



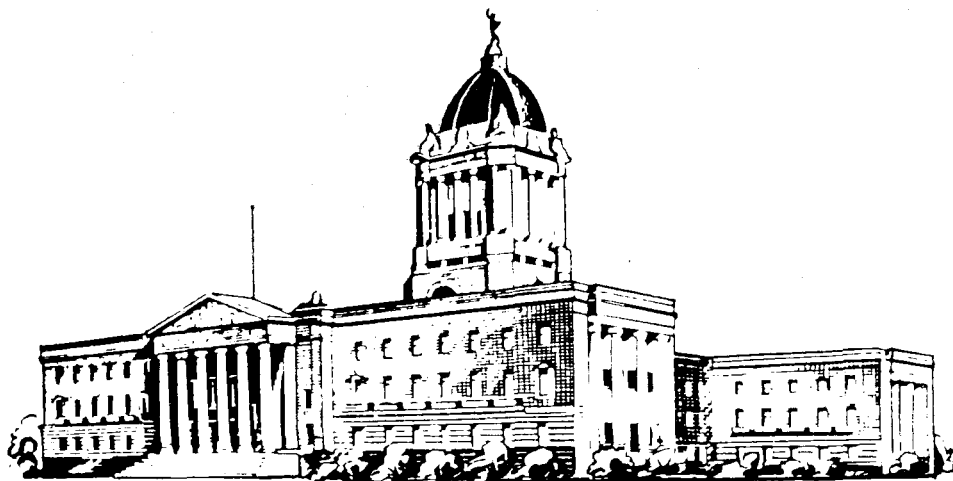
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

HEARINGS OF THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE

ON

LAND OWNERSHIP AND USE

Chairman
Harry Shafransky, M.L.A.
Constituency of Radisson



Winnipeg — 2:00 p.m., Monday, January 26, 1976.

THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON LAND OWNERSHIP AND USE
 JANUARY 26, 1976
 (WINNIPEG)

Chairman: Mr. Harry Shafransky

Clerk: Mr. Jack Reeves

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. We have a quorum; we can proceed. I believe we finished with the presentation by Mr. Hall. I call upon Dr. John Ryan. Is he present? Mr. Art Coulter, Manitoba Federation of Labour. Mr. Ken Groening, Morris, Manitoba, farmer. I hope I have not pronounced your name incorrectly.

MR. KEN GROENING: Mr. Chairman, if you had pronounced my name correctly you would be one of the very few people that ever has, so we'll just pass on that. It is Greening.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Is the spelling G-R-O-E-N-I-N-G?

MR. GROENING: Yes, that's right. Now if you want the pronunciation correctly you'll have to put two little dots over the "O". "Greening".

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Groening, proceed.

MR. GROENING: Thank you gentlemen for the opportunity.

I've been farming, a grain farmer since 1968 and as a result I have a natural interest in this subject; however I don't think that it's essential that you be a farmer to be interested in the subject of land or perhaps the subject of food in general. I can see by the make-up of your committee here that you have people representing various segments of our society. However being a farmer perhaps I have a little more of an interest in this than the average non-farmer might have.

When we're talking about land - and I'm going to be speaking primarily about agricultural land because that's the area that I feel more familiar with - when we're talking about land we're really talking about the food supply. If any of us have been following the news in recent years we'll have to agree I believe that maintaining the food supply has become the world's Number One problem. It could be argued in fact that perhaps that problem has become more important even than the energy problem. So if we can agree on this, let's start with a basic premise: that we must continue to produce as much food as we possibly can and increase the production if possible. The fact of the matter is that if we don't do this somebody is going to starve. We've reached that point in civilization.

So if we look at this question we can look at the land itself and see we're dealing with two questions. One is the productivity and the other is the maintenance of the supply of available farm land. Now in terms of maintaining the supply to me the answers seem to be very obvious, particularly in a country like Canada. Maybe not quite as obvious in Manitoba as in other provinces but nevertheless I think we shouldn't be shortsighted here. It just doesn't make any sense to me, Mr. Chairman, that we should have urban or industrial development to any large extent on agriculturally productive land in view of the fact that we have so much land in this country that can't be used for agriculture. I'm not going to get very deep into this aspect of it but I think that an intelligent land use policy is warranted.

I would personally prefer to see a system in which we did to some degree at least limit the non-agricultural use of farm land. This may imply that cities will be encouraged not to grow at the rates that they have been or perhaps that we will see cities developing in other areas or population centres developing in other areas, along with the industrialization. I think that this is within the realm of possibility if we're willing to use transportation policies intelligently and certainly there are things that can be done in this area.

But getting back to the area that I feel more comfortable with, and that is productivity - if you want to talk about productivity you have to talk about the farmer. If you want to develop a land ownership system you're going to have to relate that to the producer and how it affects his productivity. In other words under what system of land ownership will the man produce the most. Because we are at this situation where we have to produce the most possible. That's the overriding concern.

(MR. GROENING cont'd)

So I will encourage you to look briefly at four systems that we have in the province today and perhaps we can draw some conclusions from it. First of all we have the situation on which it sounds to me we're pretty well all agreed and that is in which the farmer owns his own land and he's operating it. I gather even Mr. Green agrees with this.

MR. SIDNEY GREEN, Q.C.: Especially Mr. Green.

MR. GROENING: Especially Mr. Green. Okay so it's very nice to be amongst friends on this one. Now there is an objective reason why we should have this. When a man owns his own land he can make his plans not just in the short run, he can lay them over the long run and lay plans that hopefully will result in the maximum productivity. Then for some reason we have to recognize the fact that there is a "pride of ownership" aspect involved and to some degree I believe the man, if he feels this pride of ownership in his property, he will take care of it better and perhaps he will be more productive. Now there are those here who may argue that and I don't think we need to spend too much time on it, but that happens to be the way I feel about it. I'd like to see a system in which the farmer's maximum motivation is maintained.

Then we have a second situation in which the farmer is a tenant and he is leasing his land from a Canadian or a Manitoban. Now this situation has certain advantages, particularly for a young fellow starting up. He doesn't have to have that much money tied up in equity just to have a land base. If he can maintain a good relationship with his landlord this system can be quite workable. However that particular relationship is very important, there must be an atmosphere of trust maintained. This system of land ownership has its difficulties and particularly in terms of the planning process in which the farmer must engage. You introduce an additional element of uncertainty here. The guy doesn't really know whether he is going to be able to renew his lease and if he is going to be able to, at what price. Then also it happens and perhaps is quite natural that the interests of the landlord and the interests of the tenant may clash. This also tends to increase the uncertainty. So in general I'd say that the farmer who is a tenant tends to be less motivated, obviously can't have the pride of ownership, and may in general be less productive.

Then we have a situation in which the state owns the land and leases it back to the farmer. Now this has been a hot one in recent times and I can understand some of it, some of it I can't understand in terms of why we have so much heat on that subject because there are some obvious advantages in it. It doesn't make much difference when you're starting up whether you lease your land from the state or from a private individual. What does make a difference is the tenure, the security that you can feel in your lease. Now the landlord is of an obviously different type when you're talking about the state. The state is in the position to develop a rental policy that can take into consideration the long run interests of both the producer and the consumer and in this sense I submit that the state is unique. So there is this obvious advantage in having the state owning the land and renting it out. However there are also difficulties here. The farmer is still a tenant and to the extent that he remains a tenant I think that his productivity may suffer. This is a very real possibility in my mind.

Then also I spoke before about the fact that we have to have an attitude of trust between the landlord and the tenant. It doesn't matter whether the landlord is the state or a private individual. Now this type of atmosphere of trust can be developed I believe between the state and an individual as well as between the state and a private landlord. However for some reason people in all sectors of society tend to distrust government more and more as years go on - I think this is unfortunate but I guess we'll have to recognize that it's a fact and here's something that I'm going to submit to you gentlemen that we're going to have to work with. We will have to have a better relationship between the government and the governed in terms of this particular question and also in other areas.

Then finally we have something that is not really new but I think has come to the forefront in Manitoba in the last couple of years and that's the situation in which a foreigner owns the land and leases it back to a farmer in this province. Now it does have the same advantage that renting land always has to someone who is getting started. But that happens to be the only advantage I see in this type of land ownership.

(MR. GROENING cont'd)

Speaking now in terms of productivity. We have all of the problems that are naturally inherent in a tenant-landlord relationship and a couple of new ones. One is that the fact that we have foreign buyers in our land market has tended to increase the speculative element that we find in land prices. Now I just don't happen to like to see land viewed as a speculative commodity. I'd like to see land values reflecting their true value in terms of agricultural production. How much can I pay for this land and still be able to pay for it let's say over my lifetime or 20 or 30 years, out of the production that comes from it. I think that's the type of price that land should have and there shouldn't be any other considerations ideally entering into the price of land.

Now certainly if you want to have young people entering the farming business they have to have a fighting chance. So if you're going to have an unreal element in the land prices, which I call this speculative element, it's going to be difficult.

There's certain other problems that have happened that relate to productivity and that is that we have seen a number of our viable farm units lost and in their place we now see some units that are much larger than the ones that were previously in its place. Now here we could argue about this. I think that it is possible - I'll say this in brief - it is possible for a farm to get too big in terms of productivity. Now at what point this is I don't know, I don't think anybody really knows. But I think when we see farm units that have reached that size in which productivity has begun to fall off, then we have to conclude that that farm has probably become too large.

Now on the other hand with the loss of these farm units has come the loss of rural population. This makes it more difficult for us to maintain our essential services in the rural communities. I know that, you know, somebody wanting to sell his land, he's at retirement age, is obviously going to want to have the most he can possibly have for it. From that perspective I can see you know that foreign money coming in is a good thing for these individuals. But if we're going to look at it in terms of productivity I just can't see it. I personally would like to see it eliminated.

That in essence I think is what we see in terms of land ownership or farmland ownership in the province today and perhaps we can draw certain conclusions from it. I'd be in favour of at least investigating the possibility of legislating land-use policies which would reduce if not eventually completely eliminate non-agricultural use of farmland. It just really doesn't make sense to tie up farmland for any other purpose. Then I would say it's legitimate for the state to own a certain portion of the farmland. I don't know just what percentage would be necessary. The legitimacy of this rests in terms of being able to help young farmers get established and I don't see it really in any other philosophical terms. I just think that that's the type of a landlord who can help a young fellow get started.

Now how much land should the state own? This is something I don't know that anybody can place a figure on. I was surprised to hear that it's only one-half of one percent, is it? I had thought that probably the figure was larger than that. I will suggest that perhaps in the range of five to ten percent of the total might be sufficient or more than sufficient.

I'd like to see the speculative element in farmland prices reduced or ideally eliminated. There are a couple of things that can be done here but they're going to take a certain amount of political courage. -- (Interjection) -- Mr. Green shakes his head. It doesn't take any courage. Well I think it does take a certain amount of courage on the part of a politician to say to anyone, "No, you can't do this or you can't do that because it's not in our interests." But there are times at which these decisions have to be made.

MR. GREEN: I assure you I say it all the time.

MR. GROENING: You are the notable exception it would seem.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. GROENING: Back to the topic. I'd like to see an outright legislative ban on foreigners buying land unless they intend to emigrate and farm the land themselves. I think we should welcome anyone who wants to come into this country and buy a piece of land and farm it. But if that is not the case we'll ban it outright if you follow my recommendation.

Then furthermore - and this is something that I'd like you to think about at least.

(MR. GROENING cont'd) Perhaps it has more problems than solutions, but I'd like to see certain restrictions on land sales, as to who can buy land be he a foreigner or a Canadian. I'm sorry you're agreeing with me, you're going to make it difficult.

I would like to see nobody owning farmland except the man farming it. Now if you were able to legislate this type of a situation then obviously it's going to take some of that speculative element out of the price and it's going to make it just a little bit easier for legitimate farmers to get into the farming business. Now it involves some state intervention, that's obvious. But I would like to at least see this thing considered and debated.

In general I'd like to see policies initiated that will ensure that the vast majority of all farmland remains in the hands of the people actually out on the farm running that land.

Now we can talk about this subject in terms of the land ownership system but it's a much broader one because we have to look at the other end of the ball game also, in terms of the income that is necessary in the hands of the individual to stay out there. I'm in the grain business and we've been reasonably comfortable in recent years but I don't have to remember back very many years when it was just intolerable. A few more years in fact would have put me right out of business and I know that there are a lot of other individuals who were in that situation also. Now I'm not going to get in to that subject but it's going to have to be recognized if our objective is to create a viable agriculture.

Gentlemen that concludes my comments on the subject and I'd be quite happy to discuss it further with you if you wish, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Groening. Mr. Green.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I realize that this is gratuitous editorial but may I first of all say that that is the most intelligently stated brief in my opinion that I have heard in the two years that I have sat on this committee.

MR. GROENING: Could you perhaps have told me that privately.

MR. GREEN: That is my opinion and if that causes you difficulty then you are in difficulty.

Now I'd like to deal with a couple of specifics and the first one is the perennial question that I ask, which you still appear to be dealing with and I want to make sure that I understand your answer to it: you agree that the objective should be a resident farmer operating his own land.

MR. GROENING: Yes I do.

MR. GREEN: That that should be the ultimate objective. Now you have defined a small difference, and I'm trying to really appreciate it, between a tenant farmer to a landlord in Noyes, Minnesota, and a tenant farmer to a landlord in Glace Bay, Nova Scotia. What is the real difference?

MR. GROENING: Probably there is not all that much difference at all. In fact if you will look at my recommendation in the end I say that we should perhaps look at regulating land sales so that no one can buy land except he intends to produce it. Now this would eliminate the purchaser in Noyes and also the chap in Cape Breton or wherever.

MR. GREEN: I quite agree. As a matter of fact I believe that the foreign owner is identical to the non-resident landlord or virtually identical. I can't figure out a difference.

MR. GROENING: I don't see any difference really either.

MR. GREEN: Well then you haven't solved this problem that I have where there is supposed to be such a great deal of a difference and I'm waiting for somebody to explain it, but you are not able to help me in that regard.

MR. GROENING: Well no I don't think so. You know there is a difference in the nature of landlords and I make this one difference in terms of, you know, when the state is the landlord that's a different type of a landlord. But other landlords I can't really differentiate between them very much. Perhaps I would prefer to - if I was leasing land from an individual, I would prefer to lease from a neighbour, someone whom I knew and with whom I could develop a proper relationship.

MR. GREEN: But that is largely emotional. I think you'll agree if I put it to you that your neighbour is an s.o.b. but you know someone in England who is a prince of a fellow giving you land. Now who do you prefer to lease from?

MR. GROENING: Well you know that's not difficult at all. I would prefer to lease from the Englishman.

MR. GREEN: Exactly. So that really the difference doesn't depend on whether he is your neighbour or not but whether he is an s.o.b. or not.

MR. GROENING: Yes. You've got it. You're catching on faster in the afternoon than in the morning. What is it? Are you a day person?

MR. GREEN: Well you know I learn very slowly but I learn. Others know everything immediately.

MR. GROENING: Okay.

MR. GREEN: "The owner-operated farms" - I'm reading to you from - "The Provincial Government this week pledged support of the owner-operated or family farm as a basic mode of production." I gather that that is similar to the recommendation that was made by this committee in reporting to the Legislature. That apparently is what you're saying and you've given us some nuances as to the different forms of land holding.

Now let's get to ownership because that's the most sort of accepted thing and yet possibly not the most understood. I think that you said that with regard to productivity what the farmer wants to know is something about his tenure, something about the stability, something about him being able to receive a return for the improvements that he has put on the land and with a short-term lease you will have less productivity because he doesn't have that.

MR. GROENING: Yes. Exactly.

MR. GREEN: So that the Torrens title which is now conceived of to be ownership is now society's way of giving him the best security.

MR. GROENING: Well okay it's traditionally - you know has become eh?

MR. GREEN: But that is really just as you have put it, "traditionally" or "has become", that is really not ultimate ownership either is it?

MR. GROENING: Well you know we can get into all this type of a debate and I know you're taking a rational line of, "Forgive me for assuming to know what you're getting at," but we can't necessarily conclude that all decisions are made on a rational basis. Now I guess you are going to say what's the difference if we can give him security or this feeling of tenurity under a different system other than the Torrens title. Why not, eh?

MR. GREEN: Well you shouldn't anticipate my questions. The fact is that I am really trying to determine that what is the real problem is security and by the way, so that you will not worry about my next question, I believe that the Torrens title does give him that kind of security now and I believe that that probably is and will for the indefinite future remain the best form of a farmer-owner-occupied landholder to produce on land. So if you're worrying about whether I accept that or not you don't have to worry about that. And now I am merely wishing to indicate that Torrens title itself has its problems, that ultimately the public or the state or the government, different people who want to convey different meanings will use different terms, can say to any farmer in the Province of Manitoba, "we want our title back." And they can take it and they do take it. So ultimate ownership still rests with the total public rather than with the farmer even when he has a Torrens title.

MR. GROENING: Yes, we choose to overlook that.

MR. GREEN: I am glad that you put it that way because ultimately Torrens title is a lease of indeterminate duration with a promise to pay total compensation if you ever take the title back. Isn't that correct?

MR. GROENING: Well you're the lawyer.

MR. GREEN: Do you see it that way because you're an intelligent man and an intelligent man is sometimes better than a lawyer?

MR. GROENING: I submit "always".

MR. GREEN: Well then you have no difficulty answering my question.

MR. GROENING: Yes, okay. I agree with your statement.

MR. GREEN: Now one more question then I'll let the other people deal with it. It seemed to me, although you didn't state it, that if you didn't see a preference for, you at least saw nothing against a farmer leasing from the public rather than leasing from a private person.

MR. GROENING: No I think I stated specifically that I see a certain preference.

MR. GREEN: A preference to lease from the public than to lease from a private....

MR. GROENING: Yes, there is a certain advantage and there are also certain disadvantages.

MR. GREEN: Would you say that he at least should have that choice.

MR. GROENING: Of course.

MR. GREEN: No further questions.

MR. GROENING: Oh come now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. We are not here to just engage in . . . we have other people.

MR. GREEN: I have a sense of humour.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You have a sense of humour, very good. As long as we continue on that basis but I figure that it's just going to lead to a lot of complications. Mr. Enns.

MR. HARRY J. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, it's somewhat difficult in the case of a verbal brief to be able to pick out all the points that one perhaps might have.

MR. GROENING: You've got a pencil.

MR. ENNS: But I've got a pencil and I've got a few notes. I'd like to suggest to you and ask for comment, you expressed surprise or lack of concern about the relatively small amount of land that has been currently bought by the state, one-half of one percent is the figure that was introduced to the committee meeting this morning by Mr. Johannson. I put it to you somewhat differently. That of course has to be put on top of the 80 to 85 percent of the total land in the Province of Manitoba that the state already owns.

MR. GROENING: Right.

MR. ENNS: So if we're talking about adding a half or one percent, we're talking about making that 85, 86 percent . . .

MR. GROENING: Yes. If I can just get involved in that. I think I stated at the outset that I'm concerned with agriculturally productive land. Now the other land, some of that 80 or 85 percent, may or may not be. Perhaps you can answer it.

MR. ENNS: I think we're very fortunate in the Province of Manitoba that we have reserved for the options of future generations so much of our land for wildlife, for recreation, for what have you, 80 to 85 percent. It becomes a little bit more significant when we're talking about the state intervening in that remaining 15 percent of the land that is now in private hands, most of it primarily agricultural land. That's the point that I'm making.

MR. GROENING: Yes, that's obvious. No, I would say that when I suggest that perhaps 5 or 10 percent might be a ceiling, I'm talking about that 15 percent. You know 5 or 10 percent of the 15 percent if you like.

MR. ENNS: Well okay. That's just a question for some clarification. The other question that I wanted to ask you - you indicated in your remarks dissatisfaction or concern about how fair market value is being established on the price of land particularly and of course that's the difficulty that's been with us for years, not just on land but on anything else. You're a grain farmer. We accept the establishment of the international marketplace to establish what we consider a fair price for our produce, wheat, for instance. I don't think that there has been a system devised, you know, that can improve on that.

MR. GROENING: It's debatable.

MR. ENNS: Just let me finish. It's debatable. That's not to say that wheat should be selling for \$6.00 a bushel and if underdeveloped countries can't buy it or starving people can't buy it at that price, if the greater community, Canadian nation, through international agencies wants to play a relief role or wants to benefit countries of our produce that then is a national decision and should not be borne by the individual producers.

MR. GROENING: Absolutely.

MR. ENNS: But in terms of knowing the value of something, in terms of knowing what we're maybe giving away, we should try to establish a fair market base. I suggest to you that the marketplace does that.

MR. GROENING: I'm prepared to defend the marketplace but I think that it just doesn't always work as well as we'd like to see it work and there are certain times I have to get involved.

MR. ENNS: I suggest to you then also and would ask your comment, that this also happens in the case of land.

MR. GROENING: Of course.

MR. ENNS: That in many instances, I think particularly in Manitoba, we undervalue our land. I think other spokesmen, I believe from the Farm Bureau, indicated that because other people see our producing land in a higher value and are prepared to pay for it, that probably more often reflects a fair value for that land. Is that a fair . . . ?

MR. GROENING: Well okay, I won't dismiss it that quickly. I think that we have to look at the motivation behind the people coming in and buying land. Now if they happen to feel insecure in their particular country and, you know, it's happened in history that sometimes the country just shuts down on private individuals and they're wiped out. It's happened. Well if they feel this might happen perhaps they want to get some of their savings or whatever into a safe place and so they'll be investing irregardless of what it costs, just because they feel that this happens to be a haven. They're thinking has no relationship necessarily to the value of that land in terms of agricultural production. Now we have people like this in the market. They may be in the minority but they do affect the price.

MR. ENNS: I think if we check the figures that the Minister has provided for us, recognize that I think 75 percent of the foreign ownership rests in the hands of our neighbours immediately to the south who are not in danger of being foreclosed on as you just indicated . . .

MR. GROENING: Yes, but as you understand the market, and certainly you should be the first to understand the market, it's not the majority of the dollars going into the market that necessarily affect the level, it's those last few dollars. We can remember as grain farmers when we were producing 105 percent of the market requirement we were in trouble. We produce 98 or 95 percent and we've got a good price. So you're not just looking at who the majority of these people are, you're looking at this marginal element.

MR. ENNS: Well again we won't debate that . . .

MR. GROENING: Why not?

MR. ENNS: Because it gets into a different debate.

MR. GROENING: It's related to land prices, that's what we're talking about.

MR. ENNS: It is precisely when you put yourself in the surplus position that the marketplace determines the price and whether it's the last few dollars that determine the marketplace, it doesn't detract from the value of the marketplace in establishing that price.

One further question with respect to foreign purchasers. Do you in your thinking separate the purchasers between the person who indicates a desire and in fact becomes resident within prescribed times let's say versus the outright speculative land-banking type of a foreign buyer.

MR. GROENING: Oh yes. I think it's quite acceptable for a foreigner to come in here and say - well let's say we set up a system that within three years he takes over the farm or five years or whatever it is - I'd welcome him. My parents were welcomed on that basis.

MR. ENNS: Well I think in many cases that is a fact. Thank you, Mr. Groening.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Blake.

MR. DAVID BLAKE: I just have a short question, Mr. Chairman, for Mr. Groening.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Use the microphone please.

MR. BLAKE: On his stand on foreign ownership - I'm a landlord. I choose not to sell my farm. I don't farm it, I rent it out. I was born and raised on that land and that's something that I feel that I would like to hang on to. Should I change my residence and decide to reside in the United States or should I turn that over to my children - I have two boys that may want to farm some day - and they chose not to live in Canada for a short period and moved down there, what restrictions would you place on foreign residency in a case like that?

MR. GROENING: I think there may be a legitimate exception here. I think I can buy that - move wherever you want. But if you're going to sell that thing to someone outside of your family I'd say it had better be a farmer. I would prefer it be a farmer.

MR. BLAKE: But I'm free now to go down - our neighbours to the south for one

(MR. BLAKE cont'd) example - I'm free now to go down there and buy some land. Do you not think that if we restrict them from buying our land that they would put a reciprocal restriction on us buying land down there?

MR. GROENING: Well, gentlemen, I mean everyone deals with his own problems and this one happens to be ours. Really I can't get involved in what they should do.

MR. BLAKE: You're definite though that you don't favour foreign ownership.

MR. GROENING: Yes, I'm fairly clear on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Barrow.

MR. THOMAS BARROW: Just one question, Mr. Chairman. In one part of your brief - and I enjoyed it very much - you said farm land should be used for no other purpose except farming.

MR. GROENING: Ideally, yes.

MR. BARROW: You said this, yes. I can see your point. But in Calgary ten years ago, they were comparing Calgary with Winnipeg and they were kind of boasting about Calgary that it expanded outwards half as much again or as much again. And to go further they said in the next ten years it would spread out twice again. How would you stop this? How could a farmer possibly stop the expansion of a city even though it's on prime agricultural land?

MR. GROENING: How could a farmer do it?

MR. BARROW: How can anyone do it?

MR. GROENING: Oh how can anyone do it?

MR. BARROW: I mean there's no way that you could just put farm land or land just down for farming purposes.

MR. GROENING: Why should there be no way?

MR. BARROW: Well you couldn't do it there, how could you do it here?

MR. GROENING: Well the will was obviously lacking there.

MR. BARROW: You mean you can stop a city from expanding because it's taking up farm land.

MR. GROENING: It can be done. You're asking me if it can be done, I submit to you it can be done.

MR. BARROW: How?

MR. GROENING: You've got the lawmakers sitting right here that can do it if they want to. Now I don't think that you'd do it just like that. You make alternatives available. I'm not familiar, to begin with, with the Calgary situation but let's assume that that was prime farm land. You know that situation - is it possible that within some reasonable distance there was non-agricultural land that could have been used for urban and industrial development.

MR. BARROW: Well I'm not familiar with the agriculture aspect but it looks like good prairie land circling the whole city right to the Rockies. How would you . . .

MR. GROENING: I would just say, no you can't. Look at it from this point of view. If one acre goes out of production somewhere in the world maybe one individual will starve. Now we can't just see this. It's unfortunate that we can't see it but it's probably true. So we are really forced to look at the thing in a bit of a broader context than just what affects us personally. We should - I don't think we will, I'm not that optimistic.

MR. BARROW: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Groening. Mr. Jorgenson.

MR. WARNER H. JORGENSEN: Mr. Chairman, I have several questions that I would like to address to Mr. Groening and I think he would expect me to do that as he is a constituent of mine.

MR. GROENING: A supporter even sometimes.

MR. JORGENSEN: Some of the points that he raised I will agree with. The need to designate farm land for farm use, that's a position I've been taking for some time on this committee and I still think that it's absolutely essential. But that leads to the next question. You made the point that you felt that land ownership should be restricted to people who are only engaged in agriculture.

MR. GROENING: No, not only. That's not correct. I say there is a legitimate role for the state to own a certain amount of land for land lease purposes.

MR. JORGENSON: Well aside from the state owning . . .

MR. GROENING: Okay, these are the two legitimate owners then.

MR. JORGENSON: All right. If there is a land use policy specifically designating land for agricultural purposes what difference does it make who really owns it.

MR. GROENING: I don't think I understand your question. Would you mind repeating it.

MR. JORGENSON: A good deal of the land purchasing in Canada has been as a result of two things. First of all the desire on the part of the people in other countries to find a secure investment for their money and that is created by inflation. Because of the uncertainty they know that there are certain things that will retain their value. Land is one of them, gold . . .

MR. GROENING: Okay, they're not making any more.

MR. JORGENSON: Land is one.

MR. GROENING: Right.

MR. JORGENSON: And so some of the investment in here could be as a result of inflation and the insecurity in the world and the desire on the part of those people to find some secure place to place their money.

MR. GROENING: I think I suggested that earlier.

MR. JORGENSON: Yes. So remove that cause and perhaps a great deal of that so-called investment would be removed. But then on the other hand there is also a great deal of money that is invested in land in this country for speculative purposes in the hope that that land will be ultimately used for industrial development or housing development or what-have-you in which case then it becomes very valuable. But if that land has been already designated as agricultural land and will be used for nothing else then you remove the cause of speculation do you not.

MR. GROENING: That's what I was trying to say.

MR. JORGENSON: So then in that case it really doesn't matter that much who owns it. If that land is going to be agricultural land and remain agricultural land what difference does it make.

MR. GROENING: Oh yes. Now I think I'm getting to you. Let's say that we're looking at people who are making rational investment decisions and they are buying a piece of land because they feel for agricultural purposes this land will return to them a - give them a return that they feel is sufficient or adequate. Now if you've got people like this I guess there's no great problem. But when you've got someone coming in who will take no return or a different kind of return, he just wants that land for emotional purposes to make him feel a little more comfortable because he's got his land in a haven, and then you've got the other guy who is trying to buy that land who wants to farm it and it just happens that the chap from the outside may have a lot more dollars and he can push the land way out of sight and the legitimate farmer can't get it.

MR. JORGENSON: Do you not think that land prices, regardless of whether there is foreign capital coming into this country or not, land prices would have gone up if there had been not a nickel invested in . . .

MR. GROENING: Oh I don't think I said once that land prices shouldn't reflect their value in terms of agricultural output and we all know that farming is better than it has been. Land prices reflect this. But they reflect this other element that I'm talking about also.

MR. JORGENSON: The speculative element.

MR. GROENING: The speculative element.

MR. JORGENSON: There is one other point you made and I want to ask you some questions on that. It's the question of an outright ban on foreign ownership. Have you reviewed or studied the implications of that suggestion insofar - from a legislative point of view and from the point of view of individual rights? I have before me some documents from various pieces of legislation which indicate that at one time at least individual and property rights were of some concern in this country. I wouldn't want to have them abandoned that readily. I quote a section of the Citizenship Act and incidentally the section of the Citizenship Act is very very much the same as the provincial piece of legislation, the Law of Property Act. I think that one was taken from the other and I presume that the Citizenship Act was enacted first. "Real and personal property of every

(MR. JORGENSEN cont'd) description may be taken, acquired, held and disposed of by an alien in the same manner in all respects as by a natural born Canadian citizen."

MR. GROENING: Uhm hm.

MR. JORGENSEN: "A title to real and personal property of every description may be derived through, from or in succession to an alien in the same manner in all respects as though from or in succession to a natural born Canadian citizen." It would indicate to me that we have a statute protecting the ownership of land whether it be by an alien or by a Canadian citizen. That means that that would have to be changed.

MR. GROENING: Yes.

MR. JORGENSEN: And so would the Law of Property Act in the Province of Manitoba, would have to be changed and that's going to be denying . . .

MR. GROENING: Now you're getting into a legal area that I have only a limited understanding of.

MR. JORGENSEN: It's not a question of a legal area; it's a question of individual rights.

MR. GROENING: Well you're talking about the practicality . . .

MR. JORGENSEN: I'd like to know how far you would be prepared to go to take away those rights, away from the individual. Not only are those rights included in our own statutes but there are universal declarations. I have before me the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and Canada is a party to that kind of convention and it suggests here that the right to own property alone as well as in association with others and the right to inherit, etc. And then we have the Human Rights Act which was enacted very recently in the Manitoba Legislature and it says here, Section 5: "Discrimination prohibited on purchase of property. No person shall deny to any person the opportunity to purchase any commercial unit or housing accommodation that is advertised or in any way represented as being available for sale or (b) deny to any person the opportunity to purchase or otherwise acquire land or an interest in land or (c) discriminate against any person with respect to any term or condition of the purchase or other acquisition of any commercial unit, housing accommodation, land or interest in land because of race, nationality, religion, colour, sex, age, marital status, ethnic or national origin of that person."

We have from time to time attempted to insure that individual and personal rights are guaranteed in this country. They're part and parcel of the statutes of this land and you say we should ban foreign ownership of land. That is a denial of those rights.

MR. GROENING: Is it a question or is it a speech?

MR. JORGENSEN: Well you know I have to let you know what was contained in those statutes and then in the face of those statutes you say that we should change all those statutes and just forget about individual rights? Or do they mean anything?

MR. GROENING: You know I grant you that those things are all there. But when we get right down to it, how do we come by laws? How do we come by the rules?

MR. JORGENSEN: But the question I'm asking you: are you prepared to have all these changed?

MR. GROENING: The answer is obviously that I'd like to elaborate on it a little bit. There is nothing sacred about the things that you . . .

MR. JORGENSEN: About individual rights. There's nothing sacred about individual rights.

MR. GROENING: I'm not saying that. I'm saying there's nothing sacred about any particular law that we happen to have on the books at the present time. Now if we as a society through our government decide that certain laws no longer serve the function that they were intended to serve then we're at perfect liberty to change them.

MR. JORGENSEN: You change from the rule of law to the rule of man, is that it?

MR. GROENING: No, no. I think that you don't have to differentiate between the rule of law and the rule of man because ultimately it is the rule of man.

MR. JORGENSEN: No further questions, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you. Mr. Adam.

MR. PETER ADAM: Mr. Chairman, Mr. Groening, I have to support my colleague, the Minister, in complimenting you on your brief. I think it's one of the most broad

(MR. ADAM cont'd) minded submissions that I have heard since I've been on this committee.

MR. GROENING: I hope it doesn't support the government's position.

MR. ADAM: There is only one area that I was concerned in your remarks and that had to do with productivity of a person who was leasing land as opposed to one who is owning land. This is one area that I am not prepared to perhaps accept your submission completely.

MR. GROENING: Could I clarify that a little bit?

MR. ADAM: I would like to pose my question first. I would suggest to you and I ask you that - you're a private owner of land now I presume.

MR. GROENING: Uhm hm.

MR. ADAM: And if you were to lease say another half section, that you would be less productive on that land that you are leasing whether it be from a private owner or from a foreign owner or from the province. You would be just as productive I submit on that parcel of land as you are on your own - in order to make a dollar and to make it viable.

MR. GROENING: I think that's a fair statement. When I said that in general a person who is a tenant and strictly a tenant and cannot see that he will ever be anything other than a tenant may be a little less motivated and a little less productive than the person who thinks he is going to have a fighting chance of owning his land some day. Now it's a generalization that doesn't always hold true but in general I think it may be fair.

MR. ADAM: Okay. I'll accept that, Mr. Chairman, thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Bostrom.

MR. HARVEY BOSTROM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I also join others in congratulating you on your excellent presentation. To follow up on a question posed to you by Mr. Jorgenson I would just like some clarification. I believe that it came out either through your own presentation or in discussion with Mr. Green which followed, that you are not as concerned about the foreign ownership of land as you are about the non-resident, non-owner occupier of land.

MR. GROENING: Let me rephrase what I said. I don't mind a foreigner coming in to buy land if he intends to farm it. I don't want him to sit out there and own the land and just act as a landlord forever.

MR. BOSTROM: So that you are in fact agreeing with Mr. Green that the kind of ownership that should be avoided is that which is non-resident, non-occupier in general. The state is the only exception.

MR. GROENING: Right.

MR. BOSTROM: So that you are not therefore as concerned about the civil rights issue that was raised but it's rather focusing on the non-resident, non-occupier owner.

MR. GROENING: I would like to emphasize one thing. All of my comments are focused on productivity.

MR. BOSTROM: Thank you.

MR. GROENING: That's the central part. In general I believe we have greater productivity when the man owns or feels he's going to have a chance of owning the land and that's the system I'd like to see. Now we may have to have a little bit of state intervention to make sure that this can happen. Now I'm not sure I've answered your question.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Graham.

MR. HARRY E. GRAHAM: Mr. Groening, I think you stated at some point in your brief that you might even think it would be advantageous to the agricultural community if those that weren't engaged in agriculture would not be allowed to own agricultural land. Is that correct?

MR. GROENING: That's essentially correct.

MR. GRAHAM: I know that you're a farmer and at various times you have made plans on your farming operations. I don't know your individual farming operations but at some time or another you may have found yourself in the position where you might want some assistance in your farming operation.

MR. GROENING: Yes, sir, I think we all do at times.

MR. GRAHAM: I'm just going to assume something here. Perhaps you might have

(MR. GRAHAM cont'd) at one time contemplated a \$250,000 enterprise, for the sake of an argument, in an extensive farm building program, silos, feedlot and all the rest of it. Do you think that you would have been able to; under those circumstances would it be possible for a farmer to be able to borrow sufficient capital without any security? At some time or another most farmers I think have used the security of ownership as being part and parcel of his line of credit. Do you think it would have a significant bearing in farm operations if that right was denied to a person who was in the money lending field?

MR. GROENING: When you're looking at the repayment possibilities of a loan you look at the economics of a particular proposition. Now a bank or the individual embarking on this thing should have done a thorough investigation into that particular enterprise. He should have been able to lay out a cash flow budget and let's say operating budgets for at least the foreseeable future. You know, in logic this is the prime consideration that a banker should be looking at. However we all know that plans have a tendency not to materialize as often as they materialize. So very often the banker will want something in addition to just that dream, eh. So he's going to ask for additional collateral. I don't see any real difficulty with this and I have said that it's desirable that the farmer own some collateral - you know in the long run at least.

MR. GRAHAM: In other words you're saying that you don't think it would significantly affect his budgeting program and his ability to borrow capital if the right of ownership and the holding of that ownership as a security would be denied to the person that was in the lending . . .

MR. GROENING: Okay, now I think I'm starting to get to where you want to go with this. Yes, it might. It might. Because let's say if you're looking at a piece of land that has both agricultural and non-agricultural uses, perhaps the value that the market has placed on that land is higher than it should be in terms of just agricultural value. So his borrowing ability will be consequently reduced. I don't think that really he should be borrowing on that basis anyway, he should be borrowing on the merits of his expansion.

MR. GRAHAM: No but then the ultimate point that I was trying to get at was it might, because he was denied that additional security or because he was unable to borrow the additional security, the productivity might not reach its full potential then.

MR. GROENING: It might limit to some extent his borrowing ability. Yes I'd have to agree.

MR. GRAHAM: And also his productivity.

MR. GROENING: Yes that could happen.

MR. GRAHAM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you Mr. Groening. That's all the questions we have.

Mr. Matt Ullenboom. Mr. Ullenboom, Box 33, Starbuck. Not present.

Mr. Harold Proven, Manitoba Farmers' Union.

MR. HAROLD PROVEN: Mr. Chairman, committee members, that's the National Farmers' Union. I am a farmer from the Minnedosa area of Manitoba.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is your address, Mr. Proven?

MR. PROVEN: It's Box 106, Basswood, Manitoba.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Proceed.

MR. PROVEN: We were present here last year at the hearings and we promised that we would submit some material from the findings that we've had in dealing within our organization with a policy on land use and land tenure. This material is appended to the short brief that we're going to have here. If you're thinking that I'm going to read through it all then you're very badly mistaken because it's . . .

The members of this generation which are in power must not treat the earth as something given by their parents but rather as something borrowed from their children. The thought in this quotation above expresses a changing attitude by many toward our land resources. There is a new awakening among provincial governments across Canada and at the federal level over the direction in which previous existing policies and attitudes towards land use, tenure and ownership are being reflected as a positive or negative force in our changing society.

Farmers are of necessity at the forefront of this debate. Some of the traditional values and attitudes are being severely challenged by the realization that all citizens in

(MR. PROVEN cont'd) this country have a stake in prudent and responsible land use. The trends have been apparent for some time: increasing farm size, decreasing farm and rural population, increasing capital requirements, increasing farm debt and related interests costs, greater difficulty for young developing farmers or those wishing to enter farming, increasing consumer concern about the cost of food. Whether these trends are positive or negative forces on the society depends on whose interests are being represented.

The banks and other money lenders for example would view them as positive forces and trends. In 1960 the estimated value of short, medium and long term farm credit extended in Canada was just over one billion dollars. In 1972 estimated farm credit extended was just under three billion dollars. In 1960 short, medium and long term farm credit outstanding was estimated at one and a half billion dollars. In 1972 the figure was estimated at over five billion dollars. In 1974 the Canadian Bankers' Association reported that farm loans by the chartered banks hit \$2.3 billion, more than triple what they were in 1964. This did not include loans paid off from the proceeds of the farm products sold prior to the year-end report.

The Federal Government has said that in future more of the credit for farmers will have to come from the private sector. They apparently have faith in the banks. Do the banks have faith in farmers? The answer is no.

SOME MEMBERS: They don't?

MR. PROVEN: Bill C-60, the Federal Government's proposed new Bankruptcy Act would eliminate protective safeguards that farmers now have against losing their assets if they cannot pay their debts. Young farmers wanting to start farming view existing trends as negative. Competition for land has pushed the price up. At \$500.00 per acre for land the interest cost alone would be \$50.00 per acre.

Consider the ability to be competitive with an established farmer neighbour who already has the land paid for. In addition a young couple may be raising a young family when their neighbours have no dependants at home. Or consider the circumstances of that same neighbour couple if they want to expand their land base to bring their own son or daughter into the farming operation. They find out that they can't even compete with the corporation money or the foreign investor's money.

The consumer in the city sees the trend as negative. Consumers see their food costs rising. They may also see their own jobs threatened because displaced rural people must find work in the city. They must also pay for the extra services and compete for the scarcity of housing in the city.

While the policy position of the National Farmers' Union on the land tenure question is still far from being final, we recognize the increasing problems which confront young farmers who wish to start farming and the older farmers who wish to retire and live in dignity. We also recognize the need for consumers to have healthful food at reasonable costs. It is to this end that our organization's land tenure committee is working. The preliminary report is attached for your information.

There are unquestionably for farmers many conflicts of interest built into changes related to the accustomed and established value systems respecting land use, land tenure and ownership. While our value system in Canada has strongly implanted in us the virtues of private ownership and the accumulation of wealth, farmers have nonetheless learned from frequent experience that in circumstances where the public interest is believed to be concerned private individual ownership invariably suffers. Examples include expropriation for any cause by government or government agencies at federal, provincial and municipal levels for roads, power lines, etc. or private corporations for mineral exploration or pipeline easements.

The evaluation of the public interest therefore in respect to land use is merely an extension of this intrusion on private ownership and the right of any individual to arbitrarily make decisions on land use which may jeopardize the common good. It emphasizes that an orderly society can only be maintained if the interruption of public good is not adversely affected by the arbitrary actions of individuals. It is in the final analysis only the stewardship of land which ownership provides and then only if it does not intrude on the public welfare.

Absentee and foreign land ownership or sale of land to absentee or foreign owners

(MR. PROVEN cont'd) is in our estimation not in the public interest. It is increasingly obvious that responsible planning to chart the direction of future generations in respect to land use, to urban and industrial development are responsibilities which must be dealt with by the present generation. To do anything less would be irresponsible.

All of this is respectfully submitted by the National Farmers' Union, Region 5, Manitoba.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Proven. I believe there should be a correction made on Paragraph 19. You stated in that sentence reading: It emphasizes that an orderly society can be maintained if the "interruption". It's the "interpretation" of public goods.

MR. PROVEN: Oh sorry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any questions? Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one question for Mr. Proven and he has probably anticipated which one it is. Is this the concerted opinion of the National Farm Union movement that the banks don't have faith in farmers?

MR. PROVEN: Well I believe there was a discussion here earlier about whether the banks would in fact loan money if the farmer didn't own the land so I would presume that they had a lot more faith in the value of the land than they did in the farmer.

MR. BLAKE: I think if you were to do a survey now and find out the massive amount of capital that has been provided to the farm economy by the banks that I think it may temper your answer as a definite "no" to some degree. There's a certain feeling now that has maybe been generated in the last ten years on the ability of that farmer to manage his affairs and produce rather than on the assets that he might possess.

MR. PROVEN: Yes. Well we mention the fact that obviously there is pressure coming from somewhere to change the Bankruptcy Act so that farmers in fact don't have any protection that they've had in the past, especially in the three prairie provinces. We were assuming . . .

MR. BLAKE: It would be a very unwise move if . . .

MR. PROVEN: We were assuming that possibly the banking fraternity had something to do with this.

MR. BLAKE: You just assumed that. You'd better get your facts straight now.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are there any other questions? Thank you, Mr. Proven. Mr. Johannson.

MR. WALLY JOHANNSON: Yes. Mr. Proven, in your land policy statement which accompanies your brief you have a very detailed account of the Manitoba land lease program.

MR. PROVEN: True.

MR. JOHANNSON: I congratulate you on the precision of your information. Where did you get that information?

MR. PROVEN: Well we try to keep a handle on the policy in all provinces. I believe that the other provinces are represented there too. We have a committee working - I couldn't tell you who was contacted.

MR. JOHANNSON: This morning the Manitoba Farm Bureau stated that - criticized the government for failing to provide adequate information on the program and here I find that you have a very precise, detailed outline of the provisions of the program and I just can't understand how you would have this information if we're so tardy or so reluctant to give out information.

MR. PROVEN: We have some very precise researchers in our organization.

MR. GREEN: They probably asked for it.

MR. JOHANNSON: They might have asked for it, yes.

MR. PROVEN: Well that's one way of finding information.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Any other questions? Thank you Mr. Proven.

Mr. Malcolm Ives, R. R. 1, Richer, Manitoba. Not present.

Mr. Robert Smorang, Beausejour. Not present.

Mr. Richard Loeb, R. R. No. 1, Anola, farmer. Present.

MR. RICHARD LOEB: It's Loeb. In answer to a question from Mr. Minaker it is Loeb. At least when I'm close to home it is.

I think I gave that same example last year. I spoke extemporaneously to the

(MR. LOEB cont'd) committee in Steinbach when they met there. I ad libbed for a little while on some of the things I had on my mind. I do not have copies of my short brief to make available to the committee. I heard someone say before it's unfortunate that people that are appearing do not have copies. I did see the Clerk this morning and he said it would not be necessary to make copies because it will be available in print form later on.

I welcome the opportunity to address the committee and I commend the committee for once again holding public meetings to allow citizens and groups the opportunity of having their views on land use policy heard. First of all I would like to state that I have followed with interest the reports of the hearings held last winter as reported by the news media and the farm press. It appeared that the majority of discussions were on whether or not the Crown in principle should be in the business of purchasing and/or leasing land. Mr. Chairman, this seems to me to be something of a non-issue.

The Crown has throughout our history, through various governments, done this very thing, usually for the benefit of the people of the province.

Now certainly if the amount of arable land suitable for agriculture in the hands of the Crown, non-resident owners or owned by foreigners, becomes significant it could become a matter for concern. I note that the committee in their Interim Report recommend that the ownership of arable land should remain primarily in private hands.

I would suggest that the monitoring of ownership of agricultural land by (a) non-residents, (b) non-Canadians, and (c) the Crown continue with the information being made available to the citizens of the province. It is only when this information is readily available that an intelligent discussion can take place.

On the question of land use policy for the future I am reminded of the saying that not only do I not know the answers but I'm not even sure I know the question. However it seems to me that two things should be paramount.

1. Any future policies on land use should as much as possible be long term, and
2. The public interest as opposed to the private individual interests should be primary.

In regard to the first point I congratulate the government and the Legislature for the new Planning Act which should be the first step, long overdue towards a more rational control on the uses to which property is put. It seems to me that the area approach toward development is a logical and desirable one.

The question which follows is: does this approach go far enough? Do we perhaps need an overall authority to designate different areas for different uses? An overall guidance, an overview. Perhaps something in the way of a land use commission, as was suggested by the Farm Bureau this morning. This may be considered by some to be a drastic approach but it seems to me that it has to be put in the context of comparison with what we have had up to now and are likely to have in the future in the absence of such an authority.

I have spent most of my life on the farm with absences when I worked as a lumber jack, construction worker, heavy equipment operator, etc. I was born on the farm which I now operate. Within the boundaries of my own experience and with my unabashed love for the land it distresses me to see good agricultural land taken up for urban and suburban development. Because of the problems created by large metropolitan centres, of which there are numerous examples, I can appreciate the logic behind proposals to locate satellite communities outside of the City of Winnipeg, etc. although I would hope that such development take place on other than prime agricultural land. I think the comparison has to be made with what has been and is now happening in a radius of 30 or more miles of Winnipeg and other urban centres. Some of the best land in the province has been broken up into small parcels of five acres with one family dwelling on each. We can't afford much of that type of extravagance on that type of land.

We have had in my opinion too much clearing of land and too many areas of the parkland belt of the province. As well we have perhaps had too much drainage of land which could be considered marginal or sub-marginal for agricultural use. This in turn has tended to create problems for the areas bordering on streams and rivers, especially where they pass through a flat plain, etc. Perhaps we need an overall authority to deal with the question of reforestation and so on.

(MR. LOEB cont'd)

There is no question that with modern technology and with today's machines we can drain almost any swamp or marsh providing we have a lower level to drain it to. As well we can clear any ridge of trees and rocks and many acres of marginal land can be and have been brought into production. Much of this land would be better suited to forest, to wildlife management areas or for recreational purposes. In many cases it would also be well suited to townsite development. I suggest that moving in this direction is desirable on most accounts.

The question of how to moderate and/or control inflationary pressures on land values caused by a host of factors, for example proximity to a metropolitan centre or active promotion by real estate agents, etc., is I grant a difficult one. I agree with the statement in the working paper, Chapter 3, page 48, that high land prices are good for the seller and bad for everyone else. To deal with this problem in the public interest will I think bring us into conflict with the private interest and the traditional methods of zoning, sales and perhaps assessments, yet we must make changes if we wish to provide opportunities for younger people to enter the agricultural industry on other than a tenant-landlord or owner-worker basis. Perhaps examples from other jurisdictions will provide us with ideas to assist in formulating policies and legislation. I assume that the committee is looking into this area.

I want to emphasize as strongly as I can my feeling, which I believe is shared by many people in the rural areas, that many present practices are outdated and obsolete. An ad hoc approach is not going to solve very much in the long term. Regardless of what type of government we have the problems are here and must be tackled. We are looking to this committee to provide us with leadership in this regard and trust that their deliberations will be fruitful and their recommendations forward looking, intelligent and acceptable to the majority of our people.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Loeb. Are there any questions? It would appear that you have covered all the answers in your presentation.

MR. LOEB: I'm glad to see, Mr. Chairman, that my thoughts meet the approval and have the endorsement of the committee.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you Mr. Loeb.

MS. Carol Hibbert, Manitoba Naturalists' Society. Mrs. or Miss?

MS. HIBBERT: Ms.

Gentlemen, the Manitoba Naturalists' Society is an organization concerned with the preservation and enjoyment of the natural environment. Some of the objectives of the society are to stimulate research in natural history, to arrange educational programs and field trips to promote understanding of the natural environment and to work for the preservation of an adequate representation of the natural environment. It is particularly in view of this latter objective that we appreciate very much the opportunity to appear before this committee to express our views on the use and ownership of land in Manitoba. Manitoba has a very diversified landscape and that is one of the most attractive features of this province. There are of course our agricultural plains which are receiving the majority of the discussion today but also aspen parkland, boreal forests, bogs and marshes. This diversity of land promotes the growth of a varied plant and animal community and also provides a variety of recreational opportunities. These include hiking, snowshoeing, bird watching and other such activities which are enjoyed by many Manitobans. However none of this is possible without the preservation of the natural landscape for public use through legislation.

At the present time there are numerous ways in which this protection is being offered, particularly through the provincial parks legislation. The parks create areas for the use and enjoyment of the people of the province through wilderness and recreational parks, trailways, waterways, marine parks, etc. These areas are well known to the people of Manitoba and their value can be witnessed through the intensive use which they receive. We would certainly hope that the province would continue to add to these areas, in particular providing low impact recreational areas close to large population centres. In these times it would also seem that those activities which are non-destructive of the landscape should be particularly encouraged. Hiking, cross country skiing and canoeing are

(MS. HIBBERT cont'd) examples. This form of recreational activity has been increasing in the past few years and the province has certainly been attempting to provide for it.

As an example of another potential source of land for this type of activity perhaps the province could negotiate with the railways to obtain appropriate lines which have been abandoned. These could make excellent trails and railway right-of-ways when allowed to remain in their natural state - that is without spraying or cutting - are well known for their production of interesting plant life. It is through the availability of public access to land throughout the province that the intensive pressure on our more popular parks can be somewhat alleviated.

Another important area of land preservation is through the wildlife management areas. These areas such as Oak Hammock Marsh and Mantagao Lake create the best environment for the production of wildlife indigenous to that particular area. One of the major reasons for the loss of wildlife is the loss of habitat through agricultural use. The establishment of these wildlife management areas, particularly in marginal farming areas, assures the province of a healthy, continuing population of deer, elk, waterfowl and many other species. As a side benefit the wildlife management areas also offer many opportunities for recreation. It would be hoped that this program would be continued as its value has certainly been proven.

As previously mentioned one of the objectives of the Manitoba Naturalists' Society is to stimulate research and to work to preserve an adequate representation of our natural environment. Consequently we would encourage the government to set aside areas which would not be open to general public use but would be available for scientific research and also for educational purposes. These would be examples of the various areas which have as far as possible been undisturbed by man. One valuable use of these ecological preserves would be to provide an opportunity to study the effects of man's activities on the landscape through comparison with these undisturbed areas.

All of these aforementioned land uses are not necessarily compatible with one another and multiple land use is not always possible. If a certain species of wildlife or plant life is endangered then efforts must be made to protect it from disturbance. In the same way different recreational activities are not compatible with each other and this being the case it's necessary to separate them as is done with snowmobile and cross country trails.

Another example of the potential for conflict in land usage lies in the Brandon hills. As a result of the Winter Games being awarded to Brandon, an area for downhill skiing must be provided. One of the possible sites mentioned for this is within the Brandon hills area. This section of land is the last wild area south of Brandon and is the wintering area for deer in the vicinity. Presently a portion of this land has been purchased for a wildlife management area and the close proximity of a major ski resort would certainly be incompatible with the objectives of the management area. It is necessary to consider all needs in planning land usage but most particularly that of simply saving as much of our environment in its natural state as is possible so that it can be enjoyed by generations to come. These programs of recreation, research and conservation are very valuable. In order to fulfill the needs presented by these various programs the government must continue its protection of suitable land so that the people of Manitoba can reap the benefit of their diverse and fascinating landscapes. Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you Ms. Hibbert. Mr. Toupin.

MR. RENE E. TOUPIN: Ms. Hibbert would you agree and therefore recommend that arable land whether it be an abandoned railway or whether it be parklands, be turned over for agricultural purposes.

MS. HIBBERT: Arable land. I think it would depend on the degree. Agricultural land is classified as to its value and I think if it's highly productive and is within the agricultural area, yes, that it possibly should be. But if it's not as productive and is within an area that is potentially recreational or land that should be preserved because of its ecological importance, then no.

MR. TOUPIN: Mr. Chairman, could I ask her a further question in regards to a designated wilderness area north of the Whiteshell. What is your recommendation in regards to its use?

MS. HIBBERT: Presently designated?

MR. TOUPIN: Yes.

MS. HIBBERT: North of the Whiteshell? I'm not aware of the . . .

MR. TOUPIN: I'm sorry. There was a brief made by your association to the Department of Tourism, Recreation and Cultural Affairs in regards to the designation of a given area, 495 square miles, north of the Whiteshell as a wilderness area.

MS. HIBBERT: Yes. That being a brief presented by our organization I certainly would concur with it.

MR. TOUPIN: You would support it.

MS. HIBBERT: Yes.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Blake.

MR. BLAKE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I just have one question of the witness. I was interested in her concern with the Brandon hills area and the proposed new ski slope there. The area that I represent has just developed a new ski resort just barely 30 miles north of Brandon. Would you be in favour of seeing that developed further to handle the Winter Games ski trial rather than build a new facility?

MS. HIBBERT: I would say that the alternatives - and that I understand is another one of the possibilities being considered by the committee - that would be more to our liking. And then there are possibly other areas that they are considering as well but not the Brandon hills.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Adam.

MR. ADAM: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. In your brief you recommend that undisturbed areas be designated in the province. I believe that is the stand of the Naturalists generally.

MS. HIBBERT: Yes.

MR. ADAM: Would you consider, say a fire by natural causes, would you consider that an interference if man went in and stopped the fire?

MS. HIBBERT: That's not referring to the kind of thing that I'm speaking of. When I'm saying an area to be preserved, that would be areas which have been undisturbed by man, yes, but that doesn't relate to whether a fire should be stopped or not stopped. I'm talking about areas which have not been farmed or cut or whatever, not been disturbed by pesticides so that research can be carried on in these areas. There is an example of that in the sand hills area of a short grass prairie that has not been disturbed and which we would hope might be preserved so that it could be studied by scientists. Stopping of a fire is something else altogether.

MR. ADAM: But don't you think it still falls into that category of the natural process - if fire is started by lightning?

MS. HIBBERT: Yes.

MR. ADAM: I believe the position of the Naturalists would be to immediately go in there and stop the fire.

MS. HIBBERT: No, I don't believe we have a particular policy on that. I think that in fact there is some controversy over that at the present time amongst forestry people. I am not a forestry person, I do not know. But I do know that there is presently some controversy and that they feel that natural fires should perhaps be allowed to proceed their natural way.

MR. ADAM: Well thank you. I'm happy to hear that because I have had the opportunity of going into the Riding Mountain Park quite extensively off the beaten track and that is an area where no one is allowed to interfere and if there was a fire that ever developed there we would immediately try to stop it. What I've seen of the park, it's in a serious state of deterioration because we haven't allowed any fires, there is no management to harvest overripe or over-aged trees which are ending up in windfalls and no new growth coming at the bottom and there are extensive areas in the park now that are barren. I feel unless we either go in with some management to harvest these overripe trees or let the natural process of fire take its course, the mountain itself will eventually disappear and go back to a barren hill as it was in the beginning. I just wanted to get your views on that. Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Green.

MR. GREEN: I think maybe Mr. Adam has questioned you enough to get the answer

(MR. GREEN cont'd) but I gather that we did establish a couple of ecological reserves in the Province of Manitoba. I don't know whether you are aware of it but I believe that we have done so.

MS. HIBBERT: Which are the particular . . . ?

MR. GREEN: I can't identify them now but if you would go to the Department of Natural Resources, now with Mr. Bostrom's department, they will identify them for you. It was Dr. Shay who made the approach and we did by order-in-council identify some ecological reserves but now I'm starting to wonder. I thought that . . .

MS. HIBBERT: Are these protected to the full extent, to the degree that . . .

MR. GREEN: We will not permit anything to happen in them which is of a developmental nature. There are no roads, there are no permits given, there is no exploration, there is no forestry. We do not I suppose carry it to the extent that a man cannot go in there in the same way as a bear can go in there. As Mr. Enns says that's part of the natural environment too.

MS. HIBBERT: . . . as with man.

MR. GREEN: I would hope so. But I did think that Mr. Adam's question was a relevant one. As I understood it if lightning was started you leave it because that is also part of the ecological . . .

MS. HIBBERT: Yes. Certainly, certainly. What I was wanting to inquire of you then is: do these areas that you're mentioning, do they receive the same protection from sale or dispersal in any way that the parks do?

MR. GREEN: The Manitoba Government has not sold any Crown land on other than an exchange basis or a very exceptional basis since 1970. We won't even lease in an ecological reserve. Now I hasten to say that any ecological reserves that we have started are places that it was unlikely that anybody would go anyway. But that's what we have done and you can check with the department on that.

MS. HIBBERT: Is this legislated or is this under regulation?

MR. GREEN: By order-in-council.

MS. HIBBERT: So that's by order-in-council. Not written into the legislation though.

MR. GREEN: They wanted legislation that said that there shall be ecological reserves but I can frankly tell you that if I am permitted to do something without legislation or with then I prefer to do it without. Why cause additional problems?

MS. HIBBERT: It's just the ongoing continuance of it.

MR. GREEN: I expect that the people who will continue will be as public-minded as I am even though they may have different politics.

MS. HIBBERT: That's very generous of you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Jorgenson.

MR. JORGENSEN: Ms. Hibbert, I would pose what may be a hypothetical question but nonetheless I think it's quite relevant and I'm putting you in the position where you're an authority and you have to make a decision. I understand from a recent report that in the United States about 25 to 30 percent of the corn crop is lost each year because of wildlife, birds in particular. I think the percentage is considerably higher in a country like India for example. I think it's closer to 75 percent of the total volume of production is lost, does not find its way for human use because of various forms of wildlife including insects. If you had to make a decision as to whether or not the human needs were going to be met rather than the ecological ones, what would you do?

MS. HIBBERT: You're putting me in a very difficult position I think . . .

MR. JORGENSEN: Well I think it's a position that we're going to find ourselves in from time to time as well and I want your guidance.

MS. HIBBERT: Well I think that in situations like that you have to make it into a specific situation which requires specific study. I don't think that you can make a general statement about it.

MR. JORGENSEN: You're just like a politician. You'd set up another committee to study it.

MS. HIBBERT: Yes I think so. I think that you should have a long range view of feeling that as much as possible you are going to preserve the natural environment and natural eco-systems. But if there are specific problems then you look at them specifically.

MR. JORGENSEN: I gather from that that you would place human needs above ecological needs if the occasion arose.

MS. HIBBERT: But the human needs - usually humans are part of our environment and they very often are a part of the total ecological need too.

MR. JORGENSEN: Thank you very much.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you Ms. Hibbert.

Mr. Art Coulter, Manitoba Federation of Labour.

MR. ART COULTER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Members of the Committee, we appear here today on behalf of the Manitoba Federation of Labour to put forth some of our views and do appreciate the opportunity to do so.

Firstly, regarding urban development, an interest in the land is fundamental if economies and proper planning concepts are to be achieved. This can best be done through land assembly and banking on a large scale. We have been urging that all three levels of government become involved in such land acquisition. This must be done well before there is any thought of public authority providing the services. Otherwise those holding private ownership of lands to be serviced through public expense for such as prime source of water, sewer disposal system, major mains and roads garner a considerable unearned increment in the value of such land to which they are not in any way entitled. This is generally known as land speculation. This can be an element of considerable proportion that unnecessarily adds to the ever-rising costs of establishing a home.

Planning is uninhibited when land is in the public domain. In private hands the public is required to pay a high price at times for the placement of public facilities such as schools, parks and recreational areas as well as sites for public buildings, etc. Once the planning is complete and services are in place owners of private land again seek, and in too many cases receive, zoning to the highest and to their minds the best use of the property that provides for still a further unearned increment in value at the expense of the community. A further disadvantage here is that where a change in a plan is required the public authority is usually stuck and required to pay a ransom to acquire any property at this stage.

In every view with the exception of the speculator land banking and public development of land makes sense and without doubt saves the home buyer and the municipality considerable money. Saskatoon has an enviable record in this regard having undertaken land banking well ahead of developing it themselves and is a model others should follow. Locally the former City of St. James is probably the only example where this principle was carried out at all. In the aftermath of the depression of the dirty thirties this municipality like so many others fell heir to considerable land through non-payment of taxes. Rather than selling their land through tax sale they held theirs for future development. Eventually a revolving fund was set up into which sales revenues were put and from which additional adjacent land was purchased and from which - that is the fund - the installing of services were paid for. Consequently they did not have to borrow funds on the credit of the municipality and by so doing burdening their taxpayers as did others. In eventually disposing of their property they took care that the purchaser was acquiring it for a specific purpose and that had to fit into a predetermined plan of separate industrial and residential uses. A short time limit to perform was required, otherwise the sale was nullified. No speculators were allowed under this policy. The result was good orderly planned development and resulting taxes that were very low in contrast to other municipalities that opted out to the speculators and major developers who through this process have become multi millionaires. The stranglehold they now have can only be broken by a major land assembly program and by by-passing them as far as providing services are concerned. Leaving them to sweat it out is one way property values will return to reasonable levels.

Another means is to assess and tax such held land at their asking price. The present ripoff must be stopped in the public interest. We note that the Provincial Government has finally launched fairly well into land banking. We urge that this program be stepped up. If the City of Winnipeg and other cities and towns do not take up their side and their share it may be necessary for the province to take over their authority as we can no longer continue to allow them to feed the speculators at the expense of depriving

(MR. COULTER cont'd) middle and low income people the opportunity of acquiring a home. We urge the government to step up its housing program as well. This can be done by leasing more land for co-op housing where medium and lower income people can establish some equity short of purchase. Subsidized housing is needed as well.

In the rural scene we support wholeheartedly the province's land purchase to lease and I believe to purchase program. We are concerned with the degree to which land has been acquired and held by non-residents in the past years. Inflation with declining dollar values has caused many with liquid assets to switch to purchasing property as a safeguard. This has inflated land and property values considerably where it is now difficult for a new person to take up farming unless one is blessed with an inheritance.

There are two aspects to this. Firstly non-residents should not be allowed to purchase or hold land for speculative purposes, whether it is for farming or for recreational use. Secondly, the concept of a family farm has to be maintained. It is in the public interest. We already have too many corporate farms and surely we do not want to go back to the land baron days which appear to be happening.

When a farmer wishes to sell his land and there is no willing buyer short of selling to speculator non-residents it makes sense to us that farm sons and urban folk wishing to take up farming on their own should be encouraged and assisted to do so. In this latter regard we can advise that we are finding many industrial workers today, most of them from farm backgrounds mind you, indicating that they were fed up with the pressures of urban living, the monotonous work that is less than satisfying, wishing they could return to farming. The province purchasing from willing sellers and leasing the farmlands to those people wishing to get established is a good proposition for all concerned, with the exception of the speculators again. We believe the lease program should be supported.

On inquiring further into this subject we were quite amazed at the amount of land, of farms and grazing land, that is now leased from the Crown by farmers as an adjunct to their own farm. This therefore would seem to be working satisfactorily and a good proposition. With the leasing principle for establishing a basic farm it would seem proper that where one applied sweat labour in raising the value of the land in a productive sense that some degree of equity should be thereby acquired. A final purchase arrangement, if a lessee wishes to go that far, with a further repurchase option in the right of the Crown would seem to be in order under this scheme as well.

The trend towards private game preserves and the purchasing of land for recreational purposes of a commercial nature should be prohibited. The province here should see that such potential land be kept in the public domain or at least open to public access.

All of which is respectfully submitted, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you Mr. Coulter. Mr. Minaker.

MR. GEORGE MINAKER: Mr. Chairman, through you to Mr. Coulter. I listened with interest to your comments regarding the City of St. James and their land assembly and banking that they carried out several years ago as you are aware. I am very knowledgeable of that particular instance, being a former alderman from that city and taking part in some of the decisions that were made. I'm wondering if you could comment further. You indicated that you felt that this was the right approach or at least my interpretation of your comments was that it was the right approach, would you favour the municipality or city having the control of this land banking and sale of land rather than the province or would you favour the province?

MR. COULTER: Well I sure would like to see the city have that but to use it - that's one of the problems that we have. We haven't had a municipality other than St. James prepared to go into this type of an arrangement earnestly. There's no question that that is the preferable level to do it but short of that the province, having overall responsibility over the municipalities, they should be doing it. God bless them, they've been doing it, they've been pretty darned slow in getting at it but finally they're there. The City of Winnipeg for instance is pretty reluctant to get involved. They don't agree with many of the principles here and particularly the principles that St. James adopted where they used the return from those sales to purchase other lands and it was just a revolving operation. I didn't think that you were that old that you knew very much about what happened back there. Maybe your father or someone told you.

MR. MINAKER: I was Assistant City Engineer then.

MR. COULTER: Were you?

MR. MINAKER: Mr. Chairman, further to Mr. Coulter. I agree with you, Mr. Coulter, that I believe the cities are the right level of government to look after this particular operation of land assembly and as you recall I think St. James was more than willing to continue on in that particular operation but this government had different ideas about St. James and its own entity and made other decisions that killed that particular land banking program in our area, but that's another story. I'm wondering - also in that particular program that we had in St. James we offered the land for sale for private ownership. Would you endorse this principle, that either the city bought the land and/or the province bought the land and put it on the market? Would you endorse the principle that was in St. James to sell it to private owners for ownership?

MR. COULTER: I sure would and one of the principles that they had, and I mention it here in my submission, that the individual that was purchasing it had to purchase it for a specific purpose whether it was a house of certain size or requirement as to the plan or a certain industrial building to fit in to the industrial zoning plan. That had to be done or there was no sale, it was cancelled, and that makes a lot of sense. Too often the municipalities have been disposing of land to speculators and they mark it up naturally and the more it's confined, the lack of serviced land, it enhances that property and there is the problem. But St. James, I've got to give them credit. They were on the right track.

MR. MINAKER: Mr. Chairman, through you to Mr. Coulter. Also at that time you will recall, Mr. Coulter, that we worked very close, hand in hand, with private contractors to develop the services for these virgin lands and went out for the most competitive price to get the work done so that these costs were kept at a minimum to add on to the virgin land value. I'm wondering if you would support this principle as well in this whole package because it does become a very important part of the package when we're dealing with land costs and particularly reselling.

MR. COULTER: Well here I think I'd have to vary a little bit from what I understand the way it was operated in St. James and that was, as you say, engaging private contractors to do it. I don't think if I go down the streets - and I live out there now - that the number of holes in the pavement, digging up to repair services, is any criteria for the quality of work that was done it doesn't satisfy me at least. But I think that there is something to be said for the municipality, and I tried to tell the City of Winnipeg this, that their work force should be of such a size that they can use it more throughout the twelve months of the year and have them engaged installing services when they're not otherwise engaged in other more important work such as in the summertime constructing streets or in the wintertime moving snow. These types of jobs can be turned off and on to maintain a reasonable level of continuous employment. That's a far better proposition to me as far as workers are concerned and that is what we would support.

MR. MINAKER: Mr. Chairman, one last question. As Mr. Coulter knows that there was what was called a revolving fund in St. James that was utilized to keep this land banking process rolling. Mr. Coulter, would you favour that some kind of a fund be made available to cities or municipalities of certain size at a low interest rate that would be paid back by those particular municipalities or cities so that this kind of a fund could be developed. I know that, being a former councillor of the new City of Winnipeg, one of the problems that that particular city has, and I'm sure it's true of any of our urban areas in the province right now, is that they have a lack of capital funds for such programs because they're tied up in commitments or obligations to build sewer lines, water lines, you name it type of thing. I'm just wondering if you would favour the idea of some kind of a fund being made available at a low interest rate that could be paid back in this type of a process starting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I don't know what you're leading up to. We're dealing with the question . . .

MR. COULTER: There's a simple answer to that.

MR. MINAKER: Mr. Chairman, if I might answer you. I think it's part of the whole package that Mr. Coulter is talking about. I'm not leading up to anything; it's my final question. I'm just asking him for his point of view.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Proceed.

MR. COULTER: Well I'm satisfied there are funds there now, through the Federal Government and the province, to share the cost and I just forget now, it's around 90 percent, that Central Mortgage and Housing are prepared to put up for long term loans for the assembly of land and that sounds pretty good to me. I don't know what portion the province is prepared to kick in but I know that they're involved in it. Surely they're putting some up. With that type of participation, you know, I think that that's creditable. That's one of the reasons I'm amazed at the City of Winnipeg for instance and other cities who are not utilizing that for the purpose that it is meant. Those moneys are going begging now and they have been for some years.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Uskiw.

MR. SAMUEL USKIW: Yes. Mr. Coulter you indicated in your submission that you were very interested in providing an opportunity for young urban people to enter an agricultural field of endeavour, and that you thought the lease program might be the vehicle through which that might be done. It seems to me that there would have to be a practical application of that idea in that that would really have to require some degree of preparedness on the part of the individual or the applicant. I'm thinking in terms of perhaps some kind of a short course or something of a minimum nature that would familiarize the applicant with a farming situation if they have not been exposed to it; as opposed to an applicant from the countryside who has been born and raised on the farm and has a pretty general knowledge of it. Would you not think that one without the other would not work? Vocational component with it.

MR. COULTER: Well I would agree with that. But I think the comments that I did make is that any of the individuals that we encounter that would like to get on to a farm have really come from a farm family.

MR. USKIW: Yes.

MR. COULTER: And you know what's happened in the past, the exodus from the farm of the young people to the urban centres, to the great affluent society and now that they've settled into it for some time they find that it's not a bed of roses and . . .

MR. USKIW: They want to go back.

MR. COULTER: That's right. That's a real situation that we've had. We've had questionnaires out to workers as to what they would like to do to retrain or to re-suit themselves - and this is difficult when they are employed and have obligations of raising a family and are paying for a house and other credit - how do they get themselves out of that hole. And it's difficult. But some of them would truly love to get back to the farm and I think that's . . .

MR. USKIW: They are eligible under that program so that there is no barrier in that sense.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Coulter. Mr. Walding.

MR. D. JAMES WALDING: . . . in your brief when discussing speculation on lands surrounding an urban area of a means of using taxation to discourage that. Could you elaborate on what you were getting at?

MR. COULTER: Well I think most people realize that assessments today are in no way in line with values that are there on the market. We always hear arguments about people paying too much taxes, you know, too high and whether they're relative or not. The only way to have them relative is to have them based on what the individual feels the value is to him and I think a value for which he is prepared to sell his property. Then we would get some conscience established in this question and I think particularly in those that are holding land. I know that in some of the research I did a few years back we found developers sitting on land paying one-twentieth, five percent, on an assessed value of five percent of what they were asking for the land. Now that doesn't look to be a realistic or proper relationship. We know now that a home probably is about 33 percent assessed. But five percent is a long way from that. That's what they're getting away with, so no wonder they can afford to sit on it for a number of years and use that speculation to reap big dividends.

MR. WALDING: Would this apply to land that is zoned for agricultural purposes or only land that is zoned for residential use?

MR. COULTER: Well I think once you started it it would establish itself and level out that it would be realistic. The other thing is, you see, if the municipality is prepared

(MR. COULTER cont'd) to land bank well in advance then those pressures of land value do not accrue or they don't develop. So that the individual can continue to maintain and operate his farm even when adjacent to a residential community, without having that value increase because the value is not there any more.

MR. WALDING: Would you support the change in assessment to market value as opposed to the present 40 percent or 30 percent as it . . .

MR. COULTER: Well I think it could have quite a levelling effect if it were done that way, no question about it..

MR. WALDING: Thank you.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Coulter. Mr. Nemy. Are there any other gentlemen who came forward and indicated a desire to present a brief present? There was a Dr. John Ryan, Matt Ullenboom, Malcolm Ives, Robert Smorang. Well that concludes the meeting for today. The committee will rise and reconvene . . . Mr. Uskiw.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, just on that point. I'm wondering whether we shouldn't take a moment or two to discuss the arrangements for the Thompson trip. As I understand it the staff are prepared to arrange for transportation and accommodation for the whole of the committee if that is acceptable to the committee. There would be a flight in one or two aircraft and back. Is that acceptable?

MR. CHAIRMAN: That is for February 4th.

MR. BLAKE: Will we be there in time for dinner or . . .

MR. ENNS: By any chance will that be the inaugural Skywest flight, Mr. Minister? Sky north.

MR. CHAIRMAN: There's another point Mr. Reeves would like to bring up.

MR. CLERK: It's the question of how long we are going to stay in Thompson. Will it be on the same basis as we are now, continue until all briefs are heard regardless of time?

MR. USKIW: I would think so.

MR. WALDING: I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that we put a time limit on it, perhaps 5:00 o'clock. The staff do have to come back to make arrangements for a later meeting that we have already scheduled.

MR. CLERK: Well that's not really my problem. It's in connection with aircraft. I can't get an aircraft on standby.

MR. ENNS: Well put a definite time.

MR. CLERK: We may have to go into several of the smaller government aircraft.

MR. MINAKER: Can't we come back TransAir?

MR. USKIW: I think we should tentatively accept a 5:00 o'clock deadline and if it appears that there are briefs that are not going to be heard at that time we could decide as to whether we want to extend it and whether we would have to rearrange our flight plan. Would that be acceptable?

MR. JORGENSON: That's fair enough.

MR. USKIW: It may mean at noon phoning Winnipeg for airplanes or something. Who is going to advise them as to time and place of take-off?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Reeves will advise you as to the time and place when we leave Winnipeg on February 4th. Committee rise.