoba.

See, there are those that say we should turn our whole landscape into pastureland. There are those that say that. Well, if you do that and if you turn the 150 000 bison that we have in this country now, if you turn them all loose and let them reproduce, you would probably have more animals running around in this province than you do now, whether they are confined or not. That, of course, would cause an environmental problem, would it not? Would it cause an environmental problem?

You might have to then pass a planning law. We might have to then say to the people, to the Minister in charge of wildlife that he might have to restrict the production of the bison or the deer or the antelope. Yet nowhere, nowhere do I see any regulation that will give more freedom to the farmer to make decisions, an environmentally friendly decision, on his farm to keep on producing food more economically than any

other farmer in the world does today. Yet we support the Americanization by this kind of regulation of our farm community, because it imposes more cost on our farm products than anywhere else in the world does, these kind of regulations.

That, in effect, puts us in a non-competitive position with our American friends and our European friends, I think that is where the unfortunate problem lies. That is what this government needs to recognize. That is the decision this government needs to make, whether they want to increase industrialization, job creation and all those kinds of things by encouraging primary production on our farms in a meaningful way in allowing industrialization. They are not doing it this way, I will tell you that.

Mr. Harry Enns (Lakeside): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there is a disposition to call it twelve o'clock?

Mr. Speaker: Is there the will of the House to call it twelve o'clock? *[Agreed]*

When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member for Lakeside will have 40 minutes.

The hour being 12 noon, I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that the House will reconvene at 1:30 p.m.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, July 27, 2000

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