

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, 22 May, 1986.

Time — 2:00 p.m.

OPENING PRAYER by Madam Speaker.

MADAM SPEAKER, Hon. M. Phillips: Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees . . .

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Employment Services.

HON. L. EVANS: Madam Speaker, I have a Ministerial Statement. I would like to inform the members of this Assembly that our government has developed and just introduced a new single parents job access project to help single parents on social allowance gain the skills they need to find employment. The \$1.2 million project is operating in two centres, Winnipeg and Brandon, and is run by the Manitoba Employment Services and Economic Securities, Winnipeg Human Resources Opportunity Centre, and the Westbran Human Resources Opportunity Centre.

To operate this project, the province is receiving cost-sharing assistance from the Canadian Job Strategy's Job Development Program. Approximately 344 — 248 in Winnipeg and 96 in Brandon — single parents are expected to take part in the project during the first year of operation.

Participants in the single parents job access project will take part in programming that is specific to their needs. Programming options include pre-employment and employment preparation groups where 15 participants per group will spend 12 weeks focusing on career information, self-confidence building, decision-making and job search techniques; up to six months of work experience with a community employer with a good chance of extending to permanent employment. The employer may be a private business, a government department or maybe from the non-profit sector.

Placement into skills training at a community college or trade school, funding would be through the Employment and Immigration Canada, where possible, and alternatively through loans, bursaries, or student social allowances.

The last option I mentioned, Madam Speaker, is a combination of on-site, that is, at the Human Resource Opportunity Centre location, and off-site training.

The Government of Manitoba places a high priority on initiatives which break the cycle of welfare dependency. For example, we have a variety of initiatives in the department including a special needs component of the Manitoba Jobs and Training Program.

In this single parents job access project, we have focused on single parents, social assistance recipients who have the capacity to do better for themselves, but

who may have difficulty organizing themselves to deal with the combination of family and other responsibilities, as well as employment. This is a very worthwhile project which will help single parents, particularly women, to organize and take charge of their lives. It will provide them with the opportunity to become capable decision-makers and employees.

Madam Speaker, I'm confident that we will be successful with the creative, multi-faceted approach of the single parents job project, and I hope that it will lead to longer-term and broader programming that will be effective in providing employment to many Manitobans who sincerely want this kind of opportunity. Thank you.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MRS. C. OLESON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I would like first of all, of course, to thank the Minister for the announcement today. I understand that he had a press conference earlier and announced it outside the House. I'm sure that all the single women who are on . . .

A MEMBER: Single parents.

MRS. C. OLESON: . . . single parents who are on welfare or social assistance at this time will be very grateful to hear that news. I understand a great deal of the money is going to the Brandon area and the rest of it to Winnipeg. It occurs to me also to wonder if there could not be some channelled into the Dauphin, Portage, Thompson areas; other cities where no doubt there is the same problem with people on social assistance.

I wonder also how the Minister can stand in his place today and announce this program so magnanimously when 65 percent of it is federal money and we're always hearing — one by one from the Government benches — criticism of federal activities, federal funding. So I'm happy to see that . . .

A MEMBER: It wasn't even mentioned.

MRS. C. OLESON: Well, there was a bare mention of federal initiative with this. I understand from communications with Saskatchewan that the Saskatchewan Government introduced a program such as this some two years ago, and I understand also that it is working very well.

I share the Minister's hope that this will help a great many people and I do believe that it will be a worthwhile addition to the programs of this province.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. R. PENNER: Madam Speaker, I beg leave to file the Thirteenth Annual Report of Legal Aid Manitoba for the year ending March 31, 1985; and the 62nd

Annual Report of the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission for the fiscal year April 1, 1984 to March 31, 1985.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to table the Annual Report of Manitoba Community Services for the year 1985-86.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Thank you.

I'd like to table the 1985 Annual Report of the Manitoba Mineral Resources Ltd.; and the 1985-86 Annual Report of the Civil Service Commission, as Acting Minister responsible for The Civil Service Act.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Cultural Resources.

HON. J. WASYLICIA-LEIS: Madam Speaker, I have the pleasure of tabling the following Annual Reports, all for the year 1984-85: The Manitoba Arts Council; the Manitoba Intercultural Council; Le Centre Culturel Franco-Manitobain; the Film Classification Board and the Manitoba Centennial Centre Corporation.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of the Environment.

HON. G. LECUYER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I beg leave to table the Annual Report for 1985 of the Workers Compensation Board.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Municipal Affairs.

HON. J. BUCKLASCHUK: Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report for the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation for the year ending October 31, 1985.

MADAM SPEAKER: Notice of Motion . . . Introduction of Bills . . .

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MADAM SPEAKER: Before we move to Oral Questions, I'd like to direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery where we have 60 students from Grade 9 from the Meadows School. These visitors are under the direction of Mrs. Bev Ranson. The school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Brandon West.

On behalf of all the members, I'd like to welcome you to the Legislature this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTIONS

Child abuse

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rhineland.

MR. A. BROWN: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Community Services and Corrections. The question concerns the two-and-a-half year old girl who was sexually assaulted and slain while in a foster home. My question to the Minister is, will the Minister conduct a full inquiry of this most unfortunate child abuse instance in a case which resulted in the death of this child?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to comment on the very tragic and troubling case that is before us. I have received some preliminary briefing but, as usual on cases such as this, they are before the courts and I can't comment in detail. I have, as is the usual procedure, asked my Director of Child and Family Services to conduct a thorough investigation of the procedures and then report to me on the case. I have also asked that an external consultant be asked to review the procedures within the child abuse area to ensure that we leave no stone unturned to identify and protect children at risk. Madam Speaker, when dealing with child abuse, we are uncovering examples of child abuse that to our knowledge have been rampant for years in society but were not often identified as such. Now that we are identifying these cases, Manitoba is recognized at the lead of provinces in trying to develop protocols to draw in all the relevant professionals to deal with the issue and to build a system that not only deals with abuse after it has occurred but indeed in time will hopefully, if we all pull together, prevent such instances.

MR. A. BROWN: My question to the Minister is, will she make the results of this inquiry public and will the inquiry investigate why the Northwest Child and Family Services Agency took no action when the child abuse of this girl and her brother were reported by their parents to a social worker which was employed by this agency?

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, I've said that the investigation will be thorough and I will be quite happy to report when the results are brought to me.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Could the Minister confirm that not once during the one-year period that this child was placed in this home was the home contacted or checked by a child care worker?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. M. SMITH: Well, Madam Speaker, I've said in my initial response that specific cases, while they're under investigation by the courts, it's not appropriate for me to comment on the detail. I have assured the — (Interjection) — House . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

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HON. M. SMITH: . . . that when I have a full report and the legal — (Interjection) — process has . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

HON. M. SMITH: . . . been complete, that I will make public any findings that are of interest and relevance. Madam Speaker, I've undertaken that and I will follow through.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, it's interesting to note the Minister's new-found interest in child abuse. I wonder if she could indicate to the House when she will be responding to the letter I sent to her last November 22, 1985, setting out 12 detailed questions with respect to what is happening in the whole area of child abuse. When can I expect an answer to this letter of November 22, 1985?

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, I note that the member opposite has a new-found interest in the area of child abuse. There was no funding for the child abuse protection centre when those members were in charge of the government, Madam Speaker. We have had to take an issue and build from scratch a whole network of services both to treat and eventually to identify and prevent child abuse.

Madam Speaker, with regard to the November 16 letter, I responded to the member that I would be prepared to meet with him, but I was doubtful because of the method he has used in drawing my attention to those issues of going public and holding a press conference without coming to me, whether it would be productive. I did give that response to him, Madam Speaker.

MR. G. MERCIER: Madam Speaker, during February of this year the Minister refused on two occasions to debate and discuss publicly concerns raised by child care workers and professionals in the inner city with respect to this government's program. Is she now prepared to discuss those issues with the inner core agency publicly, and is she willing to assure this House and members of the public that abused children are not being returned to high-risk situations and that proper resources are being supplied to child care workers to avoid these situations?

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, the member opposite knows full well because I have given the answer to him during the election campaign. I was invited to attend a meeting when I was scheduled to be in Vancouver at a federal-provincial meeting. Later, when that meeting got rescheduled, I alerted the agency that I would be prepared to come to a meeting. Madam Speaker, they set a date that fell within the election campaign. Once the election campaign started, I was needed in my constituency and I was following that as my top priority. Madam Speaker, I have alerted that agency that I would be willing to come and discuss with them. I had attended their meetings before and I have been accessible to countless groups on this particular issue.

Madam Speaker, I think the member opposite is trying to suggest that this side has taken no interest in this

area. We have built the program, and when Estimates debate comes, Madam Speaker, we will go into all of the program in detail; but I defy the members opposite to say that there's any quick, easy fix to the question of child abuse in our society.

The issues of family violence are not issues caused by this side of the House. They are not issues which we by ourselves can solve. They're going to take the concerted effort of all members of society to deal with, Madam Speaker.

Main Street Project

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for River Heights.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question is also to the Community Services Ministry. The Main Street Project, which is a valuable social action group within our inner city, employees of which have been without contract for 13 months — can the Minister assure this House that in fact contract negotiations are proceeding?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As Acting Minister in charge of the Civil Service Commission, I will take that question as notice.

MRS. S. CARSTAIRS: Would the Minister also take as notice the fact that they are preparing to go on strike tomorrow and therefore there's some urgency?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Yes, I'll take that as notice as well.

Energy Rate Stabilization Act

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, my question is for the Premier. During the Hydro Committee hearings this week we entered into discussion with respect to The Energy Rate Stabilization Act, an act that was put in place concurrent with the hydro rate freeze to allow for the subsidy from the taxpayer of Manitoba Hydro for the amount of its foreign exchange losses.

In view of the fact that the energy rate freeze for Manitoba Hydro has been taken off more than two years now and that Hydro appears to be showing a net revenue situation for this past year and the current year, will the government now be repealing that Energy Rate Stabilization Act?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As the Minister in charge of Hydro, I've indicated that we are taking that matter under review. In fact, we have had some discussions on that over the last

year or so and when a decision is taken we will certainly be informing the Leader of the Opposition.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, given that the President, Mr. Arnason, on Tuesday projected a net revenue of \$30 million from Manitoba Hydro and the stabilization funds on foreign exchange losses are in the range of \$20 million to \$30 million, or the projection could well be in that range given what it was last year, would the Premier not believe that Manitoba Hydro should be paying its own way and not continue to be subsidized by the taxpayer for these foreign exchange losses?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I don't know whether I'm hearing accurately. I thought it was the government represented by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that did indeed undertake this legislation in the first instance. Now he rises in his place to propose a repeal of that legislation, suggesting there were sufficient revenues in order to carry the particular currency exchange differential. The Minister responsible for Hydro, I think, has answered it as clearly as he can in this House. It will be a matter that will be reviewed in totality considering the many circumstances that Manitoba Hydro, the Provincial Government and the community as a whole must weigh in undertaking considerations of this nature.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I know that the Premier has difficulty understanding that, given the application of a freeze on hydro rates, The Energy Rates Stabilization Act was put in place to forego or to cover over for the loss of revenue that would occur by the freeze . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please.

May I remind the Honourable Leader of the Opposition that question period is not a time for debate? Do you have a supplementary question? If so, please put it.

MR. G. FILMON: I do. Madam Speaker, because the two were concurrent that the freeze was supplemented for by The Energy Rates Stabilization Act, which was confirmed by the president of Manitoba Hydro, which was confirmed by the chairman of the Manitoba Energy Authority and the Minister responsible, will the Premier not act to repeal The Energy Rates Stabilization Act in order to ensure that the taxpayers are no longer subsidizing Manitoba Hydro now that the freeze has been lifted?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, the question has already been asked twice; it is now, of course, repetitious.

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the Premier could assist me and answer the question and say, are they going to repeal that act in this Session.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, this is the fourth time that question has been framed. The Minister of

Industry, Trade and Technology, responsible for Manitoba Hydro, has answered the question by indicating that will be a matter of review over the next number of months.

October Partnership and Gov't. of Man. contract

MR. G. FILMON: Madam Speaker, I have another question for the Premier. It concerns the contract for services that was entered into between the October Partnership and the Government of Manitoba for consulting services. The contract, Madam Speaker, in (5) calls for the firm to be paid as follows: ". . . 30 percent on signing the contract; 30 percent on submitting a satisfactory draft/final report; and a final 20 percent on submitting a satisfactory final report by November 30, 1986." That adds up to 80 percent of the fees to be paid. What happens to the other 20 percent?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition certainly has asked a valid question, and I will be responding to that. I think obviously the total amount would be paid on the completion of the task, the total amount owing.

MR. G. FILMON: I wonder if the Premier could ascertain whether this is a built-in discount for the contract, or whether the government was simply unaware that the figures didn't add up to 100 percent.

Shilo Canadian Forces Base Schools

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon West.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Education about the fact that the Department of National Defence has taken the position that non-resident students at the Shilo Canadian Forces Base schools, about 70 children from the adjacent Spruce Woods community, should be bused to Brandon for classes. In view of the fact that if the Department of Education paid to the Shilo CFB Division a rate per student similar to the amount paid per student to the Brandon School Division, the DND might be persuaded to allow those students to remain at the Shilo schools, has the Minister of Education met with officials of the Department of National Defence to address the problem faced by these school children and their parents?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, staff, I believe, have met with officials both from the affected school and the Department of National Defence. I will also be meeting with community representatives, I believe tomorrow, and I am aware of the problem.

I believe some interim solutions have been worked out and, as I have indicated, I will be meeting to pursue the question further to make sure that there is a resolution.

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MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, the Minister is correct. I believe a year's time has been bought to allow this matter to be hashed out. But since the Department of National Defence is not in the business of educating non-forces personnel children and since the Department of Education of Manitoba has been getting a good deal for many years, paying only about \$375 per student, what position does the Minister take respecting funding for these students?

HON. J. STORIE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I think clearly the Federal Government and the Provincial Government have to work out some kind of equitable formula for the funding of our respective employees' children. I would make the point to the honourable member and I certainly will be making it to representatives of the Federal Government, that we have other circumstances, particularly where off-Reserve students are being educated by the Provincial Government.

I should point out to the member that the Provincial Government spends approximately \$4,000 per student in the public school system and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development pays approximately \$2,600.00.

We are going to be in discussions with the Federal Government to come up with some equitable arrangements whereby the province looks after its responsibilities and the Federal Government looks after its.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Brandon West with a supplementary, with no preamble.

MR. J. McCRAE: Madam Speaker, you make it difficult.

Is it the view of the Minister that these students should be funded by the province to a lesser extent than other students funded by the province in Manitoba?

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, I have indicated to the member that I will be meeting with the parties involved to examine the issue. I have indicated as well, that the province is prepared to assume its responsibilities.

There is a legitimate question to be asked on the other side of the fence and that is, is the Federal Government prepared to live up to its responsibilities?

Compensation for victims of justice system

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ellice.

MR. H. SMITH: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is for the Attorney-General. My concern is the issue of compensation for a defendant who spent nine months in jail without his lawyer being told of an eyewitness.

Yesterday the Attorney-General told the House that the issue of compensation in such cases is under review. Can the Attorney-General tell us when this review will be finished?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. R. PENNER: Yes, and while I am on my feet, Madam Speaker, I'll answer the questions asked by the Member for St. Norbert as well.

First of all, with respect to the specific question asked, the review, I hope to be able to report to the House on a policy within two, three weeks at the most.

Suspension Crown Attorney

HON. R. PENNER: Secondly, with respect to the specific issue, a question asked by the Member for St. Norbert on the process that was used in reviewing the disciplinary issue that was involved, I can confirm that the Deputy Minister, the Assistant Deputy Minister, Criminal Prosecutions, Mr. John Guy, and the Director of Prosecutions, Mr. Wayne Myshkowsky, met with the particular Crown Attorney and the representative of the Manitoba Association of Crown Attorneys and heard his side of the story, then met and assessed the penalty. I am advised that the particular Crown Attorney will not be grieving the penalty.

With respect, one additional bit of information which flows out of the questions, the particular individual who spent nine months in jail on the information I now have, it should be pointed out, Madam Speaker, that his arrest was the result of his confession of the crime, which he subsequently repudiated and then subsequent evidence cast some doubt on the whole affair. But in any event virtually all, if not all of the nine months he spent in jail, was not related to that incident but to parole violations.

Compensation for victims of justice system

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Ellice with a supplementary.

MR. H. SMITH: Can the Attorney-General tell us what other provinces, and indeed this province, has given compensation for similar victims of the justice system in the past?

HON. R. PENNER: Yes. This is a matter in which the Federal Minister of Justice, Mr. John Crosbie, who I have never criticized in this House, has taken a lead role and there have been meetings between federal and provincial officials on this vexing question because we've had recent cases, a Fox, and Marshall and Truscott who have raised this issue and there has been an attempt to develop a uniform policy and we're close to the development of that policy.

At the moment, no province has in place, to my knowledge, and there is no federal policy in place, to my knowledge, that deals with this vexing question.

We've had two or three cases recently, of which the one under discussion is one, but there have been two others that begs the need for a policy and that is why I am accelerating the development of such a policy and will announce it to the House, I hope, in two or three weeks.

MR. H. SMITH: A supplementary question. Is the Attorney-General satisfied that procedures have been set in place to eliminate further incidents where people have been incarcerated for nine months due to error?

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. The satisfaction of the Attorney-General is not a proper question.

Would the member please rephrase his question and ask a question that does not seek an opinion?

MR. H. SMITH: Okay. Has the Attorney-General established a procedure so that this will not occur again?

HON. R. PENNER: With respect to the Member for Ellice, that's a little bit about, when did you stop beating your wife? — (Interjection) — I stopped beating my wife when she told me to stop beating her; after that, it was easy.

Madam Speaker, seriously, there is not yet evidence in any one of the cases presently under review that people were wrongfully detained to the point where the Crown has a duty to compensate.

We'll take a look at the policy — the House will take a look at the policy and then we'll see if that is the case.

I mentioned that in this particular incident, the arrest and detention of the accused initially was on the basis of his own confession of the crime, which he subsequently repudiated. Thereafter he was incarcerated because of unrelated matters.

Headingley Jail staff cuts

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Rhineland.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Community Services and Corrections. My question regards staff cuts at Headingley, which could result in a walkout by guards at Headingley as early as three o'clock this afternoon.

Can the Minister inform this House whether this situation has been resolved?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Community Services.

HON. M. SMITH: Yes, Madam Speaker. There has been no reduction in funding or staff at Headingley. Staff and the MGEA have met and agreed to resolve it through negotiation, so that's the current situation.

MR. A. BROWN: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My concern is that at the present time I understand there are no formal guidelines regarding staff which can be discussed with management and staff. Can the Minister tell me why there are no guidelines?

HON. M. SMITH: Madam Speaker, we have been developing standards and staffing guidelines at Headingley but the program is evolving as well. If there are any areas that have not yet been defined, my staff will undertake to see that that is completed; but I think any detail of that sort can be dealt with during Estimates.

Payroll tax

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Morris.

MR. C. MANNES: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I address my question to the former Minister of Finance, the present Acting Minister. It's a question dealing with the mechanics of the assessment of the payroll tax. Can the Minister tell me whether or not there are conditions under which the Minister or members of his staff have discretion which they can exercise, to see people in business not pay the payroll tax and can they also indicate what those conditions may be?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I take it that it's with respect to the health and education levy and I'll have to take that question as notice. I can't recall offhand any discretion such as that, other than when the legislation was initially introduced I believe there was one exception, but I should get back to the member with respect to that.

While I'm on my feet, Madam Speaker, I had taken a question as notice last week and I'd ask the indulgence of the House to get the opportunity to answer. It was from the Member for Sturgeon Creek who . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. Did the Honourable Member for Morris have a supplementary on that same subject before we change it?

MR. C. MANNES: Yes, I do, Madam Speaker. I'd like to ask the Acting Minister at this time if he can determine whether there is a list kept of those people who have been excused from paying that tax. Can he also bring back to this House an indication of how the public, those of us within the Assembly and the Opposition, may gain access to that list?

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My recollection is that businesses which qualified for the Interest Reduction Program which we set up in 1982 — and there were three portions of it: the interest rate reduction for homeowners, interest rate reduction for farmers and interest rate reduction for businesses.

I believe that farmers and business people who qualified for the reduction, during the period while they qualified, might also have qualified for a reduction or elimination of the health and education levy, but I don't know whether or not there is a list of the people. Certainly, I'll take that question as notice for the Minister of Finance and have him deal with it.

Madam Speaker, you can tell me when I can answer the other question.

Northern Telecom - layoffs

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Technology.

HON. V. SCHROEDER: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Member for Sturgeon Creek had referred to the layoff — which is a serious matter — of 35 people at Northern Telecom and he wanted to know whether that was something where Winnipeg had been singled out, or whether it was something that was happening across the industry.

I'm informed that while Northern Telecom operates some 20 plants in various locations in Canada and the U.S., this particular plant is a part of Northern Telecom's Network Access Division. There are three plants; it has two sister plants at Ottawa and Aylmer.

This particular division, like all other divisions, operates autonomously in order to maintain effectiveness and as a result — the point being that valid comparisons are possible only within those divisions.

The division as a whole, unfortunately, has experienced a decline in employment of 44 percent, and here in Winnipeg alone it's at 25 percent with these layoffs. Certainly, while we're not happy with it, it's clear that it's part of the overall division.

Gasoline prices

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I have a question for the Premier. During the election campaign, the Premier made a substantial election commitment to do something about the price of gasoline in Manitoba by April 1. As we have seen over the last few days in certain areas of the province, there has been an increase in fact in gasoline and not a further reduction. When will the Premier live up to his election commitment and do something about it?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, during the course of the election I indicated that if the price of gasoline did not decrease by April 1, by 9.5 cents a litre, that we would undertake action in order to bring about that reduction.

On April 2, the price of gasoline had reduced province-wide at a rate of 9.4 cents, considering the additional federal tax that had been imposed in the interim, so in fact the particular amount of reduction did occur on April 2, not April 1, as had been indicated.

Madam Speaker, in saying that, I recognize there is continuing to be a serious problem in respect to the price of gasoline, not just in Canada but elsewhere. Shell Gas Company indicated only two weeks ago that there had been an excessive amount of profit which had not been returned to the motorists of this country. It is for that reason that I've asked the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs to do all within his power to ensure there is legislation brought before this sitting of the Legislature to do what we can, as Manitobans, to ensure that Manitoba motorists receive a fair deal insofar as the price of gasoline in the Province of Manitoba, from the gas companies.

Madam Speaker, I want just to continue. I wish that Petrocan, that expected to be . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please, order please. Answers to questions should be brief and should not be provoking debate.

The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. J. DOWNEY: Madam Speaker, in view of the fact that the Premier has failed to live up to his election

commitment and do something about the gasoline prices, is the First Minister going to take some of the weight off the taxpayer's back tonight by removal of some of the taxes that the Provincial Treasury been taking out of their pockets?

HON. H. PAWLEY: Madam Speaker, I totally and completely deny the unfounded allegation by the Member for Arthur that we have not lived up to our election commitment.

We are going beyond that, by way of the Commission of Inquiry, by way of ensuring that there is an ascertainment of the measures that can be dealt with by way of amendments to The Trade Practices Act . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Order please. I presume if an honourable member asks a question, he would like to hear the answer.

The Honourable First Minister.

HON. H. PAWLEY: . . . in order to ensure the motorists of this province receive a fair deal from the gas companies of the Province of Manitoba. And, Madam Speaker, I wish that Petrocan, a federal Crown corporation expanded in the past year under the auspices and support of their federal colleagues in Ottawa, would take a lead in ensuring that the motorists of this country receive a fair deal.

Public Schools Act

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry.

MR. C. BIRT: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

My question is to the Minister of Education. In response yesterday to a question from the Member for St. Vital, the Minister made two reasons why a certain section was not being proclaimed in The Public Schools Act. One of them related to a review as it related to the Charter of Rights.

My question to the Minister is, who is conducting the review and if it is more than one individual, could he advise me who all the people are in this group or organization that is reviewing it?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: Yes, Madam Speaker. Of course, the review of the implications of the Charter goes much beyond simply the Department of Education. The Attorney-General obviously has already introduced compliance legislation last year and I believe is scheduled to do so this year as well.

Within the department, the review is an internal one conducted by an Assistant Deputy Minister. My remarks were general that the Charter has implications for the questions raised by that particular section of the act.

The review obviously is going to be going on, not only in the department as a result of requests from parents, parent groups, but as a result of continuing challenges as a result of the Charter of Rights.

MR. C. BIRT: A supplementary question, Madam Speaker. Are there terms of reference for this internal

review and, if there are references, would the Minister please table them?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Education.

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, yes, the terms of reference are quite broad in that we want a review of The Public Schools Act in terms of the implications that any parts of that act conflict with the Charter of Rights. So it is an internal review, basically going over clause-by-clause of The Public Schools Act. It is not particularly exciting in a sense, those are the terms of reference.

MR. C. BIRT: Madam Speaker, I asked if the terms, no matter how narrow or broad they are, would be tabled, I would like to see them. The Minister said he did. I would like an answer to that question and, as this is my final supplementary, I would like to know if any report or interim statement or commentary has been made by this review team as to suggestions within the department. If so, would he also table those reports or memorandum or information?

HON. J. STORIE: Madam Speaker, in the first instance, obviously those are internal documents, working documents, to give us some appreciation for the difficulties we may be incurring as a result of the application of the Charter. I have given the member verbatim the terms of reference of that review. It is to look at The Public Schools Act, and obviously anyone who has a copy can review it and draw their own conclusions about the adequacy of the provisions under the Act in terms of the Charter of Rights. That is what is going on, there are no other terms of reference.

Liability insurance coverage

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Riel.

MR. G. DUCHARME: Madam Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs Minister, or the Acting Minister right now. In light of the non-answers from my first questions I had in the House yesterday, the Minister admitted in his statements that we have to deal with this very important matter of issue of large unpredictable punitive awards. My question to the Minister, or the Acting Minister, is he contemplating doing anything to help both the industry and the public so dramatically affected right now, as of today?

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Attorney-General.

HON. R. PENNER: In my capacity as Acting Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Attorney-General, in fact the analysis that has been done in terms of the increasing costs of liability insurance, indicates — I only say indicates — that so-called large punitive awards, if they play any role at all, play a very minor role. The problem is with an industry which is sought to increase its profits at a fantastic rate and, indeed, they have taken advantage of isolated awards here and there, none of them in Canada, that have in

fact stood as final awards in order to make up their losses on some problems internationally in the re-insurance market. These are matters that are of concern nationally and are being addressed by both Federal and Provincial Ministers of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

MR. G. DUCHARME: In view of the fact that the answer did come from another lawyer, I'm not surprised that the industry is blamed. But during the recent campaign, the answers that I am getting today and the statements made by the First Minister during the campaign, does this mean . . .

MADAM SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have a question?

MR. G. DUCHARME: Is the government considering abandoning any thoughts of helping out these people and their concerns today?

HON. R. PENNER: I must say, Madam Speaker, that slam at lawyers was unwarranted and certainly, as a personal comment, it was unwarranted. I'm not rising to defend lawyers. Who is being attacked by the industry is the judiciary and the Member for Riel should know better than to attack the judiciary who are not capable of defending themselves in remarks of that kind.

What is being done is, for example, the Manitoba Law Reform Commission and the Canada Law Reform Commission are combining their efforts in looking at a system of awards for this kind of damage — called in law a tort — that would be on a no-fault compensatory basis and would remove any possibility of elements of inflated compensation for pain and suffering. That is being researched and we have contributed our bit to an ongoing study looking at such systems as the Australian and New Zealand systems, and we hope to have some answers on a very complex question within a year.

MADAM SPEAKER: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

ORDERS FOR RETURN

No. 1 — Details on travel

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. D. BLAKE: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Rhineland

THAT this House do issue an Order for Return giving the following information:

Details of all travel incurred by Members of the Executive Council, their personal staff or departmental staff from November 15, 1985 through to January 1, 1986, showing specifically, for each trip:

1. The destination and purpose of business;
2. Cost of air fare, airline used, cost of hotel(s), hotel(s) stayed at, other transportation expenses and other costs;

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- Names of organizations and/or people met with;
- A list of any people accompanying a Member of the Executive Council, their personal staff or departmental staff; and
- The total cost to the government for said trips.

Madam Speaker, we have had some correspondence with the former House Leader requesting some clarification on this as it was requiring some detail. We are quite prepared to alter the order, changing from the Executive Council to any elected members, and the support staff being changed to support staff supported by an Order-in-Council, if that is acceptable to members of the government.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. J. COWAN: Madam Speaker, with the qualifications as outlined, we accept the Order for Return.

MOTION presented and carried.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move, seconded by the Member for Sturgeon Creek

THAT an Order of the House do issue for the return of the following information:

A list of all polls and public opinion surveys commissioned by the Province of Manitoba, its departments, Crown corporations and agencies for the period November 29, 1981 to March 18, 1986, the costs of such polls and public opinion surveys and copies of such polls and public opinion surveys and the results thereof.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. J. COWAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Again, the government is pleased to accept that Order for Return.

MOTION presented and carried.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

MR. G. MERCIER: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I move, seconded by the Member for Morris

THAT an Order of the House do issue for the return of the following information:

The names of permanent, term, contract, part-time employees and civil servants of the Province of Manitoba including Crown corporations and agencies who received a leave of absence for the period from January 1, 1986 to March 18, 1986, or any part thereof and also showing:

- the purpose for the leave of absence;
- the position and title of each employee on leave;

c) the salary of each employee on leave.

Madam Speaker, I would indicate that the Government House Leader and I have had certain discussions on the understanding that the government will accept the Order for Return on the basis that it will exempt leaves of absence for medical and family reasons.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. J. COWAN: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Again, the government is pleased to accept that Order for Return.

MOTION presented and carried.

No. 4 - Community Assets Program

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Gladstone.

MRS. C. OLESON: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

I move, seconded by the Member for Brandon West THAT an order of the House do issue for the return of the following information:

- The numbers of applications in 1985 for the Community Assets Program. For each application, state:
 - the name, description, and location of the intended program;
 - the municipality or intended district;
 - the number of proposed jobs the project will create;
 - an acceptance or rejection by the Community Assets Program;
 - the name of the group, business, or applicant who applied for the project.
- List all the approved Community Assets Program projects for 1985. Include the following information:
 - the length of program;
 - the total cost of program;
 - breakdown of funding showing provincial grants, federal grants and funds provided by the applicant;
 - the total number of jobs created by the project and those jobs directly funded by the Community Assets Program and other provincial programs.
- The total cost of advertising spent on the Community Assets Program.
- The total cost of publications produced for the Community Assets Program.
- The total number of employees hired or on contract or term employed to administer the Community Assets Program, their job descriptions and their salaries and expense accounts.
- The number of regional offices, office locations and the following costs for the Community Assets Program:
 - to lease, rent or buy office space;
 - costs of decorating, refurbishing and furniture.

7. The cost to lease, rent, or buy cars for the Community Assets Program.

I would also, Madam Speaker, like to mention that I submitted an Order for Return on the same subject last year — I'm not certain as to the date now — but I would appreciate if it was forthcoming.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. J. COWAN: Madam Speaker, we are pleased to accept this Order for Return.

On the matter of the previous Order for Return, it's my understanding that, when the House prorogues, Orders for Return stay over until the next sitting but, when the House dissolves, the Orders for Return have to be resubmitted. I have checked that with the Clerk previously, and we would be pleased to have that one resubmitted if that, in fact, is the appropriate procedure. I would seek guidance in that regard, and perhaps we can discuss it at another time.

MOTION presented and carried.

MADAM SPEAKER: The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

MR. G. MERCIER: On a point of order, I don't particularly agree with the comments of the Government House Leader, but perhaps we can defer that and allow us an opportunity to discuss that matter further before raising it in the House.

MADAM SPEAKER: That particular issue is not an issue before the House at this particular point. If some member would like to bring it before the House under

the appropriate conditions, we can deal with it at that time.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

MADAM SPEAKER: May I interrupt proceedings to direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery where there are 22 students from Grade 8 from the Reston Elementary School, and these students are under the direction of J. Veselovsky. The school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Arthur. On behalf of all the members, I'd like to welcome you to the Legislature this afternoon.

The Honourable Government House Leader.

HON. J. COWAN: Yes, Madam Speaker, as you are aware, because of the recent holiday and the effect of that holiday on the timing of the vote of the Throne Speech and due to the fact that the Budget Debate usually commences at 8 o'clock p.m. by tradition, we are blessed today with a brief hiatus between now and 8 o'clock tonight.

I've had some brief discussions with the Opposition House Leader and the Member for River Heights as to how we might occupy the time of the House between now and that period of time. I think it's been agreed, although we discussed a number of different options, that calling it 5:30 at this early hour in the afternoon might be the most appropriate way to allow for the Budget to proceed in the traditional manner, and to acknowledge the impact of the holiday on the vote timing on the Throne Speech Debate.

MADAM SPEAKER: Is it the will of the House to call it 5:30? (Agreed)

The hour being 5:30 then, I am leaving the Chair and will return at 8:00 p.m.