

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, October 16, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): I am pleased to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review for the 1989-90 Estimates of Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Recreation.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, at long last I am pleased to table two documents, the Executive Summary and the full report of the Churchill Research Rocket Range Feasibility Study.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BILL NO. 56—THE WORKERS COMPENSATION AMENDMENT ACT (2)

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs) introduced, by leave, Bill No. 56, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les accidents du travail. (Recommended by His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor).

BILL NO. 57—THE PENSION BENEFITS AMENDMENT ACT

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General) introduced, on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond), by leave, Bill No. 57, The Pension Benefits Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les prestations de pension.

BILL NO. 58—THE PENSION BENEFITS AMENDMENT ACT (2)

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General) introduced, on behalf of the Honourable Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond), by leave, Bill No. 58, The Pension Benefits Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les prestations de pension.

* (1335)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Stubble and Peat Burning Regulations

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on August 9 and again on August 30 we

called for changes and action on the part of the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) with respect to regulations aimed at the control and burning of stubble and peat.

On Saturday, five accidents, two people taken to hospital because of poor visibility due to the burning of stubble and peat moss. Can the Minister of the Environment tell us today if he is now prepared to introduce regulations to control the burning of stubble and peat, or is he going to allow this accident rate to continue to climb?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, first of all, if I recall the previous dates that the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) is referring to, they were speaking in reference to the stubble burning issue. I want to inform the Member that there are regulations in place regarding the burning of peat. The province has the ability to go in and extinguish the fires, and as soon as the details of this particular situation are fully in front of us, I am sure that action will be taken.

Stubble and Peat Burning Accident Total

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, but what more details does the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings) require? Five accidents are caused, two people land up in hospital. You only have to go into the towns of Beausejour, Lac du Bonnet or Pine Falls and talk to the residents. They will tell you that the priest cannot say Mass because he has been blocked by the smoke. The people are driving with both doors of their car open so that they can see whether they are on grass or not.

To the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger): Can the Minister of Highways and Transportation tell this House how many accidents have resulted in the fall of this year as a result of the burning of stubble and peat?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, let me first of all indicate regrets that anybody has been injured through any accidents of any nature and specifically accidents of this nature. I can indicate only that my department is very concerned about these aspects of it, and in cases where there is a lot of smoke on the highways that we have been closing the highways numerous times. We did the same thing last winter when the peat moss fires in the southeast of Manitoba created some problems, some accidents, and we closed the highways at that time.

I think it is important for people to understand the immensity of these peat moss fires that you cannot just go in and extinguish them like you do a normal fire. The history of it already shows that many efforts

have been made in that direction and together with my colleague, the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), as well as the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), we have a program in place where we will try and deal with the containment of these fires so that we do not have these kinds of accidents happening.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, but this is typical of this Government. The Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) says we can go in there and we can stop the fire and the Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) says, well, you know, once they get going we cannot do anything about it.

Stubble and Peat Burning Regulations

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, to the Minister of Environment. When will they introduce regulations governing the setting of these fires so that they can be controlled for the environmental impacts, they can be controlled for the weather conditions, and that we do not have these fires getting out of control? Let us prevent them before that happens.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity of responding to the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs), Official Opposition, and let me put it firmly on the record.

This issue of a smoke hazard from peat burning has been with Manitobans for many, many years. It was this minority Government that early on in its mandate instructed the Provincial Land Use Committee to strike an internal committee to draw up specific regulations to control it. That committee has made its recommendations. The Department of Natural Resources has accepted those regulations. They have had to be properly gazetted. They have come into full force this September 1, which for the first time now allows, now permits the department to respond to these kinds of situations by first of all determining the responsibility for the peat fires by moving in equipment and in fact extinguishing the fires, Mr. Speaker. This is happening right now and if it is determined that the landowner is responsible, it will be chargeable to that particular landowner.

* (1340)

Mr. Speaker, I simply indicate to you that we regrettably also have had an extremely dry fall, that some of these fires have been with us through the summer and there has been some difficulty with respect to whether or not they have been caused by stubble burning, then in that particular area have gone into the peat burning problem, but for the first time we do have regulations in place that can action these kind of fires.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Mrs. Carstairs: But the response is as convoluted as the policy.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

University of Manitoba Governors Student Representations

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this week is National Universities Week. It is a week which is to celebrate our university communities and the students who attend those university communities. My question is to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) and it concerns that lack of student representation on the University of Manitoba's Board of Governors.

Last month the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) overruled the University of Manitoba Student Union by not appointing their choice as a representative to the board of governors, and indeed in an article in the student paper the president of UMSU was reported as having been told by the Minister "that someone better qualified to fulfill a political agenda should be appointed." My question to the Minister is: can he explain why he cut student representation on the Board of Governors by one-half?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Time and time and time and time again the Leader of the Opposition misrepresents what in fact are the facts—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Derkach: —and once again, Mr. Speaker, today she does the same. This indeed is National Universities Week and I have to say she just found out about it a month ago that there was not a student representative on the board of governors.

Mr. Speaker, I have to tell you that if the Leader of the Opposition were to research a little bit she would find out there is no mandate. There is no "must" to have a student on that board of governors. Now, we have decided that in fact there should be a student representative—

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Derkach: —and I had indicated to the press at that time, when I appointed a representative to the board of governors, that it was an oversight on my part as Minister and that the next time there is a vacancy a student will be represented and we will ensure that within the universities Act there will be provision made so the students in fact are represented on the board of governors.

University Act Amendments

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, but can the Minister inform the House today when he intends to table in the House an amendment to the universities Act which will guarantee two students at least on the board of governors and that the choice of those students will be left up to the student body?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I did not say that the choice of those student representatives would be that of the student body.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Derkach: I said that we will table in this House when we are ready to. This is not a problem that has just arisen. The former administration never acknowledged that problem either, Mr. Speaker. Nevertheless, we will address that problem and we will ensure that there will be adequate student representation on the board of governors.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Education tell us why he does not have sufficient trust in the students and in the student union at the University of Manitoba that he would not accept their recommendation and therefore not make that an essential part of the law?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, again maybe the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) should either clear her ears or listen to the answer because I did not say we would not listen to the student union, and I did not say that we would not appoint the person they suggested. That in fact may happen—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Derkach: —and when we get those names, I will be happy to review them and make the appropriate appointments.

Child Care Task Force Recommendations

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Acting Premier. Over the weekend we have received—and I am sure all MLAs have received hundreds of calls from parents across the province from all walks of life, from all political persuasions urging us to do as much as we can to stop the ridiculous confrontation and crisis in our child care system in this province and deal with the pending problems in our child care system.

* (1345)

I would ask the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings) why the Government has not implemented the Recommendation 193 for salary adjustments within the first three months of the beginning of the '89 fiscal year and 194 in the Child Care Task Force Report that this Government commissioned, appointed and received in March of 1989.

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, the reference to which the Member refers has been addressed in part, although I agree and I agreed at the time that I made the announcement, not completely adequately. The salaries are a problem. We did increase the salary enhancement grant this year. We have made commitments to increase it in the future. We have announced an advisory committee of child care which encompasses all the community of child care to address longer-term issues. We have announced that we will be forming a working group to work on day care issues, primarily that of salary.

Child Care Task Force Recommendations

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): This is the first time we have had the Minister admit that the Government has not adequately dealt with the recommendations in the report. My question is to the Deputy Premier, because I know the Minister forwarded these recommendations to Cabinet and was rejected in her long-term plan by the Cabinet which is chaired by the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

My question to the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings) is: why has the Government chosen to not implement in an adequate way Recommendations 193 and 194 that were commissioned by their committee that they appointed that would deal with the problems that are now confronting us in the crisis of the child care situation?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, first of all I think the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) has to realize that in his preamble to the first question where he talks about hundreds of phone calls coming into MLAs offices, I have two constituency offices, and neither one of them has received calls regarding this issue.

This Government has committed itself to the long-term resolution of the day care issue. We are not going to approach this problem on a piecemeal ad-hoc basis. We have pledged ourselves co-operation with the day care community. That pledge is there. Perhaps they are used to dealing with that Government that would not keep its word. We intend to keep ours.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, that is why we will have some 12,000 children tomorrow without the child care system that was put in place by the people of Manitoba, for the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Day Care Walkout Government Initiatives

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I think it is very, very tragic when the Members opposite are personalizing a solution and trying to scapegoat individuals when they had a solution that was delivered to them in March of 1989, a solution that was proposed to them by their own advisory task force, a solution that provided for two recommendations to deal with this problem so that they would not have to deal with it in a piecemeal way and a crisis way.

My question to the Minister is: given the fact that we have proposed the Government meet with the Child Care Association, given the fact that we have proposed they implement their own recommendations, and given the fact on Friday we proposed the Government look at an independent conciliator who is acceptable to the both Parties, what does the Government have in mind to deal with this crisis and return the system of sanity in our child care situation which is essential and key for the children of this province?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, we are addressing the needs of the child

care community in Manitoba. We are working toward a solution. I have indicated, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has indicated, the working group will be put in place to work on plans for funding for the future. The Member, the Leader of the NDP should realize and must realize—

* (1350)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I am having some difficulty in hearing the remarks of the Honourable Minister. Order. The Honourable Minister.

Mrs. Oleson: The Leader of the NDP must realize that these cannot be addressed in a financial manner all in one budget. We have to do a planned approach, which is what we are doing, and we are asking the child care community to work with us to solve this problem.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, there is a so-called \$200 million rainy-day fund and there are also recommendations to deal with it over the immediate term and the three-year term.

My question to the Minister, the Deputy Premier, and the Acting Premier is: why would this Government choose a fight with the child care community when they will not fight with the Prime Minister on VIA Rail, they will not fight with the Prime Minister on cutbacks to regional development, they will not fight for the Medicare in this province with the Prime Minister, they will not fight for Rafferty-Alameda, and they are going to pick a fight and bully the child care workers of this province.

Mrs. Oleson: That is a disrespectful and despicable way to handle a very serious topic. We are dealing with the child care community. We are meeting with them. We want to work on a co-ordinated basis to get to a solution to this problem.

Day Care Walkout Long Range Planning

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): This Government is facing a crisis in child care today and this crisis exists because the Government has failed miserably over the past year and a half to effectively consult and communicate with the child care community. Thousands of children will not have the security of being able to go to their child care centres tomorrow because this Government has failed to work in good faith with the child care community.

My question to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) is—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

Child Care Task Force Recommendations

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): My question to the Minister of Family Services is: given that this Minister is willing to disrupt the lives of thousands of children and parents tomorrow, does she have any positive plans to prevent further service disruptions?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): I have consistently met with the child care community over the last year and a half which I have been in this position. I have discussed their problems. The formation of a task force was a commitment to work with the day care community, find out their priorities. I have made every attempt to work with them. The Member is indicating the crisis tomorrow. I regret that is happening, but we have offered to meet as a working group to solve the long-term problem. They have indicated at the first of this whole argument that what they wanted was a long-term plan. That is what they are being offered.

Ms. Gray: I have a supplementary question to the same Minister. Meetings and lip-service is not enough. Can the Minister indicate to this House today—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Member for Ellice.

Ms. Gray: Can the Minister tell this House today why she is establishing another advisory committee to look at salaries when her own Government-initiated task force has already made very specific recommendations which have addressed that issue?

Mrs. Oleson: I do not call \$13 million over two budgets, making a total of \$42 million dedicated to child care in this province, lip-service.

Ms. Gray: Can the Minister tell us today if she supports the recommendation in regard to salary enhancement that is in her own task force? Does she support that?

An Honourable Member: Back up the Brink's truck again.

Mrs. Oleson: Obviously we agree that the salaries need enhancement. That is why we added \$550 per worker to more people this year and more dollars this year, and that is why we agreed with enhancing the salaries.

* (1355)

Private Schools Accountability

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): The Private Vocationals Schools Act places authority over course content and quality in order to assure the quality of courses offered by such schools.

I have received concerns from many parts of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker, but most recently some

residents of Morden have raised fears that fragmentation -(interjection)-.

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): Excuse me, Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for St. Norbert, on a point of order.

Mr. Angus: Thank you very much. We have precious little time to ask questions, and we get very little in the way of answers. The very least the Ministers could do is listen to the questions and stop their idle chattering across the House.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order.

Mrs. Yeo: Residents of Morden have raised fears that fragmentation in services are occurring with extension programs from Red River Community College, South Winnipeg Technical Centre, within their own school division, and now a new Morden college.

Mr. Speaker, we have grave concern with the lack of accountability of independent or private schools that receive a substantial portion of funding from the people of Manitoba.

Can the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) tell the House what assurances his department can provide that students enrolled in these private vocational schools and the taxpayers of Manitoba are receiving value for their dollar?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): There is no question that in all of the accredited private schools, students are indeed receiving value for their dollar in terms of educational programs. For the last several months my department has been working very diligently with the Manitoba Federation of Independent Schools to arrive at a solution to the accountability question.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, and as the House knows, the former Government did not address the issue of accountability with independent schools. Therefore, it has been a fairly onerous task to try and arrive at a solution to this unaddressed problem. I can report to the House that we are very, very near to arriving at a permanent solution on the program accountability and financial accountability as well.

Course Assessment

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): Does the Minister's department scrutinize courses offered in the private vocational schools throughout Manitoba?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Private vocational schools in Manitoba must

receive a licence from the Department of Education in order to be able to operate within this province. When a course is offered within these private vocational schools, we do have staff within the department who do in fact look at the programs to ensure that the certificates being given at the end of a particular course will meet provincial criteria and provincial standards.

We have had some difficulties in some of the vocational schools, and we are finding that we have to address some of these challenges in different ways. At the present time, staff from my department are working at ways in which we can better ensure that students, who graduate from different programs within vocational schools and then have to write provincial exams, will in fact meet standards that are provincially acceptable.

Mrs. Yeo: Can the Minister of Education tell us, is there assessment of course appropriateness as well as community need, given that The Private Vocational Schools Act places authority over course content and quality directly in the hands of the provincial Government?

Mr. Derkach: Yes, as I indicated, there are some challenges ahead of us with regard to some programs that are being offered by private vocational schools. Again, these are not things that have just emerged recently; these are things that have grown as vocational schools have grown as well.

We are addressing those issues. We intend to put into place guidelines which will ensure when students graduate from a program that program will be recognized not only provincially but will be recognized on an interprovincial basis as well.

VIA Rail Layoffs Minister's Meeting

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Recently the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger) indicated to this House that he was calling on the federal Minister of Transport for a ministerial meeting and for Ministers across this country to discuss the devastating impact of the VIA cuts that were just announced last week across Canada.

* (1400)

Meanwhile the federal Government and the federal Minister are supporting an \$800 million loan to Thailand to support a Quebec company's bid for a contract there. We learn that the workers in Canada, at VIA, are going to be cut in their severance pay as a result of an escape clause from the agreement. This is the kind of performance we get from the federal Minister. I ask this Minister now whether he has received word from the federal Minister that he is agreeing to a Ministers' meeting for Canadian Transport Ministers on this issue?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, on the day that the announcement was made about the VIA Rail cuts, I forwarded a letter to the federal Minister indicating our

concern and requesting that all provincial Ministers meet with him once again to express our concerns. Other Ministers in other provinces took different approaches to the thing. I sent copies to each one of those Ministers.

We have now received a reply from the federal Minister and he has rejected the idea of meeting the Ministers as a group. However, he has consented to meet with the Ministers on an individual basis and I have an appointment set up with him for November.

I also this morning, Mr. Speaker, met with the mayor of the city, and Mr. Al Cerilli, as well as the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. We have strategized, we have people developing community communiques that we are going to be forwarding to the Commons Transportation Committee that has started hearings today. Subsequent to that, I have already made application for myself to appear before that committee to bring forward the concerns that we have.

First Ministers' Meeting

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): This is what they call a fight, Mr. Speaker. This is a fight to the death, like they are doing in child care.

In view of the fact that the Prime Minister was quoted today in the Toronto Star as telling the business community in Singapore that in Canada he is trying to cut VIA Rail, divulging his true agenda, has this Minister now taken the position and agreed with the Opposition and agreed with the New Democratic Party that his Premier should be calling on the Prime Minister for a First Ministers' meeting in Canada so that the Prime Minister will lay his agenda on the table, his true agenda, for his plans on VIA Rail?

Has the Minister asked his Premier (Mr. Filmon) for that, and will he ask his colleagues to support him in that?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, our Premier has already raised the issue with the federal Prime Minister. I also want to indicate that as we develop our approach towards the federal Government and the community communique that we are developing, we will probably also be asking for the assistance of the Members of the Opposition to support us when we go and make that presentation.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, this is a serious issue that affects communities throughout Manitoba and affects workers throughout Manitoba. Now we have a Minister who is not taking strong action with his Premier and his colleagues here to have a First Ministers' meeting on this issue.

I ask the Minister of Transport, in view of the fact that the Prime Minister said in Canada we are trying to get rid of VIA Rail—he tells the people of Singapore this—I ask him to raise this with his Premier now and his colleagues to have an urgent meeting to deal with this so the Prime Minister can be forced to put his agenda on the table.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Speaker, many times already I have outlined in this House the procedures and the process that I have gone through as Minister responsible for Transportation in Manitoba.

I always raise the concerns that we had with the federal Government. I just outlined further activities and ask the support of the Members opposite, as we will be asking other communities in Manitoba to participate, once we have developed the communique, which hopefully will be done by tomorrow sometime. We are on a short time leash. We want to make representation to the Commons Transportation Committee that started the hearings today, so we expect that there is going to be some activity coming forward by next week on the issue.

Agassiz Youth Services Power Plant Downgrading

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): My question is for the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Albert Driedger). I have received numerous letters from employees at the Agassiz Youth Centre in Portage la Prairie who have brought to my attention that the Department of Government Services intends to downgrade the power plant from a first-class power plant to a second-class power plant. One of the letters indicates that up to 24 engineers presently working at that centre could be affected who presently work, obviously, in Portage la Prairie. The reason given by the department, as stated in these letters, is that a first-class engineer cannot be found to replace the one who is retiring. Mr. Speaker, this is indeed strange, given that two second-class engineers who worked at Campbell Soup are now looking for work, one of whom has already applied for this very job.

Will the Minister please explain this decision?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, the Member for Portage (Mr. Connerly) already raised this issue with myself a week ago, and my staff is in the process of trying to see whether we can resolve it. I am going to be having a meeting within the next day to see whether we can resolve it.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, can I gather from the Minister's answer that the Minister is going to rethink this decision and reverse this decision, given the particular vulnerability of Portage la Prairie residents at this time?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what I said. I had indicated that the issue was brought to my attention just a little while ago, last week, and that I am dealing with the issue right now. I will certainly review it and make the decision based on the information that comes forward.

Mr. Edwards: My question again is to the same Minister. How did it come to pass that this Government even considered cutting jobs in Portage la Prairie? Given the history of the last year in that city, a thousand jobs have been lost in that city. How does this Minister

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account for that decision and how does this decision square with this Government's stated rhetoric on decentralization of the Civil Service in this province?

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Speaker, between my two departments I have approximately 4,500 employees who are working. I am not speaking in defense of the employees, but some of the things move on sometimes before I become aware of it. When I became aware of this issue, I indicated that I would review it and take proper action.

Tartan Lake Mine Closure

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld). Since this Government took over responsibility for the governing of the province, and this Minister in particular for mines in the province, the mine in my community employing 140 people has closed. The New Democratic Party had to drag the Minister kicking and screaming into negotiations to support the community of Lynn Lake and 250 jobs.

Can the Minister now indicate to this House and to the people of the area of Flin Flon what steps he has taken, what steps he is taking, to prevent the closure of another mine north of Flin Flon, the Tartan Lake mine, and what steps he has taken to prevent the loss of an additional 100 jobs in mining in this province? Can he table for us any concrete measures he has taken to support this venture and the miners in that area?

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, the Tartan Lake mine may indeed close. If it closes it is because they cannot mine the ore for the price that they can sell it for. They have not come to Government for any assistance at this point, nor has the community come to Government for any assistance at this point. When the time comes that they come for assistance or they come for some advice, we will deal with the matter.

Technical Assistance

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Well, Mr. Speaker, that sounds familiar from this Government. My question to the Minister: is it not possible for the Minister, in advance of layoff notices going to workers, in advance of mine closures, for this Minister to provide technical assistance to examine with the company options for maintaining that operation? Does he not believe that 100 jobs in northern Manitoba is important? Does he have to wait until after the fact, until we have an emergency or crisis to respond? Can the Minister tell us whether he is prepared to do anything?

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, the decision to lay off men and the decision to close mines is not that of the Government. That is the decision of the companies who operate those mines, and when they make a decision they make a decision on the basis of the economics of their operations. If

they do come to Government we will discuss the issue with them, but if they do not come to Government for advice and for help then we will wait for them to do so.

Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Modernization

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Here the Minister is waiting, fiddling while Rome burns.

Mr. Speaker, my further question to the Minister of Energy and Mines is, given that on Thursday, October 12, at the Economic Development Committee meeting, the president of Manitoba Mineral Resources indicated that Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting has suspended its exploration activities pending a decision on modernization. Can the Minister indicate whether negotiations have proceeded, whether the people of Flin Flon have any realistic expectation of this Government acting in their interest to get modernization on stream to get exploration back on track so that Flin Flon will have a future?

* (1410)

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, we have never ceased negotiations on behalf of Hudson Bay with the federal Government for the modernization of its plant, but the monies involved are quite huge. There is some \$140 million involved, and we do not make a decision on \$140 million at the drop of a hat.

We have to make certain that the other parties to the agreement come to the table and we are, as the Manitoba Government have been, the catalyst in bringing together the federal Government and the Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting, proceeding as quickly as we can for the conclusion of the negotiations. When that conclusion comes, we hope it will be in the best interest of the community of Flin Flon. I should mention that the Manitoba Government has always had in its heart the best interests of the people of Flin Flon.

Co-operative Housing Program Cuts

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, the development of low-income housing has not fared well with this particular Government. Many housing co-operators exist today because of the Co-op HomeStart Program. This program provides the funds that are necessary to enable non-profit groups to start up housing co-operatives.

Mr. Speaker, why has this Minister decided to axe the Housing Co-op Start Program, an important program which saw the establishment of many fine housing co-ops in Manitoba and provide affordable housing for many low income Manitobans?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, again the Liberal computer is incorrect.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Ducharme: Mr. Speaker, when the Member for Inkster gets into Estimates, he will see that we have increased the funding on each project. During the fiscal year 1989-90, we will be bringing what we call Proposal Development Funding, \$30,000 for each co-op program that comes into effect, unlike the previous one of \$5,000 to enter into a program.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, again I have a supplementary question to the Minister of Housing. Taking away a grant and replacing it with a loan will result in a loss of potential co-operatives. Given that the Minister is unwilling to reinstate the Co-op HomeStart Program, will the Minister agree to forgive the HomeStart grant portion of the loan as compensation for the grants he has cut by the elimination of Co-op HomeStart Program?

Mr. Ducharme: Of the 80 programs that were established since the program started, I believe about 25 percent now -(interjection)- Mr. Speaker, what we have done is we proposed under the new program that the ones who are serious, like the ones that were proposed, the Weston, in his own particular area has a start-up grant. Also, we will give \$30,000 for each particular co-op on a PDF Loan to bring it in line with all the other non-profit and profit programs.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, is it a loan or is it a grant? Many co-ops today that we have now are as a direct result of the Home Co-op Start Program. Has the Minister consulted with the Housing Co-op sector to see what type of impacts his actions will have on the future of the housing co-ops in the Province of Manitoba?

Mr. Ducharme: Mr. Speaker, we felt in our guidelines that all programs, profit and non-profit, should be under the similar guidelines, and that is a loan. Under the similar guidelines, like every other profit and non-profit, co-op should be no different.

Northern Education Government Support

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): My question is to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach). There has been growing concern about the future of many post-secondary education programs in the North in recent months because of the actions of this Government. It has centralized a number of programs under KCC leading to the elimination of the Limestone Training Authority. It has put the BUNTEP program in Thompson literally out on the streets looking for a permanent facility. It has brought in a child care program but did not bring in any student assistance leading to many of the students dropping out before the program started.

There is also the ongoing concern about the situation facing the northern nursing social work and BUNTEP programs which have received support from the NDA program. In fact my first question to the Minister is what actions is the Government taking to ensure a permanent base of support for those programs and

will he commit this Government to maintaining them whether or not the northern development agreement is renegotiated?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): I think this Government has made it very clear in terms of its commitment to the northern people of this province and to the programs in the North. I think the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) must have done his research in conjunction with the Liberals. Obviously, he does not know what we have done in the North to support the education programs of northern Manitoba.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Minister of Education and Training.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, as opposed to the former administration where there was duplication of virtually everything in the North, we have consolidated many of the programs. The administration of the Northern Training Employment Agency has now been such that northern programs are delivered by Northerners. In fact the dollars that were put into administration and buildings are now going to be put into programs for northern Manitobans.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Before moving on, I would like to draw Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have with us this afternoon twenty-nine students from Woodstock, New Brunswick. They are under the direction of Catherine Froese-Klassen.

Also this afternoon from the Pembina Crest School, we have twenty-six Grade 9 students under the direction of Leslie Mesman. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans).

On behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I would like to move a motion under Rule No. 27. That motion reads:

WHEREAS it has been recognized that over the last eight years Manitobans have built the best child care system in North America;

WHEREAS an overwhelming majority of child care professionals across Manitoba have voted to participate in a voluntary work stoppage tomorrow, Tuesday, October 17, 1989, in response to the Government's unwillingness to recognize the real value of their work;

Monday, October 16, 1989

WHEREAS this immediate crisis has been precipitated by the Premier's unwillingness to meet with the Manitoba Child Care Association to negotiate a settlement and his refusal to appoint an independent conciliator to help resolve this dispute;

WHEREAS the Government has set aside a \$200 million rainy-day fund from the previous budget to be spent on public priorities;

WHEREAS parents support child care professionals in these efforts to bring their salaries to suitably recognized levels; and

WHEREAS it is crucial that child care professionals receive the unequivocal support of Members of this Legislature and these actions to ensure fair salaries;

THEREFORE I move, seconded by the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) that under Rule No. 27 the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter or urgent public importance, namely the voluntary work stoppage to be held October 17, 1989, and its impact on child care professionals, parents, and children.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Speaker: A spokesperson for each of the other Parties will also have five minutes to address the position of their Party respecting the urgency of this matter. The Honourable Member for St. Norbert.

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Oh, sorry, Judy is speaking. Sorry.

Mr. Speaker: My fault. Before determining whether the motion meets the requirements of our Rule 27, the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) will have five minutes to state her case for urgency of debate of this matter. A spokesperson for each of the other Parties will also have five minutes to address the position of their Party respecting the urgency of the matter.

* (1420)

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: I bring forward this motion on this day because this province is on the eve of a crisis in our child care system. I bring forward this motion today because the situation at hand is both urgent and is still preventable. I bring forward this motion today because eleventh-hour action on the part of the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and Cabinet of the Government of Manitoba is still possible, can still restore confidence in our child care system and can address the looming crisis that this province faces tomorrow.

Mr. Speaker, as you know, almost one month ago on September 19, I presented a motion on the emerging crisis in our child care centres and you ruled in favour of that motion and agreed that it was a matter of urgent and public importance. The reasons then were that child care workers had expressed grave concern about their situation in the professional life of this province, that they were totally upset with the kind of response that they had received from this Government and were considering other actions to make their case known.

Mr. Speaker, the crisis that was emerging then is now at our doorstep. Tomorrow, if there is no movement on the part of this Government, a voluntary day of demonstration involving thousands of professionals, parents and children will take place in order to try and convince this Government to take action on the critical issues of child care funding. The urgency of that situation can only be illustrated by referring to the fact that 90 percent of this province's child care system will be shut down, that day care centres right across this province will be closed, that approximately 12,000 children will be at risk without care, that some 30,000 parents will be inconvenienced and put in most difficult, awkward situations and that upwards of 2000 professionals will be forced to resort to the only avenue left to them, to make their case and to tell this Government that their response is unacceptable and intolerable.

In the last month since the emergency debate took place, ample opportunity has occurred for this Government to act. The Manitoba Child Care Association has tried every avenue to get this Government to sit down and negotiate a significant adjustment, every opportunity to compromise and develop a long-term plan that is a responsive, meaningful, sensitive policy on the part of this Government. Time and time again, Mr. Speaker, this Government has totally refused to sit down and negotiate, to compromise, to find a resolution to the impasse at hand.

The MCCA has hit a brick wall at every opportunity. On September 19, the child care association requested a meeting. On September 27, the Premier (Mr. Filmon), turned down that meeting. On October 4, the child care association requested another meeting and said that their members, if that meeting was not forthcoming, would have to consider a ballot to determine what kind of work action they would consider. On October 5, the Premier refused that meeting. On October 6, the child care association tried again and put forward the olive branch and called for a compromise. On October 13, they did the same.

Mr. Speaker, as a result of the impasse in negotiations, as a result of the intransigence of the provincial Government, tomorrow we face a crisis, an emergency, a crisis for children, an emergency situation for families, hardship on professionals and a tragedy for our entire child care system. A month ago I said to you that children are our most precious resource, both as a province and as a country. Today, I say that even more loudly and strongly and tell you that those children are at risk, that it is imperative upon us as legislators to convince this Government to take eleventh hour action, restore confidence in our child care system and end the crisis and emergency situation looming on the horizon facing Manitoba's professionals, parents and children.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. Norbert will also have five minutes to address the urgency of this matter.

Mr. Angus: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is quite obvious that we are facing a crisis of sorts. Certainly it is going

to be a crisis for specific people. The workers in the day care centres throughout the province have made it abundantly clear that they are going to take a strike action—a one-day strike action—tomorrow, and this form of work stoppage is not something that any of us should look forward to.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed unfortunate when action of this nature to drive a point home is deemed necessary by any group. I feel confident that every Member of the House would like very much to be able to sit down and address the specifics of the issues and co-operatively work out a solution. I do not envy a Government that has to make decisions under pressure tactics. I do not envy a Government that is forced under duress to pay attention. But I have to ask myself under what circumstances has brought this last effort to the forefront.

Mr. Speaker, of the issue itself, I doubt very much whether we are going to be able to do anything specific today without the encouragement and the co-operation of the Government to at least resolve to sit down on a given time and at a given place to try and work co-operatively and resolve this. Apparently that message, even though the Government seems to try to say that they are giving that assurance, has not been received by the people who are threatening this action.

I would like to just address the fact that this is the last on the specifics of the motion as to whether or not this is of urgent public importance. I am not sure how Members of this House determine what is urgent and what is not and what is important to what people. I would suggest to you that the people who are going to be affected tomorrow by this work stoppage is a serious matter. It is a very serious consequence. We in this particular Chamber do not have any other option to address the specifics of this issue before the action takes place. This is the last opportunity we have in a legitimate fashion to avert this wildcat action that the workers are forced to take, to try and drive home their message.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that it is a serious matter. I believe that it is of utmost public importance and urgency, and I think that it meets the criteria. I would respectfully request, Sir, that you agree to hear the submissions in relation to the Honourable Member's position.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): We are faced again today with an Opposition that wants somehow to take the Rules of this House and play the usual games that they have been playing with this and other issues during this Session.

Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcia-Leis) sits right beside the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), her own House Leader, and right in front of the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan), the very knowledgeable person with regard to the Rules of this House.

Mr. Speaker, Rule 27.(5)(a) says that "The right to move to set aside the ordinary business of the House for the purpose mentioned in Subrule (1) is subject to the following restrictions: (a) Not more than one such motion may be made at the same sitting."

The Honourable Member in her own comments referred to her own resolution on September 19 dealing with the matters referred to in her motion today.

The other issue that should be raised is the fact that Resolution No. 16 on the Order Paper standing in the Honourable Member's name is on the Order Paper, Sir, and Rule 27(5)(d) refers to: motions shall not anticipate a matter that has previously been appointed for consideration by the House, or with reference to which a notice has previously been given and not withdrawn.

* (1430)

So the Rules are out the window. We have seen this before with the Opposition, both opposition Parties. Rule 27 is there to be used in times when that particular Rule might be of use. We had the debate, Mr. Speaker, with respect to the child care issue.

I remind you that in two budgets since coming to office this Government has put forward 13 million new dollars for day care in this province—\$6 million this year alone. That is a 45 percent increase in two budgets for day care, and with respect to salaries, in two budgets, a 35 percent increase.

The Premier has been clear about this matter. His views on the matter are very well known, and the positions that he takes are well known. The position that this Government takes with respect to working with all players in the day care industry is clear also, but the Premier has made the one proviso. That is that no Government can work constructively under these circumstances. He has made it clear that service is not very well enhanced by withdrawing it. That is something that we hope all Honourable Members will recognize.

To raise these emergency debates in this House repeatedly like this, Mr. Speaker, I suggest takes away from the importance that Rule 27 suggests should be attached to these resolutions. Now no one is suggesting that the provision of child care in our province is not an extremely important matter, but no one should be suggesting also that this Government is not making significant strides towards a better day care system. The commitments of the Government financially over the last two years have been extremely significant.

Now we reach a situation where there are threats and votes respecting work stoppages and so on. I suggest to Honourable Members that reviving a debate that has already been had by anticipating debates that may be had is not the way to operate a House. Mr. Speaker, we continue to wonder what it is that the opposition Parties have in their minds when they realize that time is limited for discussion of matters in this House, including Government business. Honourable Members continue to use Rule 27 to attempt to make their points, but I really suggest that sometimes the ruses Honourable Members opposite use are not effective in terms of resolving important disputes in this province.

It does not help, I suggest, to encourage people to walk off their jobs and leave children without the care they need and to leave the parents of those children stranded in terms of care for their children.

So, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the Honourable Members know this flies in the face of the Rules and should not be supported.

Mr. Speaker: There are two conditions to be satisfied for this matter to proceed. The first condition has been met in that I did receive the notice from the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) on this motion.

The second condition is that debate on the matter is urgent, and there is no other reasonable opportunity to raise the matter. I have listened carefully to the comments of Honourable Members respecting the urgency of debating this matter today, and I thank them all for their advice.

Before concerning myself with the operative portions of the motion, I feel obliged to point out to the Honourable Member that the third WHEREAS clause offends against the spirit, if not the letter, of Beauchesne's Citation 565, which provides, in part: "A motion should be neither argumentative, nor in the style of a speech, nor contain unnecessary provisions or objectionable words."

The opportunities for the Honourable Member to address this matter are somewhat limited.

Although the Estimates of the Department of Family Services are not expected to be considered for some time, the Honourable Member could rise on a grievance on this matter, as she has not already used that opportunity.

I note that on September 19, I ruled in favour of a similar motion, introduced by the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), which identified as a subject of debate, and I quote: "Manitoba's child care crisis and its effects on child care workers, parents and children." The House voted in favour of debate proceeding, and debate took place and was concluded.

I believe the subject matter of today's motion, which proposes: "The voluntary work stoppage to be held October 17, 1989, and its impact on child care professionals, parents and children," is virtually identical.

Our Rule 31 provides that, and I quote: "No Member shall revive a debate already concluded during the session . . ." Debate on this matter today would, in my opinion, revive debate.

Beauchesne's Citation 389, states in part that the matter proposed for debate, ". . . must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention." I am not entirely convinced that this is a case with the motion proposed today.

Therefore, for the reasons indicated, I must rule against the Honourable Member's motion proceeding as a matter of urgent public importance.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): With greatest respect, Mr. Speaker, I challenge your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. Order. Order. Shall the ruling of the Chair

be sustained? All those in favour will please say, aye. All those opposed will please say, nay. In my opinion the Ayes have it.

Mr. Ashton: Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Call in the Members.

The question before the House is shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained.

A STANDING VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

* (1510)

YEAS

Burrell, Connery, Cummings, Derkach, Downey, Driedger (Emerson), Ducharme, Enns, Ernst, Findlay, Gilleshammer, Helwer, McCrae, Mitchelson, Neufeld, Oleson, Orchard, Penner, Pankratz, Praznik.

NAYS

Angus, Ashton, Charles, Cheema, Cowan, Doer, Edwards, Evans (Fort Garry), Gaudry, Gray, Hemphill, Kozak, Lamoureux, Maloway, Mandrake, Minenko, Patterson, Plohman, Roch, Rose, Storie, Taylor, Uruski, Wasylycia-Leis, Yeo,

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 20; Nays 25.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been overturned. The question before the House is, shall debate proceed? All those agreed? (Agreed) The Honourable Member for Concordia.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure to speak on the resolution and thank all Members of the Chamber who supported the resolution. This is a very, very important resolution. We all respect Rule 27, but we know that unlike four weeks ago, unfortunately, rather than having a resolve to a very serious crisis facing 12,000 children, facing numbers of parents and numbers of communities, that we have moved toward a crisis situation and a confrontation. We have not moved toward an orderly resolution of what we would all agree to be a long-term but difficult situation.

We had a number of key ways of solving the situation in our opinion. We have the report of the Manitoba Child Care Task Force. It is a report that was commissioned and established by the new Government when they were first sworn in. It was a committee and an advisory group that was made up of members of the child care community who were chosen by Order-in-Council by the Government of the Day.

Mr. Speaker, this commission that was established was the long-term strategy on the Government and was the commission that was empowered to take the feedback from Manitobans and come back to the Government of the Day, the present Government, with the long-term plan. The question that has to be asked today, when that committee had the public hearings,

when the commission had the presentations across the province, and when the committee came up with a number of very, very positive recommendations, 200 recommendations in all, why did the Cabinet say no to those recommendations? Why did the Cabinet not implement those recommendations, and why do we have the crisis today?

The Members keep talking about creating straw people to deal with. They talk about the former Government. Let us deal with a couple of the little comments from their seats. Mr. Speaker, it will not solve the situation to show on the record that the amount of money we put in to our budget last year that was defeated was more, marginally more, I would admit, than the budget that this Government came in. That will not solve the problem to go back to those figures. It will not solve the problem to talk about the percentage increase and the two budget accumulated increase that has gone into the child care situation, because the percentage number does look big. There is no question about that, but the real dollars that have gone to salary enhancement through the last two budgets have been relatively, and in fact in comparison to previous years, small.

Now do not go by my numbers and do not go by the Government's numbers, go by the child care association's numbers. They pointed out in certain years, '85-86, and '86-87, and '87-88, what the salary enhancement grants were. If we add up all those grants over that period of time, if my memory serves me correct, there was some \$3,800 in the three years preceding this Government's \$500.00.

(Mr. William Chornopyski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there has unfortunately been, the two years since the Government has been in office, \$500 per year to deal with the salary enhancement problem which has been in part, not in whole, but in part the reason why we have the crisis. The other major reason why we have the crisis today, and I know the Members opposite keep going back to the recorded announcement about the 45 percent, and I know that gives them some comfort, and in relative terms that looks like a lot of money.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, look at recommendation 193 and recommendation 194; recommendations that went before this Treasury Bench; recommendations that were made by their own advisory committee; recommendations that were made by their own group that was made up of their own appointed Members; recommendations that came from the broader child care community, including parents, children and child care workers.

Those recommendations are very specific: (1) deal with the immediate salary adjustments within three months beginning in the '89-90 fiscal year and (2) that the salary increases for child care workers should be phased in over a maximum of a three-year period.

So what did we get from the Government? We got a one-time-only announcement. We got no recognition of the report and the validity of the recommendations

in the report. Instead we got turmoil, with rumours of a non-partisan meritorious civil servant in the key office being fired or moved or whatever else—moved, I guess, is a better term. I want to correct myself.—(interjection)—I want to correct myself, moved. We do not know yet, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have asked that question a number of times and we can still not get the answer to that question in this Chamber.

The bottom line is that child care workers are becoming more of a valued commodity in our public child care system, and yes, that has developed over time, and yes, yes, they should have been given more money 10 years ago and five years ago.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we were moving in a child enhancement position. The average grant of the last three years we were in power was about \$1,300 per year. I applaud the Government for establishing the task force. Where the thing has fumbled and where the best child care system in North America is in risk, and where we are heading to a crisis, is because the Government did not act on their own two recommendations 193 and 194. One is what is the adjustment going to be this year, and what is the adjustment going to be over the next three years and tabled in this Chamber, table it with the child care community, and proceed with the \$6,000 proposal that was made by the Child Care Task Force and the independent study of the situation. That is why we have a crisis.

We have tried to decrease the confrontation in this issue. We have proposed that the Manitoba Child Care Association and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) meet. This letter was written much prior to the deadline being established for the one-day walkout. The Government chose not to meet, and it wrote back to the child care association that it would not meet.

The question I ask is: why would the child care association be able to not meet with the Premier when the Premier was making speeches to the Chamber of Commerce about the same issue during the same week the crisis was taking place? If the Premier is going to talk about it with the Chamber of Commerce, why would he not talk about it directly with the child care association which is made up of parents and made up of child care workers?

Secondly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, why would the Government not agree to the conciliation approach? We proposed a conciliator that would be acceptable to both parties as a way of de-escalating this fight, as a way of dealing with this fight. The Premier says to us, well, we are not going to deal in short-term solutions. Well, a conciliator is not an arbitrator and when you have two sides, one immovable object and an immovable force moving the immovable object, I suggest that we have to do something to deal with this problem.

* (1520)

We believe the \$200 million that has been set aside in the rainy day fund should be used for the child care workers today. We believe it should be phased-in, but I believe the money is already there for this fiscal year to deal with the salary inequities.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do believe this is a crisis. We do believe it needs all the attention of this Legislature. We believe it needs a focus, and we intend to continue to make this a very major public issue until the Government meets with the child care community and resolves the legitimate demands as their own task force has recommended. We do not want to see the system deteriorate. We have the best child care system in Manitoba, in the country, and we cannot allow this thing to fall into crisis. We cannot allow it to fall into confrontation. We must make peace with the child care workers, not war with the child care workers. We must reach an intelligent, reasonable settlement with the child care workers and the parents and children in this province, and we must move the Treasury Bench and this Government to start acting on the legitimate recommendations in their own report.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, one can go on for a long period of time on such an urgent issue, but we really and sincerely have proposed peace proposals. We would ask the Government not to be on a war footing with the child care community, but to move into a peaceful footing with the child care community on behalf of all Manitobans in all communities, of all political stripes. Please be reasonable and peaceful with your own child care community. Thank you very, very much.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on this matter of urgent public debate, and I must say that it is a sad day for Manitobans that we are speaking on this particular subject. The reason we are speaking on the subject is because of a crisis that has been precipitated in Manitoba. This crisis has been precipitated solely because of the inability of this Government and this Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) to effectively consult and communicate with the child care community.

I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we look over the past year and a half, this Government has had the opportunity to present two budgets to this particular Legislature. They have had the opportunity to work on a daily basis with the child care professionals, with the child care associations, to review the various serious problems facing the child care community in Manitoba.

We have a Government who decided to spend \$400,000 on its own task force. This task force came up with a number of well thought-out recommendations in regard to various issues facing the child care community in Manitoba. Those main issues, those main recommendations which we read in the report, Mr. Deputy Speaker, they all relate to the child care professionals. They relate to a need for training, and they relate to a need to move the salaries of the child care professionals from the very low amount of money they are now paid to a higher level, a level which by a study on pay equity is indicated to be around \$22,000 a year.

So we have a task force report which the Government of the Day refuses to even support. We have a Minister of Family Services who stands in this House today during Question Period and she says, yes, I agree that the salaries of the child care workers are inadequate. She stood in the House today and said, I agree that

they are inadequate; but then on the other hand, she says, we have given \$13 million over two years to the child care community. So on one hand she is saying one thing, and on the other hand, she is saying another thing.

My question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, does she really wonder why the child care community does not have any faith in her words, given that on one hand she says we have given you lots of money, we have given \$13 million, and on the other hand she says but I know your salaries are inadequate.

When the Minister says they need to work with this on a committee, the child care professionals and the community, the boards of directors and the parents are saying we do not believe what this Government has to say anymore. The Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) would not commit herself today in Question Period to even say that she actually supported the recommendation in regard to salary enhancement that was presented by her own task force. What does that tell the child care community? What does that tell the parents? What does that tell the boards of directors across the Province of Manitoba whether they be in rural Manitoba, whether they be in northern Manitoba, or whether they be in Winnipeg. What does that say to them when she cannot even come out and say, yes, I support that recommendation?

This is the crux of the issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is not just money that is the issue. This Government has been blind because they have failed to recognize it has been a pattern over a year and a half of poor communication and lack of consultation with the child care professionals. We have a group of individuals representing child care professionals in this province who have attempted to work closely with this Minister. When this Minister and this Government came into power a year and a half ago they were prepared to meet with the Minister, they were prepared to share their ideas and their suggestions, and they were prepared to work with this Government. Because the child care association—they are a very smart group of people—know that in order for them to get the best deal for their membership, it is incumbent upon them to work with the Government of the Day, and that is what they have attempted to do in the last year and a half.

They have followed through processes, they have given every opportunity for this Government to meet with them, they have given the opportunities for this Minister to respond. Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we have, which is unprecedented in this country, is a Tory Government who has bungled the child care issue from Day One, and it is because of their lack of consultation and communication. I hear all these heckles from across the way and one would think what I have to back, that it is not just the child care community saying that very same thing, it is every other basic community group that has to deal with the Department of Family Services that is saying the same thing. It is not just the child care professionals. It is the Child and Family Services agencies, it is the advocates for the mentally handicapped, it is the shelters who will not even get recognition from this Government about forming a coalition, it is every major—

An Honourable Member: Rubbish.

Ms. Gray: —social service group, and the Minister of Family Services says rubbish. Well, perhaps the Minister of Family Services can tell this House today, if she is doing such a wonderful job of communicating, why we are going to have a voluntary walkout and a protest on the steps of this Legislature tomorrow afternoon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Tory Government insists that we are fomenting a walkout. Well, they do not know that every time they open their collective or individual mouths and they utter those comments, they are insulting the board of directors, the parents and the child care professionals in this province. If this Government -(interjection)- feels that one or two individuals from a political Party can actually create and orchestrate an entire province-wide protest, they do not know very much. If they really believe that it is being fomented by people—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Gray: —on this side of the House, you are definitely out to lunch. That has been the difficulty, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Tory Government does not know what they are doing in regard to this situation. They have had opportunities to meet with the child care association and they have chosen not to do that. Every time they rise in this House and say this side of the House is fomenting a strike, they are showing disrespect for the child care community and it is that disrespect that is causing the child care professionals, parents and boards of directors to meet on the steps of the Legislature tomorrow.

* (1530)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us look at the point of view of the child care professionals. The Government spends \$400,000 on the task force and says we need this task force to assess a situation so we know what direction to take.

The child care association did not like the idea and neither did the Liberals in opposition, but the child care association reluctantly agreed to be involved in the process. They did agree and we saw the process come to conclusion. What happens with the task force recommendation? The Government chooses to ignore the main task force recommendation. They have the audacity to go back to the child care association and say, but we will talk, let us talk. Let us talk until whatever freezes over is your message that is being given to the child care professionals.

Now we are going to have an advisory committee that is supposed to look at the specific recommendations of the child care professionals. So you are going to stall for another year. That is what is so upsetting to the child care professionals—another committee when you already have your specific recommendations. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): I rise today to speak on this emergency debate, the

second such debate that has taken place in the House in this short few days we have been in the Chamber in this fall part of the Session.

I find very interesting the remarks of the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) in addressing this. Some of the remarks were interesting, Mr. Speaker, do not get me wrong. The remarks that she passed—I find there is a conflict in other things that she has said over the past few weeks, which is not a surprise. The Liberals are always doing that. One day they are for something, the next day they are against it, and another day they are in-between.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, when I had a news conference and distributed copies of the day care strategy for 1989-90, the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) was asked in the hallway by reporters what she thought of this. She thought it was great. She indicated that it was a good strategy. She went on apparently about how it should have been brought forward earlier, but that was the only criticism she could really state about it at the time, that it was late in coming.

Of course we always want to do things in a more timely fashion, but sometimes we do not get them done when we would like to. That point I felt was irrelevant, but it was interesting that she actually rather agreed with the strategy when it was presented. Now she does not know where she is. In a recent interview with the CKND television station she announced in front of us all that the Liberals had always had a policy, maybe not always, but since 1986 they had a policy that they were against funding to private centres. She had told the people involved with private or independent centres during the last election, or her Leader had, that they wanted them to have funding. We really are confused about how the

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for Ellice, on a point of order.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I think it is important to clarify the record that our Leader has always been consistent in regard to what her policy was to private day cares. You can even ask them themselves, because she has always maintained a consistency in her position. Perhaps the Minister should get her facts straight.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thank the Honourable Member for Ellice, but the Honourable Member does not have a point of order.

The Honourable Minister for Family Services has the floor.

Mrs. Oleson: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I did not mean to interrupt you. It might be nice if the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) would share her information with the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray), and they would get together on these things. Then we might know or have some clue where the Liberals are.

The Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) indicates that we are -(interjection)- in

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Minister has the floor.

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) indicated that one of the reasons we are in a so-called crisis is that I have not been communicating with the day care community. First of all, one of the ways that we communicated with the day care community was that we had the task force. I have met with the three major groups involved in child care in the province. I have met with Native groups who want to discuss child care. It is not a lack of consultation and discussion that the Liberal Critic would have us believe. It is ridiculous to think that there is only one point of opinion on child care in this province.

The child care community has come together with an opportunity that they have never had before of coming together with an advisory committee to advise the Minister on items concerning child care. Now, one of the things that is abundantly clear to anyone who sits down with that committee and wishes to listen is that there is a divergence of opinion, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in exactly how the day care funding should be delivered in Manitoba. There are many, many divergent views.

It has become apparent that simply adding salary enhancements year after year is probably not the answer. So we have said to this advisory committee, now having heard you and heard that the funding is the problem, we know that the system overall is a good system. I have never argued with that. The system is fine, the children are receiving excellent care in the centres in Manitoba, the workers are well trained and I respect the work that the day care workers do, I really do.

The problem is in how the whole structure of funding has evolved, set up by the NDP, added on from time-to-time with salary enhancement grants. But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if you really have an excellent salary program in any field of endeavour, why do you enhance it with an enhancement grant? I mean, the whole thing sounds strange. If you are not funding it right in the first place, then why do you enhance it? So this is something we have to look at, and so I have told the group that we will have a working group to look at the entire way that child care is funded in the Province of Manitoba.

A change in the mechanism of how we fund is not able to be achieved overnight. In the interim we have added to the salary enhancement grants for this year a considerable amount. Manitoba spends something like \$5 million this year on just enhancing the salaries of child care workers. Now that is a significant commitment.

Now I wonder, the Leader of the NDP (Mr. Doer) said that when they were in power the salary enhancement grant amounted to \$3,800.00. Well, he is wrong. It was \$2,800 at that time. It has been added to by our Government to the tune of \$500 last year, \$550 this year, bringing the total salary enhancement grant per trained worker to—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), on a point of order.

Mr. McCrae: I wonder if I could ask you to help restore order on all sides of the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Mr. Minister.

Mrs. Oleson: Having said that, that the salary enhancement grants now amount to \$3,850 for every trained worker, we have added so that the unfunded centres this year, their trained workers are able to receive that as well, so more people are getting more dollars in salary enhancement grants. We have indicated that we do not think that is the perfect answer, but we are working on it.

* (1540)

Now, all of a sudden in 1989 it becomes a crisis, so-called, by the Members of the Opposition. I did not notice the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) or the only Liberal Member in the House, the Member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) during 1986 to '88, I did not notice her rallying and making a racket. Well, maybe she did; we will leave her out of this. But the people who were in Government at the time, I do not notice that they were encouraging day care workers to walk out when their salary enhancement grant was only \$500.00. This was at a time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when the average salary was more like \$12,000 and \$14,000 instead of nearly the \$18,000 which it is now. So I am wondering just what is going on here.

When the NDP initiated salary enhancement grants in '85, right?—they put in \$1,300 and that was the salary enhancement grant at that time. In '86, they allocated \$1,000 per worker, but in '87 they put them down to \$500.00. That was half of the increase they had been given before. Now, was there a crisis? Was it proclaimed? Was the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) standing up in the House screaming at the Minister of the Day, whichever one it was? Was she talking about how terribly low the salary enhancement grants? I do not remember. I do not remember that she did that. It suddenly becomes her all-consuming issue now. It obviously was not then.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker—how long do I have?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Minister has two minutes remaining.

Mrs. Oleson: Thank you. I would just like to say that one of the problems that we encounter in the whole day care issue is that we have to maintain a balance. There are people out there who are writing to me, who are phoning me, and their MLAs are writing and phoning me, telling me that we need more spaces for child care. We have to have a balance here. We have to take our priorities and look at them closely and say, okay, we need spaces and the salaries are low. With the money we have available, what can we do to address both issues?

When I took that proposal before the people I felt that I had achieved a balance with the money that was available. There are not unlimited funds available, even though the Opposition may think there are. There are not.

The \$2.4 million that I was able to have to ascribe to the day care fund was allocated in the fairest most balanced way in which I could achieve. That is what we have for this budget.

I would like to address the Member's snide remarks on slush funds, but if the Liberals had their way there would be no funds available for anything the way their spending would continue.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I heard the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) earlier, prior to this debate proceeding, lamenting the fact that this issue was before the Legislature again, or was being brought before, despite the fact that it has been discussed by this Legislature. We all share that disappointment, but the fact of the matter is that the Government had the resources, had the opportunity to forestall this day of protest that is being undertaken by the child care professionals in this province. They had an opportunity, the Legislature spoke clearly and decisively in support of day care professionals in the province, and this Minister and, in particular, her Leader decided to ignore the pleas and the legitimate concerns of child care workers across the province, chose to ignore it and in fact chose to precipitate this action on the part of the workers.

I hear the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and it strikes me as peculiar, to say the least, that the Minister of Health is raising the issue of Opposition Members and particularly the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) standing up, standing beside, standing with the Manitoba Child Care Association and child care professionals in support of their action because this is not fomenting action. This is standing up with people who have a legitimate concern. The Member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) says, where was she? Well, this Member is in total ignorance of the history of day care in this province. It was the NDP Government of Ed Schreyer who introduced universal Manitoba day care in 1974. It was not the Conservative Lyon Government, it was not the Roblin Government, it was the NDP Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the history since 1982, since 1981 when the NDP were elected after four short years of horrendous Lyon cutback Government, the NDP Government again took up the cause of day care in this province and increased, first of all, by more than tenfold the number of spaces existing in the province in 1979-1980. They increased the budget year over year by more than 50 percent in the first two years; introduced The Day Care Standards Act, and yes, when the problem was raised with respect to salaries, and there was a recognition that there was inadequate salaries for the importance of these people's positions and for their training, with respect to their training, the Government began the enhancement grant program to increase the salaries of child care professionals.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we want it to be clear that we do not relish this debate or the current situation any more than the child care professionals themselves. They have done everything they can to bring this Government to its senses and, as my colleague from St. Johns and my Leader have indicated, in every instance their

sensible, rational, conciliatory approach was rebuffed by the Minister responsible and by the Government.

Where does that leave us, Mr. Deputy Speaker? It leaves us in a situation in which many, many working people have found themselves whenever there was a Tory Government in power. It left them no alternative but to protest in the most highly visible and public way that they have available to them. That is because their concerns are not listened to, and the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) wants to chirp from his seat while the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), or Opposition Members are fomenting this problem.

When you have a legitimate problem, when you have gone through the process of enlightening the Government, and I emphasize that there is a lot of enlightening to be done when it comes to this Government, that when you have gone through the process of enlightening the Government, when the Government itself has undertaken studies to define the problem and propose solutions and then the Government ignores it, what else can they do, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

The Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) says it is not true. The Minister has received a task force report, March of 1989, a task force that she put in place. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister has received the MANSIS Report which clearly indicates that the salaries being paid to our day care professionals are inadequate, they do not live up in any sense of the meaning of pay equity to the needs and requirements of these positions. The fact of the matter is the Government has more than adequate information upon which to develop some fair solutions for these people. They have chosen not to.

For the Minister of Family Services to stand up and continually say, well, I have my budget to live within, I am concerned. The Minister underspent within her budget some \$4.4 million. That more than covers the cost of increasing the salary enhancement grants to manifold what was offered by this Government. The fact of the matter is, if this Government chose to increase the salaries, even in line with what the MANSIS Report recommended, the cost to the Government would have been one small fraction of the total spending of this Government.

The Minister of Health does not need his \$90,000 consultant to improve his image, nor does the Minister need someone to back up her back up, to back up her back up, in her office because she cannot manage it. The fact of the matter is this Government is spending millions and millions and millions of dollars to cover up its own incompetence and at the same time denying child care professionals the right to a decent salary and that is all they are asking.

Let not the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) stand up and pretend to this House or to the public that somehow the needs of this group could not have been accommodated, could not have been accommodated within the existing budgets had they decided or wanted to rearrange their priorities. If they had wanted to rearrange their priorities this would have been achievable in very short order. Mr. Deputy Speaker,

the Minister, and more particularly the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of the province dug in their heels. They dug in their heels.

* (1550)

They were not very happy earlier this afternoon when our Leader, when the NDP Leader, stood up and said, you know, you cannot fight Brian Mulroney, you cannot fight VIA cutbacks, you cannot fight cutbacks to the post-secondary education support program, the EPF programs. You cannot fight against the elimination of the Port of Churchill, you will not move to support the modernization of Flin Flon, you will not get the federal Government off their whatever but, Mr Deputy Speaker, we will fight the child care workers. The same First Minister who sits in his little Cabinet room and passes O/Cs to increase the salaries of his political hacks by \$10,000 or \$15,000, or whatever thousands of dollars, 20 percent, 30 percent, says no to child care professionals who are making \$16,000.00.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the fact of the matter is that everyone recognizes, and I hope including the First Minister, that day care professionals are underpaid. Independent studies have told them that, common sense would tell them that someone with two-years training is underpaid, and this Government cannot use the excuse that it is not within the Minister's budget, or the budget of the department. They cannot use the excuse that they cannot prioritize within the department to make this happen. It simply does not wash in the public's mind, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

So what are we left with? We are left with a situation where child care professionals, those people who work on a daily basis to provide good quality day care for kids across this province are forced, in effect, to withdraw their services to show their displeasure with this Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, all of the rhetoric from the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) and for those defenders of this Government's policies are not going to wash because this Government has found the money to support its political friends, to hire its political staff, to support projects which are far less of a priority for the average Manitoban than this priority.

I want to talk a minute about what the people in the field feel with respect to this issue. Because I had the good fortune, and perhaps the Minister responsible should have attended some of the regional meetings that were conducted by the Manitoba Child Care Association, perhaps he would have understood the depth of feeling these people have about this issue.

I took the opportunity and attended the regional meeting which was held in Cranberry Portage on the 23rd of September and, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can tell you that no one in the child care community is taking any pride in the actions that are going to be taken tomorrow unless this Government comes to its senses, none of them are taking any pride in it. It is an extremely serious confrontation as far as they are concerned.

But, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you have to respect their right to make a public statement. You simply cannot

sit and listen to the kind of lip-service that is paid to day care priorities from this Government any longer. They have to show that they mean business, they have to show this Government that they are not alone in this fight. The Members of this caucus, the NDP Caucus, are behind them, the parents of their children are behind them—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The Honourable Member's time has expired. The Honourable Minister of Health.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I want to enter this debate for two reasons because there are two issues before the House. One of them is the day care issue, and the second one is the issue of where the Official Opposition is finding comfort in this House when occasion upon occasion upon occasion they have burned the speaker. They have gone contrary to his ruling, they have deliberately and knowingly burned the speaker on several occasions already this Session.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for Transcona, on a point of order.

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I believe the Honourable Minister of Health has stood on a point of order. It appears that instead

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member does not have a point of order.

The Honourable Minister of Health has the floor.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, thank you. Recall those brave words prior to the start of this Session from the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) who was not even here to vote to burn the Speaker, and neither was the Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Carr). Mr. Speaker, that is a matter of record, the names were called.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Inkster, on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) knows full well that he is not supposed to be making reference to the absence of Members of this Chamber or the presence of Members in this Chamber. If we want to start referring to people who are here or not here, all he needs to do is look at his own Leader.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Minister of Health has the floor.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province is attending business out of the Chamber, was not here for Question Period, did not duck a vote to protect the Speaker and a proper ruling of the Speaker. I cannot say the same for the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) who was here for Question Period, and the record will show in the

named vote that she was not here for a vote. That demonstrates how confused the Liberal Party is on this issue. One day they are in favour of a strike, the next day they are not in favour of the strike. One day they want user fees in day care, the next day they do not. They have no consistency, no policy, and what is shameful is that this is the Party that five short months ago claimed they were Government-in-waiting. That only was a day after the Leader of the Opposition said that her caucus was like looking after an adult day care centre.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The Honourable Member for St. James, on a point of order.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I feel it is incumbent to mention that while the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) was forced to leave the House on a pressing, personal matter, we need only remind the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) that it was his Government that scheduled Estimates and then did not produce a Minister. It was his Government that saw fit to unilaterally walk out of a committee of this House a few short months ago. If he wants to talk about responsibility in this House he need look no further than his own colleagues.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Order, please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. A dispute of the facts is not a point of order.

While I am on my feet, I may mention to the Honourable Minister that while the person is absent, it is not proper to refer to somebody who is absent. The topic under discussion is day care and voluntary work stoppage.

The Honourable Minister has the floor.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I might remind my honourable friends in the Official Opposition that when the committee was disrupted at about one in the morning they were busy wolfing down pizza and chicken. They were not interested in the business of the Province of Manitoba. They were wolfing down pizza and chicken.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak), on a point of order.

Mr. Kozak: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I believe that the disorder prevailing in the House could be resolved with direction from the Chair to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) to stick to the topic at hand.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. The Honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), on a point of order.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order.

The Minister of Health is attempting to address the issue before us today, and I would humbly request that you, your Honour, assure us that the time taken by

Honourable Members in the Official Opposition with their frivolous, and may I suggest childish, points of order not be deducted from the time of the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I will strain my generosity at this time. The Honourable Minister of Health has the floor.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Liberal Party five short months ago told the people of Manitoba they were Government-in-waiting. I think that was a day after the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) said her caucus was like running an adult day care centre, but that is neither here nor there.

* (1600)

The Leader of the Liberal Party promised to the people of Manitoba that she would raise the decorum and the level of debate in this House, that she would follow parliamentary Rules. This is now the fourth or fifth time that the Liberals have participated in the gamesmanship of the NDP and burned the Speaker on a correct ruling. How does that fit with raising the decorum of the House? How does that fit with following the parliamentary Rules? How does that set with the decorum and the issue of keeping the business of this House before the people of Manitoba? How does burning the Deputy Speaker and overturning a correct ruling by the Speaker follow the Rules of decorum and parliamentary debate as promised by your Leader, as Leader of the Opposition.

I want my honourable friends—and there are some honourable friends in the Liberal Party that do have a semblance of honour and will reflect carefully before they burn the Speaker again. The reason why they are caught on this issue, as they are always caught by the manipulators in the New Democratic Party, is they do not exactly know where to be on an issue of principle. They flip here, they flop there, because they are not consistent. They are trying to be all things to all people, but the people of Manitoba will remember the words of the Liberal Leader (Mrs. Carstairs) where she said she was going to raise the level of decorum in the House. They will remember every single time you have been lead down the garden path by the manipulators in the New Democratic Party. A vote of principle today would have supported the Speaker.

The issue is independent as to whether you wish to participate with the fomenting of a one-day strike with the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) as the Liberal Party. If that is your agenda, stand up and state it, because that was not what you said some several weeks ago. You never said that you were in favour of the strike that the Member for St. Johns was fomenting for tomorrow. You and the Liberal Party at one time put children before raw, crass politics, but now you are not doing that. Now you are supporting the one-day fomented strike by the Member for St. Johns, and you are prepared to use children in your narrow partisan agenda, because you think you are losing the electoral battle in some of the seats you won in 1988.

Well, that is no reason for you to defile the principles of parliamentary democracy in this House. You cannot

stand up and burn the Speaker consistently and expect him to have the confidence of this House, but you consistently do it, because you cannot make up your minds as to where you stand on issues of major public importance.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) is on an agenda. Her Leader, the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer), said he believes—and he wants to take this issue door-to-door in the next election campaign in the Province of Manitoba. He wants to take universal day care to the people of Manitoba. I hope he does do that, and I hope the New Democrats do it.

Some Honourable Members: Why?

Mr. Orchard: Because then there is going to have to be answered what does it mean, how much does it cost and where does the money come from? Those are the questions that will be answered.

Right now on the narrow partisan agenda of the New Democratic Party, they are prepared to use children to advance their political fortunes in the seats that the Liberals took away from them in the last provincial election. I thought the Liberal Party had a few more principles than to use children in that callous a fashion, but they do not. They demonstrated that today when they voted to burn the Speaker on an emergency debate that we have already held.

Let us talk about the issue of day care and where this Government is taking the issue of day care. Yes, we have a task force that has reported, and it has given us a number of recommendations, many of which we have already implemented and begun to follow. Anyone in the Liberal Party and the Official Opposition will agree that that is the agenda we are on. Certainly we did not meet the objective salary agenda of the child care workers this budget and last budget, but I heard the Liberal Critic and the last New Democratic Party Speaker say we are paying lip-service to day care. Mr. Deputy Speaker, \$13 million in two budgets is not lip-service to day care. I say, if that is lip-service, we cannot afford NDP or Liberal lips.

Now, I recognize that the narrow partisan political interests of the New Democratic Party are bound in a one-day fomented strike by the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) using children as political tools against Government, but I never, never once thought that the Liberal Party of Manitoba was in such desperate straits that they had to join with the New Democrats to use children to gain their political momentum back. You do gain momentum in this province by standing on principle and announcing principle, not burning the Speaker, not flip-flopping on policy but being consistent in your approach to the people of Manitoba. The Liberal Party in this Chamber has failed and failed miserably to demonstrate that consistency to that dedication to principle, that dedication to parliamentary democracy, and Mr. Deputy Speaker, more importantly that an Official Opposition has failed and failed miserably to demonstrate that they are indeed Government-in-waiting, they have failed and failed miserably.

Mr. Edwards: Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today on this emergency debate. My first thought

is that in this particular debate on this particular day, the Progressive Conservative mismanagement of this issue is only surpassed by the New Democratic Party's unfounded self-righteousness.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to pick up on some comments, and I know he likes me to do this. The Minister of Health likes me to pick up on some comments he made. I want to pick up on one of them. He talks about not being able to afford Liberal lips. Well, let us think about that. This is the Party that set up a \$200-million slush fund and called themselves good managers. We cannot afford PC lips, lips that give service to financial management ability. The fact is there is zippo, there is none.

These people set up a \$200-million slush fund that even my most right-wing friends say is a ruse. Nobody in this province is fooled by these people. They do not know how to manage. They are playing a game. They played a game with foster parents. They are playing with day care workers. They played it with the public for a year and a half.

The fact is this Party is ready for Government. The people of this province know they are ready for Government. They know, and I will tell you how they know. They know because they have seen it all before. They have seen Sterling Lyon do it. They have seen this Party do it. Go to the public and say, hey, we know how to handle bucks, people. We know how to handle bucks.

The fact is they lose them and they hide them away, and that is the PC strategy, Mr. Deputy Speaker. They have absolutely no respect for financial accountability and for management ability. What they are out to do is put a ruse over the people of this province and they know better. This Party knows better and the people of this province know full-well what that slush fund is all about. When the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) indicates that his Party is known for consistency, well, we need look no further than the foster parents on that.

The fact is the way this Party puts across its consistent position is to go beyond the people who give the services, do a poll amongst the people who took care of the foster kids in this province, undercut the very organization that they were supposed to be dealing with in good faith, went right to the people and attempted to subvert the entire negotiation process. The Premier was finally forced to step in and bring some common sense to the issue and some decency and some morality to the issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, finally on the issue of decorum raised by the Minister of Health. I simply reiterate decorum is something which I think anybody who took the time to sit here in Question Period every day would understand was not a word known to the Government. The Government has no idea what that word means and has no idea how to act that out in the course of procedures in this House. Decorum, especially I might add from the front benches which should be giving some guidance to those in the upper benches, is absolutely unprecedented in its non-existence in this House from the Government side.

Then this Government says we respect the House and we respect the Rules and the way this House is supposed to work. Meanwhile they allow the chairman of a committee and the Minister there to walk out of a committee duly constituted by you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, by this House, and under specific orders from the majority of that committee to continue talking. About one-fifth of this province and the chairman walked out. Let us not talk about respect for this House because that Party has proven very clearly what they think. It is a matter of convenience for them.

* (1610)

The fact is that the \$550 increase on the salary enhancement, out of an average salary of \$15,600, is far less than the rate of inflation in this province. It is somewhere less than 4 percent. The fact is that this Government has completely failed to address the very legitimate points put forward by child care workers; indeed, parents of children who use child care; indeed, the operators of child care centres. There is a consistent message coming through from the people in this field in this province, and that is that this Government better get with it and very, very quickly because they need to deal with the issue in a reasonable manner and they have not. They have thrown a sop to the day care workers in this province. They have thrown it down and said, take this and go away; please, go away. That is more than the workers in this case are willing to stand, and they know that what the study was going to find before it was ordered by this Government. But the Government went ahead and said, we are going to study this issue, we are going to go around the province. They co-operated and they said, look, we have to educate this Government and we have to get this Government on track knowing about the issues and knowing where they should go and they did that.

The report came down and they were not particularly surprised. It confirmed what they thought was going to come out of it. They looked forward to the Government coming up with a comprehensive plan which would, hopefully, be more than a bone thrown to a dog, something to make the dog go away. The fact is they looked for a plan, a plan to get them where ultimately they wanted to be and where ultimately they should be, and no plan was forthcoming. Now we have the arrogance, the arrogance of a Premier who says, I will not meet. Can you fathom that, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Leader of a Government who says, I will not sit down, I will not give an hour of my time to the parents and the children and the day care workers of this province? It astounds me, I believe it astounds the people of this province, and I believe that style and that message that has come out from this Government consistently, again and again and again is, if I may say, at the root of the distrust of this Government by the people of this province. They know that this Government plays political games all the time, and the very real suspicion of the day care workers and the day care users in this province that there is another political game being played.

I want to also indicate, specific to the first thing I said, which was that I think the NDP have a large amount of unfounded self-righteousness on this issue. They were

obviously the Government for many, many years in this province when they had every opportunity to do just what they are calling on the Government to do now. Now they are correct in calling on the Government to do that, but it is kind of Johnny-come-lately to this issue. The fact is that they did do things to raise standards in day cares, they did do that. They did create a system which could work, but they went nowhere near far enough. They did not ever completely understand the need for day care in this society. I believe that, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

I hear my friend from the third Party calling about some problems with my comments. I simply reference comments I made the last time I spoke on this issue and apparently it was a controversial issue in this House. There were some people screaming at me, and let me just say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I stand 100 percent behind extending what is a means test for the poor to a means test for the rich. The fact is that this Party, this New Democratic Party, when they were in Government, saw fit to say, yes, the poor need to go through a means test. They should have to account for their getting back some of the cost of having their children in day care, but they would not extend that. It was innately unfair. For a Party that claims to have a social conscience and claims to be on the side of the poor, I find it passing strange that they would continue the present stand that they have and would continue the policies that they have put in place. Mr. Deputy Speaker, may I ask how much time I have remaining?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member has one minute remaining.

Mr. Edwards: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I simply want to reiterate some of the shocking statistics in conclusion which I think lead us to deal with this issue very seriously. I have referenced them previously.

They probably cannot be mentioned enough and I speak in particular of the fact that six in every 10 female-headed families live below the poverty line presently. Only one in 10 out of the two million Canadian children who require child care are in licensed, supervised settings, and finally and perhaps most importantly, we know that without the contribution from the second parent in two-income families, it is estimated that the number of families living below the poverty line would increase to 62 percent. I close with those comments. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): I rise in support of the day care workers of this province and the children who are in their charge and their care, with the crisis that has developed in this province as a result of Government inaction over the last number of months.

The short time that they have been in Government, a year and a half, they have had an opportunity to develop relationships with various groups and communities in this province. In this area they have obviously failed to develop the communication, the programs and the action that is required to ensure that these people involved, the day care workers and the

parents involved have confidence in their ability to deal with it. Obviously there is a lack of confidence and this is why the workers out there are proceeding with the action that they have announced some time ago that they would be undertaking. They do not feel comfortable, they do not feel that this Government is serious in its willingness to undertake action. They are obviously frustrated, they are outraged at the fact that this Government has not taken the kind of realistic action that would at least lead them to believe that there is going to be some light at the end of the tunnel, some future for their profession, for the system in this province. That is why it is there.

It is not a matter of one member, the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), my colleague, fomenting a strike, as the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), is wont to say, and others have said. He has continually belittled the issue by saying that, belittled the efforts of the people involved because the feelings are very widespread. One person by saying yes, we support you in your actions, support you in your efforts to gain some justice from this Government, can in no way be accused of being the instigator, being the one responsible because it is so widespread, this discontent.

The fact is that the Members, every time they say that, show their lack of understanding of the issue. I know that they have done that before. As a matter of fact, in the debate on the 18th of September, when we came back into the Legislature and my colleague introduced emergency debate at that time, there were a number of speeches by Members, the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), the Member for Pembina, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and others, which outraged the day care workers.

I had the opportunity to pass some of those speeches around to some of my constituents and they saw what these people said about day care. Obviously they did not know what they were talking about, these Members, so it prompted some letters from day care workers, from the director in Dauphin, for example, to the Member for Minnedosa, the Member for Pembina, asking him to explain his statements further because obviously he showed no understanding of the issue and obviously, therefore, no empathy for the people involved in that particular issue.

* (1620)

The fact is, and Liberals have made statements about the NDP being self-righteous or speaking from a point of a weak position because we had left, they allege, the day care system in this crisis. The fact is there was no crisis, we were moving in a planned way, and over the years, the six years that we were in Government, we brought in day care standards, we increased the number of spaces from about 6000 to 16,000 and that alone requires that much more funding, just base funding for operating. Obviously you have to have a substantial increase every year just to meet the basic operating costs without actually bringing up the standards of salaries for workers because there are so many more of them every time you open more spaces.

So we did increase the number of spaces by some 134 percent in those six years. The budget has gone

from \$600,000 ten years ago to some \$33 million this past year. So that means this is a growing program; obviously, a program that has not even begun to meet the needs out there. Therefore, it is natural that there are going to be rather substantial increases in funding.

So when the Members opposite talk about 45 percent, they feel this is really super. The Minister sitting over there would really like to brag about their own departments and they got 45 percent increases in two years. Although they would quite likely be accused of mismanagement if they were to get that kind of increase, particularly, if they did not have some major new thrusts and programs that were needed out in the public realm.

Obviously, this 45 percent looks rather large, and a number of the Ministers around there obviously have taken that and said, hey, there is too much going into that program, we have to balance this out a little bit here, obviously we are giving too much to the Family Services Minister for this program. Therefore they said, look, enough is enough we can only go so far with this. I think that is the way they are thinking.

Many rural Ministers there have not seen the tremendous need in the changing society. A lot of single-parent families who require a day care system so they can work and develop productive lives, productive careers, raise their families and, of course, not have to continue in a situation where they are on social assistance or welfare, they want to be productive and they want to give their children the best possible opportunities. In the changing world, with that kind of family structure, there is that growing need for a child care system that meets all of the criteria.

This Government has not recognized that. They have simply said, well, 45 percent is a lot. We are saying that the day care workers in this province have come forward with reasonable requests, and they are now facing a position where they are up against the wall, where the Premier refuses to meet with them, where he delivers ultimatums to them and tells them they cannot continue with any job action or else he will not talk to them.

The fact is job action takes place in many different situations. Strikes have existed for years. Unions have worked for that, to organize together, to get some justice in the workplace. That does not mean the employer stops talking to them. It is a legal right that they have to protest to say, look, we are not satisfied here, we want you to stand up and hear us, we want you to listen to us.

They exercise some of the limited powers they have to withdraw their services, to get some results from that employer. That does not mean the employer stops talking to them. That is why they continue to talk, in many cases, through arbitrators and conciliators.

What we propose is that an independent conciliator be called in to arrange the discussions on both sides, to develop solutions so that the impasse would be broken, and the workers would not have to go through with their job action. In fact, the Government has not supported that position.

Now, I say the true position of the Government on this issue is borne out clearly by the Member for

Pembina's (Mr. Orchard) words when he said we cannot afford NDP lips, when he was saying that we were accusing him of paying lip-service to this issue. Well, the fact is, he is saying this program is not important enough to provide additional funding, it is not an important need out there. I think that is what is typified by that particular statement. If one were to generalize from it, it is that they do not think it is an important issue. They are not interested in supporting families out there that need this support and therefore they are not going to provide the funding. That was summed up in that statement by the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard). He did not mean it that way, but that is precisely what it is.

Now the workers obviously have heard that feeling. They have that response from the Government in their discussions and the meetings they have had. They realize there is really very little hope, there is no plan, there is no interest in developing a plan. Therefore, because this Government lacks any sincerity to deal with this issue, they have no choice but to undertake major action in this province.

So I am saying, and our Party is saying, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this Government should come to its senses and, through this debate, should resolve amongst themselves here today to listen to common sense, to move forward immediately with a communication to the day care workers and to the association here in Manitoba to tell them, call this off, we are prepared to sit down with you and talk about it and work out a long-term plan, discuss with you the issues, and avoid this major action that is going to take place tomorrow, unfortunately now almost unavoidable but still some chance for this Government to act.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hear one of the backbenchers from the NDP saying, have you got your money on the table? I guess that raises the question of whether or not this is simply a matter of money, or whether or not it is a question dealing with the child care workers and child care issue in this province on a total and broadly-based and comprehensive manner. That is really why I rise to speak to this because I have always been of the inclination that dealing with a problem on a piecemeal, and not on a comprehensive manner, will compound and complicate the problem.

Frankly, as Governments across the years have dealt with this issue, we have ended up with a system that is funded in some areas, not funded in others. It has certain criteria that are not even across the province. I think this is really where the misunderstanding and the apprehension of the child care workers out there stems from. It is that they have not developed a feeling of trust and willingness to work with Government. They have not felt that Government is particularly willing over the years to look at a long-term development of child care within this province.

Then we see examples today of where we have most urgent public importance, and we have a lot of vacant seats in the House today, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think that maybe what we have seen is the Opposition has

seized an opportunity to try and make a political issue out of something that they probably should have known better, and probably we have created a little bit of controversy and a little bit of hard feelings in the Liberal ranks today.

I am a little bit concerned that maybe the Liberals are going to have to have another caucus pretty soon to get their position on this in order. Because I look here, Wednesday, the 20th of May, 1987, the Honourable Member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) raised the issue regarding day care, and I want to quote from a statement that she made at that time. I notice that maybe this is where it stems from, some of the dissension within the ranks of the Liberal Party, because I quote: I am not concerned about the centre per se, nor would I provide them with maintenance grants, nor would I provide them with Salary Enhancement Grants, but I would provide subsidies for children, because that is, after all, who are in care. I find that very interesting, she said: "I would not provide salary enhancement grants."-(interjection)- Yes, from Hansard, Wednesday, May 20, 1987.

(Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

* (1630)

Mr. Cummings: Now the issue today seems to be the funding for the child care worker. I have to reiterate that this Government made a very conscious effort not to preclude the child care workers from the solution, but to look at the overall problem of child care in this province, and one of the problems was also spaces. You need spaces, you need workers, you need spaces in order to have jobs for those workers.

Quite frankly, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have put a lot of money into day care operations in this province. The Opposition says that we have talked until they are tired of hearing about the \$13 million in the last two budgets.-(interjection)- Well, perhaps they better wake up a little bit and smell the coffee because there are an awful lot of people out there who think that is a lot of money and that it is going in the right place. We have constantly said that we are prepared to sit down and work with the workers of this province to make sure that we have properly reimbursed them for their work. We have never precluded them from the formula that we want to work with in this province. That offer still stands and that offer will still stand tomorrow. It will still stand the next day. It will still stand the next month. We will work with the day care industry in this province, Mr. Acting Speaker, and we will not withdraw that offer to work with them to find a solution that is suitable for all of those who are involved.

There have been a number of initiatives that have taken place: one-time equipment grants were included, start-up grants for family day care from \$225 to \$300 per space, work site day cares are being encouraged with assistance grants of \$75 per space.

There is a whole list of things that we have initiated, that this Government and this Minister have initiated, to deal with the day care issue in this province. I think that it hurts us deeply to feel that there are some people

in the day care industry who feel that we have abandoned them, we have not. We have committed ourselves to continuing to work with them. The only thing that has happened is that we have asked for the opportunity to provide an overall solution for the issue as it faces us today. There is certainly a need and a place for day care as the previous administration increased the requirements and the education and the level of regimentation on day cares, naturally it follows that the requirements vis-a-vis pay and working conditions for the workers have to rise as well.

We have agreed to that, we have recognized that and nothing has changed, but we have said that we would not under threat make arbitrary moves to deal with one part of this issue without dealing with the overall question. That is the only area of dispute that there is in front of this Government today. That is the only area of dispute there is between us and the child care system that is out there, and we believe that we have a process and that we have a willingness to deal with that issue. No matter what happens tomorrow, we will be quite prepared to continue to work toward the solutions that we put on the table. No matter what the Opposition wants to say in terms of going out and telling the workers that the only way you are going to get attention is to strike, that is not the way to deal with this issue, Mr. Acting Speaker.-(interjection)-

Well, it is certainly not an approach that I would take, because if there is one way that we are going to create continued growth and ability to serve those who need the child care spaces that are appropriate in this province, it is by having all areas of child care working together, not just dealing with one section in isolation. Because in different parts of this province, in different parts of the cities, there are different ways which we can provide spaces, and we need not turn our back on one particular aspect. We have to look at all aspects in order to make sure that we provide the spaces that the children are needing.

If we want to extrapolate the words of the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), even though she says she is not prepared to talk about salary enhancement grants, I am sure she would support the expansion of the number of spaces that are required for children for day care in this province.

If we were not saddled with the great white elephant north of Selkirk, there is probably another 28 million bucks we could put into some useful programs in this province.

Some Honourable Member: \$30 million.

Mr. Cummings: Well, 28 I got, 30, will you give me 31?

Mr. Acting Speaker, this is a very serious question, and while we refer to each other in this House with various jibes about how we would deal with this issue, I believe there is a willingness in this House and a willingness in the province to deal with the concerns of day care. We will continue to put forward our best efforts to work with all parts of the industry and that is always what we have said, that we will look for an overall solution.

If you look at the recommendation that came from the task force, they stated that they found it virtually impossible to prioritize the key concerns on a 1-2-3 basis, but it is most urgent that salaries, training, opportunities, financial support to the existing system, and provision of additional spaces be addressed.

Our Premier (Mr. Filmon), our Minister and this Government have always committed itself to addressing it on that basis. That commitment is no less strong today than it was at the beginning of this process.

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): Mr. Acting Speaker, just hearing the Deputy Premier speaking about commitment, I do not know how he can stand up in this House and even utter those words. I really cannot. Why do we have a walkout by the workers, totally supported by the families, in child care in this province, if there were a commitment of this Government to the preservation of services and enhancement of salaries of the workers, which has been widely acknowledged by their own studies, by their own reports, by everyone in the system, as one could call it, and yet they fail to act.

They were using, in essence, the threat of a walkout as the basis for not dealing with this matter. We are not going to talk to you if you are going to walk out, if your threat is there. That is the basis of their refusal to discuss this issue. The issue has been here for months. The association has been trying to get to the Government through all avenues to deal with this matter, and what happens? The Premier (Mr. Filmon) puts his special adviser and his campaign manager into the Minister's office to cut off all the calls and the concerns about this issue.

That is essentially what is happening, Mr. Acting Speaker.-(interjection)- Now, when I hear Conservatives saying that someone's nose is growing, I know that I am touching a chord. That is why things are so quiet in that office. They have hidden him already. We know. I know what is going on. The Conservatives better just stand up and admit that they are attempting to manipulate the system. Their philosophical hang-up really comes out in the speech of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), who is really the hawk on this issue, who is really the Sterling Lyon on this issue. He says, we cannot afford child care. If it is what the NDP say, we cannot afford it in Manitoba.

* (1640)

Mr. Acting Speaker, Manitoba families cannot afford Conservatives. They cannot afford Conservatives in office because Manitobans, working families, require a system of child care to make sure that the families are supported in a necessary way to meet the needs of Manitoba families, and the program is necessary.

To hear the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) of this province say, look, we cannot afford this program, really comes to the root of the issue. They are not prepared to act. The right wingers of the Conservative Party are in control. That is essentially what it is all about. There are no left wingers in the Conservative Party. The ultra-right is basically pushing the other right. That is really what it amounts to.

Additionally, Mr. Acting Speaker, they have their philosophical hang-up, just like the Liberals do. Those two are very much alike to say, look, we really want to see the money move with the children and set up private day care for profit rather than having co-operative community-run day care in this province. That is our philosophical hang-up. Instead, what should be happening is the Government should be saying, and through the Canada Assistance Plan, increasing the number of spaces, because they get half of their money back, so Ottawa will not stop, will not prevent, even though they have killed the program, the increase of spaces. They should be enhancing the program.

No, Mr. Acting Speaker, they are holding on to their ideological blinkers. Both the Conservative Government and the Liberal Opposition here are also hung-up. That really comes up to the point today.

What is going on in the Liberal Party? -(interjection)- I would too. We had the Deputy Leader into Question Period, we had the Leader into Question Period, and then when the vote was called, where were they? I am sure that Manitobans would want to know where they stand on this issue. I want to know where they stand on this issue, because interestingly enough, I do not agree with the Deputy Premier of this province very often, but the point that he raised out of Hansard in 1987 clearly hits home. Where does the Liberal Party stand on day care in this province? We have had the critic mouthing support, but yet her Leader consistently seems to undercut her. Where are they on this issue of crisis in confidence and crisis in management of this Conservative Government? The Liberals appear to be split. If they are not split, where were they? Where were the two key people of the Liberal Party today? Where are they? Where are they on this issue?

I think the Liberals have some answering to do on this question. I am sure the media will be raising those questions. Let us not kid ourselves. There is a crisis in day care. This crisis could be solved. This Government should be prepared to act, to sit down with the workers and the families who are involved in the spaces in this province, because this issue goes across Manitoba. This in fact can be interpreted as an attack on families. This intimidation—I call it intimidation on behalf of the Premier (Mr. Filmon)—saying, withdraw or we will not talk to you can only be interpreted as an attack on the families of this province requiring day care services.

The crisis has been created by this Government. They are perpetuating it. We have the Official Opposition who know where they are on this issue. They claim to be in support of having the debate go on in support of workers. Their key members and decision-makers in the Party disappear at crucial times on this issue so we do not know where they really stand. Maybe some of them will get up and say why they spoke one way in 1987 and they are speaking differently today or they are missing some votes on this issue.

Perhaps they will tell us, perhaps Manitobans will get an inkling of how a Government-in-waiting operates. Today we see you, tomorrow or this afternoon we do not see you. Is that the way a Government-in-waiting operates? Let us deal with this issue as a Legislature. Let us sit down with the workers, provide the necessary

salary enhancement that is required and not continue the attack on Manitoba families.

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolesey): The issue before us today is one that the Liberals take very seriously, contrary to some of the comments made by the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) a few moments ago. I will be addressing those comments in more detail in a moment.

We are dealing here, quite frankly, with the issue of mismanagement, the lack of consultation, the not willing to talk on the part of the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and his Ministers and his officials. The threat that we will not meet with you because you are contemplating a walkout is quite frankly on the part of the Government benches and the Premier himself a cop-out. I do not think you can call it any less than that. There has been plenty of time to deal on this issue. It did not come up over night. We knew there were problems a year ago. The answers have to be put on the table. Yes, there has been some additional money put forward. I think those were some of the right things to do, some of the right things, but it is insufficient to just put dollars on the table and hope they will arrive at the right destination.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Premier himself about a week ago on radio admitted that much of the—in fact most of, in some cases, the extra dollars that went into day care centres did not arrive in the pay packets of the workers involved. I do not think that is right. I think if the intention of this Government was that there was to be a greater degree of support from a salary viewpoint to those trained day care workers, playing the important role that they are in the lives of our children, then the program should have been set in a certain way that would have guaranteed that those would have been the results. It would have ended up in the pay packets of those workers.

I think we also have to talk about the fact that there is a gross shortage of day care spaces in the province. That is the sort of thing that did not have solutions directed by this Government, nor were there solutions by the former Government. In 1986, in the election campaign that winter, the NDP promised thousands, I quote, thousands of new day care spaces. By the time the election came around in the spring of '88, the net day care spaces produced in Manitoba, and I say net because there were day care spaces closed, the net was 235 new spaces. I do not think that is a heck of a track record. That is why I find that the other opposition Party in the House is quite frankly in very great danger, if it does not watch itself, of being rightfully accused of manipulation and hypocrisy on the matter. I say in great danger because I have some hope that maybe some principles will come out in the matter.

At the moment I am having a lot of trouble with some of the statements being brought out by the NDP and a couple of their critics, because their suggestion is the Liberals were not there. Well, I am sorry but the Liberals have brought forward ideas how new day care spaces could be funded, how we could stretch those dollars, how we could suggest through the tax system that—in that we do not have a universal system now, we can arrange that the system could be modified so that those who can afford to pay, those families who

have two professionals earning professional incomes, levels that leave them in a situation way above the average earnings in this province, could pay a greater portion of their space for their children. Instead we have the opposite, we have professionals taking advantage of it, two family professionals taking advantage of spaces when there are people that are single-parent families or very, very poor families that cannot get a space at all.

Now I find that unconscionable, quite frankly, and I think we should look at these sorts of things. The NDP was in power for six and a half years. They set some of the best standards for day care in Canada and I have never said no to that. I have said yes, and my hat is off to them for that, but then do not go and say, we set the best standards but we will not create sufficient spaces, we will not fund it properly, and we will not work for creative solutions which will mean there will be more spaces, given some tightness of resources, in this province. Instead we have overworked, ideological solutions, and we have the day care workers under the NDP being a heck of a lot worse off than they are right now.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I find that rather interesting. I think a lot of people out in the street are going to say, when they look at the different Parties around the table, what sort of position did you take, what sort of solutions did they offer? I think the NDP is going to be found wanting. I think it is going to be found wanting quite a bit because they had the opportunity to do things and did not, and now of course they are taking the issue on with—in fact, I wonder if we are not going to see a changing of the name of the Party. I think this should be the HTT Party, not the New Democratic Party, and that stands for Holier-Than-Thou.

* (1650)

(Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

Anyway, those are the sort of sentiments I have about an issue that I feel very strongly about. I represent a riding, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in which day care is absolutely crucial to the lives of the people in that area. I represent an area that probably has one of the highest levels of single-parent families and some of the lowest incomes in the Province of Manitoba, and day care is absolutely crucial. To say that they did all the right things, and they are doing all the right things now is just so much hooley, quite frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

The Liberals, for our part—we have since 1986, when we had representation in this House, offered creative solutions to looking forward to their being more and better day care spaces in Manitoba. We are not ideologically bound by some of the solutions that have been put forward by the other two Parties and in particular the former administration.

I hear comments for them by the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) about the fact that our Leader is not here. Well the NDP is in very great danger of saying that they are being accused on this issue of taking and manipulating the situation as opposed to working for and with the workers and families involved.

If they were so interested in this issue, they could very well have come to the Official Opposition and said,

we are interested in putting forward a MUPI today. Can you rearrange schedules and deal with the matter that we think is of great importance and work together? But no, that is not what is going on.

There is a lot of grandstanding going on. It is unfortunate our Leader had to be away from her seat this afternoon after Question Period, but the Member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) had other commitments and we have brought people back in. We have brought two Members back in since Question Period for this debate and we are attempting to bring others back in. I think that shows what we are trying to do. We are working around it.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

When people ask to work with us in this House that is what we will attempt to do. That was not done in this case. I think we can quite frankly see for what reason that it was not done, either by the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) or the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis). They had the choice to operate that way. They chose not to. So I think that stands in quite clear light of day just what is going on.

I am sorry to say that we have a debate of this nature going on. I am very sorry to see that we are going to have a cessation of work tomorrow on the matter. I think there is going to be a number of families that are going to be very badly impacted. Given the notice involved, some families have been able to find alternate places to place their children for the day. It is a one-day withdrawal of work.

However, as a former union executive, I know how strongly workers feel about an issue like this and that they do not do it lightly. I think they do it in frustration. I think they feel that there are not alternatives available to them or they would not be withdrawing their services, especially a service of this nature. I think that is unfortunate.

They will find that Liberals like myself and the rest of our caucus will be there when it counts to give them the support, to look to the solution. One of the solutions is to take the pay equity report of the task force and say, how are you going to deal with it? Obviously you cannot read it all overnight. Nobody said you can, but where is the long-term solution?

This report did not come on the table a week ago, or two weeks ago, or three weeks ago. I think there was a time that this could have been put on the table as what will be the plan of how to implement and try to attempt to reach pay equity. That has not been forthcoming from the Premier (Mr. Filmon) nor from the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson). I think that is very unfortunate and I think that has precipitated the work stoppage that we are going to see tomorrow and the disruption in the work lives and the family lives of many, many people in this province.

We need to have that plan. We needed to have it some time back. The NDP chose not to deal with this matter when they were in Government. That is unfortunate. We know where they stand on the issue. I am looking for a greater degree of leadership that the Conservatives have not offered to date on this

matter. I think that this is going to be one of the matters that they will be judged by in the upcoming election, whenever that might be, and I know where we stand on it. We are looking for a lot better performance out of the Government benches than we have seen today. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1700)

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): - (interjection)- Mr. Speaker, the Member for Wolseley maybe has not wound up his speech yet. He still seems to want to comment.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is fair to say that this issue is a significant issue in the eyes of many Manitobans. I can tell the Member for Wolseley that yes, this will be one of the issues on which we will be judged come the next election. I would like to tell him and all Members of this House that I have yet to have one phone call from any of my constituents who said that we were not dealing with this in a reasonable and proper fashion—in a reasonable and proper fashion.

The Minister responsible has met continually with the various groups advocating changes in the day care system. She has been a very responsible Minister in how she has approached them and met with them. Any increase of \$13 million or 44 percent is a respectable way of dealing with the problem.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) spoke about how we fumbled this issue completely. Is she not aware that Manitoba ranks first in Canada in the number of day care spaces per child? She pays no attention to those facts. Is she not aware that Manitoba ranks second in Canada after Ontario in terms of funds provided for each day care space? She does not pay any attention to that, that the Minister has done a good job to this point, and we inherited an underfunded program in terms of Government support.

Really, what the members of my constituency say to me is, we believe day care is important to the lifestyle of people today. Things have changed, because I have other members in my constituency who say, we, as parents, raised our children, we provided day care in our family context, but they recognize things have changed. They also recognize that the parents who have the children have a responsibility to contribute something towards the cost of day care.

The Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) is the first one I have heard yet who even hints at that, that the parents have some responsibility, and maybe we should change some regulations to allow them to pay more towards the support of the system, that the money that comes from the Government should go to those who are truly in need. The way the system was set up by the NDP did not allow that to happen.

I think we need to put some attention into that direction, because there are people out there abusing the system. Those in need do not get the support, and those that do not need the need are using the system. That is something we should put some attention to.

The Minister and this Government want to address that, but you have created an expectancy out there

that we will dump money into this—the Brink's truck relationship—that we will just dump money and solve the problem. That will not solve the problem.

There are some structural problems that have to be addressed in who gets day care support from Government, and what level of support the parents of the child should supply.

I guess I speak with a little bit of knowledge in this, because my daughter has worked in a day care centre. She is going through university with the idea that is where she wants to work in the future.

Sure, it is underfunded at the present time, but the Minister and his Government are moving towards a more adequate level total formula of funding so the workers in this system are adequately paid. The workers are not hired by Government, they are not paid by Government. They are hired by the day care centre. The day care centre determines the allocation. Some of these facts are left out of the discussion.

We have substantially increased the funding in various categories. The Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) knows that, and I do not know why she does not come forward and support a constructive approach to resolving a problem, other than just throw money, in terms of salaries. I do not hear her talk about the children or concern about the children. It is salaries to day care workers, that is all she talks about.

Are we here to look after the children, or are we here to just advocate on behalf of some workers who want a higher salary? There is nothing wrong with advocating for a higher salary, but let us use a responsible method of doing it, a very responsible method.

There are some other facts I think the Members opposite should be aware of. The family day care homes, of which they account for 446 of the province's total 938 licensed day care systems, the Family Day Care Association, in their September 27 Newsletter, said, "The Family Day Care Association commends the present Government for demonstrating their willingness to listen to and work with all segments of the day care community,"—listen to and work with. That is referring to what the Minister has done, what this Government has done, in terms of consulting and talking about the issues.

I do not hear the Members over there paying any attention to that, and that is half of the day care centres saying that this Government has demonstrated their willingness to listen to and work with.

An Honourable Member: That is not half.

* (1710)

Mr. Findlay: The 446 out of 938 is pretty close to half, if my mathematics is anywhere close to right.

They continue that they believe this Government is committed to making changes in our day care system that will ultimately benefit all involved. That, Mr. Speaker, is the commitment of the Minister and this Government that we will do that.

The people in the country know we are committed to that. I wish the Members opposite would allow the system to function so a rational discussion could occur, because what has happened in the past few weeks has, I would have to say, hardened the thinking of some of my constituents who wanted to find a reason to be in opposition to universal day care.

You have hardened their position, unfortunately. We have out there many instances where we need to have an adequate day care system. People in small communities, where there are not day care centres, the farmers, the farm wives who have to work on the farm who need some help with their children in strange and unusual hours. We have to address that. That is part of the day care system if you are going to talk about universal day care.

All the focus that I have heard from the two Parties opposite has been centred on a political issue inside the perimeter, the old perimeter vision concept completely. That is all they talk about. They never address any issue beyond the perimeter. They are fighting for the political vote in the City of Winnipeg, pure and simple. They only talk about trying to attract that vote.

The NDP has a very clear mission, a very clear mission of making this a very significant issue for them. I do not blame them for attempting that, but I watch the Liberals, "me too." They do not come out and say what their position is, they are me too with the NDP. I would like to know if they have any position that is different from the NDP or are they fighting for the same turf on the same principles, because I think that we have an issue here that we need some leadership in the province as a total.

We are giving that leadership. We just need some support from the other side to get on with addressing the issue. The Minister has done as best she can and she has met and met and talked and talked, which is a commitment of this Government. We will meet and talk with anybody but we will not meet and talk if we are being blackmailed, and that is where the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is coming from. We have to be able to sit down and talk about resolving this as a continuation of all the meetings that have been held to this point in time. If we are going to be told that it is this way or no way, which seems to be the attitude on the other side we meet, but if we do not agree exactly with what is requested of us, we are said to be non-co-operative or not consulting. Consulting means giving on both sides. It means coming to a compromise, the old Canadian tradition of compromise.- (interjection)-

If the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) is saying that the Minister responsible for Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) has not sat down and met, I would like you to get up and put that on the record today before this debate is over because this Minister has met and met and met repeatedly with the various people associated with this issue and that discussion is an ongoing discussion towards resolution and the difficulties.- (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker, we have an ongoing debate going here, but I do not mind that because this is what we want

to see in terms of getting to the point of finding overall resolution. It is not easy to dump a large amount of money in, in one year, but over a period of time a responsible Government will address the issue with regard to what Government money can be used in this process. I think we would like to see more commitment from the other side to say that the parents have a role to play in this, and this should not always be public money towards finding a method of looking after our children.

We all recognize over here that when there are two people in a family, two parents in a family working, or a single parent and she has to work or he has to work, the day care is important. We must have the proper kind of centres in place, and I for one believe that it does not always have to be publicly funded spaces that supply that sort of day care system, that the private sector can supply it too.

So thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to put my comments on the record because my constituents want a system that is afforded by the province. They want a system that gives good day care and we want it delivered in our rural constituencies too. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I had an interesting experience yesterday. I was invited to a meeting that was organized by concerned parents and child care workers in Thompson. In fact, about 60 people showed up at the meeting. I had no knowledge of the meeting until a few days before the meeting.- (interjection)-

The Members opposite say, of course not. I did not organize that meeting, it was organized by the concerned parents, by the child care workers. If the Member wishes to insinuate anything else, I would like to see him put it on the record. I would like to see him talk directly to the concerned parents and child care workers because they organized the meeting. They asked me to attend as the Member of the Legislature. They also asked the representative from the Cabinet office in Thompson to attend, which she did. They presented me with a petition signed by more than 400 people, the vast majority of whom are parents, indicating their support for the child care workers and their fight to obtain fair salaries.

Yes, I am glad to see that the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) is aware of what happened at the meeting because the interesting experience was listening to the reaction of the people at the meeting to a letter that was read to them by the representative of the Cabinet office from the Premier (Mr. Filmon) trying to justify the position the Government has taken in regard to this issue.

I will not get into some of the details of the letter, but what amazed people was that one of the things that was raised in the letter as a reason why more money could not be given to child care workers in this province was because of the forest fires this summer. That is correct, Mr. Speaker, and this was in a community which was in the middle of the forest fires. No one is saying that the money should not have been

spent on forest fires but people were amazed, and I would say were very annoyed, at the fact that the Premier in his letter would stoop as low to suggest that one of the reasons the child care workers should not get the kind of salaries they deserve was because of the forest fires. That was their reaction.

I felt sorry for the representative from the Cabinet office. She had a difficult job trying to explain the Government's position, trying to explain to the parents and the child care workers why the Premier would not meet with the child care association prior to Tuesday. Now, one of the previous speakers referred to blackmail. I ask you, Mr. Speaker, and I ask the people of Manitoba, what is blackmail? Is it the child care workers who have asked for a meeting, or is it the Premier who has refused to meet with the child care workers if they refuse to call off their day of protest?

I do not know what mentality this Government has towards the child care workers. Well, in fact, I suspect I do. I hear daily suggestions that the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), or the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray), or any one of us in the Opposition Parties—and the word they use is “fomenting to strike.” That is the exact phrase they use. -(interjection)- Fomenting, well, some of them use fomenting too. Fomenting is the correct word. I thank the Minister for clarifying that.

Well, I want to say that is an insult not to me, not to the Member for St. Johns, or any other Member of this Chamber. That is an insult to the parents and the concerned child workers. I wish they could be here to listen to the comments by such enlightened people as the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) today and some of the other speakers who have gotten up and once again accused the Opposition of setting up this whole situation on Tuesday. If they had, I am sure one of the first things they would do is they would accost each and every one of the speakers in the hall at the first opportunity to tell them directly that it is their own decision. It is their own decision based on their own very real frustration that is leading to the walkout on Tuesday.

I would also like the Government to talk to the parents because the interesting thing is, it is the parents who are the most vocal. At this meeting in Thompson on Sunday, attended by more than 60 people, it was the parents who raised all the questions. A lot of the child care workers, it is a new experience for them, they do not want to walk out on Tuesday. Believe you me, Mr. Speaker, they do not want to walk out on Tuesday. All they want is a fair hearing from this Government. They want a long-term commitment. They want to meet with the Premier (Mr. Filmon). They feel that if there is any blackmail that is taking place in this current situation, it is from the Premier and the current Government. For the life of me I cannot understand why.

I just cannot understand why they cannot understand the situation facing the child care workers. You know the bottom line for child care workers is they are grossly underpaid. It is not that there have not been some increases since the salary enhancement grant was introduced a number of years ago. For example, the average salary for a trained child care worker went from \$13,200, up by a total of \$3800 for trained workers;

although the average for overall workers is still around the \$15,500 level. Studies have shown, Mr. Speaker, that the minimum wage that the child care workers should be receiving is more in the range of \$22,000 and \$23,000.00. A substantial increase over the current rate which they are paid for.

One parent got up at the meeting and had a newspaper clipping from last Tuesday which showed that prisoners earn between \$6 and \$8 an hour in penitentiaries, plus a living allowance, plus getting free room and board. That is more money than the vast majority of child care workers are making in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the Government recently increased salaries for political staff. Some of the increases that took place were more than most child care workers make in a year. That is the kind of priorities that we have in society and that is what they are saying. That is why they will be out protesting tomorrow, not because they want to disrupt anything, not because they are being agitated by anyone, but because they have come to the point where they feel they have to take a stand.

What I find saddening about this whole process is the rhetoric we hear today. I do not know what the strategy of the Government is in dealing on this matter. I suspect from listening to some of the catcalls from Members here, they want to show how tough they are with the child care workers. They must have been watching Premier Bourassa in Quebec taking on the unions and they thought, well, this is going to be our stand that way, a la Sterling Lyon. We remember those confrontational days from the 1977 period to 1981. Now I suspect that is the strategy. It may be something else, I do not know, but why this Government would not agree to meet—the Premier with the child care association—is beyond me. I cannot believe why they have put the condition on that they not protest before the meet.

We are witnessing in eastern Europe where people have the right to demonstrate, and here in Manitoba this Government is saying, you demonstrate and we will not meet with you. That is unacceptable, that is blackmail.

The people in the child care facilities have every right to express their view, which they will be doing tomorrow. This Government has no right to attach those sorts of conditions, Mr. Speaker. As I said, I wish they could have been at this meeting yesterday because I would like them to explain the comments they make every day about suggesting this meeting was arranged by myself or the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) or anyone else. It was a meeting arranged by the parents themselves. I would like to see them go through the list of the people who signed the petition because I noticed earlier one of the Members on the Government side refused to accept the fact that people from all political Parties, all walks of life, have been supporting the child care workers.

I can go through the list, and I know the people in Thompson are very open about their political views. There are Liberals, there are Conservatives, there are New Democrats, and people have no political affiliation

who signed. Four hundred people signed that petition and they said, we support the child care workers in their fight for approved salaries. That is the real grass-roots situation out there. That is the real bottom line.

I will be quite glad today to send people copies of the speeches that have been made, because I think they would be amazed. I would be glad to send them the speeches from the Conservative Members as well, because the thing that showed the difficulty we have run into the most is when they heard the Premier's letter. You should have heard the frustration on people's minds, with some of the comments that were put in there.

These are people, Mr. Speaker, who are child care workers who received 24 cents an hour extra last year. That is what they received. I hear all these big figures being floated around, but the amount that the actual increase was for the staff from the salary enhancement program was 24 cents an hour. People said that is just not enough.

Mr. Speaker, they said there needs to be a long-term plan. They are reasonable. They understand it cannot be done overnight. I said there was an increase over the past number of years under the previous Government of \$3,800, and the average salary of trained child care workers under the previous Government—the bottom line is this Government now is giving them 24 cents an hour. That is not anything, 24 cents an hour.— (interjection)— Well, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) says they do not work for Government.

This Government may try and wash its hands of the situation, but we have accepted that we have a provincially-funded system in this province. We provide funds to non-profit centres and profit centres, in the case of this Government. We do provide funds for salary enhancement, but 24 cents an hour is not sufficient. People are being reasonable, they want a long-term plan. It is not just the child care workers, it is the parents themselves who are saying that is not enough, that is not enough. People are saying you cannot pay people wages that are one-third less than the average industrial wage in this province. In many cases it is less than the poverty line for the people who are paid.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is what the child care workers are saying tomorrow is important. Let us listen to it, let us meet with them, let us deal with them and not get into this kind of political blackmail we are seeing from the Government.

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Mr. Speaker, I rise today in probably a very unique situation, as a Member of this House, and certainly on this side of the House, being a Member who is under 30 years of age with a young daughter, I rise as probably one of the few Members of this House who actually uses the child care system.

* (1720)

Mr. Speaker, I am also probably unique among the Members of this Assembly. I am probably one of the few Members who has a Day Care Advisory Committee

in my constituency, to me, as an MLA, which involves all of the day cares in the Lac du Bonnet constituency. We meet fairly regularly and the members of that committee who represent the various day cares in Lac du Bonnet constituency use that as an opportunity to brief me on the issues that they are concerned about specific to their day cares, as well as to the broad issues.

Over the last year, since we have had those meetings, I have had the opportunity to learn a lot about the day care issue. I am certainly no expert and I do not make myself out to be one, but I feel that I certainly have some thoughts and opinions that I would like to express and contribute to this debate. This debate on this issue is very troubling to all of us, whether one be the Minister of Community Services or a Member on this side of the House, and certainly to all Members of this Legislature. There is no denying whatsoever that there is a problem, that there is a frustration among the providers of day care services in this province. It is a frustration that is built up for a whole variety of reasons.

I find it very ironical, Mr. Speaker, that the Members of the New Democratic Party sit in this House and time and time again talk about how terrible the funding situation is, and no one is admitting that it is a perfect funding situation. I think any group or individuals who come to Government today realize that there are not bucketfuls of money to provide the kinds of services and the financial assistance they would want. I find it so ironical that the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) would stand here in this House and talk about how wonderful the system was when they were in Government and how terrible it is today, when the bottom line is the providers of the system are getting more money today in dollar value than they were two years ago. That is not to admit that the system is perfect and there is not a problem. The problem is not one that has been created in just the last few months. It is a frustration that goes back for many, many years and is certainly there. We acknowledge that, Mr. Speaker.

Another problem I have with this debate today and in listening to the comments from Members of the Liberal Party, particularly the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) and I have to say this, I think the Member for Wolseley provided some tremendous insight into this debate that I would like to discuss a little bit. Although Members of his Party and himself are certainly going to have a debate over the levels of funding and the way these things are being handled, et cetera, he did draw to our attention a very fundamental part of this debate that I do not think has been entirely put on the table by the Members of the New Democratic Party.

There is a very philosophical difference in the way we deal with child care in Manitoba. I think Members of the Liberal Party, expressed through the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) and Members on this side, have a very different philosophical view than Members of the New Democratic Party.

I had the opportunity of working for a federal Minister of Health and Welfare at a time when he was working at providing federal dollars into the child care system

across the country, and at that time a very topical document was the Katie Cooke Report. I remember that report welcomed by the then Deputy Premier of the Day, Muriel Smith, who I believe was in charge of day care. That report called for a universal free system of day care, Government run, universal free day care at a cost of \$11 billion to be funded by the elimination of RRSPs and a number of other benefits that would simply have increased the cost of taking care of our elderly. I remember the Government of the Day, Mrs. Smith, talking about how wonderful this report was. If we listen to Members of the New Democratic Party, we see time and time again that what underlies their argument is the need for a universal free system.

Members of the Liberal Party, I think, have clearly indicated that is not their preference and some of them share with Members of this House. I am sure there are others in the Party who support the universal system, but there are Members who recognize that the country, for a variety of reasons, is not going to have that system financially, philosophically, et cetera.

I can tell you from the conversations I had, I do not think the issue really in this debate or in the debate that we are going through in the public realm today, is one of universal versus non-universal. I think it is generally accepted, although the Members of the New Democratic Party do not accept that and under their agenda continue to push for it, that the system is not going to be a universal free system.

That brings me to my other great concern in this debate, Mr. Speaker. I sit here, I speak to my day care workers and my board members in my riding who bring forward a lot of very legitimate concerns, one of course is salaries. We have heard in this debate about the tremendous support that many parents have for their demand for salaries, but what I have not yet heard from any parent in this province who has the financial means to provide it, I have not yet seen one additional dollar from them on the table toward those salaries and that is what troubles me. This is a problem that we all share.

Tomorrow we will have a walkout or an information day. This debate, through the auspices of the media, through the auspices of the New Democratic Party, the Opposition, has been made into a very black and white debate. It is either the Government gives more in salary enhancement grants, or it does not.

Mr. Speaker, we have to ask a fundamental question which I asked of my day care committee. Who do they work for? They work for their boards, who were chosen by their parents, the parents of their clients. That is their employers. The boards have an argument with Government and how funding is to be provided, but the workers' employers are their boards. What we have seen in this child care debate are those interests, which are not always the same interests, brought together and focused on one place because it is easy, and that is the Government.

Mr. Speaker, I think that is a very short-sighted way to deal with these issues. The Province of Manitoba is not the employer. Those boards are. There are many day cares in my constituency where the parents who

use that day care do not have the financial means of contributing more. I recognize that. There are others that do. I think that the answer to this problem and these negotiations is going to have to be in trying to bring more dollars into the system, that can provide for better salaries, but there has to be a variety of means of bringing those dollars in.

My day care community in the Lac du Bonnet constituency has made a number of suggestions. One of them is a differential rate for those who only use the system one or two days a week. One of the big problems that rural day cares face is that they staff up for a full complement, and they have people who only use it one, two, or three days, and yet they may need one worker and have only two children to look after.

Mr. Speaker, they have said to me, change the regulations so that we can charge a dollar or two or three dollars more per day, depending on the number of days that you use it—fewer days, you pay a little bit more so that they can cover the true cost of having that worker available.

I know there is an additional charge that can be levied in the system. There are day cares that presently provide hot meals, while others do not, and yet they do not have the ability to charge the parents an extra dollar or two dollars a day for those hot meals. That would bring more money into the system.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, because my time is running out, I would just like to say that this is a very complex issue. It deserves a lot more work and a lot more thought than we have seen coming from the New Democratic Party.

Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia): Mr. Speaker, it brings me great pleasure to participate in this debate. I am a little bit troubled with the comments that are being made saying that this side of the Party, the Official Opposition, that we do not have any direction.

Mr. Speaker, let us look at the Government in power. We are talking about direction. We asked the Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) to show initiative on the VIA Rail problem, to talk to his First Minister (Mr. Filmon) and take a whole delegation of all the Premiers to Ottawa and lobby on behalf of VIA Rail. What happened? Nothing.

* (1730)

Mr. Speaker, now we have day care, another disaster. This Government seems to go from one to the other. They are not looking at things with a future. They are just going one day at a time. The day care people, all they wanted to do is meet with the Premier (Mr. Filmon), just meet with the Premier, that is it, and asked him to have a plan so that they can at least progress over a period of years. This Premier says, no, which is typical, very, very typical of a Tory Government. There is no question in my mind. They are arrogant, they are irresponsible, and they could care less about anybody else except themselves.

Mr. Speaker, we have a minority Government here. What would have happened to our day care people if

this was a majority Government? What would have happened? Cuts, unquestionably.

Mr. Speaker, we have a problem in our rural area day care centres. Day care centres all over Manitoba have to be addressed in such a fashion whereby everybody will have an equal right to that day care centre. One thing that really bothers me is people who are earning, let us say, \$100,000 a year. They put their children in a funded non-profit centre. Now that I find very irresponsible. People who are earning that kind of money could well afford to go to another centre and pay the full going rate.

Mr. Speaker, I will give you an example of one day care centre in my area and that is called the Lakewood Day Care Centre. I have three of them, Lakewood, Crestview and Voyageur, but the Lakewood one I am very, very close to. In fact, last year, just to give you an example of the problems that they have, I donated out of my own pocket \$200, so that the children could have little books for Christmas. That is right, Mr. Speaker, but what happened? They do not have the resources. They do not have the money, and the poor little children had a nice little Christmas party which was very, very beautiful. They participated in this Christmas party, but there was nothing to give them. Well, I tried to help out as much as I could.

I will give you an example of the amount of people who are single parents in this particular day care centre. Out of 33 parents in that centre, 26 children are children of no father or mother. Now that is a disaster. If we cannot provide a good funded day care centre, what is this mother or father going to do with their child? This one mother said to me, Ed, help me out, I do not want to go on welfare, I need space for my child. So I spoke to the lady at Lakewood and we got her a space in there. What are we trying to do? Are we trying to put these people on welfare? No. Let us give them a day care centre that is going to be able to look after their child in a way that you and I would look after our children.

As I said, in this Lakewood Centre, the funding was not sufficient enough because of whatever happened, and I do not know the whole story, but the lady said to me, well, instead of abolishing the lunch program that they have at this centre—it probably would be the only hot meal that they have during the whole day, now that is a shame. So what did she have to do? She laid off one of her staff members to be able to accommodate this lunch program.

Mr. Speaker, we are going to have to take our blinders off. Let us take our blinders off and look after our children. I get very, very uptight when I hear the present Government having an attitude problem, and really that is all it is. As I said before, they are in a minority position right now. They could show leadership but no, Sir. They are arrogant. It has been proven time and time again. They do not care; they do not want to listen; they do not want to listen to criticism; they do not want to listen to ideas, nothing.

I offered an example when I brought forward a Bill which would assist in the rear licence plates, where we would not have those stickers on them. Mr. Speaker,

what happened? They said, no, we have to think about it, a simple thing like that. But that just goes to show you how arrogant they are. We will try to help, we will work with them 101 percent, but do not be arrogant. I find that very, very upsetting because, as I said, our children are our most important resource.

I will give you another example of a little child. I am a Big Brother to little Carl McDonald. His father left and the poor mother had to go now and work at Assiniboia Downs. She needs day care desperately to be able to survive. She does not want welfare. She says I have dignity, but that is exactly what they are trying to do. They want to put everybody on the welfare doll.- (interjection)-

The Honourable Member for Gladstone (Mrs. Oleson) says, come on, come on. Wake up and listen. Wake up and listen. He is not in a day care, Mr. Speaker. I beg of this Government to open up their eyes. I beg this Government not to be so arrogant. Please work with the day care workers where by we will have a system that is going to stand the time.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, the Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake) has certainly made a great re-election speech. He stands a fairly good chance of being back here with a speech like that.

I did want to initially in this debate make reference to the historical, philosophical position of Conservatives in the Conservative Party to an issue like day care. The fact of the matter is that historically the Conservatives in this country and around the world have opposed day care as some sort socialist plot designed to snatch the children away and indoctrinate them into social thought.

The Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) has certainly made references in previous speeches in this House, in past Legislatures to this "evil" that he perceives. I know that the Conservative Party is trying to update its imagine and modernize a bit and put a better face on it.

Let us face facts, this is where the roots of the Conservative ideology and how it relates to day care come from. Twenty five years ago you found very few Conservatives who were as urbane and modern as this group is today, trying to present themselves as defenders of day care and trying to pretend that it was maybe even their idea that a good healthy day care system would be necessary. I think that is the public image they want to present at this time because of the electoral position that they find themselves in right now. I think they are attuned very closely to their natural constituency. Their natural constituency is telling them that they are really not supportive of day care and they are not supportive of this day care strike. They are advising them to take a tough line because that is where their votes are. I think they are looking at this politically and they have made a political judgment that if they can get tough with the day care people and the day care workers that they are going to score brownie points with their natural constituency. I think that has a lot to do with their attitudes they have right now.

* (1740)

We felt today that we should have this emergency debate, because we are very concerned about the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) attitude, the fact that he would not try to or be willing to negotiate with the day care workers and would allow this to develop right up the the eleventh hour and allow these people to walk out, the fact that the Government would determine that the forest fires were a more important place to spend money. Admittedly, the forest fires are a serious problem, but to -(interjection)- no, we are not suggesting that. We are suggesting that the forest fires are important, but we are also suggesting that the day care situation has deteriorated under this Government to the point where the Government has to step in and do something.

The Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) earlier said, well, call an election. He is very keen. I remember him a couple of years ago wanting an election at that time. There were reasons then why he wanted the election. He knew what was coming, and right now he would like to be in a situation where he could push a button and call an election. I do not think that he has the nerve. They do not have the nerve to do it. So they are waiting for us to do it for them. That is right. They want to be forced into a position, and the reason that they want us to do it is because they know they cannot count on their Leader to pull them through. He is a two-time loser. He took a 50 percent lead in the polls last time and blew it for them, and he blew it in '86. I think even if we spotted them another 10 points, there would still be people in that caucus who would say no, do not let this guy out. Look what he did to us the last two times. No matter how many organizers they bring in from Ontario, it still did not help. The day the election was called they were at 50 percent, and they plunged after that. They would have been better without a leader in the last election, and I think that that is a big concern to them here.

So they are going to play brinkmanship here and pretend and govern as though they have a majority, and we all know what happened to the last leader who governed as though he had a majority. Mr. Clark ended up leaving it. So the Government ought to mind its p's and q's here and watch very carefully, because they may find themselves in an election sooner than they think. So you have to be careful. With your situation, with your Leader's track record, I would not be so sure that you are going to come out of it in the shape that you think you might -(interjection)- Well, Mr. Speaker, it is certainly true, I think they are trying to position this into a potential issue. I think they would like nothing better than to do that, and they have not been able to do it so far. Maybe with a little bit of professional advice from the backroom people from Ontario, they may be able to try to get it into that position so they could make that short run to the polls and to the election, but they know those 35 days are a long, long time and a lot can happen in that period of time.

Now, Mr. Speaker, someone else referred in the debate, or not in this debate but at a meeting I was at a few days ago, talked about baby-sitting money that was suggesting somehow that day care workers

were high paid baby-sitters. That is, once again, typical of the reaction of a lot of middle-aged males of the conservative persuasion, hankering back to the good old days, the 1950s and beyond, and of course who think there is some humour in this situation and think that it makes sense to make jokes about this. Well, I do not think it is a very good situation at all.

Mr. Speaker, the Member, I think it was for Rhineland (Mr. Penner), the Minister of Rural Development, made a comment about women in rural Manitoba would like to earn \$16,000, suggesting somehow that this \$16,000 was a tremendous amount of money. We have shown that there have been studies done that have indicated that not only are the members of this group underpaid but actually giving suggested salary levels in the area of \$22,000 for day care workers. So independent people have looked at the situation, have determined that the day care workers are underpaid for their qualifications and that certainly an increase from \$16,000 to \$22,000 would not be out of line.

On the other hand, you have a Member of the Government making the comment that there are people out in rural Manitoba who would like to have \$16,000.00. To them that would be a lot of money. That is a comment I think that is reflective of the community and the constituency that Conservatives represent.

What they are trying to do—and the previous Member made a reference to how they are acting now versus what they would act like if they had a majority Government. He is absolutely correct. If they had a majority Government, they would be out here slashing, hacking and kicking the way the Sterling Lyon Government did for its four short years—well four long years—from 1977 to 1981, and nobody, but nobody, wants to go back. Not even a lot of the Conservatives can identify and want to go back to those days, but the fact of the matter is that the people who run the Conservative Party, the strong right-wing ideologues in that Party, that upon obtaining a majority would basically direct that the right-wing agenda be followed.

That is what is happening in Ottawa with the back-to-back majorities the Conservatives have there.

You have privatization at a scale that has not ever been seen in Canada. Even the Conservative Government of a Joe Clark or a Robert Stanfield would not do those sorts of things. After all, the history of the Conservative Party is such that they were the Party who originally set up the Manitoba Telephone System.

The Conservatives in this country have done things like nationalize basic resource companies, utilities and stuff like that.

In their Party they have the red Tory wing and they have the right wingers. Well, who is in control at the federal level? It is the right wingers, the Reaganite types. Actually it is the branch plant, it is Reagan's branch plant, that is what it is, that is all Mulroney is, in every way, shape and form. He is just a branch plant of Ronald Reagan and the right-winged agenda of the United States.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, it was the New Democratic Party that brought this resolution forward today.

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If anybody was really wondering where the NDP stood on this issue, or the sincerity with which they brought forward their resolution today, I would invite them to clip and read the speech just given to us by the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), with respect to the importance of day care in this province, the value to families in this province of quality care given to their children at times when parents are not able to look after the children. I ask them to read the speech given by the Honourable Member for Elmwood and then ask themselves where do the NDP really stand, and what do they really stand for?

If the Honourable Member for Elmwood personifies the sincere feelings of the New Democratic Party towards this extremely important issue, then I say shame on the New Democratic Party.

I can understand other Members in this House rising to take part in a debate on an important matter of public interest and making their feelings and philosophies even, known.

That is one thing, Mr. Speaker, but to listen to what I just listened to for the last 10 minutes, which sounded like little more than a very poorly prepared speech to fill in time on the day of a debate when the debate is about an issue which the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) would have us believe she and her Party are serious about, and she allows the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) to stand to his feet and make a disgraceful presentation like the one he just made.

Any speech dealing with child care in this province, which does little more than give generous references to recent public opinion polls and election results, references to three and four Governments ago, red Tories and right-wing Tories, Reaganite Tories and the Reagan branch plant, and how this has anything to do with the issue before us I have difficulty understanding.-(interjection)-

The Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) wants to get into the act and defend the Honourable Member for Elmwood and the quality of his speech this afternoon, Mr. Speaker. If that be his wish, so be it. Let him clip the speech himself and send it to the people in Thompson and see what they say about the attitude of the Honourable Member for Elmwood, which personifies the attitude of the New Democratic Party according to the Member for Thompson.

An Honourable Member: Why do you not speak on the issue instead of getting off the topic?

Mr. McCrae: The Honourable Member for Thompson suggests I speak to the issue. I suggest that is an excellent idea, and that is what I am about to do.

We cannot fault the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) for being interested in this issue and putting positions forward on this issue. I do not do that today.

* (1750)

I do say, here we are as three groups of politicians addressing an issue that we get anywhere from three

to six positions on. Certainly, we know the position of the New Democratic Party. We know that the position is universal day care and never mind where the money comes from, never mind who pays it, and never mind how much the money is. We know that. We understand the New Democrats, and we can live with that. Our proposals, our policies are different but, I would suggest, equally well understood.

Now then, we get to the Liberal Party and it depends on what day of the week it is, Mr. Speaker, it depends on what time of the day it is, it depends on which Member of the Liberal Party is speaking, so when it comes to the positions laid out by the Parties, I think there is some confusion when it comes to the position of the Liberal Party in this province.

Our Party has been consistent, Mr. Speaker. The Government Party of this province has been consistent in our assertions that indeed day care is an important part of the services provided to families in this province. Our Government has been consistent in providing not just lip-service, but indeed substantial dollars in the direction of day care services in this province.

I have suggested once before that it is interesting this year, Mr. Speaker, when our Government after two budgets has put 45 percent more money into day care, then all of a sudden this year, when we have an issue regarding the salaries of day care workers, the issue now become salaries rather than spaces. In previous years the issue was as much spaces as it was other issues.

It is also interesting that the present issue, even in light of comments made by certain segments of the industry complimentary of the handling of the issue by this Government, even in light of that, we still have Members on one side of this House seemingly doing what they can to ensure that there is a disruption in the industry so that parents and children are going to find themselves in a very disadvantageous position, going to find themselves extremely inconvenienced, and this proposed work interruption tomorrow is really not helping anyone, I suggest. Anyone who encourages it should be asked to stop immediately, and that includes Members of the New Democratic Party and Members of the Liberal Party who by their actions today show that, at least for today, they intend to support the interruptions of services to children and families in this province.

This, and in light of the fact that Manitoba ranks first in our country in terms of day care spaces per child, we rank second in our country, after the Province of Ontario, in regard to the funds provided for each day care space.

We have those kind of statistics in front of us, Mr. Speaker, yet we have another, an emergency debate today brought on by the third Party, supported by the Official Opposition, which tells us that far more than genuine concern for the welfare of children we have a desperate concern on the part of certain sectors in our political life, a desperate need to bring attention to themselves. I am telling you, Mr. Speaker, that does not help day care in this province, does not help children, and does not help families in our province

who desperately need the kind of care that we should be all working together to try to provide.—(interjection)—

Now we hear the Honourable Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) getting into the act and reminding us—using the word “mismanagement” in relation to this issue. Nothing could be further from the truth, Mr. Speaker. That is a pretty bad misreading of what has been going on. How you can refer to mismanagement in the light of 45 percent increased spending for day care in this province in the space of two budgets, \$13 million in the space of two budgets, still able to cut taxes, which Honourable Members opposite vote against, besides just speak against but actually vote against, in the light of all of that, with a reduced deficit, in spite of all of those indications of good management, we hear from the Member for St. Boniface something about mismanagement. We are able to provide this kind of funding for day care in the Province of Manitoba and the Honourable Member somehow finds some mismanagement in that. He will have to forgive me if I do not see it his way, I really do not. Most Manitobans do not either.

If we want to indulge in the kind of discussion encouraged by the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway), I could say I think a lot of people in Manitoba agree with the position of this Government too, and among those people are people who use day care, those who pay for day care, those who find themselves in every corner of this province are supportive of good Government and are supportive of good management, which they are seeing. There is evidence that the people out there agree with what is going on.

Let it not be said that we are just spending more money for day care, because we are doing that, but we are also in a position where we are prepared to work with day care providers in this province and others who are interested in day care. We have been, are, and will remain committed to working together with many segments of the community in this regard.

Honourable Members opposite in the Liberal Party sometimes talk about how long it takes sometimes to get things done in Government. Of course, they have never been in Government, so maybe that is not surprising. The other point is they would go ahead with their plans and worry about the consequences later. Never mind consulting with anybody, we have a plan, we are going to do it the way we want to do it and here is how much we would spend. It will always be lots, Mr. Speaker, believe me. It will always be two or three times more than would be required to get the job done but that is the position that the Liberal Party espouses daily in this House.

It is a totally irresponsible knee-jerk way to try to do the business of the people and it is because of their suggested way of doing business for the people of Manitoba that they sit on that side of the House and not on this side of the House. It is because of their attitude and their arrogance toward the spending of hard-earned taxpayers' dollars in this province that they will remain on that side for a long time and their numbers will decrease as well.

Now I am not a crystal ball gazer as a rule but if this is the attitude that Honourable Members opposite

continue to display, their numbers will be very much reduced after the next election. No one will have been served well by a Party that wants to find as much money as it possibly can for whatever the issue. It does not matter what day of the week it is. If somebody is asking for something, Honourable Members opposite are going to be there to offer it. But when and if, in the unlikely event they should ever be in a position to do so, I say God help the taxpayers of Manitoba should the Liberal Party ever be in a position to make decisions about day care, to make decisions about foster care, to make decisions about anything because their demonstrated abilities in this House is such that they would never find much support.

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Mr. Speaker, I do not take a great deal of pleasure in rising to participate in this debate because no one welcomes or encourages a crisis of the kind that we are facing in Manitoba today, but I cannot help but make the comment that it is unclear whether or not this debate is fighting last year's election or fighting next year's election.

We have heard comments from Members of the New Democratic Party that would have us believe that we are fighting an American election. We have comments from the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) just now that makes us think he is laying some sort of groundwork for the election to follow. He criticized the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) for five minutes. He took fully half of his time to criticize the speech of the Member for Elmwood for not putting his own positions on the record, and the Minister of Justice spent fully 50 percent of his time attacking the Member for Elmwood.

Mr. Speaker, in light of the serious situation that faces all of us, as legislators, I do not think that either of those tactics are particularly helpful. As a matter of fact, I am not sure the last time I heard more political rhetoric in this House. The NDP believes that all was heaven and rosy for the six and a half years that they were in power. All of a sudden the Government changed and the storm clouds began to gather and all of the problems which befall us, as legislators, are the result of one election defeat for them. I do not think that is so, but I do think that this Government has handled the crisis badly, very badly.

The Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) just finished saying that the Liberals never mind consulting with anyone, and that is a quote. Well, why is the Premier (Mr. Filmon) refusing to consult with the child care workers of this province? The Premier does not mind taking questions on behalf of the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) in Question Period. When the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) poses a question on child care to the Minister, the Premier rises and answers on her behalf, but when it comes time for the Premier to use the authority of his office to try to bring this crisis to a conclusion, he does not do it. He believes that the Human Services Committee of Cabinet is quite capable of handling the issue, but he does not think the Minister is capable of handling questions in the House.

Mr. Speaker, I think there is a pretty obvious contradiction there, when the Premier thinks it is

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important for him to respond to an issue, and when he thinks it is not important for him to respond. When we had the crisis with foster parents just over a year ago, the Premier thought it was appropriate to use the power of his office to try to come to a successful resolution of that problem, and he did. He will not do it here. Whenever we ask him to try to draw a distinction between those situations, he cannot do it. He talks jibberish on the subject.

* (1800)

Well, why do we have a crisis? We have a crisis because this Government has chosen confrontation, and this is not the only example. This Government chose confrontation with the nurses of Manitoba, this Government has chosen confrontation with Klinik and their legitimate need for capital expansion. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) goes to a public meeting and criticizes the very people that he as Minister of Health is supposed to serve, and we have a Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) who will not give us any picture at all of what the long-term plans of this Government are for child care workers. It is not as if she does not have good advice that she can rely on.

She has the advice that she paid \$400,000 for, Mr. Speaker, in the Child Care Task Force. The recommendations which were laid out very clearly for the Government were to move towards a \$22,000 salary for child care workers, and the Minister cannot pull it off with her colleagues in Cabinet. Now they have to create another advisory group to give her advice on the advice she spent \$400,000 getting.

It is confused, and for a Government that considers itself competent and good managers, this is a display of incompetence, Mr. Speaker, and at whose expense? At the expense of parents, at the expense of taxpayers and at the expense of children in Manitoba.

Somebody on the Government side said that those of us on this side of the House did not care about children. Well, Mr. Speaker, that is what this debate is all about. It is about the care and nurturing of children and who is going to do that, and how much are they worth, and how are we as legislators—

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 6 p.m., and in accordance with the Rules, I am leaving the Chair and will return at 8 p.m., at which time the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) will have five minutes remaining.