



Fifth Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report
(Hansard)**

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert	Steinbach	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley, Hon.	St. Vital	P.C.
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SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
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STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
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TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.
<i>Vacant</i>	St. Boniface	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 10, 1999

The House met at 10 a. m.

PRAYERS

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Orders of the Day, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have this morning thirty-two Grade 11 students from MacGregor Collegiate under the direction of Mr. Norman Wiebe. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan).

We also have fifty-three Grade 6 students from Garden Grove School under the direction of Mr. Dave Boulton. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you this morning.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, as agreed today, we will be holding private members' hour of two consecutive hours for this morning's sitting. I would ask if you could call for the first hour Resolution 15 proposed by the honourable member for Wellington on Breast Self Examination and for the second hour to be followed by Resolution 29, proposed by the honourable member for Crescentwood, that being the Most Indebted Countries Initiative.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 15—Breast Self Examination

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk),

"WHEREAS 18,000 Canadian women develop breast cancer every year; and

"WHEREAS in 1995 over 700 Manitoba women were diagnosed with breast cancer and 200 died; and

"WHEREAS because breast cancer is the most common type of cancer in women; and

"WHEREAS because breast cancer tends to occur earlier in life than other cancers and other major causes of death such as heart attacks and strokes, it is the greatest cause of years of life lost by Canadian women; and

"WHEREAS early detection can substantially reduce the severity of breast cancer; and

"WHEREAS regular monthly breast self examination (BSE) is the single most effective way to detect breast cancer in its earliest and most treatable stages; and

"WHEREAS the "Buddy Check" program, first developed in Jacksonville, Florida, has proven to be a most effective way of helping women to practice regular BSE with over 350,000 women participating in the Jacksonville area alone; and

"WHEREAS the "Buddy Check" program, which helps women to take control of their own breast health and encourages their "buddies" to do the same, is made up of the following 5 points:

1. Choose a "Buddy" – your mother, daughter, sister, or a friend.
2. Keep one set of stickers (provided by the "Buddy Program") for yourself and give the other to your "Buddy."
3. Place a "Buddy Check" sticker on your calendar on the same day of every month to remind you to examine your breasts monthly for unusual changes or lumps.

4. Check with your "Buddy" each month to be sure she does her BSE.
5. Use the yearly reminder sticker to get a yearly breast exam from a health care provider, and have regular mammograms when warranted by age or other risk factors; and

"WHEREAS in the United States the "Buddy Check" program is sponsored by a local TV station in cooperation with the American Cancer Society, pharmacies, and private corporations; and

"WHEREAS the "Buddy Check" program is publicized regularly to remind women to undertake their BSE; and

"WHEREAS programs such as the "Buddy Check" can greatly decrease the severity of breast cancer.

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Provincial Government to consider investigating the "Buddy Check" program as practiced in Minnesota and Florida, among other locations; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly urge the Provincial Government to consider instituting a "Buddy Check" program in cooperation with the Canadian Cancer Society, media outlets throughout the province, and the Department of Health to enable more Manitoba women to live healthier lives through regular BSE."

Motion presented.

Ms. Barrett: I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the House for placing this resolution on the agenda and for, I believe, what I hope will be the support of all members of the House to endorse this resolution.

Madam Speaker, before I begin about the issue raised in this resolution, I just want to let people know how I found out about the buddy program. I was using the clicker for my television one day last winter, in early spring—[interjection] Channel surfing, yes, and happened upon one of the Minneapolis television stations who are actually the

supporters of the Buddy Check program in Minneapolis. They had a story about the Buddy Check program, and I stopped and watched the story, and I thought what a wonderful idea this is. So I contacted the KARE 11 television station in Minneapolis, and they sent me a good amount of information about the Buddy Check program. So I wanted to congratulate the television station in Minneapolis and also other locations in the United States that have introduced this, what I think is a very effective program.

As I stated in the resolution, breast cancer is a leading cause of death for women. It may not be the leading cause. I believe heart and stroke is the first cause of death among women, but breast cancer has a particular spot in women's health care because it hits women earlier, largely, than heart and stroke do. It is a very serious, serious health risk for women of earlier ages than most women who have risks of heart and stroke problems.

Also, Madam Speaker, it is a killer cancer that with proper diagnosis and prevention and early treatment has a very high percentage of successful treatment and cure. We know what to do. We know how to diagnose and then treat breast cancer more effectively than we have in the past, so it is a very preventable and treatable cancer. But when it is not detected and treated in time, it has a very high mortality rate.

So for all of those reasons it is critical that we do everything in our power to provide as many women as possible with all of the tools available to us to detect at a very early stage this dreadful killer of women.

The buddy program that has been instituted and that we are discussing here today is a very cost-effective program. I use that because I think that we all are looking for ways to provide good, preventive health care in our system that is as easy, as universally available as possible and also that is as cost-effective as possible. One of the reasons why it is cost-effective is that it is educating women to undertake their own breast self-examination or BSE, and that is not only the most cost-effective but the best form of preventive and early diagnosis treatment available.

If every woman in the province of Manitoba undertook monthly BSEs, the rate of breast cancer would be reduced remarkably and the severity of the breast cancers that were identified would be much less. So you would detect the cancer at an earlier stage, you would have a higher success rate in treatment and longevity for women, and you would reduce the need for invasive treatment that many breast cancers require, because they are not diagnosed early enough. It is also something that women can do. It does not cost women a penny to do a breast self-examination every month. It is absolutely free. How many preventive, healthy lifestyle choices do we have today that are absolutely without cost? Virtually none. So for all of those reasons, it is critical that we do as much as we can to ensure that as many women as possible have access to and take advantage of this very positive health prevention and early detection system.

* (1010)

Another very nice thing about the Buddy Check program is the concept of buddies. I mean, we all know that a healthy lifestyle is easier when it is undertaken with other people. We know about exercise, how often exercise is easier to do if you go with someone else. Eating well is easier if you have someone else to eat well with. All of the healthy lifestyle choices are easier if you have someone else who works with you. Particularly a situation like the breast self-examination which is once a month, if you do not have a regular routine, then you are less likely to undertake the breast self-examination. If you have someone else, a friend of yours, a sibling, a mother, an aunt, who can do it with you, then you are more likely to do it. If you have someone that you are buddying with, you are more likely to do it for yourself and also for your buddy. So that kind of a partnership makes it a very positive experience as well.

The other kind of partnership that the Buddy Check program is talking about as it has been utilized in the United States is partnerships with perhaps unusual and not normally thought of partners when it comes to health care. In this case, in the Buddy Check program in Minneapolis and also in Florida, it is a television station that undertakes this program. They work

with pharmacies and health care professionals and other corporations to provide the information and the tools that they use for the Buddy Check program. It is an opportunity for a broader range of organizations to participate in good health prevention and health protection. In Minneapolis, the program is called Buddy Check 11 because the television station is Channel 11. So if a television station here in Manitoba undertook this, it might be the Buddy Check Channel 6 or Buddy Check Channel 43 or something like that.

There is a very good brochure that is sent out to women telling them how to examine their breasts, what a mammogram is, what the five steps are to the Buddy Check program, and also a punch-out card that you hang on your showerhead. One of the most effective ways to do a breast self-examination is in the shower. It takes virtually no time, and it is a very effective way to do it. If you have this hanging there, you are likely to remember to do it, more likely to remember to do it than if you do not have a visual reminder; also, little punch-outs to put on your calendar; for example the 11th of the month. So once a month you put the little sticky on the 11th of each month, and then when you look at the calendar, you know that it is time for you to do your breast self-examination, all of these simple little checks that we often forget that are very simple, very easy to do and help make the Buddy Check program an effective preventive tool.

But these cost money. I said that the BSE was free. Well, it is free for women to do it, but the education and the promotion of it does cost money, and this is where the co-operation of the pharmaceutical organizations like drugstores—they could have this information there, available for women to take when they come in for their other health care needs. Doctors' offices. As I said, the television station actually has a person on staff who deals with just this program. So there are those costs to disseminate the information and to start the Buddy Check program up. This, again, is where co-operation among various parts and various segments of our society can be very helpful, and it is not often that we can find something where you can co-operate in this manner.

The Buddy Check program has been proven to be very effective, as I said in the resolution. Over 350,000 women in the Jacksonville, Florida area are regular participants in the BSE Buddy Check program. Now, just think about if even 1 percent of those women find a lump or an anomaly in their breast and are able to have early detection and early treatment. One percent of 350,000 women is 3,500 women that can be helped early on to prevent this dreadful form of cancer.

So, Madam Speaker, I strongly urge the members here today to support the concept of this Buddy Check program, and I pledge that we will work in conjunction with the government to establish this program, to investigate how we can put a made-in-Manitoba Buddy Check program in place and who our partners could be in this very important and vital health care prevention program.

So, Madam Speaker, again, I appreciate the help of KARE 11 and the work that they have done and hope that we can use this good idea and help Manitoba women to prevent breast cancer. Thank you.

Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood): The resolution today speaks of the importance of the early detection of breast cancer and the need to promote awareness among women to be in the habit of conducting monthly breast self-examinations on a regular basis. We on this side of the House feel that this resolution has merit and is definitely worth considering.

As a former nurse, my experiences certainly have led me to work with a number of women that had breast cancer, and I am very well aware of many of the issues that they have had to deal with in the hospital, outside of the hospital and during their hospital experience. As a woman, I have seen friends die of breast cancer, and I have also seen friends who are currently struggling to live with breast cancer.

Too many women in Manitoba die each year of breast cancer. This disease affects too many families and friends who have loved ones with the disease. Our government is well aware of the threat that breast cancer poses to women, and we have been diligent in developing strategies to

address this major health concern as part of our overall women's health strategy. My own personal interest in this area led me to develop an information brochure on breast health which I make available to my constituents on a regular basis. We have made progress to date in this area, and our government will continue to take steps to improve prevention and treatment services for breast cancer.

When we look at breast cancer, there are certain facts known about it. The cause of breast cancer is unknown and cannot be prevented; 75 percent of all breast growths, whether malignant or benign, are discovered during breast self-examination, so it certainly does speak to the fact that breast self-examination is an important part of what a woman should be doing each month. Family history of breast cancer significantly increases one's risk, so education for women, knowing what to check for and what some of the side issues are in this, is definitely important. Nine out of 10 growths are detected by women themselves, and that is generally what gets them going to the doctor for a further check.

Over the past two decades, the mortality rates for breast cancer have not changed. Eight out of 10 breast growths are noncancerous. Increasing age is the second-highest risk factor for breast cancer; being female is the highest. With our aging population in Manitoba right now, it definitely is something that we need to be looking at in terms of increasing education out there for women. The highest rate of increase in breast cancer incidence is among women who are 60 years and older. The smallest detectable lump is about two to three millimetres and could contain approximately one billion cancer cells.

* (1020)

There is a six times greater risk if one's mother or sister had breast cancer prior to menopause. There is up to 10 times greater risk if one's mother or sister had cancer in both breasts. The risk of breast cancer is slightly higher with a family history of cancer of the uterus, cervix or colon. The risk triples for obesity, with excess caloric and fat intake. Also, male incidents of breast cancer account for 1 percent of all cases, so this is not something that just affects women.

Breast cancer can be cured if caught in time. The odds for a complete recovery from breast cancer are highest when the disease is detected early, and for a woman, examining her own breasts regularly is our greatest weapon in the fight against breast cancer.

The source of this information is from the Breast Cancer Society of Canada and certainly does further support the need for breast self-examination as one aspect of looking at breast health for women.

I would like now to talk just a little bit about the incidence and mortality of breast cancer. The incidence rate of breast cancer has been increasing by 1.3 percent per year for the last two decades. This increase may be due in part to the increasing numbers of mammographic examinations but may also be affected by other factors such as reproductive histories and the increasing age demographics of the population.

In 1996, approximately 18,600 new cases of breast cancer occurred, accounting for 31 percent of all cancer cases diagnosed in Canadian women. There were 5,300 breast cancer deaths. For women of all ages, breast cancer ranks as the fourth leading cause of death after ischemic heart disease, stroke and lung cancer. In 1995, 824 Manitoba women were diagnosed with breast cancer, and 196 died from it. Mortality rates for breast cancer have declined slightly since 1985. Further research is needed to determine whether early detection through screening, improved treatment or changes in risk or protective factors are responsible for this decline.

The stage at which a woman is diagnosed with breast cancer greatly influences her survival. Data from Saskatchewan and Alberta show 10-year survivals of 70 percent in Stage 1, which is primary cancer measuring two centimetres or less and node negative; compared to 53 percent in Stage 2, which is a primary greater than two centimetres and less than five centimetres or node positive; 25 percent at Stage 3, which is a primary larger than five centimetres; and only 7 percent at Stage 4, which is over-metastatic disease.

Risk for breast cancer also varies according to a woman's family history. The lifetime probability of developing breast cancer for a Canadian woman is about 11 percent or one in nine, with the risk increasing with age. As I said, the risk for breast cancer also varies according to a woman's family history. Women with a strong family history of breast cancer have a risk of getting breast cancer in their lifetime as high as one in three, and women with no family history have a risk of developing breast cancer at a ratio of one in 16.

Factors which are thought to increase the risk of breast cancer include age, early menarche, late menopause and late age at first full-term pregnancy, as well as obesity and postmenopausal women, family history of primary breast cancer, history of cancer in one breast and history of primary cancer in the endometrium and ovary. There is also evidence suggesting a linkage between high intake of dietary fat and alcohol use to the risk of breast cancer.

So when a woman goes for a breast self-examination at her physician's office or through a nurse practitioner, she certainly has the ability and the opportunity to be taught a number of these factors and a number of these things that she needs to be looking at to know if she is indeed at risk or at increased risk of developing breast cancer.

When we look at breast self-examination, however, it is important to know that that is only one aspect of a breast care program. A comprehensive approach is most effective and one that this government supports, and I would like to just talk a little bit more about the comprehensive approach, because with the whole issue of breast health, we cannot just look at one part of it without addressing it in a comprehensive manner if we want to be most effective in delivering this service to Manitoba women.

The first thing I would like to talk about is the Breast Cancer Screening Program. At present, the only proven strategy to reduce breast cancer deaths is early detection through mammography in women over 50. There is clear evidence from population-based trials that

screening mammography can reduce mortality from breast cancer by approximately 30 percent in women aged 50 to 69.

Following recommendations from a provincial breast cancer screening advisory committee, our government implemented the Breast Cancer Screening Program in 1995. The essential elements of an organized breast cancer screening program are recruitment and promotion, a population-based registry of screening outcomes, quality assurance follow-up and evaluation.

The Manitoba Breast Screening Program has been in operation since 1995 and is managed by the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation. Manitoba's Breast Screening Program screens women every two years and includes a clinical breast examination, video instruction in breast self-examination, along with a two-view, bilateral mammogram. As well, women receive a pamphlet developed by the Canadian Cancer Society on breast self-examination to take home with them.

The program currently operates from three locations, Winnipeg, Brandon and Thompson. Two mobile units were added in 1998 to improve access to mammography for Manitoba women who are not near these sites. It is anticipated that 33,000 women per year will now be screened. Manitoba is the only province or territory to have implemented an organized screening program with 70 percent target capacity in such a short time.

I would now like for just a few moments to talk about Manitoba's breast health program. In August 1998, our government announced \$5.6 million in funding for the development of a comprehensive breast health program. The two Winnipeg health authorities jointly announced the establishment of the Breast Health Program that will consolidate breast surgery and better co-ordinate breast cancer treatment across Winnipeg. The new breast health centre sets a foundation for major service improvements for women.

The WCA is working to develop the community components including public education and wellness that complements

diagnostic and treatment services offered through the Winnipeg Hospital Authority. This new centre is scheduled to open in the fall of 1999.

As a result of this new Breast Health Program, women will have more timely access to an array of leading-edge diagnostic services, including mammography, ultrasound and stereotactic and excisional biopsy. The centre also offers women and their families a new risk assessment, genetic testing and counselling program.

I am very pleased to note at this time also that the two nurses that have been hired to work at that particular centre and manage it are probably two of the women in Manitoba most skilled and equipped to build on that program and ensure that the program we do offer to Manitoba women is indeed the best possible program that could be built in this province.

* (1030)

The resolution today speaks to the Buddy Check. A program that is practised in the United States and one that appears to have merit, and as I said, is definitely worth considering by our government. The Buddy Check program, being a breast awareness program that has been operating in the United States, certainly does appear to be effective. Building on the establishment of the provincial breast screening program and the new Breast Health Program, our government is willing to look at it and continue to work with health providers to explore further improvements to the services available to women in the area of breast health. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): I, too, want to thank the member opposite for bringing forward this resolution. For me it has certainly been interesting to sit and listen and to become more aware of the concerns that are out there.

I think, ongoing, we are aware that there are concerns regarding breast cancer, but what are some of the better ways of being able to detect any evidence of this dreaded disease at an early stage? How can we look at it and what we can we do to prevent it?

I speak from some personal experience when my mother, and I was so very young at the time, had a radical mastectomy, and so it is something that does happen. I know that at that time it was certainly something that was feared because again of the unknowns. We were not aware of what this disease would ultimately result in.

I think also this morning, Madam Speaker, we have heard statistics of people who have contracted this dreaded disease but who have, as a result of it, died. Maybe in some of these cases, it was due to the lack of early detection or possibly not knowing how to detect and what to do about it. I want to thank the honourable member for bringing up this resolution, and certainly it is not my intention to speak on this resolution at length but to put a few comments on record.

When I look at our area, the southern part of the province, certainly it is something that people are aware of, but there are a number of things that are going to be able to assist also the residents and the people that I represent within the Pembina constituency. As I listened intently to the comments that were made, certainly on an ongoing basis we need to educate people out there regarding self-examination. They need to be made aware of it and the importance of it. I also believe that there is a place for mammography units that can be out there, and our government has introduced this in the last while. We are going to be having mobile units moving to the different areas within the province to make it accessible for all who would like to avail themselves of this opportunity.

Also, Madam Speaker, I would just like to say that the new Boundary Trails Health Centre that is going to be built and is in the process of construction, as we speak, is going to be having a stationary unit which again can be used by people living within the area but also of course people out of the area who choose to come there in order to avail themselves of this opportunity.

One thing I found interesting—in fact, this was several days ago as we were discussing this resolution—was the fact that this is not only a disease that is something that can afflict females but can also afflict the male population. I think

the honourable member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) indicated that 1 percent of males can also contract breast cancer, so it is something that certainly we all need to be aware of and need to know how, in fact, to detect this, or when we go in for physicals to our doctors, to ask them to take a special note of this as well.

So there are a number of things that I have learned as a result of this resolution that are important, and then this information I can pass on to others who I come in contact with. So, Madam Speaker, again, I want to thank the honourable member for putting this resolution forward.

A further component of our Breast Screening Program has been the addition, as I indicated before, of two mobile mammography units in the province of Manitoba. These improve the access to breast screening services for women in rural and northern Manitoba. They allow women to be screened closer to home and should encourage more women to undergo regular screening, and I believe the area of closer to home is something that is going to be attractive to all because it is something that we need to do. We go out of our ordinary agenda, our day-to-day activities that we have, and we have to make a special effort to do this, and certainly this is going to be something which is going to make it more available for those within the province of Manitoba.

In addition to the Breast Screening Program, this government has introduced a Breast Health Program. This will better co-ordinate breast cancer treatment in the province. The program will offer women a range of services in regard to treatment, education and counselling. We are committed to ensuring excellent treatment and options and educational services for Manitoba women when it comes to breast health. The program represents a comprehensive approach to breast health, and we are proud of the services it offers to Manitoba women.

Our commitment to women's health and wellness is not confined to our initiatives for breast health. We were proud to recently announce funds for a Cervical Cancer Program which also helped further our goals of early detection. Our action in this area will help

detect abnormalities when they are in their earliest stages, thereby preventing further progress of disease. The program will identify at-risk women and encourage regular Pap tests, as well as improving follow-up treatment for those who need to be retested. Cervical cancer is frequently preventable, and successful treatment is often possible when detected at an early stage. Pap tests and follow-up, where warranted, have already shown positive results in reducing death rates from cervical cancer.

Madam Speaker, I have cited these two examples, and I think the base of all of this is something that is through the clinical system, that the medical profession has devised, but I certainly would promote the self-examination, also promote the area of a healthy lifestyle. Anything that is going to prevent this is something that we would all strive to, to be able to adhere to on a daily basis, if it is a lifestyle issue, and, again, the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) indicated a number of things that could be done in a lifestyle. It is the eating of foods. It is the way we conduct ourselves from day to day in our activities.

These are things that can help to prevent any of these diseases, and, Madam Speaker, I certainly would promote and encourage all of us to do those activities and do those things, eat those foods, which are ultimately going to lead toward a healthy body, which is something that, of course, our families deal with on a daily basis. If I am a healthy individual within my family, I can encourage the other members within my family to also live a healthy lifestyle.

So I just wanted to put a few comments on the record this morning. I realize that there are other people who would like to make a few comments as well, but again I would encourage all members present that we encourage one another to live out a lifestyle that is something that exemplifies and promotes healthy lifestyles and healthy bodies so that, in fact, we do not have to stress our medical systems, our hospitals and so on. I think there are many things we can personally do to prevent this. So thank you very much.

Mr. David Faurschou (Portage la Prairie): It is a pleasure for me to have the opportunity to

rise and respond to the resolution that has been placed before the House by the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett). I will be providing comments that will be in support of this resolution.

It may be, perhaps, a little unusual for a male member of this Chamber to speak on essentially a women's issue. However, the family unit, as I may describe, includes mothers, wives, sisters. They are part of the family unit, and this devastating disease, and that, namely, breast cancer, affects us all. Today I want to say that it has affected my own family personally. However, it has been on a positive note insofar as that my mother-in-law experienced a radical mastectomy operation and is a cancer survivor, and we are very pleased to say that she is in exceptionally good health and enjoying her retirement, as is the hope that I have for all women.

Madam Speaker, I join with the colleagues on this side of the House that have expressed their comments thus far on breast cancer in this province and what this government has been motivated to do and is doing. I am very pleased to say that I am in complete support of Manitoba's Breast Screening Program, which this province has initiated, as the honourable member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) said, back in 1995, and the thousands upon thousands of women that have benefited from this program.

*(1040)

I might also say that I support wholeheartedly the expansion of the mobile breast screening unit that provides this type of mammography program to the rural residents of the province, and I might just make mention at this time the Manitoba mobile breast screening unit is in Portage la Prairie for the month of June. This unit has been set up in the Portage District General Hospital and commenced operations on June 2. It is expected that many women will take advantage of this program right in Portage la Prairie, and currently about 600 women in Portage la Prairie and district have participated in the program to date. We would like to see that number grow to over 1,200 because most certainly it is a program that we must encourage people to take advantage of because it is not only

the mammography that takes place through the mobile unit, but there is also a video supplied to those attendees to the unit that provides the techniques of self-examination which are so vital to prevent this devastating disease, and consequently, upon detection, the very early treatment of the disease.

I do believe that the addition of the two mobile breast screening units operational, as well as the permanent site that was open in 1997 in Thompson to serve the people of the North, makes Manitoba's Breast Screening Program one of the most advanced in the country. It exemplifies our efforts as a government to provide to the women of Manitoba the programs that are much needed.

Madam Speaker, it is not only prevention, but it is also treatment. I am very proud to support the government in its efforts to provide the facilities in which treatment can be delivered with the announcement of \$27.5 million in equipment that will be installed in the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation facilities that, I might just add, Madam Speaker, is experiencing as we speak significant expansion involving \$46-million worth of investment in the facility on Olivia Street right here in Winnipeg.

In Portage la Prairie, we are as well very much concerned and support the government effort and the efforts of the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation. In fact, we have in Portage la Prairie a very active committee headed up by Catherine Vanstone and Sharon Allen [phonetic]. We have had many fundraising events in Portage la Prairie to raise dollars that will in fact equip the Portage la Prairie room which will be duly named upon completion of the construction of the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation facilities. I am very pleased and personally have committed dollars to this effort.

It is our sincere hope, however, that there will be a cure found. That is why we must as well support the medical research that is so desperately needed that will be able to, in fact, find a cure for this most devastating disease. Here in Manitoba, there is over \$3 million in funding dedicated to this particular research

initiative. I am certainly hopeful that in the not-too-distant future that we will find and have at our disposal a cure for this disease.

Once again, I would like to offer this member's support to the resolution and ask all my honourable colleagues to give due consideration and urge their support in passage of this resolution. Madam Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity to have placed these words upon the record of this House in support of the resolution.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I, too, want to put a few words on the record on behalf of the Liberal Party. This is indeed a positive resolution and the individuals that I would especially like to acknowledge are the individuals that have played such a critical role in advocating on a very important issue. Within the resolution, it emphasizes the importance just by sheer numbers, the number of women that this terrible disease affects every year. If there are progressive things in government, and I believe it goes beyond government that this is in fact a very apolitical issue. An issue which receives the support of not only all members of this Chamber, but it goes beyond this particular Chamber to, as I say, recognize the individuals that really need to be recognized in this. That is, of course, our advocacy groups that are out there which organized all sorts of information seminars to rallies to marches that constantly give diligence to ensuring that the government is taking action.

This is one of those issues that I would argue that has been there for many years in which so many people can take some gratitude in the sense that we have seen movement forward in addressing this terrible disease. I think that this particular resolution reaffirms what many people are saying, many people believe. In fact, it is something that has been brought up in the past inside the Chamber. Having said those few words, we have absolutely no problem in supporting this particular resolution sponsored by the New Democrats.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise to support the resolution of the member for Wellington on

instituting a Buddy Check program in Manitoba. We appreciate the support of the government in allowing this resolution to pass, and we look forward to the government of Manitoba investigating the Buddy Check program, which is in place in a number of American states, particularly in Minnesota and Florida, and instituting a Buddy Check program in Manitoba in co-operation with the Canadian Cancer Society media outlets and the Department of Health.

I cannot think of anything that strikes greater fear in women than a diagnosis of breast cancer or even the fear of a diagnosis of breast cancer. I think there are reasons for this. One of which is the obsession in our society, particularly the media, with that part of women's bodies. This places tremendous and unnecessary pressure on women. I think that contributes to the fear of a diagnosis of breast cancer.

I would like to also commend the member for Wellington for a resolution which does not cost the government any money or, if it does, a very small amount. Certainly the Buddy Check program which individuals would use does not cost the government any money. I think we as members of the Legislature all need to be more creative in finding programs like this that do not cost taxpayers any money.

In conclusion, I know several women who have had a mastectomy. I also know several who have been treated for or are currently being treated for breast cancer. I know the burden that this puts on them emotionally as well as physically. I also have a friend who has been sharing with me the psychological impact of being diagnosed with breast cancer and being treated with breast cancer. In fact, she has asked me to pray for her, which I have been doing and will continue to do. I appreciate learning from this friend what an individual goes through on a daily basis throughout treatments and how it has impacted her and her family and her work, because she is off on disability leave. I know that breast cancer costs a tremendous price to individuals.

* (1050)

The good news, as people have mentioned in previous speeches, is that early diagnosis and

prevention mean that the effects can be much less devastating.

So promoting this Buddy Check program is an excellent idea. I am pleased that all members support it. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): I just want to put a few comments on the record. Certainly the comments that I propose to make are certainly different, a different philosophy than maybe many members have put on the record here today.

My experience as far as my family is concerned is very limited in terms of the actual experience of breast cancer, but after spending some 15 years in learning about nutrition and responsibility as far as creating health is concerned is one that I certainly advocate. I look on this from my understanding as far as cancer wherever the cancer is, wherever it strikes, is more about cleansing than it is about dealing with a lot of the evasive issues that we sometimes tend to lead to as far as our medical professions are concerned.

Madam Speaker, I certainly do support this resolution that the member for Wellington has brought forward. It is certainly one that I support wholeheartedly, because I think it has that element of people taking responsibility for their own health rather than relying on the more evasive treatments that we are sometimes subjected to in society today.

I think it is really important that we education people in terms of the understanding. I think that unfortunately, and I have mentioned this before, our medical profession unfortunately understands the medical approach to this and the diagnosis and the treatment is of that same mind.

Madam Speaker, I certainly believe that by doing a lot of things that the honourable member is proposing in this resolution, with self-examination and whatever it takes, I think that people and women especially are understanding that maybe some of the things that the traditional treatments, whether it be chemotherapy, surgery or radiation, is not always working. As a matter of fact, there are suggestions that is not working. So I support the idea of what the member is

proposing with this resolution and taking that responsibility.

I think that if we look back in terms of the research that has been done in 1988, and I have mentioned this before, the Malmö clinic in Sweden did research on mammograms, and there are suggestions that mammograms, in their invasion of the health aspect as far as those things are concerned, can even cause breast cancers from the radiation and the things that they are subjected to through the mammography.

I think what we want to look at here, Madam Speaker, is to certainly endorse what the honourable member's resolution is proposing, and that what she has put on the record here is something that certainly, I believe, our government can support and I can support. I think we have to expand on that in a wider range and that will best serve the people who are inflicted by breast cancer a lot more than maybe the traditional way in turning the responsibility over to the medical profession whom we hold in supreme authority as far as health care is concerned.

So I know that we do want to take the time to pass this resolution. My government supports this; certainly, I support it, and I would certainly endorse it. I want to thank the honourable member for her vision in terms of bringing this forward. I know that she certainly has a sincere knowledge and understanding of what is best for the women of this province, and I would certainly support her in that. So saying those few words, Madam Speaker, I do sit down and allow this matter to come to a vote.

Madam Speaker: Is it the will of the House to adopt the resolution? [agreed]

Point of Order

Ms. Barrett: On a point of personal privilege, if I may, if that would be appropriate?

Madam Speaker: A point of order.

Ms. Barrett: I just wanted to briefly thank the members of the House on all sides for supporting this resolution. I just wish we had more members of the public and media here

today to prove that there are times when we are able to act in concert as representing all the people of the province of Manitoba. So on behalf of myself and my colleagues, I want to thank everybody here for supporting this very important resolution. Thank you.

* * *

Madam Speaker: What is the will of the House, to proceed now to the second resolution? [agreed]

Res. 29—Most-Indebted Countries Initiative

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), that

"WHEREAS the poorest 40 nations on earth such as Mozambique and Burkina Faso have debts which are unpayable; and

"WHEREAS the original loans were made to them before sharp increases in interest rates and steep commodity price declines; and

"WHEREAS there is no realistic hope that these nations can ever pay off their loans because of the factors noted above; and

"WHEREAS Canada's share of this debt amounts to less than one fifth of the current Federal surplus to date this year; and

"WHEREAS Canada took the initiative to begin debt forgiveness under a previous Federal Government; and

"WHEREAS the continued pressure of these loans completely prevents any human development initiatives in health, education, and environmental areas; and

"WHEREAS the World Council of Churches and the Canadian Council of Churches have declared that the year 2000 should be a year to forgive the debts of the poorest of the poor nations on earth, based on the biblical vision of the Jubilee year; and

"WHEREAS Manitoba Church leaders have endorsed this campaign;

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Provincial Government to support the Jubilee Campaign; and

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly call upon the Federal Government to join with other leading nations to forgive the government-to-government debts owed by the poorest nations on earth, as defined by the United Nations criteria for debt forgiveness eligibility."

Motion presented.

* (1100)

Mr. Sale: I would like to thank honourable members opposite for agreeing to bring this important resolution forward, and I look forward to their support, I hope, after they have heard the remarks on both sides of the House in regard to this resolution.

Madam Speaker, the campaign for Jubilee is both biblically rooted and supported by contemporary economic evidence, and I want to start by indicating the breadth of the support for this particular initiative. The Jubilee partners in Canada have put out three handbooks from the churches sponsoring us.

There are 29 sponsor groups as of a year ago, and that list has grown since that time. I am just going to refer to a few of them: The Canadian Council of Churches Commission on Justice and Peace, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Canadian Catholic Organization for the Development and Peace, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Christian Reform Church, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Mennonite Central Committee, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the United Church of Canada, the Women's International Church Council of Canada. There are many other groups who have joined in this initiative, which seeks to work with the United Nations through the most heavily indebted nations initiative of the United Nations organization. This is not a unilateral action on the part of churches, nor is it a kind of poorly rooted proposal from an economic perspective.

I want to quote from the document called *A New Beginning: A Call for Jubilee*, which says: We watch as the gap between rich and poor, both within and among countries, grows ever wider, destroying the promise of a new planetary community. Despite the claims of progress, despite our current unimaginable technological capacity, billions of people stay mired in poverty, denied the essentials of life, and burdened by a debt they can never hope to repay. We are frightened by these threats to the well-being of all. Those are the words from the first of the Jubilee Initiative organization education booklets.

I want to cite a few statistics on debt. First of all, if calculated on a per-capita basis, every person in the Southern Hemisphere would owe about \$300 to the North. Every single person. For every one dollar that the wealthy Northern Hemisphere provides in aid, \$3 comes back in the form of debt servicing, which is an incredible statistic. The poorest nations of the Earth are paying out \$3 in debt service for every \$1 they receive in aid. The poorest portion of the globe is the Sub-Saharan Africa where most of the most heavily indebted nations are found, and African countries now spend four times as much on debt repayment as they do on health care. If that were the case in Manitoba, Manitoba would have to be finding some \$8 billion a year for debt service to service its debts, clearly an unattainable level of expenditure for a province even as wealthy as ours.

Madam Speaker, the strategy for unilateral debt forgiveness for the poorest of the poor was begun by an interesting Canadian Prime Minister. His name was Brian Mulroney, and in the late 1980s and early 1990s, because whatever we may think of Mr. Mulroney as a prime minister domestically, he did have a very significant reputation in Africa as a champion of human rights and a champion of international development in the African continent in particular. He began in the late 1980s and early 1990s a program of modest unilateral debt forgiveness of the poorest of the poor nations amounting to several hundred million dollars in total, a very significant campaign.

So the beginnings of the Jubilee campaign, interestingly enough, came out of a previous

Canadian government's willingness to work with other northern European nations, including Sweden, Denmark and Norway, to recognize that the debt levels of the poorest 40 nations on earth were so great that there was simply no realistic hope that they could ever be repaid and that in the process of bleeding their economies to try and service this debt, we were seeing the kind of instability that has led to a six-year civil war in Sierra Leone, that has led to unimaginable levels of atrocity in Rwanda, Burundi, other countries like Mali, Burkina Faso, where civil war and civil strife is simply a way of life because of the endemic poverty and corruption in those countries.

The question of which countries would be eligible under the Jubilee Initiative is an important question. The United Nations for some years now, approximately 10 years, has had an initiative called the most heavily indebted nations initiative. It has defined criteria for debt forgiveness, because all recognize, including the churches, most of which are churches to which members on this side and members opposite belong, that simply unilateral debt forgiveness with no conditions would allow corrupt nations to simply spend more on armaments or to siphon more money off to Swiss bank accounts which is clearly not in anyone's interest to either those who forgive the debt or those who are forgiven, because, ultimately, it is not the wealthy members of the most heavily indebted countries who pay for their debts. It is the poor members of their society who pay, because they pay in the form of atrocious public health conditions, no education or such little education as might virtually be no education. So it is really the citizens of the poorest countries who pay for the excesses of their leaders.

So the United Nations has put in place stringent conditions for debt forgiveness that prevent the ability of those countries, for example, to invest in armaments as a condition of debt forgiveness, and it is an enforceable condition. The United Nations has the capacity to enforce that. The United Nations has also put in place the requirement that the savings as a result of the debt forgiveness must be invested in infrastructure and human development initiatives—clean water, decent roads, hydroelectricity, telecommunications, health and education. Those

are the conditions agreed to by the United Nations and supported fully by the churches of the world who have asked for this to be a true Jubilee Initiative.

There are approximately 45 countries that would be eligible for debt remission. The proposal is an international body under the auspices of the United Nations would be the most appropriate forum for creditors and borrowers to work out the principles of eligibility. The body would ensure that the money saved from debt payments would be used for social development.

Now, Madam Speaker, the question of why should debts be cancelled is the fundamental central question here. The Jubilee Initiative puts out a little brochure which I think members opposite perhaps have already received. If they have not, I would be glad to see that they get it. They ask a question. If anyone takes a loan, should they not repay it? Why should these debts be cancelled? Their answer is yes; debts should be paid. But they point out that the debts of the poorest of the poor nations have already been paid many times over. Between 1981 and 1997, the least developed nations of the world paid over \$2.9 trillion in interest and principal, \$2.9 trillion. This is about \$1.5 trillion more; in other words, about double what they received in loans. For every dollar that the northern countries provide in aid, \$3 comes back in the form of debt servicing.

So while in textbook accounting terms, perhaps the debts have not been paid. In any kind of reasonable accounting, they have paid interest and principal many times over. It is a principle of our bankruptcy acts in Canada that people are not to have their means of livelihood withdrawn from them because they are bankrupt; that is, the means of living, of getting food, of having health care, of having shelter, may not be taken by a bankruptcy court simply because someone has failed in business. But the effect of our demand that the poorest of the poor repay their loans is to deprive the majority of their population of the means of life, of the ability to produce food, and certainly of the ability to enjoy even the most basic and rudimentary of health care services.

We allow millions of children in the South, the southern hemisphere, particularly Sub-Saharan and Africa, to die every year of poverty-related causes, while their governments continue to be required to make payments that have already in total paid far more than the principal and interest on the loans that would normally be required, if they had not had the misfortune to endure a global recession in the early 1980s which pushed their interest rates into the high double digits. They were never able to recover from that unprecedented escalation of interest rates, which members opposite may remember drove mortgage rates at one point in this province to 22 percent. We recovered because we had short-term ability to adjust those rates. The Sub-Saharan nations did not.

* (1110)

So, Madam Speaker, the question of cost also is a valid question, and I understand that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Gilleshammer) is the person opposite who is most concerned that this resolution may not be appropriate. I am sorry that he did not share his concerns with me prior to this debate, because I might have been able to reassure him that the scale of the forgiveness in the case of Canada is exceedingly modest. Canada is currently owed \$1.2 billion by the poorest 45 nations on earth. The actual cost of writing off this loan would be considerably less, because it is already agreed by our Finance department that most of it will not be able to be paid anyway. So it is essentially an uncollectible debt now, and it has been partly provided for in our national accounts.

The proposal of the Jubilee Initiative is that it be paid off over a four- or five-year period, because it will take that long to negotiate the terms of debt forgiveness and the processes of ensuring that the effect of debt forgiveness is human development and not armament purchases. So at five years, this amounts to only \$250 million a year. Now \$250 million sounds like a lot of money, but at the national accounts level it is approximately 4 percent of our own annual interest payments. That would wipe out Canada's credit or status for the 45 poorest nations on earth, \$1.2 billion over five years, far, far less than we spend on many other, I would argue, less high-priority items in terms of our

federal budget. Madam Speaker, \$250 million a year would give significant hope to millions of poor children in Sub-Saharan Africa.

I point out again that it was a Conservative Prime Minister who initiated this program in the late 1980s on the same kind of basis but without the United Nations involvement in ensuring that all of the nations whose debts were forgiven would indeed engage in human development strategies.

I want to close my remarks by quoting a couple of, I think, critical leaders. One is Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who says that now that we have accomplished this extraordinary business of ridding the world of the spread of apartheid, the next moral campaign must be international debt; the Latin American bishops of the Catholic church saying: the church questions when in order to pay the debt the survival of people is seriously jeopardized; the All Africa Conference of Churches report of the Women's Assembly: the churches need to be the voice of the oppressed and develop a lobbying and advocacy strategy to press for debt cancellation; Peter Vandermuelen, Christian Reformed Church of North American: Jubilee 2000 is our best chance in a long while to put our beliefs to work. Our world belongs to God, not to creditors. Debt, particularly massive and illegitimate debt, enslaves and distorts, drains and impoverishes the most vulnerable among us.

Madam Speaker, the aboriginal vision of Jubilee underscores the idea that the earth is a holy place and that it is not simply to be treated as an economic instrument. That is what this motion seeks to do. I hope all members opposite will support the resolution.

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): It gives me some pleasure to rise today to speak to this resolution, although I might want to take a bit of a different approach to serving the needs of the people of the poorest of the poor countries of the world.

My wife, Dora, and I have been extremely privileged during our lifetime. We have been able to travel in many countries of the world, most of which was done before I came to government. We have visited many of the very

poor countries of the world simply on our own as a point of interest to see how the people in this country function and how they exist and how they in fact live and provide for their families.

One of the countries that we visited some 25 or 30 years ago was South America. We were quite astounded at some of the things that we found. I will give you an example. I had to really reflect on this when we came back home. We use the term "happiness" fairly loosely sometimes. When we visited a given community and we stayed over in this community in a small, little straw-thatched hut, the next morning when we woke up there was absolute quietness, an absolute quietness that one only hears very often first thing Sunday morning on the farm. We looked at each other, and we commented about this. We said how peaceful.

We got up, and there was a little hut next to us that served food. We went over and we sat there and had breakfast. While we were having breakfast a pig came dashing through this grass hut followed by a dog. Just before we had finished breakfast the church bells rang. There was not a car on the street because I do not believe that there were any cars in that village. This was a poor village. The church bells rang, and families started coming out of their what we would call very poor homes. They were dressed in white, most of them, and they were walking down the street to church. They were laughing, and some of them were singing. We turned to each other. We looked at each other, and we said: this we want to change? Our country wants to change this? Because I think we truly observed happiness there. I think we truly observed a togetherness which one seldom sees or experiences.

One should not judge only by appearance what is really there, because I think the seriousness about the resolution that is before us should not be underestimated or undervalued, but those very poor, I think, had no indication at all or no thought at all about how they were affected by their country's national debt.

I think we need to reflect on another experience that we had when we travelled to Africa. We went to Africa to visit my aunt and

uncle who were working on a CIDA project called the Canada Wheat Project in Tanzania. We spent a couple of weeks in Tanzania. We did a significant amount of touring: toured the Serengeti; watched the wildebeest migration on the Serengeti; stayed in a tent in the Serengeti and woke up in the middle of the night with lions roaring right next to you; woke up first thing in the morning with elephants trumpeting within a hundred yards of the tent that we were sleeping in.

We met many of the people that lived in the area. We travelled by jeep into areas that few white people, I think, had ever travelled. We took two jeeps, and we had winches on the jeeps and cable. If one of them got stuck somewhere, the other one would winch it out and we would travel. I will never forget being stuck in the middle of absolutely nowhere in the dead of Africa, and we thought that we were totally by ourselves, totally by ourselves. While we were pulling ourselves out of this mud hole, there appeared very quietly a person. Before we were finished, there were about a dozen people standing around us with bones in their noses and wood pegs through their ears and very scantily clothed, if any clothes. They had all sorts of paintings on their bodies, and it gave one a different feeling.

* (1120)

The reason I relate this incident is that it demonstrates how small one is in the total realm of things, and that economics really have a very, very small impact. The world economics have a very small impact on the poorest of the poor. We visited one of these people's huts. It was another day when we drove up through an area, and we saw one of these houses or living areas called domas. There was a circle of thorn bushes around a group of grass huts, and there was an opening in this thorn hedge. We drove up to this thorn hedge, and a little girl came running out and we asked her in Swahili whether we could come in, and she said no. So we gave her a pipi, a candy. In Swahili it is a pipi. So we gave our candy, and we saw two young fellows run up the hill towards the doma. When the young fellows came up to our car, we asked them in Swahili whether we could come in and have a look around, and they said yes. So we took pictures of where these people live.

When I say the poorest of the poor, I say to you that we observed two pegs driven into the ground and a zebra skin stretched tightly over these pegs and that was their bed. There were droppings of young calves, manure droppings, quite literally, and we asked why this was, why they were sleeping in the same place that there was livestock droppings. They said they brought the young calves in at night, the young livestock, to keep them warm at night because it became very cold. It is interesting that we see Africa as a very hot place, and yet during the daytime it can become very hot, but it can become very cold at night. So they brought them in for warmth.

They had a storage which we would call a basket, probably 50 or 60 bushels of corn in it that they stored. We looked at it and we said, what do they do with this? Do they feed this to the livestock? They said, no, this is what we pound the corn—and they showed us how they did it. They made powder out of it and baked cakes and that, of course, was their food. When we looked at the corn, there was all kinds of little worms in the corn.

But one of the most interesting experiences that we had was when we were driving along and we saw two ladies and three youngsters walking along. One of the fellows said, today you will have a true African experience. He stopped and he offered these two ladies and their three youngsters a ride. Once we had closed the doors on the jeep that we were in, there was this absolutely awful, awful smell. I said to John, what is this smell? He said, well, look at what they are wearing. They were wearing leather skins. He said how they cure the skins is he said they chew the leather and then they soak it in a mixture of urine and milk, goat's milk, and they soak it. Then they press the urine and milk out of it, and then they hang it to dry. It becomes extremely soft when they do this. When you felt the leather, it was some of the smoothest, softest leather that you could buy anywhere in our stores, some of the finest leather, yet, it had an absolutely awful smell to it.

These were the poorest of the poor, and honestly, if you would have asked them what the financial situation of their country was, they would have said: what financial situation? They

really had no thought or desire. What really affected them was the need that we have sometimes to demonstrate because we are very, very wealthy, comparatively very wealthy, but the need that we have sometimes to show our charity and through projects such as CIDA—and I want to talk a little bit about this, because it is extremely important—CIDA's wheat project in Tanzania, whereby Canada spent large amounts of money showing the Tanzanians how to grow wheat.

I have used the term in other speeches that I made when we first got back, I used the term "the Saskatchewan mentality." It was picked up in Canada and delivered to Tanzania, a huge mistake. Governments working with governments using government funds to demonstrate governments can do things, that is not how you get there.

It is not government monies that will ever improve the situation, I believe, but it is organizations. It is organizations such as the Mennonite Central Committee that does a huge amount of work in those areas. It is the faith-based organizations, Madam Speaker, that send missionaries and other aid-type workers into those areas to teach the young people how to use different technology than the stone hoe or the stone axe and/or other things that will get us down the road to change the lives and the economics in countries such as the poorest of the poor.

I am absolutely convinced, Madam Speaker, that the best thing that we can do as a government is encourage those kinds of people who have a will and a desire to go out and serve their fellow man and change the way those people think, and then maybe they can change their government's will, and then we can get on with changing the economics and the economic strategies of those countries.

I am absolutely, totally convinced that if we would tomorrow wipe out all the debt of those nations, within five years they would be in the same kind of debt because that is their mentality. I am not suggesting at all that that is wrong; I am suggesting only that we should not try and impose our way of life on theirs and bring them to our way of thinking, because the observation

that I made on that Sunday morning when those church bells rang made me change my mind on how we should deal with people in foreign countries. When I walked into that dome and I saw that zebra skin and I saw the smile on that young lady's face, I said we should change the way we think and how we approach the economics.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Madam Speaker, I, too, am pleased to put a few comments on the record this morning regarding the resolution that the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) has brought forward.

Certainly, it is a good resolution. I believe it is a resolution that has a lot of very good aspects to it, and as in part of the resolution it states this being the year of the Jubilee that certainly we need to look at forgiving those debts. But just to continue on the discussion that we heard from the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) and in our discussion here as we debate this resolution, certainly it is nice to forgive, and I think we all should. I believe that that should be our mandate, that should be our responsibility, to forgive other people.

* (1130)

But I want to go back and preface my comments with the years of experience that I have had in the credit union in the local area. We dealt with many people who had financial problems. These were problems that they had personally, collectively, whatever, accumulated and gotten themselves into over the years, and as we dealt with each individual situation, as far as simply the stroke of the pen, it would have been the simplest thing to write off that debt. Just to write it off, it is always the simplest thing. [interjection] The member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) has had his opportunity to speak. I would ask that I be given that same right as well.

It is a nice thing to do, but is that always the best approach to take? Now, what they need is education as to how they are going to deal with the problems that they have gotten themselves into. Again, I will deal with more of this resolution a little later on, but I want to take it to

a very personal basis. When you have people, when you have clients coming in year after year after year who have good jobs but who are at their maximum on their credit cards, who have used all the money, they have exhausted the funds that they have, is it the best thing to go ahead and just give them money.

So I am taking this to a local level, but I believe the similarity is there when we look at countries. I have had the opportunity to go to some of the underdeveloped countries to meet with the people, to meet with the officials of the government. I had the opportunity to go to India. Now this country is not the one that has been mentioned here by the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale), but I believe there certainly are some similarities as to what I saw in that country as I met with people who were working with MCC and who had devoted many years of their lives to helping improve the situation out there. But one classic example that will sit in my mind for many years to come is the fact that at the time that we were there, they were talking about the people who were starving, and the comments that were given by the people who are out there and working with them and also by government officials who lived out there was not that these people were starving but they were malnourished.

Now, you take a country like India. They can grow beans, which is a commodity, a product that we grow out here. It is high protein. It is a good nourishing food. They can grow fruits that the people need in order to be able to eat and survive, which is going to be good for their bodies, but they do not enjoy it, they do not like it, so they eat some of the staple foods that they have grown up with and they are malnourished.

Madam Speaker, in this case it was not the problem that they could not grow the food which would in fact give them the nourishment that they needed for their bodies, but it is something that they did not want to do. In many cases the problems that countries have run into is due to their own political problems that they have created for themselves. They have created these problems for themselves, and I come back to the comment that I made before. It is a nice thing to just go and write everything

off, but I believe that what the member missed in his comments was the fact that we need to be in there assisting them to try and get out of the problem that they have created for themselves, and it is not just always the case of writing everything off.

That does not resolve the problem, just to say your debt is cleared off, although I agree it would be a nice thing to do. I appreciated the member for Crescentwood making the comment that Prime Minister Mulroney, when he was in office, the human rights efforts that he put forth in order to be able to assist and he started on this, and I agree with the approach that was taken. I believe and I agree that as countries we need to do something, but I believe also that we need to get to the root of the problem, because as the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) indicated at the close of his comments, if you do not create an environment which is going to be there to help to assist them so they do not run into the same problems again, if you eradicate the debt that they have and take this away, they will be there within a few years again. You need to get down to the source of the problem, and I believe there are agencies and also my honourable colleague—

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, this is an incredibly important motion for justice and for long-term peace in this world. I have no problem with members opposite disagreeing if they wish to do so, but I wish that they would not characterize the motion differently than it is both intended and explained. No one has ever suggested unilateral debt elimination without conditions and without the United Nations involvement in ensuring that exactly what the member opposite wants would be the case. That is the intention of the motion. It has been explained that way, and I wish the honourable member would not characterize it other than that. If he wishes to oppose it, he should do so without changing so substantially the intent of the motion.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Crescentwood does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Dyck: Well, thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It is interesting that the member for Crescentwood would have that sensitivity towards the comments that I have made, because I am not opposing the resolution. I am stating that within this resolution there are some concerns that I have, and that does not mean that I am opposing it. I certainly do have concerns, as I indicated at the outset, from prior experience that you need to deal with the source of the problem. Just to eliminate and eradicate something does not touch the source of that problem, and it has to be there with strings attached. So certainly, I do not dispute what the member opposite said, although I do feel that there is a sensitivity towards the comments that I am making in trying to point out these things.

My experience would also go back to the relationships that I have established with people through MCC which is the Mennonite Central Committee. In fact, I met with a gentleman from my community two weeks ago, who is going out to South Africa. He is going to be living there and living within the communities for two months in order to help them establish a working relationship with the people around him in their community. He is going to a village, and what they are going to do is establish communities that are going to be able to produce some of the foods that they need in order to be able to survive and in order to be able to live in a community and live in such a way in the community that they do not need to be dependent upon other governments. Again, I believe that is the source of the essence of this resolution here that if we are going to go and forgive the indebtedness of these countries, we need to be able to establish a forum whereby they are going to be able to not have to be within that same situation in the next few years.

So, Madam Speaker, I believe that the resolution is a good one. I believe that it has many good aspects to it. Again, I do not know what the member for Crescentwood's (Mr. Sale) concerns are about the comments that I am making here.

* (1140)

The other organization who has been working and who I am involved with is MEDA,

which is the Mennonite Economic Development Association. Again, this is an organization that is going out and is helping to establish sites within different countries in some of the less privileged countries and helping them to in fact become self-sufficient. I believe this, as well, speaks to the heart of the resolution that we have here, what we are doing is going out and assisting. We are not asking them for money. We are not asking them to support our organizations. These are organizations that are funded from here. Certainly, this is going to give them the opportunity to be able to, in fact, create an environment and an economy within their own country which is going to help them be self-sustaining.

So I just wanted to put a few comments on the record, and certainly I am not disputing the importance of this resolution. I believe it certainly has merits to it, but I also maintain that we have to look at all the ramifications of it as to how they affect the people who we are dealing with. Just one more comment I want to make. That is, we are very familiar with our Canadian Wheat Board, and certainly through the Wheat Board there have been many, many countries who have received grain from Canada. There has been forgiveness given there. Now, again, this impacts on the local producers. It impacts on the countries the same way as it does, as I mentioned at the outset, with the credit unions.

But what has happened there? You give forgiveness of a loan; it is owned by members, so everyone is impacted by doing it. So you have to be careful how you make a unilateral decision of where you are using funds from others in order to be able to eradicate the dependency that others have upon governments or upon local organizations.

So again, Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity of putting these few comments on the record.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I am pleased to speak on this resolution of the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale). I would like to point out that this resolution for a year of Jubilee came from the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative. It is comprised of a large number of churches

and ecumenical coalitions. I would just like to read into the record the names of some of them. They include the Canadian Council of Churches Justice and Peace Commission, the Anglican Church of Canada, the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops Social Affairs Commission, the United Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church of Canada, the Conference of Mennonites in Canada, as well as the Mennonite Central Committee.

So the people that have been speaking have in fact specifically mentioned the Mennonite Central Committee. I just wanted to put on the record that this is one of the groups that are recommending the year of the Jubilee and that are part of the Canadian Ecumenical Jubilee Initiative. This points to a long history of ecumenical co-operation on economic and social justice issues in Canada.

In fact, in 1908, the Methodist and Presbyterian Boards of Evangelism and Social Service Representatives joined hands with labour leaders, other church leaders and social reform activists to advocate for the introduction of the Lord's Day Act. So we have a long history in Canada of churches raising justice issues at the political level.

Of course, this idea for a Jubilee year is much older. It goes back to the Hebrew Bible and specifically the Book of Leviticus, which talks about a biblical vision of Jubilee. I was not here so I do not know if the member for Crescentwood quoted this in his speech, so I will quote from the 25th Chapter of Leviticus, which says: and you shall hallow the 50th year, and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you. You shall not sow or reap the aftergrowth or harvest the unpruned vines, for it is a jubilee. It shall be holy to you. You shall eat only what the field itself produces. In this year of jubilee you shall return, every one of you, to your property. You shall observe My statutes and faithfully keep My ordinances so that you may live on the land securely. If any who are dependent on you become so impoverished that they sell themselves to you, you shall not make them serve as slaves. They shall serve with you until the year of the Jubilee, then they and their children with them shall be free from your authority.

So this is the biblical vision. This is the inspiration for the year of the Jubilee. It is really to be a year of liberation, liberation from bondage, liberation from indebtedness. Specifically the indebtedness that is spoken of here is the debt of Third World countries to either First World countries or the International Monetary Fund or the World Bank.

So why are we supporting it? Well, partly because it is part of a biblical vision, which many of us here support, partly because the debts of the Third World nations have consequences for their people. Debt payments by governments are going to First World countries and, as I mentioned, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, and they are going there instead of providing good health care, adequate nutrition, clean water, decent housing, daycare, and many other things that people need, education being another important one. The result is increasing inequality in our world and increasing poverty in Third World countries.

Also, because of the amount of debt, that is huge to these countries, the benefit of forgiveness of some of this debt would be a huge benefit to these countries but would be a small cost in terms of government debt to Canada. For example, in the pamphlet *A Call for Jubilee*, it says the cost of cancelling the debt of the poorest nations is relatively small. There are three kinds of debt which must be considered: commercial debt, which is owed to banks and other private lenders; bilateral debt, which is debt owed to governments; and multilateral debt, which is debt owed to international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

Canada is currently owed about \$1.2 billion Canadian by the poorest nations. The actual cost of writing off this debt would be considerably lower, and it could be written off over a number of years. Canada has already written off debts for some countries at similar costs in recent years. So this is something that we could do.

Now it is quite puzzling why this provincial Conservative government would oppose this resolution and not allow it to pass and instead talk it out, when it would not cost the government of Manitoba anything. The debt

forgiveness would come from the Government of Canada. So it is perplexing why government members cannot support this resolution.

I listened very carefully to the speech from the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), who really gave us a travelogue which did not address any of the substantive issues in the resolution. His philosophy basically is that the poor are happy, so why change the status quo? Now I think he was talking about a particular group of people who are happy with their circumstances, but I am wondering if many other people are unhappy with their circumstances. Why would oppressed people not be happier if they had clean water, enough food, adequate shelter, good medical care, and education for their children? What we heard from the member for Emerson was a plea for charity but ignore any calls for justice.

I listened to the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), who is also speaking against this resolution. I would like to point out that one of the problems with Third World debt is that the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank, in particular, impose on these countries structural adjustments which affect every area of their government which allow these international organizations to basically rewrite the laws of these countries and force them to do things which are not in their best interest because of their debts. One of the things that happens is that people are forced into large-scale farming, into growing and exporting cash crops, instead of feeding their own people. Surely, that is not in the interests of the people who live there.

So we know that these international organizations have great influence on the internal operations of these countries and are not in the best interests of the people who live there, but these countries feel forced to do this. They feel that they have no alternative. In fact, if they accept the lending of these organizations, international organizations, they really do have no alternative. They are forced to agree to the structural adjustment programs and the terms and conditions of the loans.

* (1150)

I am pleased that the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) brought this forward. I am

pleased that this ecumenical church coalition in Canada is calling for a year of Jubilee. Many of us had the petition in our churches which we signed, and I would actually like to table a copy of the petition in case some people did not get a chance to see it and would like to get a copy from the Clerk's table so that they can take it to their church and gather signatures on it. I understand that thousands of these petitions were collected and were publicly presented. I am not sure how many petitions or how many signatures, but I know that it was substantial. We hope that it will have a positive effect on not only Canada, which I understand it has had—the Prime Minister announced that he was—I am just going by memory here—but I think the Prime Minister endorsed this campaign and said that there would be some debt forgiveness by Canada of Third World debt. We are pleased to see that.

So we hope that through our speeches we can persuade government members to support this resolution. I do not think they are going to, but they might have second thoughts before the hour is over and see the light and support this resolution, which many of the churches that I know they attend are calling for and supporting, and that is international year of Jubilee. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Madam Speaker, I know that time has almost run out on this resolution. I wonder if you would not mind giving me an indication as to how much time there is left to speak on the resolution.

Madam Speaker: Eight minutes.

Mr. McAlpine: I do want to put a few comments on the record, but also I know that there are other members that do want to speak to this resolution. I want to offer my support to the resolution, because I believe that although there are different aspects in terms of debt repayment and what we have to look at when we consider that, I think, it is almost as important as the resolution itself. I think that under the circumstances, I certainly have not had an opportunity to give this resolution a lot of thought because it was brought forward and moved ahead of other resolutions. So I do not think that we have been given the opportunity that maybe the honourable member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) has had to

give thought to this. Certainly the comments that have been made by many members, the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner), the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), I certainly agree with the aspects and the rationale of forgiveness of debt. I agree with what the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) offered in terms of the year of the Jubilee.

We, as Conservative members on this side of the House, took our lead from the former Prime Minister of Canada in terms of what the honourable member for Crescentwood referenced. I think that when you look at this aspect, how do we help these people in Third World countries when they cannot do anything more and even cannot afford the debt, let alone to do other things? I certainly want to reference some of the aspects and encourage the federal government to look at this. Certainly the biblical thinking in terms of the forgiveness of debt, I certainly agree with that, but I think we also have to implement other conditions that would enable these people in Third World countries not to repeat the same thing. I think that is really the important aspect of this whole resolution.

I do not think there is enough information in the resolution to satisfy all the issues that we have to address here. I know that there are other members here on this side of the House that do want to offer their support to the resolution, but I think that we also want to give further consideration to how we as a government, I think we as legislators, have to be thinking seriously about how we are going to expand on this opportunity and look at it as an opportunity and our conditions and responsibility to these Third World countries.

So with those few comments on the record, I yield to my other colleagues. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, I just want to participate for a couple of minutes on this issue and make a point which is apropos to what has been happening in Yugoslavia and Kosovo. That is from the reading I have done, back in the '80s, and I am not blaming any particular person or country, but we in the west in our wisdom did very much impose

financial problems on Yugoslavia, on that country.

Maybe they had their own problems, but we were very tough with them through the IMF and so on and created a lot of social dissension and also undermined the ability of the central Serbian or Yugoslavian government to subsidize some of the provinces, including Kosovo, causing the standard of living to drop in some of the regions.

That subsidy out of Belgrade, I understand, was the cement that held that country together as it was held before, and once you squeezed them in terms of debt repayment and in terms of IMF conditions, it caused that cement to disappear, to be washed out. As a result, you had a large migration of Serbs out of Kosovo because of diminishing standard of living into Belgrade and into the Serbian area. At any rate, this is my understanding of an economist who has written on this, that we had created the conditions that eventually ended up in this conflict. I realize it is not that simple. There are other conditions and so on—ethnic background, history, and so on. But this economist affirmed the last 10 or 15 years our financial policies in the West have caused conditions that led to this horrible war that we just witnessed. So I just put that on the record to make the point that international indebtedness, international finance is very critical in terms of peace and prosperity and all the major concerns we have for good world order.

Hon. David Newman (Minister of Northern Affairs): Madam Speaker, I know there are others that want to speak on this, so I am going to be very brief. I wanted to go on record in supporting this resolution. I have not only signed a petition in supporting this in my own church, but I believe very strongly that this is the kind of act in an interfaith kind of way that should be supported. It is the kind of activity of religious groups throughout the world which I fully subscribe to and personally want to express my support for the resolution and thank the member for bringing it forward.

Hon. Mike Radcliffe (Minister of Labour): I join in sympathy with my honourable colleague

the Minister of Northern Affairs. I am of a like mind on this motion.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I too want to put a few words on the record on this very important resolution. It is indeed a very serious problem. I do not think there is any that would question the position in which we put our poorest of poor countries. We want to see significant progress in addressing those concerns. A lot of it is through debt management and how we facilitate these Third World countries in developing in a situation which is almost completely unbearable because of the debt that is there.

I can recall even internally, I believe it was Chief Louis Stevenson who talked about some of the problems we have on our aboriginal reserves and some of the debt problems that are also there. We have seen representation from reserves go to some of these Third World countries and compare some of the problems that both of them share. I think the general spirit of the resolution is a very positive suggestion. I do not know to what degree it has been debated inside the House of Commons. I do know Minister Lloyd Axworthy is very much concerned with regard to this particular issue, as I know the member for Crescentwood is likely aware. He has personally taken on a portfolio that I believe can make a difference. I know there are a number of us from within, not only our party but Manitobans as a whole, who are hoping that he will be successful in addressing issues, such as the ones that have been brought forward in this particular resolution. I wish the federal government well in trying to draw a very positive conclusion so that we can help the poorest of our poor. Hopefully, we will all be able to contribute in some way. I find what is most effective is communicating my thoughts and beliefs on this particular issue to my federal counterparts. With those few words, Madam Speaker, we are quite content to see the resolution go to a vote.

Hon. Mervin Tweed (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): I, too, just wanted to put a few comments on the record. I think it is a good resolution that has been brought forward. I am not fully understanding the criteria that have been set out and defined by the United Nations on the debt forgiveness side of it, and I regret—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable minister will have 14 minutes remaining.

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, June 10, 1999

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