

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, December 20, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mr. Parker Burrell (Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the Second Report of the Committee on Law Amendments.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as their Second Report.

Your committee met on Tuesday, December 19, 1989, at 10 a.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building to consider Bills referred.

Your committee has considered Bill No. 67—The Social Allowances Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale, and has agreed to report the same with the following amendment:

MOTION:

THAT Section 4 be struck out and the following be substituted:

Coming into force

4 This Act is retroactive and is deemed to have come into force on December 18, 1989.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Mr. Burrell: I move, seconded by the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Goods and Services Tax Opposition Support

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, yesterday we witnessed an absolutely incredible performance from the Premier (Mr. Filmon). He states on the one hand that he is responsible for the reduction in the GST from 9 to 7 percent. He then disavows any knowledge of the new proposal, but he is against it—he tells us that. He will not join in the boycott, but he will assist Michael Wilson in collecting the new tax.

Mr. Speaker, instead of working with Michael Wilson to collect the new tax, what steps will the Premier take to assist Manitobans as they fight Michael Wilson?

* (1335)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, just so that the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) understands fully

and completely, this Government remains opposed to the GST. We are opposed to it whether it is at 7, whether it is at 9, because it carries with it the prospect of inflation for our province. It carries with it the prospect of serious problems and concerns for our small businesses attempting to collect two different taxes on two different sets of goods and services. It carries with it the prospect of having 10,000 additional bureaucrats and a billion dollars of collection costs. It carries with it the prospect of damage to our tourism and to many other aspects of our economy. We are firmly opposed.

This Premier went on record, went to the Premiers' Conference in Quebec City and, together, all of the 10 Premiers of this country issued a communique opposing the GST. I believe from what I have seen in the coverage of yesterday's response to the GST that in fact the Premiers are still opposed to it.

This Government will continue to oppose it in every possible way that it can, Mr. Speaker, and we will have the Minister of Finance attempt through his colleagues, the Ministers of Finance, to work with Ottawa to convince them that an alternative to this damaging tax must be found.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, we hear that. We also see in other provinces when they condemn the tax, they do not immediately jump in and start collecting it. I would ask the Premier, what specific steps is he and his Government going to take to assist Manitobans as they continue to protest this tax?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, does the Member for Osborne believe that we should inflict upon the small businesses and the retailers of this country two separate taxes paid to two separate tax collection systems, to double bureaucracy to a billion dollars of collection costs and to 10,000 more bureaucrats? Is that what he would prefer to see, rather than have at least two taxes, if there are to be two taxes—and we will continue to fight against those two taxes—but to say that, no, we would not allow our collectors to save the taxpayers of this country and the small businesses and retailers a billion dollars of costs and 10,000 more bureaucrats, is that his solution? If it is, it is another typical Liberal solution which is absolutely negative, which will cost more to the taxpayers, which will drive up inflation and drive up—

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

* (1340)

CFB Portage la Prairie Compensation

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): If you do not believe in the devil, you do not dance with him. Mr. Speaker, we need a Premier who is not afraid to stand up for Manitobans and who is able to negotiate for Manitoba.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I was pleased to note that Prince Edward Island is close to signing a deal with Ottawa to provide compensation for the loss of the Summerside Base. Can the Premier tell us how close he is to a similar agreement on Portage la Prairie and Kapyong?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, if what the Member for Osborne is now suggesting is that we no longer work with the people of Portage la Prairie to save the base, and that is what he is saying, that is exactly what he is saying, and if what he says instead is that we sign an agreement with Ottawa to do a replacement there, well, I will tell him this, that first, Ottawa has already done more than just give us any lip-service, they have already put forth two new businesses in Portage la Prairie. They have put forth an oats processing plant. They have put forth a rotary combine manufacturing plant.

Mr. Speaker, we do not think that is the right solution; we want to work to preserve the base. If all he wants us to do is to sign with Ottawa an agreement to put forth other economic development and to abandon the people of Portage la Prairie in their fight to preserve the base, then let him say that. If that is what he wants, we will go and talk to the people of Portage la Prairie and see if they choose the Liberal solution, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Osborne.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, this Premier is abandoning the province. The Premier of P.E.I. is able to get a meeting with the Prime Minister to discuss his base. Why can this Premier not meet with the Prime Minister to discuss our bases?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what I did in August when his Leader opposed that. She said I should not be talking about the base closure at Portage la Prairie. She said that is not the kind of thing that I should be talking with the Prime Minister about. She said do not talk about economic development for Manitoba, do not talk about economic development for Portage la Prairie, do not talk about all those important long-term issues for Manitobans. She said that was the wrong thing to do.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Osborne.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, at least my Leader is prepared to fight.

Goods and Services Tax Impact Labour

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) stated yesterday that Michael Wilson's proposal is a better deal, so good that he now intends to join in collecting the tax. Can the Finance Minister quantify for us, as he did a few months ago, the job losses in Manitoba over the next three years as a result of this good deal?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there is some incumbency upon all Members

of this House to get their facts straight when they are asked a question. At no time did any Member of this House, indeed any Minister, say that they were joining in joint collection of the federal tax. Indeed, that has not even been talked about with the federal Finance Minister. So until the Member for Osborne can get his facts straight, I am afraid I cannot answer his question.

Mr. Alcock: Well, Mr. Speaker, I do have a fact, actually it comes right out of the Finance Minister's mouth, and that is we are going to lose 6,700 jobs as a result of the 9 percent proposal. I am asking the Finance Minister today: how many jobs are we going to lose in Manitoba as a result of this proposal?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, let me say that first of all with job loss, the Liberals are more interested in losing jobs in Manitoba than any Party in this House. If they had not been, they would have supported the tax measures of this Government by way of introduction in the budget. They would acknowledge today that the economy in the Province of Manitoba is forecast to grow at a rate second highest in the nation, and they would be prepared to acknowledge that fact.

With respect to the goods and services tax, by way of the analysis done by the Conference Board of Canada which seems to be the one that is accepted by most, it would appear that there are upwards of a couple thousand jobs that are going to be lost in the next period of time given the 7 percent solution.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, we are indeed concerned about job losses because that is all we have seen since this Government took office. A couple of thousand jobs—on November 13 the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) stated 1,200 jobs in '91; 4,500 jobs in '92; and a further 1,000 in '93. What is his estimate now?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, it is not my estimate. I was reporting a conclusion drawn from the Conference Board. So it is not my estimate at all. Indeed the numbers that were presented by the Member opposite were basis 9 percent, and indeed that number now has dropped down somewhat to roughly 2,000 jobs, as I understand that number to be today, Mr. Speaker.

* (1345)

Minister of Health Apology Request

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, a couple of weeks ago we commented about the chaos in the Department of Health, ADMs that were leaving, confrontation with many of our health care people. Two weeks ago the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) called the doctors of this province liars.

The Premier has had two Cabinet meetings since that time to hold the Minister of Health accountable. I am absolutely shocked that the Premier has not yet had, either through himself or the Minister of Health, an apology, because no one can conclude that is good negotiations or good Government.

I would ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon) why we have not received an apology from the Government on the

Minister of Health's comments so we can bargain tough but in a hospitable way with the people across the table? -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable First Minister.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, we continue to be in discussion with the members of the Manitoba Medical Association. Those discussions continue to involve exchange of information and positions with regard to the settlement of an agreement with the MMA.

I might remind the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) that his administration strung the doctors out for 11 and a half months beyond the expiration of their agreement. His administration belittled the doctors, were in confrontation, told them they could leave the province if they cared, that they would not do—insulted them at every turn. He is in no position to offer advice about relationships with the doctors, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doer: I am surprised that the First Minister does not have standards of integrity and negotiations—bargain tough, bargain firm, but do not bargain in the gutter, Mr. Speaker. I am surprised that the Premier allowed that to happen.

Cadham Provincial Laboratory Infectious Material Storage

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). We have commented about the decision-making and the chaos in his department before. Hopefully, he has some ADMs left. He has lost two in the last year under his stewardship.

A month ago the employees of the Cadham Lab informed his senior management that there were infectious wastes and material stored improperly in the front of the Cadham Lab, in the reception area of the Cadham Lab. I would like to know what action his department has taken on this material stored in the front of the Cadham Lab in the public reception area?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I will seek answers to that question and report to my honourable friend.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, we are further informed of internal documents in his department that this material, which had been identified to senior management a month ago, also constitutes a fire risk at the entrance of the Cadham Lab. I ask the Minister why his senior management has not acted upon the recommendations of employees and removed the material from this section of the Cadham Lab, the public area of the Cadham Lab?

Mr. Orchard: As I indicated, to the first question I will provide information on that matter as soon as I have it.

Department of Health Assistant Deputy Ministers

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I was wondering whether the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), in reviewing this question and reviewing his department, can report to the people of Manitoba whether we are going to have any ADMs going into 1990 with the two he has lost in his department? Has he been able to attract—

An Honourable Member: Nonsense.

Mr. Doer: Well, this is a serious issue of health management under the Minister's administration. Are we going to have senior management in the Department of Health to run the Department of Health in a way that is consistent with the health care needs of Manitobans?

* (1350)

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I might remind my honourable friend, the Leader of the New Democratic Party, that under the stewardship when he was Government, a Minister resigned as Minister of Health for what reasons I cannot say.

I want to tell my honourable friend that as he makes allegations, and I might indicate totally unfounded allegations of chaos in the Health Department, he has absolutely no substantive proof. My honourable friend in the New Democratic Party knows because he has his advisors on his Health committee telling him that there is more reform and initiative in Mental Health than ever in the 20-year history of this province, 15 of which were under New Democratic Party jurisdiction. His own advisors are telling us.

Mr. Speaker, there has never been more close consultation on issues important to the health care system with individuals delivering health care from administrators to the nursing profession, to the medical profession, to all those involved in health care delivery than ever before in recent history in the Department of Health.- (interjection)-

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

Drinking and Driving Legislation Justice Minister's Position

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): My question is for the Minister of Justice.

This Minister has repeatedly stood in this House and taken a holier-than-thou attitude toward the evils of drinking and driving. All the while he was bungling through a piece of legislation that required amendments by this Party to give it a chance of success. Sadly, this Minister has now condoned the actions of drunken drivers who destroy lives and property by defying MPIC regulations—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Is there a question here, please?

Mr. Edwards: My question to the Minister is, why did he say to Mr. Joseph Pollock in a letter to him of November 13 which I will table, that impaired drivers were not as bad as suspended drivers because they are drunk, they do not know what they are doing, so we should spare them from being sued from MPIC. Why the hypocrisy from this Minister?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister responsible for The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, the Member chooses to paraphrase in his comments, and certainly the words that he chose to put on the record are not what is included in the letter.—(interjection)—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Cummings: The fact is that this is an interesting issue of concern, because the issue that is addressed in the letter is whether or not the liability insurance for a third party can be recovered from the insured as opposed to someone who is driving suspended.

Drinking and Driving Legislation Justice Minister's Position

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. James, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, I have tabled the letter and it is now a matter of public record, but let me quote very briefly the statement the Minister made.

Mr. Speaker: Question, please. Question, please.—(interjection)— Order, please. Order.

Mr. Edwards: My question is, and I hope the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) will answer it because he wrote the letter.

Why does the Minister defend protecting drunken drivers by saying it is necessary in order to pay victims swiftly when he knows fully well that collection later from a drunk driver for damage caused would in no way prejudice or delay payment to victims, payment which is made immediately now upon settlement?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): The Honourable Member's questions come not surprisingly as the issue was covered last evening on CKND television, but it is somewhat surprising in view of the fact of his faint-hearted support for the anti-impaired driving measures announced by this Government last May 9.

His first reaction to our nine-point program to deal with impaired and suspended drivers was, well, it probably will not make it through the courts, this was his reaction. All the way through, the Honourable Member made every possible attempt to discredit a program which works very effectively, I might add, against impaired and suspended driving. Recent news reports and other reports tell us that the program is working extremely well.

As a lawyer, the Honourable Member might also take into account the opportunity or the cost that would be involved for the Public Insurance Corporation in recovering the kinds of monies that we are talking about and some of the serious accidents that are caused by impaired drivers. What is behind the letter written to Mr. Pollock was advice given to me by the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. Acting on that advice I drafted a letter to Mr. Pollock to respond to his letter.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. James, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Edwards: This Minister does not know yet how much he owes me for saving his legislation. Mr. Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Member for St. James, kindly put his question.

Mr. Edwards: Let me save the Government some more money. The Minister has just said MPIC is going to cost money. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness)—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. James, kindly put your question now, please.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, that from the Minister who has a slush fund making \$55,000 a day in interest. The fact is, the ability to sue impaired drivers would make MPIC money from impaired drivers. How can this Minister on the one hand say all over this province on radio and TV ads, "If you choose to drink and drive, that is everybody's business," and then say in this letter MPIC should forgive them the carnage they create because they do not choose to drink and drive, they are too drunk to choose—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The question has been put.

The Honourable Minister of Justice.

Mr. McCrae: There may be something in what the Honourable Member says, but I do not think very much. In addition, I could say with respect to the Honourable Member who shows lack of modesty today he has a lot of qualities, but modesty usually is not one of them. That is pretty clear today.

* (1355)

To be fair, the Honourable Member should have a look at the letter in its entirety. I would rather trust my own writing of the letter than the Honourable Member's paraphrasing of it. What the letter was doing was giving a recitation of the history of the situation. The fact is, The Manitoba Insurance Act and other insurance Acts in Canada, including the Ontario one, were amended in September of 1973 so as to delete the impaired driving as a breach from third party liability coverage.

That has been the situation in Manitoba since 1973. What I was doing for Mr. Pollock was giving him a recitation of the history of that particular provision in the Act.

Speech Pathologists Waiting Period

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, in June of 1988, there were 250 preschool children waiting for appointments with speech therapy. In June 1989, the number rose to 300. Now there are 493 children waiting for speech therapy at Children's Hospital. The waiting period has increased from 14 months to 23 months. Can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tell us why he is ignoring all these parents and their children?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): My honourable friend's information in terms of the growth of the waiting list is accurate. The rest of his preamble is totally inaccurate. I realize my honourable friend and the Liberal Party have instant solutions to every single problem in Government. Most of them involve a blank cheque, but in this case even a blank cheque will not work. The issue of speech language pathologists is one not only of a shortage in this province but a shortage across Canada, so that even if we used the Liberal blank cheque, individuals are not available in this province for hiring.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell my honourable friend, as I have consistently indicated to him, that the additional resources that went into the Health Sciences Centre program have allowed more children than ever in the history of the Province of Manitoba to receive assessment, service and treatment.

Mr. Cheema: That is the result that at least 20 percent more speech therapists have left Manitoba in the last nine months.

Funding Increase

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Can the Minister of Health today assure this House that he will allocate some of the funds from his saving account, from the underspending of health care, out of \$32 million he has saved for the last 19 months?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly why we increased the resourcing to the Health Sciences Centre as an intermediary step to attempt to provide more service to children. In that additional resource to the Health Sciences Centre, a fact my honourable friend fails to put on the record, increasing that resource was also in the area of pediatric audiology in which waiting lists have gone down and waiting times have gone down from 6 months to one month. That issue has been substantially resolved by this Government. No credit would flow, and I would not expect credit to flow from my honourable friend.

Mr. Speaker, surely my honourable friend would indicate to the public that more children, preschool-aged children, have received service in the last six

months since that resource has been enhanced at the Health Sciences Centre than ever before possible. That is an intermediate step. The MacDiarmid Report has offered us further direction on which we are prepared to consider action on a number of fronts.

* (1400)

Speech Pathologists Educational Incentives

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, I have a final supplementary to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach). Can the Minister of Education assure this House that educational incentives will be provided to the students seeking training outside Manitoba so that they can come back and practise in Manitoba?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, any students that are studying outside of Manitoba are indeed offered the opportunity to access the Student Aid Program that is present in this province. Staff from my department have been in contact with all those students who have left Manitoba to study outside of the province to ensure that we can attract them to this province, and recently I can indicate that we have just hired three speech therapists for this province who had been studying outside of the province.

We are presently in the department looking at ways in which we can provide such incentives that will attract even more of those kinds of professionals to our province because of the need of those professionals within our province.

Inter-City Gas Corporation Rural Rate Increases

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, this Government is always paying lip-service for the need to protect rural Manitobans and Manitobans who live outside the City of Winnipeg. My question is to the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld). Can the Minister of Energy and Mines indicate whether ICG has provided any justification to the Government of Manitoba for proposing a 25 percent increase in the price of natural gas to consumers in the City of Brandon, increases two and three times the cost of living for other rural consumers of natural gas? Can the Minister indicate what justification there is, why people in rural communities like Brandon should be facing a 25 percent increase in the price of gas to equalize the rates across the province?

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, the Member for Flin Flon knows very well that the rate increases are approved by the Public Utilities Board. They are the final authority on what rates shall be charged at whatever centre they are being charged.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, that sounds suspiciously like the Minister is going to stand by and watch ICG gouge people in rural Manitoba to maintain a rate of return of 14 percent on its investment.

My question to the Minister is, can the Minister indicate whether he intervened or is prepared to intervene before the Public Utilities Board approves the rate hike of 25 percent. Will he intervene today to protect the consumers of natural gas in the City of Brandon and rural Manitoba? Will he do that?

Mr. Neufeld: Mr. Speaker, the Public Utilities Board makes its rulings without Government intervention. They have been set up as an arm's length committee and they should remain at arm's length from Government. If Government is to make the decisions on natural gas rates, we do not need a Public Utilities Board. The Public Utilities Board will make the final decision.

Municipalities Direct Gas Purchasing

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I raised with the Minister more than a year ago the possibility of establishing, or working with municipalities, so that they could directly purchase their own gas supplies and save themselves 15 percent or 20 percent. Is the Minister today prepared to commit to working with municipalities so that they can do their own direct purchasing and save themselves from this outrageous increase ICG is, with the support of the PUB, imposing on the residents of Brandon?

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, it is very easy for the Member for Flin Flon to stand up and say municipalities could buy directly cheaper than they can through the ICG distribution system. It is not quite as easy as that. The Alberta Government has to issue export permits. It is true some large businesses or large industries in Ontario buy direct, but an individual municipality may not be big enough to buy direct.

We have a problem with core area users that has to be settled before any such direct purchases can be made.

Cadham Provincial Laboratory Infectious Material Storage

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I have just received an answer to the question posed by the Leader of the Second Opposition Party (Mr. Doer), and the materials that he referred to have been removed entirely.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Minister.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Petroleum Products Storage Tank Monitoring

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, Manitobans are growing more frustrated with this Government's performance on environmental issues every day. The

Conawapa fuel spill, the other well-noted gasoline spills that are becoming routine in the rest of the province have demonstrated this Government's lack of enthusiasm in getting tough with polluters.

Can the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) tell why he has not taken the necessary steps yet to ensure that regulations for fuel storage tanks are properly monitored and enforced?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, the regulatory control on fuel storage across this province is a massive undertaking. I stated in the House during the Estimates process that we were improving the ability of the department to follow up more closely on the monitoring on the major bulk stations and public gas stations. The numbers of tanks across this province is enormous. Frankly, we have been left with a very large backlog, and we are actively working to get that cleaned up.

Mr. Taylor: Not a very reassuring response.

Mr. Speaker, given the environmental danger posed by the resale of old storage tanks that have outlived their safe life span, when will the Minister introduce measures that will control the sale of used fuel storage tanks?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, the Member chooses to misunderstand, or possibly he chooses to misrepresent the situation in the region of the Conawapa dam site where riveted tanks which are not considered proper for bulk storage any longer in this province were put in place. The fact is the owner of those tanks did not register them with the Environment Department. If they had been registered he would not have been allowed to use them. Since it has been found that he was using these tanks, he has ceased to use them. That is the matter in which we control the use of vessels for storage within this province.

Conawapa Project Fuel Tank Inspection

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Wolseley, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I take exception to the comment about misrepresentation. There has been a total lack of action by the \$198 man—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Wolseley, kindly put his question, please.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question to the same Minister: what is the status of the other tanks that Vector has on the Conawapa site? Were they also illegally purchased from the same individual, have they yet been inspected by the department, and what is their status today?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Again the Member chooses to misrepresent the facts, either that or he does not know them.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Minister of Environment.

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, I just indicated in my answer to the previous question that the other tanks owned by Vector that were in improper storage have since been emptied; they are not being used any further for that purpose.

The tanks that were in fact removed from service are now—there is a direction to have them rendered unusable for further holding of petroleum products.

* (1410)

Municipal Assessment Act Public Presentations

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, yesterday and last night a number of people had expressed concerns about Bill 79, The Municipal Assessment and Consequential Amendments Act, which affects all Manitobans who own or rent property in this province, a very important Bill. I would ask the House Leader if, in view of the concerns that were expressed about inadequacies in the Bill, concerns about omissions and concerns about changes that must be made in the appeal process and the market value definition and phasing and procedures and so on, will the House Leader now agree to giving Manitobans an opportunity to present their concerns in January, as well as rushing it through in the last couple of days, give them some more preparation time to make presentations in the new year?

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Justice.—(interjection)— Order, please.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): As I recall, the Bill was introduced for second reading early in November, I believe it was November 2. That is well over a month and a half ago.

Precisely because Honourable Members on this side of the House would like to give Manitobans those opportunities to be heard, I recognize that the presentations are not complete as yet, but a little later I will be announcing further sitting dates for that committee so that Manitobans can be heard. We have had two meetings now. We will have another one tonight, and another two meetings on Thursday to give ample opportunity.

Mr. Plohman: A Bill that has been some 10 years in the making in preparation, a Bill that affects the property of all Manitobans surely deserves more than three days' consideration.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Dauphin, kindly put his question now, please.

Mr. Plohman: This is a very serious matter. In view of the fact that we have had very cold weather, the Government—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. Is there a question? The Honourable Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: Will this House Leader and this Government allow Manitobans time to make presentations after they have had time to prepare them, and not rush it through in three days prior to Christmas?

Mr. McCrae: I think the Honourable Member's reference to three days is somewhat misleading, albeit I am sure it would not be intentional on the part of the Honourable Member. The issue has been current in this province for the last 10 years. Where was his Government for seven years of those 10 years?

I can only repeat, the Bill was introduced for second reading on November 2. It is a very, very important Bill. The Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) and other colleagues are listening very carefully to the presentations that are coming forward. I am sure that the Government is attempting to do the right thing, but I think the Honourable Member's plan of just stalling for the purpose of stalling really is not acceptable to the people of Manitoba.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Dauphin, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Plohman: This Bill is too important to be done in this Government's usual shoddy fashion which requires more amendments in subsequent sittings. We want to get it right now, and we want Manitobans to have an opportunity to make their presentations.

Mr. Speaker, in the interest of co-operation in this House which is so important—

Mr. Speaker: The question, please.

Mr. Plohman: —especially in a minority Government, will this House Leader now reconsider his position and grant Manitobans and agree to giving Manitobans an opportunity to make presentations, or early in January as his Minister had indicated willingness to do earlier in the letter that he sent to me just this last week?

Mr. McCrae: The Honourable Member as critic in this particular area also knows that it was about a month ago that I wrote to his House Leader (Mr. Ashton), letting the NDP and the Liberal Party know the priority this Government placed on Bill 79, asking indeed for their co-operation. Indeed, that is the way this Government has attempted to proceed. We asked that that Bill be considered. We gave adequate time for that consideration. The Honourable Member—I can show him a copy of that correspondence if he does not have it before him.

What we come down to is a few days prior to a potential holiday recess and the Honourable Members

are trying to find reasons to stall Government legislation. It just does not wash, Mr. Speaker.

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

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): The House Leader (Mr. McCrae) is imputing motives, Mr. Speaker. I have letters on record that say we are willing to have this Bill dealt with by January 15, and that is on record and letters have been delivered. It is not an attempt—this Minister is imputing motives to our concerns—

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. No, he does not have a point of order.

Taxicab Industry Foster Report

Mr. Ed Mandrake (Assiniboia): The taxicab industry has been studied to death, yet no firm policy has been formulated. First, we had the Fox-Decent Report, then the Touche Ross Report, then the review of the Touche Ross Report. Now Jody Gilmore was to conduct a study on actual earnings by the average taxicab driver in Winnipeg.

My question to the Minister of Highways and Transportation is, a report by Jody Gilmore which will cost the taxpayers of Manitoba \$11,000 has not yet been tabled. Would this Minister table it today in this House?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate that further information to the Member on his question is that the Taxicab Board had held hearings, a series of hearings based on all kinds of problems that had developed within the industry. Those hearings have been completed and I am awaiting a report from the chairman. Once I have that report, I will be meeting with the industry itself to see whether we can resolve some of the concerns that they have.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you kindly call the Order for Return standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo).

ORDER FOR RETURN NO. 12

Mrs. Iva Yeو (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry),

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

- (a) The total cost of travel, accommodation, and other expenses payable by Manitoba

taxpayers incurred by the Deputy Minister of Education on a trip to Hong Kong with regard to Gloria School; and

- (b) The cost of the painting that was presented by the Deputy Minister to Paul Hui, proprietor of Gloria School, on behalf of Manitoba; and
- (c) The annual cost of reviewing academic criteria of the Hong Kong School; and
- (d) An itemization of all costs associated with Manitoba's involvement with the Gloria School in Hong Kong and payable by the taxpayers of Manitoba; and
- (e) The number of students enrolled at this time and the projected enrollment estimate for the fall of 1990.

MOTION presented.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the Order for Return put forward by the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek is acceptable to the Government.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

HOUSE BUSINESS

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on a matter of House business, as I said a few moments ago to the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), in an effort to ensure that people who wish to be heard may be heard and to help in the proper consideration of Bill No. 79, I would announce today that if necessary the Municipal Affairs Committee of this House would sit on Thursday morning at 10 a.m. and Thursday evening at 8 p.m., if that is necessary, in Room 255 to resume consideration of Bill No. 79.

I understand, Mr. Speaker, there might be leave on the part of Honourable Members to waive Private Members' Hour today. I will be asking that Bills be called, but if we should happen to get through the list and there is time available, we might discuss that amongst House Leaders later, but as I understand it right now, there is a wish to waive Private Members' Hour.

Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call the Bills in the following order: Bill No. 76, 71, 90, 42, and if we get that far I would then give you some more Bills that you might call.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Dauphin on House business.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): I have a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On House business?

Mr. Plohman: Yes, on a matter of House business. I want to indicate to the House at this time that the New Democratic Party does not agree with the sittings. There

has been no consultation with us on the sittings that have been announced by this Minister for Thursday. We believe that the committee will finish its public hearings tonight, of the public, and that we should adjourn until January to have an opportunity for others to come forward, and that is the position that we will be taking on this issue.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

* (1420)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. On this matter of House business, I would strongly recommend that the House Leaders get together other than on the floor of the Chamber.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): I do not think, Mr. Speaker, a point of order is the proper place to put an inaccuracy on the record. The Honourable Member should be called to order for making the statement in this House that the announcement of the committee sittings was made without consultation.

To the Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) perhaps consultation means agreement. I respect the fact that the Honourable Member for Dauphin does not agree that the committee should continue to hear people who want to be heard on Bill No. 79, but that does not mean there was not consultation, both with his House Leader and with the Acting House Leader in the House today, so I would like that to be clear.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Attorney General used a vehicle on a point of order. The point of order raised, he said the Honourable Member for Dauphin was up on a point of order. He actually was up on House business. The Honourable Government House Leader does not have a point of order. Debate on Second Readings? Order, please. I have said that House business can be done by the House Leaders other than on the floor of the Chamber.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I accept that. The Government House Leader has put on record that there is agreement to waive Private Members' Hour—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. On the point raised by the Honourable Member for Flin Flon, it was that there appears to be an agreement, but House Leaders would meet later on today and this matter would come back to the House.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 76—THE REAL ESTATE BROKERS AMENDMENT ACT (2)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Connery), Bill No. 76, The Real Estate Brokers Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les courtiers en immeubles, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko), the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

Mr. Mark Minenko (Seven Oaks): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I welcome this opportunity of participating - (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Mr. Minenko: —in debate on this Bill No. 76. Again, if we were to reflect on comments I made earlier this week with respect to other legislation introduced by the Honourable Minister responsible for Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Connery), I think that debate could equally apply in debate on this Bill in that this Bill is again looking at the protection of the public in the Province of Manitoba and raises an interesting point that we understand has been under discussion for a number of years, I believe since 1986, when the Manitoba Real Estate Association first approached Government with the concept of this fund.

It would certainly be interesting to listen to the debate of some of the Members who were Government at the time as to why perhaps this matter was not brought forward at that time. Mr. Speaker, again, if a member of the public or a Member of this Chamber were to review this legislation it would appear to be a technical kind of change, a change that maybe adds a few things, takes a few things away from the present legislation, but on closer study I think we all can agree that it indeed introduces quite a substantial change in the way this particular industry will conduct their business affairs in the future.

As we indeed know that pursuant to other legislation in the Province of Manitoba, the law profession is governed and has a similar type fund in operation as protection for the members of the public and has unfortunately, as a member of that profession, unfortunately been had to be tapped into from time to time.

This piece of legislation is looking at changing again in some substantial way the method by which the public in Manitoba will be protected. I think as a result that it indeed should be given due consideration by Members of this Chamber, because it again potentially will affect many of our constituents, if not most of them, and indeed all of those who will be looking at purchasing and selling some property, as it deals with the problem of a real estate agent or broker through some fraudulent means absconding with or misappropriating the trust funds that have been given to them by potential purchasers of the piece of property.

I think in that way, Mr. Speaker, where we are dealing with a matter of trust, this Bill does indeed deserve an appropriate level of attention and review by Members of this Chamber and also members of the public and the profession that is going to be affected by this legislation. All matters of trust where indeed many of

us have purchased property, some more recently than others, in various sizes and shapes—I indeed took great pride in just under three years ago purchasing, actually around this time, Mr. Speaker, my wife and I submitted an offer to purchase on a small home in West Kildonan, and part of that offer to purchase was indeed a token amount for trust money, trust account, given as an indication of our seriousness of purchasing that piece of property.

One of the things that many people who come into Manitoba are quite surprised about is how little money people need to place down in trust with their offer to purchase that is submitted to the seller of that particular property. Many of the other provinces across Canada, the practice, if perhaps not the law, is several thousands or many thousands of dollars or a percentage of the actual offered price is placed with the real estate agent and the broker to secure their intention of purchasing that particular piece of property.

(Mr. Herold Driedger, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Although the amounts that many people have in trust are relatively small, I still think, Mr. Acting Speaker, when we look to the issue of trust, that in itself makes this Bill important enough for honest and serious review both now and in committee later.

One of the areas, Mr. Acting Speaker, where there is indeed quite a sizeable amount put forward by a purchaser or potential purchaser of property is with respect to commercial and farm land.

I have been advised by the various brokers that oftentimes the average, perhaps in the City of Winnipeg or other towns in the Province of Manitoba, that any client may have in their particular trust account with a broker is approximately the amount of \$1,000.00. Obviously that is an average; some may have less, perhaps many do have less and some may have more. On an average there is about \$1,000 in any particular trust account, although I understand that in commercial and farm property you are looking at quite a bit more, in the \$25,000 to \$50,000 range, and perhaps the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) could even comment on this particular aspect. I think recently or in the last year or so, he himself purchased some property.

What we see happening, Mr. Acting Speaker, is that although here in Winnipeg and other centres in the province the amount is relatively small, but in many other transactions the amount is large, what this Bill proposes to do is set up this fund, a fund that will be assessed by the association and I understand operated by the association who is prepared to operate it starting January 1 of 1990. The fund would be built up based on assessments of their Members.

* (1430)

This is a voluntary organization as opposed to an association like the Law Society of Manitoba, where if any person who wants to practise law in the Province of Manitoba has to first become a member of the Law Society, paying a relatively substantial amount to have that privilege of practising law in the province. Part of that assessment is indeed to deal with the reimbursement fund.

So again we look, interestingly enough, to the regulations, as mentioned in debate by the Minister responsible for this legislation, as to exactly how it will be operating in the assessments and so on. We understand that indeed the association is prepared to operate that and is prepared to operate it relatively quickly.

When we look to the fund, and what the purpose is of this fund then is indeed to deal with any—to protect consumers against real estate brokers who misappropriate trust funds.

We have heard in certainly my participation in the debate on the various consumer Bills, Bill No. 63, The Consumer Protection Amendment Act, and Bill No. 64, The Business Practices Act, where again I discussed the aspect that the vast majority of people who provide services to Manitobans, to our constituents, the vast majority of people who provide the goods to Manitobans and our constituents are indeed on the straight and level.

However, it seems to always be the role and obligation of Government to look at that very small percentage that always seems to stir the pot up, to bring it to a boil, and ultimately our constituents, the consumers, are burned. Mr. Acting Speaker, this Bill attempts in the same way to provide coverage for consumers so they are not burned, sort of an asbestos glove as they say.

I think that when we look to this fund it certainly seems to be going in the general direction of looking at increasing the amounts that the brokers will actually be covered for. Today, I understand the real estate brokers, who register and are required to register with the registrar of The Real Estate Brokers Act, have surety bonds which vary in amounts depending on the size of that particular broker's operation.

What this legislation will do is three things. It will first of course, as I mentioned before, create this fund. It will, two, increase the levels of protection to the public and, three, over the long term, as set out to us by the association, will ultimately save their members money in this self-administered fund.

May I add, Mr. Acting Speaker, that a few years ago when I was a bencher with the Law Society of Manitoba—and that is sort of the executive, the directing body of the Law Society of Manitoba—the Bench—we looked very seriously at self-insurance.

The quotes that we were getting for providing coverage to the public from actions by members of the Law Society were growing in leaps and bounds, not necessarily reflecting the incident rate here in the Province of Manitoba but more of a national or North American scale where many states in the U.S., and so on, pay tremendous amounts of money for insurance coverage.

We were looking at ways of ensuring the public is protected but also the amounts that lawyers pay out, which ultimately is as in every sort of business paid by the consumer does not grow too quickly beyond the limit of many of our members, especially many of the younger members of the Law Society who are

beginning their practices. Thereby, if those amounts were to progress too far, too high, perhaps many members, young practising lawyers, would not be able to practise law. Law would then become restricted to only those people who can actually afford those higher rates.

Perhaps the repercussions of higher rates would go to that point of even perhaps shutting out people like myself. Certainly I do not come from a wealthy family at all, worked hard and paid for the education, and was indeed fortunate enough to be able to participate in that type of education, but certainly who does not come from a rich family whose family could help them setting up a business. I think that is an important aspect to this legislation.

The first point of course that we as legislators in this province have to ensure is that the consumers of various services are protected. I would certainly look forward to this Bill moving on into committee in fact hear, have input, from the various elements that will be affected by this legislation.

We all know, Mr. Acting Speaker, that this legislation can be amended at the committee stage because it is in everyone's interest, including our constituents' interest first and foremost, to ensure that the legislation is as good as it can be, that it looks to and addresses some of the problems and concerns that may injuriously affect Manitobans.- (interjection)- I am indeed encouraged by the comments of Members opposite. Well, it seems that this debate is becoming quickly a question and answer period, and I would certainly welcome the Minister's questions at a time—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Herold Driedger): I am having difficulty following this debate, so if I could have a bit of co-operation from the Members.

Mr. Minenko: Mr. Acting Speaker, it seemed that some Members of the Government benches agree that they were having difficulty in following the debate and perhaps I would suggest that it was not necessarily because of lack of hearing on that side, but I am indeed encouraged that Members of the Legislature are considering my remarks this afternoon because this is indeed an important piece of legislation.

Perhaps if I could just step back to my comments previous where I think that what we are going to find is—I am directing my subsequent comments to the suggestion that any increased cost to the person providing the service, the businessperson, is ultimately going to end up on the consumer's back. This is a concern when we look to the GST and the changes that have been recently introduced by the federal Minister of Finance with respect to that and indeed the amount that they had offered to small-business people to perhaps allow them to defray or defer some of the cost of doing business with this new tax, which certainly was not because of their own efforts. Ultimately now with the cutback in that aspect we will find that, and I would predict that should this tax ever come into law and indeed become part of our doing business in this country of ours, that who will ultimately bear the cost?

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

* (1440)

The people who will ultimately bear that cost are the consumers, your constituents and mine, Mr. Speaker. In every aspect, not only on the direct amount that they will pay in tax to the federal Tory Government to try to deal with the deficit that they have been increasing in leaps and bounds since they were elected in '84, but the consumers will be hit in at least three ways that I can think of in my own humble opinion.

First, Mr. Speaker, we see ultimately that they will be affected by the actual amount of taxation. The next aspect to it that I think is important is the fact that small-business people will no longer be getting, other than a small initial defrayment of costs that will ultimately be passed on to consumers, and third, I would submit that unless Government is vigilant as to the costs of goods in this country of ours and specifically in the Province of Manitoba, I do not see too many businesses reducing that 13.5 percent manufacturer's tax that is presently applied. I can see the price staying the same, and instead of the 7 replacing the 13, that I can see the 7 being put on top of the 13, because the 13 may not be eliminated. The federal Government has not put in place any effective means of dealing with that particular problem.

If you were to review the materials presented by the federal Finance Minister, he pledges to set up some sort of office or small bureau to deal with consumer complaints dealing with prices. There is no efficient way that they have projected in dealing with that particular problem. Just in highlighting some of these issues, I just wanted to point out the aspect of cost with respect to Bill No. 76 and the cost of doing business to brokers.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion -(interjection)- I would say that this Bill, 76, which will set up -(interjection)- well, if Members opposite, Mr. Speaker, were actually following my comments they would indeed understand exactly which Bill we are addressing. I do not know whether they are participating in some sort of other activity that does not necessarily allow them to be here, but it is certainly evident from their comments that they could not necessarily even follow what I have been suggesting, and certainly that is a problem that has to be addressed at another time.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, with respect to this legislation, we feel that it certainly appears to be protecting the interests of consumers and purchasers of property in the Province of Manitoba, and it will do that by increasing the levels of protection available to the public. I think in our deliberations in the future on this particular legislation and in our deliberations in committee that we need to keep that as first and foremost in mind.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): If I were ever to hire the previous Member as a lawyer I certainly would not want to have to pay him an hourly rate.

With this Bill No. 76 it is a bit of a *deja vu* situation for us, because this Bill was actually introduced, I believe, by Al Mackling in the previous Government way back in 1976. It ranks right up there with The

Cemeteries Act and The Prearranged Funeral Act in the list of priorities.

It is an important Bill. There was an agreement on the part of all three Parties to support and pass this legislation back in 1986, Mr. Speaker. I might spend a couple of minutes giving a bit more background on the Bill and how it came about.

The Real Estate Association is a non-profit professional association representing over 2,500 real estate brokers and salespeople in this province. The association itself is dedicated to serving the public in an ethical manner, educating and regulating its members in promoting private property ownership and rights.

In October of this year Bill 76, The Real Estate Brokers Amendment Act (2), was introduced in the Legislature. Now I might point out that our caucus has a similar Bill and that is The Real Estate Brokers Amendment Act (1). We have yet to see it out of Legislative Counsel, so we have elected instead to proceed with the Government's Bill and support its passage to committee, whereupon we do have some questions and we may have an amendment or two.

Mr. Speaker, currently the requirements for brokers require a surety bond to be filed in an amount specified by the regulations. The amount varies depending on the size of the real estate brokerage from \$10,000 to \$100,000, once again depending on the number of people each brokerage employs.

The reimbursement fund that is envisioned under this Act would provide identical coverage to all the members, and the levels would be prescribed by the regulations of the Act.

As I had indicated, the association first had discussions with the Government back in 1986. There was a concern that the current bonding regulations were too onerous and did not provide an even and proper type of coverage for persons who had to make claims when there was a case of fraud arising when funds were misappropriated by people in the real estate agencies. This fund is envisioned to provide an amount of \$50,000 per claimant up to a total of \$250,000, and the total amount in the fund would be a half a million dollars.

The association plans to pay for this fund through an assessment levy on their members. The association plans to contract with an insurance consultant in terms of the early years in dealing with a possible insurance scheme in the years when the assessments do not match the required levels. If they get hit with a very big claim in the early years the amount of assessments will not have built up to the half million dollar level, so some insurance mechanism has to be put in place through a private insurance company to pay these excess claims. They are going to deal with that situation.

The association itself, Mr. Speaker, will be responsible for the day-to-day administration of the fund. The association office itself will collect the levies, it will forward notices of assessment, it will maintain a roster of participants in the fund, and it will do all of the things necessary for the fund's smooth operation. The

association's responsibilities will also include the education of the members and the consumers on the parameters of the fund coverage.

The Securities Commission, which is the regulatory body charged with the responsibility of enforcing the Act itself, will maintain its current investigatory powers with regard to the claims that are made on this fund regarding fraud and misappropriation of funds. In appropriate circumstances, and only after they make the required investigation, the commission will order the fund to make payment and the fund will be obliged to comply.

* (1450)

The Real Estate Association was hopeful that this particular fund could be set up as early as January 1, 1990. Well, that is only 10 days from now, so we would certainly be interested in asking some questions when this Bill gets to committee. For example in the Minister's statement he made a comment that independent brokers who are not members of the association will continue to be required to file surety bonds as in the past. We want to ask him the question at the committee as to why that is the case. We would like to know why this fund cannot cover all of the real estate brokers in Manitoba, and why the Government feels they have to exclude the non-members at this point. This is a question that I have been wanting to ask and will ask at the committee stage.

Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that I had a couple of comments dealing with funds such as this in general and how they relate to both the real estate industry and other industries in Manitoba and Canada and also some comments regarding the Government's handling of the House and of this particular legislation.

I believe it was two weeks ago that I met with people from the Real Estate Association regarding this Bill. Now the Government has tried to blame the Opposition, certainly the third Party, for slowing down the House. The fact of the matter is—and they tried to blame us for slowing down the House when we have been prepared to support this Bill, support Bill No. 63, the amendments to The Consumer Protection Act, The Business Practices Act, Bill No. 64. We have been prepared to support The Prearranged Funerals Act and The Cemeteries Act. What has this Government done? It does not even call the Bills.

I was away for a week a number of weeks ago. I came back expecting that The Business Practices Act, Bill No. 64, would already be in committee, because the Minister made his second reading speech to this House. I got up and spoke immediately after that, and typically the Liberal Members stood the Bill and did not speak to it. With fairness to the Liberal Opposition, when I got back I expected that the Government had been calling the Bill. I expected that the Liberals would be feeling the pressure and would be wanting to speak to this thing. I did not anticipate that they would have spoken in the week, but I certainly anticipated that this Government would have at least called the Bill on those days that Bills were called. They did not do it.—(interjection)—

The Opposition Whip is correct. They cannot speak to Bills that the Government does not call. To me that indicates that the Government really are out of control. This Government has no plan. I will say that when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) takes over, and the days that he takes over the duties as House Leader, things appear to proceed a little more orderly and a little more efficiently and things get done. We found that last year too, whenever the Minister of Finance was taking over.

So perhaps the Premier (Mr. Filmon) should pay attention to that, do another shuffle, shuffle the current House Leader out to some other less onerous responsibilities and put the Finance leader in as House Leader, and maybe we will see this House carry on a lot more smoothly and efficiently than it has in the past.

Another comment that I would like to make in this regard is that when the Real Estate Association people came to see me, they were at a loss to find out how it is that they were to get this Bill through before the January 1 date.

In fact it was they who deserved the credit for getting this Bill back on track, because it was the Real Estate Association people who went to the Attorney General to get this Bill back on track, which goes to show and prove that the Attorney General listens to the Real Estate Association before he listens to the Members of the Opposition Parties.

I give them full credit for being able to lobby and get their Bill pulled up in front of others, because we supported them, we supported the Bill but we could not get it to the top of the line. We could not get it to the front of the line, but they could by going to see the Attorney General.

That is a bit of advice I would give to anyone who wishes to pass any of these 90 Bills we have before the House. If there is any interest group who wants to see a Bill passed, The Motor Dealers' Association, they know the way to deal with this House. They know they can go to the Liberal Caucus and stop Bills that they do not want to see passed. That is what the Motor Dealers' Association does.

Well, Mr. Speaker, I do not know how much more time I have, but I do want to say that we think this Bill is a good idea, because what it does in a way is it gives the association, the industry responsible, the responsibility for funding any misappropriation in trust funds and so on that occur within its purview. We have seen in the last 10 years, in 1980 in Ontario, a similar situation develop with the Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario where they formed the RIBO organization and they became a self-regulatory body to a certain degree where they in fact policed their members and probably policed them more stringently in some respects than in fact the Government would.

In the travel agency area we have funds that are set up to protect consumers in the event of bankruptcies and insolvencies on behalf of suppliers. We have funds in Ontario. We have funds in Quebec. We have funds in British Columbia. In fact that appears to be the way to go, because while people tend to support a mixed

economy and a sort of free market economy, the public want to be protected.

The public want to be protected from gouging, the public want to be protected from bankruptcies from companies that go down and take trust funds with them or misappropriate funds. With that, I think that this is a positive step forward. I commend this Bill to the House and want to see it to go to committee as soon as possible.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

BILL NO. 71—THE LAW SOCIETY AMENDMENT ACT (2)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), Bill No. 71, The Law Society Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur la Société du barreau, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), the Honourable Member for St. James.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, it is indeed a pleasure for me to rise today on this Bill of - (interjection)- Well, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), sings from his chair "How Great Thou Art." Firstly, let me thank him for that. Secondly, let me say that I was indeed—

An Honourable Member: Are you going to save this Bill, too?

Mr. Edwards: Well, actually I am going to—

An Honourable Member: Are you going to save this Bill, too? The great saviour from the Liberals.

Mr. Edwards: Actually, Mr. Speaker, I do intend on improving this Bill, but let me say it appears that the Members opposite would have liked Mr. Mackling to have replaced me in the House. They called for my resignation today. He was my predecessor, that spendthrift, Mr. Mackling, who they are now naming community clubs in Saudi Arabia after.

Let me start my comments by refuting the totally unjust and incorrect allegations of the third Party yesterday when they spoke to this Bill. I feel I must use up some of my time to respond because of the gross inaccuracies which they put on the record.

Mr. Speaker, I want to start by saying I was a little chagrined yesterday to see that the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) was suggesting that elderly people are somehow incompetent to lead nations. He left the statement on the record that the new leader in Chile was somehow not so susceptible to be overthrown. Why? Because he was elderly, Mr. Speaker. Indeed a shameful comment that was for the Member for Elmwood, and I expect at some point he will want to speak to his Leader and attempt to set the record straight.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I do not know where the Member got that information, but I made no statement such as that.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. That is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* (1500)

Mr. Edwards: There is no point of order. The facts speak for themselves. If he would read the paper today, his comments are quite clear; if he wants to refute them that is fine. He said the new Leader of Chile was not in any danger. Why? Not because he is democratically elected and the candidate supported by the people; no, he was not vulnerable because he was elderly. Those are the comments of the Member for Elmwood.

Mr. Speaker, let me also simply refer to comments made by the Member for Elmwood speaking to this Bill yesterday, where he started talking about the gas system; a truly relevant comment and I say that with no small amount of sarcasm with respect to this Bill. The only person with gas in this Chamber was the Member for Elmwood who is spouting it from the mouth throughout his speech.

Mr. Speaker, his speech and those from his Party were totally without analysis of this Bill. While I appreciate and I agree with their support of the thrust of this Bill, they clearly had not taken the time to look at it in any detail. Their speeches were as per usual filled with an inordinate amount of rhetoric.

In fact, when the debate was raging on this Bill some months ago and POINTTS was in court, taken to court by the Law Society, where were the NDP, Mr. Speaker? Where were they on the issue of paralegals and POINTTS? Nowhere to be found; let the record speak for itself, absolutely nowhere to be found. So when the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) says that he was willing to deal with this Bill before the end of the week, I think as my colleague the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has pointed out quite correctly, we have to take that with more than a little grain of salt, given the context in which it comes.

The fact is, I have been calling for this legislation for some time and I was willing to support it being passed prior to the end of this session on one condition and one condition only. I made this condition clear to the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae). I said, I will speak to this Bill. We will curtail our comments, we want it to go to committee, we want it to be passed on the condition that we have at least one week between when it is referred to committee and it actually appears at the committee stage. There are interested Parties who want to speak to this and deserve notice of a committee date and at least one week I submit to prepare presentations to the committee.

(Mr. Mark Minenko, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Clearly, the Minister of Justice in effect withdrew this as a top priority for his Government before the Christmas break. With that in mind, I had every intention of course of putting my comments on the record before the end of the break. I look forward to this being passed speedily and becoming a priority of this Government early on in the new year. That is not to say, Mr. Acting Speaker, that I will not have amendments to make; I will. I think that this Bill needs some improvement.—(interjection)— The Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger) yells from his seat, you always have. Well, if the shoe fits I will wear it.

The fact is the legislation is generally deficient. The fact is that in the drinking and driving legislation, the Minister admitted at the committee stage that he put it forward as a flyer, to test the waters and he was going to go back and get it right later. That is the attitude of this Government. It requires amendments; quite frankly, most of them do.—(interjection)— The Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) says, why do I not cross the floor. That is some cheek, Mr. Acting Speaker, from the Party that has been propping up this Government for a good 15-16 months, by this point.

These are the people who say we should cross the floor. They already have. They are already in the pockets of this Government. They are the people who rail for 39 minutes out of 40 every time—39 minutes out of 40 the Government is a disaster; they are ruining the North; they are ruining the farm economy; they are doing all the wrong things, but in the 40th minute they always say it is not that bad, we will support them, because frankly they know the polls. They know where they are going. They are not in good shape and they know that full well. That is why they do not dare have the courage of their convictions, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Recently, in a large part due to a well-publicized federal leadership campaign they are doing a bit better I hear in the polls. I hope they will come to the courage of their convictions now that they may even think they might retain the seats they already have.

Let me go on to say that the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak), in speaking to this Bill, makes the interesting suggestion—and he refers to the Thatcher murder case in Saskatchewan—that paralegals should be moving into murder cases. Let me simply say I do not believe that position is particularly well thought out by the Member for The Pas.

It is that level of analysis of this whole issue which has pervaded the comments and the indeed mostly rhetoric from the third Party on this issue. They detect that it is a populist issue. Yes, it is, it definitely is a populist issue. Should a Party—an elected representative—abandon all analysis because an issue is populist? Certainly not. That clearly is the position of the third Party. The fact is that they go so far. The Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) says the Thatcher case in Saskatchewan, he references in his speech, seems to suggest that paralegals will soon be defending murderers in this province.

I would submit that is not the intention behind this Bill. That is not desired by the people of this province.

The Member for The Pas had better raise this in his own caucus to see if his caucus supports his position, because if they do, credibility—if it was not already down the drain—certainly will be.

Mr. Acting Speaker, finally let me correct whoever it was—and I am quite sure it was the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger)—

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Acting Speaker, on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Minenko): The Member for Flin Flon, on a point of order.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Acting Speaker, I raise a point of order based on relevance. The Member continues to use other people's arguments and other people's views. He said when he began his remarks he was going to put the Liberal point of view on the record. We are waiting to hear that.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Minenko): The Member does not have a point of order.

Mr. Edwards: If it embarrasses the Members of the third Party for me to quote their speeches on this issue, far be it for me to continue quoting what they said on this very Bill. If I am irrelevant, Mr. Acting Speaker, what were they? I am quoting what they said. They said paralegals should defend murderers in this province. That is what they said. That is the level of analysis they have gone through on this Bill.

They know nothing about this issue except that it is populist. So they latch onto it like dogs to a bone, because they know that what is populist they want to be a part of, whatever the cost. The fact is they do not know what is going on in this whole area let alone this Bill specifically.

Then the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) has the gall today to purportedly stand up, after their Party has spoken on behalf of seniors and the elderly, and say the new leader of Chile is not in any way vulnerable. Why—only because he is elderly.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the fact is this legislation does a very major thing, although the legislation is quite brief. It, for the first time in this province, legalizes agents appearing on behalf of accused persons in front of highway traffic court in this province.

That is indeed, in my view, an acceptable and a preferable way for this province to go. I am mindful that while the POINTTS group itself is a group that has a track record and has had some success and we have not had problems with consumers of their of their services, this legislation is of course not restricted to POINTTS. It is going to allow indeed anyone to act in the capacity that the POINTTS people now do.

* (1510)

For that reason, Mr. Acting Speaker, certain considerations have to be taken into account. We do not want people represented by those who have I would suggest perhaps been proven incompetent in other areas, who have been perhaps criminally charged and convicted many times themselves. The protection the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) has put in is that judges will do the reviewing. Judges will be the ones, not the Law Society or not their own regulatory body; judges will be the ones who will be asked to decide if the representation given an accused is competent.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I have some serious concerns about that. The traditional—

An Honourable Member: You might get struck out.

Mr. Edwards: The Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Downey) makes light of this by saying, for fear that I might get struck out. Mr. Acting Speaker, that again really sets—(interjection)— Well, now he denies it and I will accept it, it is more likely withdraw, because he realizes the really incipient insinuation which he makes by that comment. The fact is that it is a very important issue for this province, and it is an important issue for this province to get right. He suggests and the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond) also suggests that there is some conflict of interest, and that was raised yesterday by the Members from the third Party. Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, where were they and where was the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) when I was calling, months before he did, for this legislation. The record is clear and it speaks for itself. I have been calling for this very move for months.

What I also said was, and it stands correct in retrospect, but I said it at the very time that the lawsuit was going on, there was no need for that injunction application to have gone forward with the Law Society and POINTTS. Thousands of dollars were spent by both parties going to the courts. The fact is the Minister did not do anything to facilitate discussion between those parties to attempt to reach a compromise position and quite likely come forward with the legislation or a form of it that we see here today.

Instead, the Minister of Justice rode the sidelines for months until our Party, the Liberals in this province, forced action on this issue after repeated calls for the Minister of Justice to take some action and do something. It is the same strategy that the Minister of Justice took with respect to the prayer issue in this province and many other issues. It is a sit and wait and see how the fight goes and maybe I will take initiative. That is the approach of this Minister of Justice.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the legislation, as well as raising concerns about judges entering the fray as it were in a court and being asked to defend the accused also I believe leaves short the issue of privilege between a solicitor and a client. Let me raise this spectre.

The fact is that under our laws in this province you have two years to sue for personal injury. That is because oftentimes personal injuries are not known or at least the severity of the personal injury is not known for some time after an accident. There can be a lag

time, and that is why you have up to two years from the incident itself to launch a suit. In the event that a traffic accident occurs it appears there is no personal injury perhaps at the time that it is dealt with. Oftentimes these are dealt with very quickly if it is pled out and a guilty plea is entered. It may not be known whether or not someone was injured.

In the event that someone is injured and there is a lawsuit in which MPIC would most likely be involved, it is possible that the POINTTS person, the agent, could be called to testify against his or her client in court. That would I believe be a real possibility, given the fact that solicitor-client privilege only covers solicitors, it does not cover agents.

The fact is that in a lawsuit a POINTTS agent could be subpoenaed to court and could be demanded to testify against his or her client, and I think that has to be made clear. I think when you go to a POINTTS agent you have to know that what you say may indeed not be covered by solicitor-client privilege, and that very agent whom you may be seeing as a solicitor may not qualify for solicitor-client privilege and may end up some day in court testifying against you in a personal injury case.

That is a real concern and a real scenario which flows from what is being done in this legislation that has to be addressed at the committee stage. It is not, I would submit, irreparable or something that cannot be dealt with by an appropriate amendment, but it has to be thought about. I do not believe it has. An amendment has to come forward.

Mr. Acting Speaker, other concerns, which have been raised many times by the Bar Association and the Law Society, I will indeed be raising at the committee stage. I simply want to at this point indicate that the Law Society and the Bar Association are not the only people with concerns about how paralegals become a part of our system. This has to be done very thoughtfully and very carefully.

I want to refer to correspondence from the Manitoba Association of Legal Assistants, which is the recognized major group representing paralegals themselves. Paralegals themselves say this in correspondence dated September 12 to Mr. McCrae, the Minister of Justice. They say, in Manitoba paralegals have thus far worked under the supervision of lawyers. MALA, that is M-A-L-A, the Manitoba Association of Legal Assistants, believes that this supervision should remain as is. We have the association of legal assistants themselves clearly raising some concerns.- (interjection)-

The Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) indicates "table" and I certainly do not mind doing that. I must admit I have made notations on the copy, I have underlined it, and I will be more than happy to table this document for the Member for Churchill's edification. I am sure he will want to read it in great detail.

This is correspondence written by Lori Symbol, who is the president of this association. He is very knowledgeable about this. This association represents people who by and large, I believe, maybe perhaps entirely, have come out of the Red River course. So

they are trained paralegals. They have their own reservations about this whole area and that is why I demanded that we have at least a week's notice to people for the committee stage, because I think they will want to make a presentation on this very issue. I think it is important that they have notice.

I have surveyed in great detail the comments made by the Bar Association nationally when they opposed paralegals. I have looked at the Manitoba Bar Association. That branch's opposition spoke on many occasions to Mr. Teffaine, who sat on the national committee for the Bar Association looking into this. I have had lengthy discussions with Mr. Scurfield, the President of the Law Society, and I feel that I have canvassed the experts, both paralegals themselves, consumers of paralegals. Certainly Mr. Goddard, the head of the POINTTS group, I have spoken to on a number of occasions, as well as obviously the associations representing lawyers.

I do not agree that paralegals should be outright banned from practising independently in this province. I have made that position clear from Day One on this issue, far before any other political Party in this province took a stand on it. What I do—

An Honourable Member: How great I am.

Mr. Edwards: Well, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) sings, how great I am. I am not willing to agree to that on his part, but in any event I simply remind him that the option to me was Mr. Mackling.

In terms of being a spendthrift, I think he should reconsider his earlier call for my resignation, something that I do not think the people of St. James would be too pleased he is calling for at this point. I remind the Minister again that to my knowledge they are naming, no doubt, hockey rinks and community clubs and soccer fields in Saudia Arabia after Mr. Mackling with some \$26 million left on their sands.

In terms of being financially rewarding to this province, I think I have done more than my fair share. The best thing I can do for this province is continue to vote against the Government, something the third Party has yet to recognize, even though 39 minutes out of 40 minutes, on a regular basis, they call for it, but they never quite get up the gumption to do it.

An Honourable Member: We voted against them more often than you have.

* (1520)

Mr. Edwards: Yes, the Member for Churchill says, we voted against them more often than you have—the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), excuse me. Yes, when they know the Government cannot be brought down, they do occasionally vote against the Government. Yes, Mr. Acting Speaker, when the big issues come, they still vote against them, but what do they do? They send in three people, sometimes two, because they know—he is standing—maybe it is four on occasion. Whatever it takes, just so they do not have to face the people, just enough to maintain a facade of opposition to this present Government.

The Bill in particular, getting back to some of the specifics referred to in it, I believe needs improvement. I have mentioned a few of the areas in which I see specific improvements needing to come forward, and I will be bringing those forth. I might add that I anticipate being in a position to share those concerns prior to the committee stage with my colleague the Justice Critic from the New Democratic Party and also the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) himself.

The concerns which have been expressed throughout this debate by me were not just with respect to dealing with paralegals in a fair and an equitable and a progressive way in this province. They were also aimed at downplaying and downgrading as much as possible the hostility which this issue brought to the legal community. The Law Society and POINTTS were at each other's throat, as it were, in the courts of this province for many months. That in my view was not necessary had the Minister of Justice done his job.

I think it is important to remember that while I personally do not entirely support the tactics which were used by the Law Society, some of the arguments they made quite frankly I have to say were simply not tenable in their opposition to POINTTS. When they took POINTTS to court they were defending The Law Society Act, in fact. Anybody who took the time to read that Act would see that it imposed a duty on the Law Society to defend The Law Society Act. The Law Society does not make laws. It is only empowered and required to defend the Act under which it functions. They in fact did that and their position was vindicated by the courts of this province. That required the politicians in this province taking the initiative, and doing what they should have done months before to prevent the lawsuit, and that is, have brought in legislation like this. That could have been done early on and would have prevented in my view, in all likelihood, the very divisive and very hostile lawsuit which took place.

Of course, it is also my view that POINTTS knew that they were not going to win that lawsuit. They were engaging in it because they wanted to refer it to the political forum where they knew that it belonged, and they knew that the way to do that was to take it through the courts, to raise it as a populist issue, which indeed it is, and ultimately to spur the politicians to movement in this whole area, to look at it seriously.

Quite frankly, I believe the Law Society was looking for the politicians to take some initiative in this whole area as indeed ultimately the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) did after repeated calls from this, the official Opposition, and only the official Opposition. I want to simply say on the record that the Law Society did, in defending The Law Society Act, what they had to do. I do not think anybody would take away from their defending the Act, which they were required to defend. The fact is, that their doing it in the first place, had this Minister taken the initiative, would not have been necessary, but indeed their position clearly, simply on the wording of The Law Society Act, not looking at the overall political considerations, simply legally they had to defend their Act and their position was obviously vindicated.

Mr. Acting Speaker, let me also, in closing talk about the committee which the Minister of Justice (Mr.

McCrae) -(interjection)- the Members opposite are calling for me to close. They have had a bit of a rough day, and I know that they will not want Opposition Members to speak at length today. They are tired and it is close to the break, but this is an issue which deserves a thorough consideration.

An Honourable Member: What break are you talking about?

Mr. Edwards: The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says, what break? Perhaps he is thinking of rescinding the two-week Christmas break. The fact is, Mr. Acting Speaker, I certainly think we have to deal with this Bill as soon as possible when we get back.

With respect to the committee, which the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) has indicated he will be setting up, I want to encourage him as I have done privately already to be very, very careful and very thoughtful in the mandate he gives that committee.

Like the INE Committee in Ontario, which has now published a preliminary report on this whole issue and will be publishing a full report—hopefully very soon; I think it was expected earlier this fall—it is very important that this committee and this whole review of this area be done thoughtfully and with a view to what is best for all Manitobans. What is best for all Manitobans is affordable, competent legal service.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the fact is that in defence—and I will defend the many practitioners in this province who provide affordable, competent legal services to the people in this province because there are many, there are hundreds of them, if not thousands. The fact is all over this province, and in particular I want to distinguish the rural and northern practitioners in this province who by and large have general practices, and attempt to keep up on the law and do as best they can in the many areas of the law which are continually changing, and they do a truly admirable job, I would submit, in the vast majority of cases, at a very affordable and reasonable rate.

The interesting thing about lawyers in this province is that people will say—as a profession, they will make disparaging comments about lawyers. Generally they will say, but my lawyer is different. They will generally like their own lawyer but not the profession. I think it is important to remember when we talk about this whole area that there are sole practitioners with a general practice throughout this province who do very good service to their communities. It is important to respect those people who have dedicated their careers to serving their clients throughout this province in a dedicated, competent fashion.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I have the privilege of practising with a larger firm in this province, which allows me the advantage of specialization in a certain area or areas, but I recognize the difficulty that sole practitioners have as indeed any professional has, a doctor, or an accountant, or whatever, in doing a generalized practice. It is indeed, I believe, more difficult because they have to keep up on all the areas of the law. They are truly serving their community by being able to do all of the legal functions required of them by their clients.

So let me simply leave on the record my comments recognizing the dedication and the service given this province by the vast majority of the legal profession. Indeed, I do indicate that I believe most, if not the great majority, would support this legislation given certain guarantees in the interest of the public; that there be certain things in place to allow for review in the case of incompetence, proven incompetence, or found incompetence. We have to be aware of that. We have to be aware of the solicitor-client privilege, which has grown up over hundreds of years in our legal system.

We have to be aware that this may have ramifications for that. These are not solicitors per se and will not be covered, it is my submission, by the common law of solicitor-client privilege. We have to deal with that in some fashion at the committee stage. Those and other issues, which I have indicated, I will make every attempt to raise with the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), prior to the committee stage, as well as my colleague the New Democratic Party Justice Critic, will be important to deal with at the committee stage.

I believe we will have submissions which will give us further guidance and enlightenment on this whole area as we move into it in this province. I suspect that the committee when it is struck will have a mandate which requires a fairly lengthy period of time because I think it is important that we do not rush into this and we do a thorough job. I look forward to that announcement of the committee and in particular its mandate, which I have said needs to be carefully thought out by this Minister of Justice. I have had discussions with him on that issue, and I refer him back to those private discussions.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we look forward to this being in the committee stage certainly by the end of January; I would hope before that. My only requirement is that there be at least a week between going to committee and the actual committee hearing itself. With that I will close and ask that this matter be dealt with in an expeditious fashion by the Government and thank all Members for the opportunity to have addressed them on this very important Bill. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Minenko): Is the House ready for the question? The Honourable Member for Churchill.

* (1530)

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): It is obvious from the speech just given to us by the Liberal Justice Critic that some speeches in this House are harder to give than other speeches. Generally they are harder to give when one feels somewhat ambivalent about an issue.

An Honourable Member: On a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Minenko): Order, please. The Honourable Member for St. James, on a point of order.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Acting Speaker, I sense that the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) is

about to embark on a tirade which is totally unfounded. Let me say to him that six months ago his Party did not speak on this issue, I did. I called for this legislation six months ago. Where was his Party?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Minenko): Order. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order.—(interjection)— Order, please. The Chair has recognized the Honourable Member for Churchill.

Mr. Cowan: I guess the more difficult the speeches are to make, the more sensitive the Member is who makes them, because I was not going to embark upon a tirade, I was just going to note again that when someone is somewhat ambivalent about an issue and has not firmly staked out a philosophical approach, it is difficult for them to order their thoughts in such a way as to provide an illuminating statement on where they stand on a particular issue. That is difficult for any one of us in this House at any given time.

I would suggest that it is more difficult for Liberals than it is for others because they start from a common position of ambivalence and therefore when they find themselves personally stuck in a philosophical swamp of ambivalence they find that is very hard to find their way out of it. The Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) gave us a very torturous rendition of how his logic has proceeded to flow on this particular issue to the point where he supports the Bill but he does not want to see that support in any way be interpreted as a reflection against the legal community. He shrugs his shoulders and —(interjection)— the Member for St. James said, read the speech. Spare me. I just had the opportunity to hear the speech. Why would I want to subject myself to it twice?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Minenko): The Honourable Member for St. James, on a point of order.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): I think the Members of this House will remember my comments that I could not support many of the arguments put forward by The Law Society and the Bar Association on this specifically. I said that and that is on the record.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Minenko): Order, please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order.

Mr. Cowan: I am pleased that I am giving the Member for St. James this opportunity to regroup his thoughts and to clarify his comments somewhat, but I can tell you, Mr. Acting Speaker, that having listened with some care to the Member for St. James I am not certain that we as a collective are any further ahead in our understanding of the Liberal position on this particular Bill than we were when he started his comments some time ago, but that does not surprise me.

I found a statement in a magazine the other day, very enlightening, I put it on the record once, and I

will put it on again today. I imagine I will have an opportunity to put it on the record in future speeches as well. It is a statement by the Liberal House Leader (Mr. Alcock) when he was speaking before the MGEA with respect to privatization. The headline is—and this is out of the MGEA latest edition of their magazine called Contact, “Liberals no longer unknown on privatization.” The statement is, and I am reading the narrative of the statement now, “When Reg Alcock, there to represent the Liberal Party, began his address to delegates there was no doubt where his party stood.” This is a quote. This is what he said at that time, “I am sitting in the middle, and I am going to take a classically Liberal position.”

The Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) obviously has taken note of that classic Liberal position and tried to position himself on the leading edge of a populist issue, but still in the middle, torn between his sincere desire for populism where it suits certain purposes and his own participation in one of the organizations that may find this Bill to be somewhat less than favourable from their perspective.

He stated -(interjection)- well, the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) says from his seat that he believes I am imputing motives. If I have left that impression I apologize to the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards). I think I am only stating the facts. If he takes any imputation of motives out of that statement then I do apologize to him.

It is not directed at him as an individual. It is directed at the classical Liberal position of trying to run down the middle of the road and his own personal circumstances which he has to, in every speech in this House, as do we all in some way, let come through our speeches so that the people are aware of how we feel about certain issues.

I saw an interesting poster the other day, and what it had was a big truck. Most of the poster was just a truck with a white line going underneath the truck symbolizing the middle of the road, and someone standing just about to be hit by that truck and knocked aside or knocked over, and the slogan on the bottom is, “This is what happens when you stand in the middle of the road.” -(interjection)-

The Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), who did not hear the first part of this speech, took immediately the note and the message that I was trying to portray in the speech, and that is that the Liberals indeed on most issues find themselves stuck in the middle of the road. There is a danger to that.

I am just trying to provide some helpful but unsolicited advice. The Liberal Party and the Members of the Liberal Caucus in the Legislature can take it for what it is worth. I think it is important to note that it is becoming fairly apparent to even an individual like myself that they do, on almost every occasion, find themselves in the middle of the road on an issue without very definitive ideas on where to go and how to get to those objectives. They cannot clearly define what the philosophy is, and for that reason, what the route to that philosophy or the accomplishment of certain objectives might be.

It was a difficult speech for the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), but I appreciate the fact that even under

those very difficult circumstances, partly philosophical, partly personal, that he took the time to try to illuminate us on his position.

You know, the speakers before me the other day, the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak), the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) and the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) all said they wanted to hear the Liberal position on this Bill. We asked for the Liberals to speak, and that was just yesterday.

We indicated yesterday that we were prepared to let this Bill pass yesterday, Mr. Acting Speaker. I will indicate today to my knowledge there is one more speaker from our caucus following myself, and I will not take long. We are prepared to let this Bill pass to—or a vote to be taken on this Bill at least today so that if it is voted in favour it can pass on to committee stage.

I want to commend the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) on one of the suggestions he had, that is, there be adequate time given for notice for committee so that people who want to make representation to this Bill and want to provide differing perspectives on the Bill have full opportunity to do so, not only full opportunity to do so in the committee but also full opportunity to prepare themselves to go through the comments that have been made in this House to research the subject and to prepare themselves fully so we can benefit from the research they do to carry forward their message.

* (1540)

I make that special note not only to commend the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) but to criticize the Government for trying to ram through committee The Municipal Assessment and Consequential Amendments Act, because I believe, Mr. Acting Speaker, that if it is—

An Honourable Member: Is this relevant?

Mr. Cowan: Well, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) asks if this is relevant. Certainly it is relevant because if in any way the Government attempts to damage the ability of citizens to come forward to make known their views, to make representations to us, to aid us in better understanding what it is they believe we should be doing on their behalf, to give us technical advice, to give us philosophical advice, to give us policy advice. When the Government does that in any instance it reflects upon the Government in every instance.

Because they are attempting to ram through the committee on The Municipal Assessment Act and Consequential Amendments Act, we could therefore assume they may be willing to ram through the committee on this particular Bill, The Law Society Amendment Act. The fact is that they are wrong in the first instance. If we let them get away with that sort of railroading of legislation through the committee process in this House on that particular issue we may face it also on this particular legislation.

So I ask the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) to talk to his seatmate, the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae), to ensure that the Attorney General does—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Minenko): Order, please. The Honourable Minister responsible for Rural Development, on a point of order.

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Acting Speaker, on a point of order. I take exception to what the Honourable Member for Churchill has put on the record, saying that we are trying to ram something through. It is important for this Chamber to note that we put forward The Assessment and Consequential Amendments Act in November. It is also important to note that there are only three presenters left in committee to make presentations, and therefore there is ample time to not only debate the Bill but to hear everybody who has indicated an interest in this Bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Minenko): Order. The Honourable Minister did not have a point of order. The Honourable Member for Churchill.

Mr. Cowan: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker, I do not want to reflect upon your ruling that the Minister did not have a point of order, but I do want to address the general philosophical question which was contained in his response. I think he overreacted, quite frankly, to what I was saying.

What I was saying was that I did not think the Attorney General should pick up on the bad habits of the Minister of Municipal Affairs with respect to trying to ram legislation through committee stages. The reason I said that is because I think if it is successful in one instance they will be tempted to try it in other instances, and they may be tempted to try it with respect to The Law Society Amendment Act. I agree with the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) that we should not allow that to happen.

So in order to not allow that to happen with The Law Society Amendment Act, we must not let it happen with The Municipal Assessment and Consequential Amendments Act. That is a pledge I can give to you, Mr. Acting Speaker, as we pledge today to allow this Bill to go to a vote on second reading after a few short comments by myself and the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie).

We also pledge to you, Mr. Acting Speaker, that we will not let any Minister nor the Conservative Government of the Day ramrod legislation through the standing committee so that people do not have time to appropriately prepare themselves to make informed and well-researched representation which helps us as legislators. So I make that point in passing.

With respect to the Bill itself, we believe it is a good first step. We believe it should go forward. We will be supporting it, we will be listening very carefully to what is said to us at the committee stage. Depending upon the advice we are given, if it is that which we expect, we will be supporting it either in its present or amended

form when it comes back for third reading because we believe it is time to demystify some of the more professional processes that we as individuals are subject to in our normal life. That does not mean we are suggesting that paralegals, or paraprofessionals, or other individuals have free access to carry on their business in an unfettered way; no, we believe it should be regulated and we believe that this Act provides for that regulation to take place.

We also believe that it should be tested and tried. We believe that this is probably an appropriate area to make the first initiatives which will result in some lessons to be learned and some evaluation that can lead us to an expansion of this, but we are going to be pressing for an expansion of this process of demystification beyond this Bill based on our experiences with it.

In saying that, I do not mean to suggest that we are going to wait a long time, but we want to take a quick look at what is happening and build upon this process and encourage the Government to further put into effect amendments of this sort that allow a more open process. A process that is less designed to suit the needs of the professionals and more designed to suit the needs of the population.

For that reason we believe it to be a populist first step.- (interjection)- The Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) suggests that I should not be distracted by the dialogue that goes back and forth. Contrary, I find it very enlightening. I find that sometimes the dialogue that people in this House speak from their seat is much more illuminating and much more informative than that which they say on their feet. If I can encourage that sort of banter, which I believe is in the finest traditions of Parliaments, then I will do so.- (interjection)- The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) says it keeps my speech going, and in some instances, and I expect there will be some instances in the near future where I may require that sort of encouragement. I would agree with him.

In this particular instance I am going to prove him wrong, which is something to which he should become more familiar with over the last little while, having been proved wrong in so many instances. I am proving him wrong in this instance by not extending this speech too much further than to say that we want very carefully to review what is said in committee, but we believe the general intent and thrust of this legislation is positive.

We hope that if there are any areas that require clarification we will listen closely to what the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) and our own Justice Critic (Ms. Hemphill) has to say with respect to how the clarification might be beneficial to the Bill. We will certainly entertain that from an open perspective, but we do want to see the Bill proceed very quickly.

Having said that, the one point which I think we may want to take a look at is the coming-into-force section of this Bill, and I do not want to refer to the section specifically, but I want to talk about the ways in which a Bill can come into force.

One is by a day fixed by proclamation, the other is by Royal Assent, and the other is that—let me go back,

the day by proclamation can be put right into the Bill itself. I believe in order to make certain that the Government does not lose momentum for whatever reason with respect to this Bill that an amendment should be forthcoming that would put this Bill into effect on a specific day rather than to return this Bill back into the hands of the Government where it could be lost for some period of time before it was put into effect.

That is how far our support of this particular Bill goes. We want to see it implemented quickly, fairly and equitably so that we can carry on with any momentum that might be created by this particular piece of legislation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Minenko): Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I also want to add a few remarks to this debate on this legislation. I want to begin by commending the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) for introducing this legislation. I think that if there is any argument, and I preface my remarks by saying if; if there is any argument to having someone as the Minister of Justice, the Attorney General for the Province of Manitoba who is a non-lawyer, this legislation is an argument for that.

This legislation is an argument for that, because I believe it would have been very difficult for someone who had been admitted to the Bar, who was a member of The Law Society, to have introduced this without having had to face a significant amount of pressure from his peers one way or the other, of one sort or another. I think that we would have been the sorrier or the poorer for not having had this legislation.

My colleague from Churchill (Mr. Cowan) indicated in his remarks that he was having some difficulty interpreting the Liberal position. He attributed that to the fact that the Liberal position is generally in the middle of the road. I am somewhat more cynical about the Liberal position. I think that they have not formulated a position. I do not believe that the Liberal Caucus has formulated a position on this. I do not believe for a minute that any amendments introduced by the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) are going to do anything more than complicate this Bill, are going to make it less likely that people can act on behalf, as agents of people who come before the courts. The Member for St. James will have a chance to prove me wrong when he introduces his amendment.

The fact of the matter is that this Party, the Liberal Party, has not identified its position, has not unequivocally said that yes, this is something that is desirable, has not indicated whether it will be prepared to proceed with amendments to allow paralegals in other areas of current Law Society jurisdiction, whether they are prepared to amend this whole process so that people can more easily both represent themselves in legal transactions or have others who are non-lawyers represent themselves.

* (1550)

For the information of the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), this caucus did go on record far in

advance of the Liberals trying to develop a position. In fact, Mr. Acting Speaker, on May 11, some two weeks after I received a letter from Mr. Dave Goddard, the vice-president, western Canada of POINTTS, I responded with our position with respect to POINTTS, some two weeks after it. The Member for St. James may want to listen to this.

On May 11, I wrote to Mr. Goddard and I said: Thank you for your letter of April 27, regarding the actions of the Law Society of Manitoba. There is no doubt in my mind that the Law Society is concerned about protecting its monopoly against the perceived intrusion of paralegal organizations such as yours. You may recall that the New Democratic Party introduced legislation that would make it easier for individuals to purchase residential property without using the services of a lawyer. This too was vehemently opposed by the Law Society. The demystification of professional duties is a goal of the New Democratic Party. I can assure you that we support your battle, and if there is anything that we can do to support your cause, please do not hesitate to ask."

I go ahead to outline why we support POINTTS, and I want to indicate for the record, or for Members of the official Opposition, that this Party has been on record for a long time as desiring and wanting to demystify professional associations whether it be the Law Society or the Teachers Society. In fact the Teachers Society have proposed some amendments on their own, which would bring lay people into the process so that they can provide new perspectives on the transactions and the approaches that society takes.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I believe we should certainly be supporting this in principle. I believe that the amendments that are being proposed are reasonable and I know that there are going to be objections, some individuals, professionals, lawyers, are going to object. I know that representatives of the Law Society are going to come before committee and object. I have to chuckle when the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) suggests that the Law Society had to defend its Act.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the Law Society could have approached the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), could have said, yes, we see what you are trying to do, and in principle we do not want to deny individuals the right to choose their representative, regardless of his or her legal qualifications. If someone can represent themselves, then clearly there should be a way. We should be perhaps encouraging the development of paraprofessionals who are licensed and bonded to represent individuals on other matters. I am not trying to deny that lawyers bring a certain expertise to many matters, be they criminal or civil, but certainly a trained professional is not required in all instances.

I have said on many occasions that real estate transactions, and the drawing of mortgages, can be done quite adequately by paraprofessionals. They can give the same protection to clients providing that they are bonded, and they are licensed, and there are regulations governing their operations. I think we should be doing that, and we should be doing it forthwith. It will reduce the costs, it will introduce a measure of

competition into the provision of legal-type services, and I think that is desirable.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I can tell you that while there will be amendments introduced I am sure that the New Democratic Party will be watching for amendments that are more progressive, more expansive, that limit even further the wall that had developed around the legal profession, which prevents competition, which prevents others providing paralegal services that are less expensive, but also which are professional in its own way.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, we are going to be tracking this very carefully. I am anxious to see whether the words of my colleague from St. James are lived up to in terms of his amendments. I predict now that they will be designed to complicate, obfuscate, make more difficult the appointment of an agent to act under The Highway Traffic Act. I will predict now that the amendments for the Member for St. James will not broaden the mandate, will not attempt to demystify, will not attempt to further limit the power of the Law Society, which I believe is desirable.

We will watch, and when the Bill comes before committee we will be introducing our own approach to this particular piece of legislation. If it is feasible we will also be amending it to improve its scope and perhaps look to my colleagues who have at least superficially indicated they will be supporting this legislation, see whether they are prepared to go that extra mile, provide additional services at lower cost to the people of Manitoba for their legal services, provide additional competition for those services to further reduce costs. We will do so in a way that still protects individuals who seek such representation from being abused by the process, make sure that their rights, their financial rights as well as their legal rights are protected in the process.

I think it can be done, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I believe we collectively should be doing that. Having said that, we are prepared to let this Bill move to committee. I am sure that there are many, many people who are anxious to present their views on this Bill to the Government and to the Opposition. I look forward to those presentations as well.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

BILL NO. 90—THE INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 1989 (2)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill No. 90, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1989 (2); Loi no 2 du 1989 portant affectation anticipée de crédits, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch). Stand.

Is there leave that this matter remain standing?
Agreed.

The Honourable Member for Selkirk.

Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, just the other day my fellow colleague for Transcona (Mr. Kozak)

spoke on this Bill and spoke of how over the last six months we have been in the beginnings of a recession. I am speaking on the amount of retail sales that are down and the level of the income support that is in the province.

I do not know the finances behind it, but I can tell what the people are saying, the people have lost hope in this province on a very gradual and sliding rate, particularly as they see the GST coming into being, a GST which they did not vote on in the last election that was imposed upon them in somewhat of a surprise action by the federal Government, a GST which this Government speaks on one hand of not supporting and certainly is not planning on how to cope with it but is ready to be at the grabbing end of it should it be imposed upon us in another year.

The people have lost hope in the economy, and I think that is the saddest part when it comes to the economics of the province. When the people do not believe in themselves, when they stop spending, then we truly are in the beginning of a recession. We unfortunately are seeing that in going through the stores this Christmas and seeing the stocks of supplies that are still on the racks. I do hope that in these last few days the people have come out in a greater number and are buying and supporting our retail sales in the province.

It is not just the economics of this province that we are seeing the lack of support by this Government. Probably the most obvious fact that we can see where this Government has no support for the province and only on books and on paper is in the area of the environment.

* (1600)

We have all our major rivers in the Province of Manitoba highly polluted and yet this Government has not taken one step toward curing the problem in any significant way. We have the water supply for the City of Winnipeg threatened and hopefully under control now, but it has been threatened over these last few months. Yet no backup system is available to the City of Winnipeg should the water supply in any way be taken out of service.

We have the Red River which is perhaps the most highly polluted river in most of Canada, and this Government has not taken one itty-bitty step toward doing something about it. We have the Conawapa hydro dam coming into force and yet when asked questions in the House the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) was not even aware of what a water basin was and how the Conawapa dam can affect the water levels in Lake Winnipeg. He laughed at the question, and the laughing was showing his ignorance and not his understanding of his portfolio.

We have Repap that has gone through without a thorough environmental hearing on the whole process. It has been on a proportional basis and going through piecemeal. Hopefully, the interim withdrawal of the Repap into its long-term proposal is just that—an interim, and we can come across with a procedure that will be in place and will be both economically and environmentally acceptable to this province.

We have the Rafferty-Alameda project, which this Government has continued to say that we will go through with and wait and see what the problems should be if they occur after the dam project goes through. We have the Assiniboine delta aquifer pipeline that this Government finally backed off of, in recognizing that it did not have thorough and adequate information available to make the decision upon. They have had to retreat on that.

We have today before us in committee Bill 79, The Municipal Assessment Act, which has in no way given any allowances for land and taxation of land in order to keep it environmentally protected and what the ramifications of taxation on land can be and should be under the Assessment Act.

When you put these all together, you see that this Government is only giving lip-service to the environment problem in Manitoba, and though it has brought in some very significant and friendly Acts, if they do not monitor or enforce any of the Acts then they are just another waste of paper and probably not even recyclable paper. It is a very sad situation when we have lip-service once again for another generation, another decade.

We are not ending this decade seeing that any adequate protection is being put in place for our environment. If we were to see The Environment Act is in place, imposed by this Government, then we could see some action that we could say, this Government believes that The Environment Act is a beginning as it was introduced by the past Government, a beginning to a turnaround in our environment and that it should be enforced, and the enforcement should be a serious enforcement.

Although there is an Act to come in and amend some of the fines that are under The Environment Act, it is a bunch of hogwash when you see this Government hand out a \$198 fine to a polluting company that can get away with anything it wants. All we have on paper is a commitment to fines of a significant amount.

We have the City of Winnipeg which is continuing to pollute the Red River and this Government continuing to allow it to do so. We have not seen a finely tuned time line come out on how Winnipeg will have to come under the Act and what will happen if it does not come under the Act. We have the City of Winnipeg with lower water rates than many areas around the City of Winnipeg, and yet it is complaining that it does not have money available to put in place some of the necessary procedures that will be required if the Red River is to be cleaned up.

Back in the early '80s the Town of Selkirk had to spend \$5 million in putting a water treatment plant, and rightly so, in place. Our water bills have significantly gone up proportionately till every citizen pays about \$35, \$40 a month in water bills and sewage bills. I do not believe that if you compare the City of Winnipeg you will find them comparable to that amount.

We have this Government supporting once again the City of Winnipeg. Even in its new proposal for the Manitoba Telephone System where if you live in the

Lockport area, even under the new system, it will be about three times as expensive to have the same calling district as if you lived in the City of Winnipeg. This Government is claiming to support all peoples and claiming to be a representative Government of rural Manitoba.

We have this Government which although it has done quite a significant move in the mental health area, still refuses to put in place a mental health worker in the community and district and Town of Selkirk, although that cost would be so insignificant in comparison to the cost of lives that are ruined because of the lack of services available in our community.

We have this Government that puts in place the provincial crisis line in the City of Winnipeg, not outside the Perimeter Highway, but again in the City of Winnipeg, a provincial crisis line that is to answer all the calls throughout the province, and yet no procedure is in place for those calls once received to be handed over and dealt with through any other agency. So there is no follow-up, and it is almost in many respects a waste of money should the people phoning not be able to have services given to them in their own community at their own lifestyle as they require it.

We have the crisis shelter in the Town of Selkirk, which has to take out of its salaried positions enough money to support the telephone costs of its crisis line which happens, I believe, to be about \$4,000 a year—on a very limited funding, having to take \$4,000 out of their budget line in order to pay for the crisis line in the wife abuse shelter.

But most of all, Mr. Speaker, this Government has failed to deal with the future. It is only dealing with the past. I think one of the aspects we have to deal with, especially as critic for Culture, Heritage and Recreation, is the future of our province. In 10 more years this province will have a significant multicultural make-up. We will not have one supreme race in our province but be a very cross-cultural community.

Yet, just this last week, in coming back from the airport in a taxi and speaking to the taxi driver who was a very nice, young, white man, in the very last statement as we were coming up towards the hill, he turned to me and he said, you know, we have to work harder to make sure our kind is getting more jobs; we are being taken out of our jobs and work force by those people—meaning I am sure, the East Indian community who often have to drive taxis, not always by their preference but by lack of other opportunities.

I think that was the saddest statement I have heard in many, many years, to have, from this young man, an idea that one culture, one group, was more important and more significant than any other. I thought words of that were left in the early '60s. I guess the last time I ran into that was the summer I turned 15 and worked at a lodge. I think, as I have mentioned previously, when I had the owners of the lodge—we met them and saw them at the front gate turn away a black couple, saying that there were no rooms available, and wondering why he did not remember that so many rooms were available in the other wing of the lodge, and not realizing till a few minutes later that of course he just did not want black people in his lodge.

That was 25 years ago and things have not changed at all. We are still having to deal with racism and it is not going to be cured if we ignore it. We have to deal with it. Yet I have seen no commitment by this Government acknowledging that racism does occur, is there, is growing, and that it is a problem we, as legislators, have to deal with in an educational manner, that we can deal with our children now and teach them with open hearts to accept all people as equals, to judge them not on their appearance or their abilities, but on the quality of heart and character within that person.

If we have a lack of commitment to our future, whether economically or in humanitarian ways, then we have no Government at all, we are just floundering. I believe that we have to find some in our heart whether we maintain this minority Government or whether we go to an election and things are changed. We have to take out a new road and look towards the future, and deal with the unpopular issues that no one wants to deal with but are continued to be swept under the rug.

I was at a school yesterday afternoon and was unable to be in this House. Speaking to a classroom yesterday, we were discussing why there is not more representation in this House of other communities and of women themselves. There are no people in here with obvious physical disabilities; there are only two of what some would call the visible minorities, only nine women. This is not representative, unfortunately, of the community we are here to represent. We are to be a Government of the peers of the people and yet we do not represent the people.

* (1610)

I hope that through Government rules and regulations, and Government procedures and programs, this can be changed at the earliest opportunity. Whenever that day happens, it will be a happier day for all of the people.

Perhaps we see that on a daily basis, when this Government continues to show a lack of respect for the communities wherever they are in Manitoba. It started out early in this Government's term when the Government would not deal with the foster parents, when it came out with a phone list and tried to intimidate foster parents and put one against the other—a lack of respect for this community which was only asking that it be given a long-term plan for support. When into child care services, this Government would try to make a spectacle out of the services given by these people who commit their time, because it is a commitment that few of us would be able to give under the salaries they are allowed to receive. This Government would not speak to them.

We see this lack of respect in the way the Premier continues to act up in this House. It is the Premier who has to be called to order perhaps more than any other person in this building, and I think that lack of respect is significant and showing exactly what this Government has as its purpose, and that is to be self-contained, totalitarian Tories. If they believe that is the way the people want it then they will be a short-term Government, because people are sad—

An Honourable Member: You would not be reading your speech, would you?

Mrs. Charles: No, I am not reading my speech, Mr. Minister. These people are saddened by the lack of respect the Government holds for them as people, and they are giving up hope in a slow but obvious way in this very cheerful season that we have going for us. You do not see many of these people looking forward to a happy and prosperous future. The idea that the 1990s will be the time for cocooning, as the term will be, will come in many respects, because people have given up hope in looking toward either the economic community or the political community as showing direction. Perhaps in the long run they will have to find it in themselves to bring us into the 1990s and the year 2000.

As I look forward to my children taking over the community, as other people's children of this age will, I hope that they have the answers that this Government is not providing, that they have the hope that politicians can respect peoples, whether they are directly in their care, or indirectly in their care. But most of all, Government has to have an attitude of respect and an attitude that they have to take the reins and perhaps make decisions that are for the future and not for today, because today's are passing at a faster rate than ever before.

Before closing, I want to add one further remark. I think it is also reflective of the lack of this Government's attitude toward understanding the attitude of the people, that they want to protect and enhance the past and the future under The Forks Corporation. We have continued to see this Government come out with varied ideas of what The Forks should be.

The people continually tell me they want to see it maintained as a parkland. I would urge this Government, for all the powers it has in representation to The Forks Corporation, to not allow gross development down on The Forks area. Let us for once have a protected area where people can just be people and do not have to be forced into entertaining themselves, or being entertained. That they can just relax and be who they are, and that is, Manitobans with a great future, but a future that is in the hands of this Government at the moment, and a future for which this Government is showing no support, and no attitude of respect for them. I hope that things can change, but if we do not see some change in Government, I doubt that will be the case.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Springfield wishes to speak on Bill No. 90?

Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield): Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The House has already granted leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch). Is it the wish of the House to reverse its previous decision of allowing this matter to remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Springfield? Agreed. The Honourable Member for Springfield.

An Honourable Member: How is your hip?

Mr. Roch: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz) says, how is my hip? I keep telling him that it is not my hip, it is my back.

When this Bill was introduced the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) said, and I am quoting: Let me begin by saying that we are bringing forward a Bill that is precedent setting in the Province of Manitoba. Never before by Interim Supply has 95 percent of the requirements of expenditure of the province been sought through the legislative Interim Supply forum.

That is quite correct—the second time they had to do it—but I believe that they should look at the reasons why. Why? It all comes down to management. They are managing the affairs in this House in the same way that they are managing the affairs of this province, the same way they are managing this economy.

If this Government had been on the ball, so to speak, from the beginning, if they had their affairs in order last spring and called the House into Session during the normal fiscal cycle, they would not be in this predicament.

They often berate the Opposition for holding up Bills, but what do they do? They call Bills when they feel like it, the Bills they want. They are upset because some of their Bills are not being passed quickly. I ask, how many Private Members' Bills have they allowed through? You look at the Order Paper and virtually every Private Members' Bill is being stood by a Government Member, virtually all of them.

I would say that all of them are -(interjection)- The Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond) says now we are catching on. Maybe they are the ones that need to catch on. They seem to think that their Bills are important and Private Members' Bills are not. Nothing could be further from the truth. They have a very high opinion of themselves, but they have a very poor memory. They seem to forget, and we will remind them these next couple of days, that they are in a minority situation, that we need co-operation. Their own Leader -(interjection)- the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says let us fix that right now. His Leader (Mr. Filmon) has the power, to screw up his courage, to call it. If he is willing, we are willing, Mr. Speaker. The Minister says, yes, sure, but it is only rhetoric, nothing is happening.

I know it is frustrating for them to be in a minority situation. The Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz) is making comments. I mean, the number they have done on him, I would be very quiet. I would never take what the Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) did to him if I were in his position.

To get back to the Minister of Finance's (Mr. Manness) Bill. What were his comments? He made sure to finish up on his comments first of all. I know that he is very frustrated being in a minority position, because I think he would like to have their true agenda out on the table.-(interjection)- The Minister of Finance says it is better than sitting over there. Maybe yes, maybe no, but the position they are in right now, I do not think

it really matters. He will find out that when their coalition partners decide to pull the plug on them, if ever, which is very doubtful, or else whether they screw up their own courage to—I am sorry, Mr. Speaker, is that an unparliamentary term?

What I am trying to say, I do not know what the proper word is, but if they have the courage to go into an election, I think they would be very surprised. Yes, we would have a majority Government, but I think a few of them, those that would remain, would be back on this side of the House. There is only one way to find out, is there not? I have no concerns.-(interjection)- The Minister from Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) says that I would not be here at all.

I would much rather be running as a Liberal in La Verendrye than a Conservative in Charleswood, I will tell you that much right now. I must admit that he is one of possibly two urban Conservatives who may place a respectable second. Most of the other ones would be lucky to run third if there is no independent candidate, in the city I am talking about. This brings us back to the reason why we are on this Interim Supply Bill, for the simple reason that, as has been proven over the last 12 to 18 months, some months they were the beneficiaries of a bit of a windfall from the very budget which they attacked, the 1987 Kostyra budget.

* (1620)

Again today, we heard earlier on in the day a few heckles about Autopac increases from the previous Government. What have they done? They have increased it twice so far, minimal increases granted, but after the current Minister responsible for MPIC (Mr. Cummings) blasted the previous Governments for their increases, he has done nothing at all to even attempt to put a cap on any increases. He has allowed it to increase.-(interjection)- The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says that is political interference. That is what the Minister responsible for MPIC was demanding prior, when he was the critic responsible for MPIC.

It all brings us back to this Bill No. 90. Virtually what is happening here, if this Bill is passed it gives the Government the whole spending authority that it requires to carry on. In his opening comments, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says, and I am quoting again: Bill 90 is required to provide additional interim spending and commitment authority to ensure the continued operation of Government.

He likes to make statements saying about which side of the House he is on, but the fact remains that without one of the other two Parties here very often—co-operation, in this case you need co-operation from all three—they could not operate.

If it was only for the sake of this Government, I do not think this Bill would pass very expeditiously, but there are the requirements of many other people out there who could be hurt if this Bill were not passed. That is why the Opposition—when I say the Opposition, I am sure I am including the other the Opposition Party—will see to it that this Bill is passed.

However, this may not be the case with all the Government's Bills. We are up to 91 Bills as of last

Friday which have been introduced to date, or possibly 92 by now, I am not sure. There are several Bills to be dealt with, many Bills that we wish to deal with, but as I was saying earlier in my comments, there are also some Private Members' Bills which need to be dealt with. If it requires leave of the House that they not only be dealt with on Tuesdays and Thursdays during Private Members' Hour, then let us make those changes. It cannot be all one way, given their current situation.

I would like to point out too, Mr. Speaker, specifically the mess they have made out of Bill No. 79, The Municipal Assessment and Consequential Amendments Act. It is unbelievable. Here they accuse the Opposition of holding back on this Bill when they themselves only introduced in mid-November.

That Bill, Mr. Speaker, is a major piece of legislation. It is a Bill of such importance, which has implications throughout the whole province, that it requires very intense scrutiny not only by Members of the Legislature but I would say by members of the general public. As we have seen in the last couple of days of committee hearings, the presentations which by and large have been very good ones, even the ones which support this particular Bill, are pointing out flaws in it, which just goes to show that, had this Bill been introduced like it should have last June and enabled people to come to committee during the summer, it would have been far better.

There are many people right now at this point who would like to come, but because of the time of the year, because of the season we are in, due to personal commitments, due to family commitments are unable to come before the committee. Yet this Minister, this Government, wants the Bill rushed before we break for the Christmas season.

Mr. Speaker, I use that as an example. There are several other Bills on the Order Paper which have been introduced in the last month, month and a half, maybe even two months. These seem to be Bills, especially the most recently introduced ones, which the Government wants passed ASAP, no questions asked almost. I think that is not a very good way to manage affairs, not a very good way to introduce legislation when you are in a majority situation, never mind a minority situation. I think they should keep that in mind when Bills are introduced.

Mr. Speaker, because of the mismanagement of this Government and I must say to be quite fair - (interjection)- Well, we hear the soon to be former Member for Portage speaking from his seat there. I am not too sure what he is saying. It is of little consequence anyway. As he always says, being in Cabinet is not a demotion. His famous quote that was in the Free Press.

Anyway to be quite fair not every Member on that side could be accused of mismanagement. I notice, for example, to give credit where credit is due, that when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is in the House, the affairs of the House seem to move along a lot better, but I think that whatever the reasons may be the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) is not doing his job. That is the problem.

Consultation, co-operation, is essential in a majority situation. It is crucial in a minority situation. It is my firm belief that if the Government House Leader were to not only consult or inform but indeed co-operate with the Opposition, possibly a lot of this could be avoided. Maybe we would need not be sitting right now. Maybe the Estimates process could have been over by now.

Mr. Speaker, at this point in time we have passed the Department of Agriculture, Rural Development, Urban Affairs, the Seniors Directorate, Co-operative Consumer and Corporate Affairs, and the Environment, plus Highways, Health, and Housing. There are several, several departments that have to be dealt with. We are close to 60-odd hours left of Estimates time and we have major departments such as Education, Justice, Family Services, to mention but a few which need to be dealt with. There just is not sufficient time.

Part of the problem again lies with the arrogance of certain Ministers in not answering questions. They seem to forget that when we are in Estimates it is not Question Period, that they have or should be able to give specific answers, should be able to—unless their intention is just to burn off committee time, so we can clear this vote. Maybe they are the ones who are actually wasting the time and then are trying to pin the blame on the Opposition. Maybe they are trying to do that, maybe they are trying to repeat that point daily to the media and try and blame the Opposition, when they in fact are the ones refusing to co-operate.

Mr. Speaker, it seems to me that if there was a sincere desire of this minority Government to get certain Bills passed they would be willing to speak with Opposition Members and say, here are our priorities, here is what we think should be passed, here is what we think should be done. What can we do to help facilitate this, to help expedite these Bills?

We could have some informal discussions. We will say, well, we have certain priorities on your Bills, we have certain priorities on our Bills, here is what we would like to do. This is not unusual in a majority situation. You would think it would be par for the course in a minority situation. Because let us face it, the reality is, as Members opposite have often pointed out, it takes two out of three Parties to get anything passed in this House.- (interjection)- As one of my colleagues says, I do not think that all of them realize that. I think that they start being full of themselves at times.

Mr. Speaker, it is indeed ironic that we will be reaching the fiscal year end, and we will be going through the motion of concurrence which in essence will be a motion brought to concur in the Estimates process which will be, no doubt, dealt with early in the new year before the end of January assuming all things being normal but yet, the most ironic thing about all this will be the fact that most, if not all, of this money will already have been spent. What they will have done is, at least in certain areas, allow the Opposition to question the various Ministers, to question the various staff members through the Minister of those departments which were able to make it within the 240 hours of committee time. Fortunately, and I realize as it has been said by Members that the other departments, the other Ministers, can be questioned during the concurrence motion.

* (1630)

The unfortunate part about this is at that time staff cannot be here, that is the unfortunate part.—(applause)—I certainly thank the Government Members for their applause, and I am glad you appreciate the speech. I think some of them even agree with me, but then some are more reasonable than others.

Mr. Speaker, now that the Government has, in the province, in the Legislature—and let us face it, this Legislature is the nerve centre for the whole province—and to this mess it is incumbent upon them to work with the Opposition to see what can be done to unravel it.

There are two ways. They can go for the gold by having their Premier (Mr. Filmon) see the Lieutenant-Governor, and somebody is going to get a majority, not necessarily them, or maybe they will be back in the same situation, or else if they decide they want to stay in power a little longer they can co-operate with the Opposition hopefully within two years to get the whole system back onto the regular cycle.

The normal time being, going into Session—I realize it cannot happen in 1990 because of their own mismanagement. Normal cycle would be that we go into Session mid to late February, throne speech, budget and by June, mid-June, late June, sometimes early July, a minority situation might go to late July, who knows, but we would have the Estimates process, most of the Bills that were so desired by both sides dealt with, and we would be back in a regular cycle.

Here we are dealing with the budget, which ends at the end of March, in 1990, and it is not passed. It has been passed in principle, but we still have to concur with the main motion, the actual Estimates. When and if that does happen, when we get to that point, in fact the money will have been spent. I realize that by statute it has to be done, but it is a most ridiculous situation, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the number of Bills here, which have to be dealt with, some have been dealt with already but it has just been an inordinately slow process. I realize that after a while Members get tired of sitting here, I think we all do.

The fact remains as I said earlier that had they been willing to at least approach us, to talk to us on some matters—and maybe I will refer again back to Bill No. 79, and when we were doing the Estimates of Rural Development, I asked the Minister what was happening in certain areas of assessment, and he constantly refused to give me any answer.

In Question Period again some questions were posed along those lines, and the Minister refused to give me some answers. The relevancy to all this, this Bill, is the fact that the Ministers in the various areas, and various departments have not been co-operating with the department, have not been giving the answers to the question. I asked the Minister about the whole assessment thing and he was mum. At one point in the Estimates he got up and asked the chairman, are we in the right section, because he did not want to talk about it anymore.

All of a sudden in mid-November he introduces Bill No. 79 and he expects everyone in the Opposition to willy-nilly do what he wants right away. The fact remains that even the people who support this Bill—for example, last night we had Mr. Manson Moir, President of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities state that, yes, he would like to see it passed as soon as possible, but no, there was no need to rush it, no need he says. If there are areas, which need to be seriously scrutinized, he said it can wait. The same with school board officials, they are not sure what is being passed.

Mr. Speaker, as for the debate on Bill 79—but it is an example of the non-co-operation which has existed since almost the beginning of this Session between Ministers and Opposition Critics. I think the Government House Leader likes to often state that we have consulted. No, that is not consultation when you come up to a Member and you say, well here is the Bill we would like to have it passed by such and such a date, what can you do to facilitate this?

Well, first of all we have to look at it. We do not have the resources, as individual Members, that the Government departments have. We have to rely on our own resources, a research staff of five people which has to work for 21 Members. We have to do a lot of work on our own with volunteers out in the community.

Mr. Speaker, it is very unreasonable for a Government to present any kind of Bill, whether it has been prepared for the last year and a half, or whether it has been in the works for the last 10 years, all of a sudden introduce it and say, well can you pass this next week—most unreasonable.—(interjection)—

The Member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) agrees and I am glad, because a lot of his constituents agree too—oh, no, he shakes his head no, he did not agree, and says I am sorry—well now he says maybe—no, there was no maybe, he does not agree, he says it should be passed without public scrutiny, okay whatever he wants.

As I said earlier, Bill 90—I think we can give the Minister assurance that we will be passing it, because there are certainly very significant expenditures that a Government has, or commitments, to expend money on that need to be done. We cannot expect that the people of Manitoba, all of them anyway, to continue to suffer financially any more than they are now because of this Government's mismanagement. Therefore, I believe we have to deal with this forthwith so that the Government can meet its necessary expenditures.

Hopefully, as the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) said in his opening remarks when he introduced this Bill, that it was precedent setting, hopefully we do not have to see The Interim Appropriation Act (3) coming up in the near future. Hopefully we never have to see this again. Interim appropriation is par for the course, but to have a second one is certainly unusual.

An Honourable Member: If you keep filibustering, I will have to bring a third one in.

Mr. Roch: Well, the Minister of Finance said if we keep filibustering—the point is if they would co-operate, if you keep on not co-operating, yes, you might have to

bring in (3). You are the Government. The ball is in your court. It is up to you to provide the initiative and leadership rather than just saying, here it is our way or no way.

An Honourable Member: If you all take 40 minutes on every Bill—

Mr. Roch: The Minister of Finance says we should not take advantage of the democratic process which allows each Member 40 minutes to speak on the Bill. He says we should not exercise the rights that we have as Members of the Legislature to speak for the allowed time. If the Minister is saying 40 minutes is too long for Members to speak, or not all Members should be allowed that same privilege, then it is up to him to bring it up with the Rules Committee.- (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker, I realize it can be frustrating at times, but he should be thankful there are not 157 Members, and only 57. He knows full well that not every single Member in this House does exercise that right to speak for 40 minutes on each and every Bill. He knows full well that several Bills do get passed -(interjection)- well, the dirty dozen, they do what they want, but that is their business.

If there is a Bill that we have been consulted with, co-operation has been demanded, it has been given, they are open to some amendments, we have expedited items—but then again it is a two-way street. If they start behaving arrogantly we have no choice but to express our concerns. We have no choice, indeed we have a duty to take advantage of our democratic rights as elected Members to put whatever concerns we have on the record, to see to it that, yes, Bills get to committee.

More than that, Mr. Speaker, we also have a duty, not only Opposition Members, but Government Members, too, to make sure that the public has every opportunity to be heard on any given Bill, any given matter in this House. If that means this Legislature must operate for that much longer so be it. I mean, there are Legislatures elsewhere in this country, and indeed elsewhere in the world who are in Session virtually year round. Others go a little slower, they have different systems.

* (1640)

The fact is that the business of Government has become a more complex one and has become a more involved one. There are so many segments of society, which are regulated, I would venture to say that there are too many, and that possibly we have to unravel a little bit of the mess.

In the meantime you have to deal with current realities, and current realities are obvious. There are a lot of items, which Governments must deal with. In a minority situation the Government will need the co-operation of one or both Opposition Parties to facilitate the workings of Government. This will happen if they just learn two things: No. 1, you need co-operation; No. 2, they are in a minority situation.

Mr. Speaker, this is why this unprecedented Interim Appropriation Act, 1989(2) has been introduced

because precisely there has not been that co-operation. There has not been that understanding that they need the Opposition to pass their Bills. Now they have to come "cap in hand" and ask that we allow them to spend the money they require.

Having put those comments on record, and I know that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has been listening intently and hopefully—I may be wrong but I do not think I would be—in the near future in order to facilitate matters in this House the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) would appoint him as the Government House leader. That may be an improvement. We have seen a new Member appointed as Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), there was an improvement there. We have seen various other changes. We have seen an improvement in Natural Resources. Sometimes there is such a thing as a Peter Principle, you know a person is promoted to his level of incompetency.- (interjection)-

You know, I hear some comments from the Member for Virten, The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), and I do not think anyone questions his competence in Agriculture. As a matter of fact, I think he has respect from all sides of the House as to his knowledge and expertise in Agriculture. When it comes to being responsible for telephones, well, that is another matter, we will save that for another day.

I think that the Public Utilities Board has heard from many people who have concerns about the way this Minister has handled, or not bothered to handle, the Manitoba Telephone corporation. Possibly that is one area where someone else should be. I am not denigrating him necessarily for that, but there are some areas where if you do not have the expertise, you probably should not be in. Agriculture is his forte and he is doing a good job there by and large. I think that possibly he should stick with what he knows best.

In any case, Mr. Speaker, having put those comments on record and knowing full well that they will be reviewed by several of the Members opposite and they will take him into consideration, we are prepared to pass Bill 90, in principle. Hopefully with co-operation in the future we will not see the need again for the Government to come with Interim Appropriation on more than one occasion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupertsland): I would like to speak on this Bill 90, The Interim Appropriation Act. I would like to address the concerns of my constituents, and also how the administration of funds will be affecting my people.

Certainly with the programs that have been initiated by this Government and also the cutbacks that have been—or the GST respecting the federal Government will hurt northern Manitobans and will hit hard many of the northern communities, many of the reserves in the North. I want to address it from how the funding, the Estimates of this Government, has affected many of my communities and the situation in terms of job creation, in terms of employment, or unemployment.

Unemployment in many of the communities as high as well over 90 percent in those communities and many of the job-creation programs that we had in place have

been cut back, and many of the companies are not providing any kind of employment for their members. Certainly it affects the individuals, the families, from maintaining any kind of standard of living in the North.

The standard of living in the North is quite high as the freight costs are very substantially high in the North. When I look at the goods and services tax, how this might affect the communities, it is going to be tremendously high and will have a tremendous burden on many of the individuals and the communities in the North.

(Mr. Parker Burrell, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Just to give you an example, I recently purchased a two-litre milk, 2 percent, in my community in Red Sucker Lake, and the cost of that two-litre milk was \$4.19. That is substantially higher than what you pay in the city, double or three times as high, and just one example. Certainly many of the items that are going to be purchased or used by the consumers in those communities will be high.

The imposition by the federal Government of the GST will certainly have a tremendous impact, although they say that some of the goods would not be subject to taxation, like foods, but certainly those people who provide the transportation of goods into those communities will be taxed. Certainly they are not going to pass on any kind of savings to the consumers. This will have a tremendous impact in many of the communities that I represent.

One area that this provincial Government should be looking at is an area of taxation in respect to the Indian reserves. Certainly the Indian bands do have an option where their property or their income on a reserve is not taxable. This may be one area that needs to be looked at, so it may benefit many of the reserves, particularly the reserves in the northern communities where a GST maybe not be applied.

I know that in certain instances sales tax is not applied if the store or if the institution is located on a reserve. Certainly that could be taken advantage of. We do not know what kind of an impact the manufacturer tax had on the reserves previously. I know that it has been taken off, 13 percent, whether they actually benefitted from the special dispensation of tax because they are tax exempt as legislated under the Indian Act.

I had asked the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) as to what kind of studies or what kind of impact it may have, whether there is actually any kind of study being done or being assessed in those circumstances regarding exemptions for Indian people living on reserves and property owned by the Indian people. Certainly there needs to be a lot of work done in that area.

I know that the technical paper that was introduced by the federal Finance Minister, Michael Wilson, indicates that there was not much work done and that there needed to be a study done or analysis done on how the Indian people, especially the people living on reserves, will be affected. We certainly look forward to having more information when the Minister of Finance and the federal Government, particularly the federal

Minister of Finance and also the Minister of Indian Affairs.

Also, I know that this present Government under the auspices of the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) who is responsible for the Native Secretariat, one of the things looked at under the Native Secretariat was the whole issue of taxation that they are discussing with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. I do not know how it has been done or how far they have progressed on the whole issue of taxation.

* (1650)

I know that when we were in Government we were able to address some of those issues and particularly the sale of gas on reserves where we were able to have the bands not pay the sales tax or the tax on the gas. That went a long way to help many of the northern communities especially the remote communities in the North where everything is tremendously high.

The price of gasoline in some communities, like my community in Red Sucker Lake, was about \$5 a gallon. Certainly with this we were able to knock off maybe about 8 cents off the litre at that time because gasoline is a commodity that is essential, that is needed in the community, because you use it for your transportation, your snowmobile, your chain saw, to be able to trap and fish, to be able to haul wood, and as fuel for the community, so it is very essential. It went a long way at least to be able to lower the gasoline tax.

There are many other issues that I would like to address with this Government, in terms of how they are handling the whole development in the North. As you know they have announced the Conawapa hydro sales, and they will be announcing the beginning of construction in the near future, and also in respect to other forestry development in regard to Repap and what is happening in the mining area. Some of those are major resource development areas that this Government has been addressing.

Part of the whole development in the North has to be addressed by the Native people. They have been excluded from participating or having a say as to development that is taking place in their own backyards. One example I can talk about is the hydro development. There has been hydro development that has been taking place over a number of years in northern Manitoba, and it has been the Indian people who have not been benefitting from the hydro development. As a matter of fact it has destroyed their traditional lifestyle and actually destroyed their fishing, their hunting, their trapping areas, and also even the recreation areas that they were able to enjoy in many of the communities.

The reason why I say that is we are producing this hydro power, the benefit of the southern people, and also exporting it to the United States. Practically, these transmission lines run over many of the communities. We have been negotiating with the federal Government, when I was sitting on that side, trying to get a hydro line from Kelsey into the northeast part of Manitoba where there is no transmission line going to those communities.

We are being serviced presently by a diesel hydro generator, which has a limited capacity. We are only

able to have 15 amp. service to each house and it is not conducive to any kind of economic development, or able to have any kind of full electrical power that will provide a good standard of living in the North.

I know that this issue has been going on for many years. When I was chief of the Red Sucker Lake Band, we had been trying to convince the Governments to bring hydro lines into those communities. I believe this Government has reached an agreement with the federal Government. I know that when we were in Government we did indicate that we were proceeding to agree to pursue that with Manitoba Hydro and as a province. The only part was to get the federal Government to come in and to cost-share in the development of the hydro line.

At that time I believe the cost would have been about \$40 million or \$50 million to service the six communities in my area. I believe, because of inflation, the costs would probably be higher now. I hope this line will be coming into our area in the near future.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Now in respect to just talking about my area, I hope that many of the people will take the opportunity to take part in the construction and training and the educational opportunities that are required in the building of that line.

Also, I did mention earlier about this Government signing an agreement with Ontario where they will make a sale of about \$13 billion that they will be selling to Ontario. Conawapa itself, the construction of that project, will cost about \$5.4 billion to construct. I know we had criticism from this present Government when they were in Opposition in regard to Limestone, how we were able to proceed in constructing out at Limestone. Certainly one of the key objectives of building Limestone was to get the aboriginal people, the Native people in the North involved in the construction.

We were able to set up the Limestone Training Agency in which many of the northern residents took part in the training and also took jobs on site. Certainly many of the communities took advantage of that. We were able to have community-based training programs. We were able to have simulation training programs and also institutional programs which are, I believe, still ongoing in some institutions. One example that I can remember is the engineering program that is presently going at the University of Manitoba. We are looking forward to this Government in the construction of hydro as to what policies will be taken in respect to getting the Native people involved.

I know that the opportunity to improve the Nelson-Burntwood collective agreement is gone. They have already signed the agreement without improving it. When we initially started we did not really have any kind of experience how to get the people involved, particularly our people, the Native people involved, in the construction of hydro but we were able to change the Nelson-Burntwood collective agreement from just a northern preference clause. We actually changed the word to say that the first preference would go to northern qualified Native people.

By changing that wording we were able to continue with the policy of providing training and upgrading and job training so that people who eventually go on site would have the ability, the experience and also the training required to work on site on Limestone. I hope this Government will carry on the activities that were carried out by the Limestone Training Agency.

We were able to secure with the federal Government a training fund in the neighbourhood of \$30 million for the Limestone Training Agency and this present Government has to indicate as to where they are going to go with the Conawapa, how the Native people are going to get involved in the construction of the hydro dam and also, I believe, the construction of the transmission line, the Bipole 3 line that will be coming on the east side of Lake Winnipeg. That is another tremendous task that would have to be undertaken by the Government—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) will have 24 minutes remaining.

COMMITTEE CHANGE

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a change to the committee for tonight. I move, seconded by the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs be amended as follows: Burrell for Helwer.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? (Agreed)

* (1700)

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., it is time for Private Members' Business.

ORDERS FOR RETURN, ADDRESSES FOR PAPERS REFERRED FOR DEBATE

Mr. Speaker: Orders for Return, Addresses for Papers referred for debate, on the motion of the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan), standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme). Stand.

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Agreed.

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker I have been meaning to and wanting to have an opportunity to speak to this Order for Return. It is one that has, I think understandably, had my interest and attention as Minister of Natural Resources. We have a very long history of having worked in co-operation with its initial establishment as a rocket range, having provided at the time the required Crown lands for that same purpose.

Mr. Speaker, I have, since coming back into Cabinet, probably had this issue brought to my attention more

often by my colleague the Minister for Tourism, Industry and Trade (Mr. Ernst) more frequently than any other issue. This is an issue that he takes very seriously, and I happen to be privy to the efforts that he has been carrying out on behalf of ensuring that not any stone be left unturned, page in the book not turned, to examine every possible additional and indeed expanded use of this facility.

Mr. Speaker, I am more than pleased to co-operate with my sister department earlier on when the request was made that an extension be provided to ensure that no dismantling would take place on the site. There was no difficulty concurring with that suggestion that was made to me by my colleague, and that in fact was done.

An Honourable Member: You stopped it.

Mr. Enns: We stopped it dead in its tracks, as the Minister says. Mr. Speaker, it is this kind of one-two act on the part of you know Ministers of this department of this Government that often can bring about effective you know resolutions to a problem.

Mr. Speaker, we have a vision for this site. There might have been you know understandably I think in the minds of some, that although the military aspect of some of the original testing that was carried out on behalf of clients, whether they be Bristol or others, are lessening in the world today, and I say, thank God to that. I think we all say, thank God to that. We do not for a moment lose any sleep over the fact that it is not missiles for destructive purposes that need to be tested or hold out the use of that range for these purposes.

Mr. Speaker, far more important is the entire area of research that will in fact loom larger and larger in the development of high space and technological industries and goodness knows what kind of pieces of equipment. To be ideally situated as we are, the only rocket range in Canada, far removed in the main from built-up residential areas, populations, and that is not to suggest for a moment that we do not value and do not hold in the highest esteem the population that we have in the community of Churchill. They themselves will be the first, in fact they have petitioned Governments, recognizing as they do, the need and the importance of any kind of activity, particularly this kind of activity, activity that in the main would attract high tech, well paid jobs.

You know, Mr. Speaker, in a way that is very important to Northerners. It brings a bit of focus to that community, and the community of Churchill needs that kind of attention from the rest of us, certainly from the rest of us here in the province of Manitoba, and I say, and I know that my colleague, the Minister of Trade and Industry, goes along with me in saying this and trying to make this an issue at the federal level with Ottawa, that we take advantage of what is there now and indeed build on it.

Mr. Speaker, there are any number of future potential uses for that site. I am pleased that we have at least—and we have indicated that and support that in documentation—resisted any attempt that has been directed to us by the federal Government to dismantle or to walk away from the site.

We have in fact done just the reverse. I only wish, and concur with the actions taken by my colleague, the Minister of Industry and Trade (Mr. Ernst), that given a bit of time, given a bit of opportunity to develop this, the facility will indeed become the world class research station—research into new technology, research into space, research that could tell us more about our environment, could tell us more about the ozone layer, Mr. Speaker, research that indeed reaches to the stars and to the very heavens and beyond.

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): This Address for Papers is something that I take to heart, having a familiarity with the area of Churchill, having visited many times in the course of my work.

An Honourable Member: Why do they call you Captain Chaos?

Mr. Taylor: I would suggest that the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) refrain from making his denigrating remarks, and then we can keep on with the business of this House.

The importance of the rocket range in Churchill goes without saying. It has been a centre of research and Canadian expertise in space ventures going back some 30 odd years now. It was at one time an offshoot of the large, very large, in fact, military establishment in Churchill. That establishment is non-existent today and the rocket range, which is located along the shores of Hudson Bay some 15 miles to the east of the townsite, is largely intact.

Although the federal Tories have attempted to not only close the base down, which they did for a period of time, but to actually dismantle and sell off parts of this facility, there seems to be some saner minds prevailing at the moment, however. A review of the matter, as to what should be done with the base, is highly appropriate. The research that has been carried on at this facility has been one largely dealing with the upper atmosphere. Being a northern country this is particularly important to Canada, because the impact on weather patterns by changes to the upper atmosphere are rather profound, and Canada has developed over a time a leadership in this area of upper atmosphere research.

* (1710)

In fact, the Canadian focus of this research, to a large extent, has been through the development and launchings of the series of Black Brant Rockets. Black Brant Rockets, by the way, are a series of some ten different models of smaller size research rockets which were developed by Bristol Aerospace here in this city. The Black Brant is a rocket which is a very affordable rocket in many institutions such as universities, think tanks, corporations, et cetera, which can afford to purchase rockets of this nature and afford to launch them from a facility like Churchill.

We are not talking here the sort of rocket that we have all seen in the newscast blasting off from Cape Canaveral, under the auspices of NASA, or those launched by the European Space Agency. We are talking

here a smaller series of research rockets which are very, very affordable and carry out some very important research undertakings.

The Black Brant is a solid fuel rocket, which again not only makes for affordability, but makes for safety as well, Mr. Speaker. We have a propellant plant adjacent to Stony Mountain, where the fuel is produced for use in the Black Brant series of rockets. That plant is located where it is, in a spot of isolation, quite deliberately, because there always could be some risk of explosion in the manufacturing process. The fuel once produced and in solid form is one of the safest rocket fuels available, a far cry from liquid oxygen, helium or hydrogen, which of course was the fuel that was current in the earlier rockets. Of course, we are well aware of the numerous disastrous explosions that we had in the early days of rocketry.

We have today, of the series of Black Brant rockets that were developed, of the 10—I believe five of those rockets are still in production and available, the problem being Canada does not have a regular launch site, not unless this facility is in service. The facility is in the right location, it is far enough north. It is away from population centres, it is away from pollution which would be a problem in optic equipment tracking the rockets, and it is away from significant ground and air traffic.

The access to the site by road just east of the airport is quite satisfactory, in the condition the road is today, and there is, of course, good air access into Churchill airport. Unfortunately, the flights over the last couple of years are not on the same frequency of service that they once were, but at least we have regular scheduled service into that airport for scientists, for observers of this work to get into the Churchill area to conduct the work.

The site does need some minor upgrading, and I think that has to be an accepted fact of the matter. Some small costs will have to go in. After all, we are talking of a facility that was developed some three decades back and with only some upgrading since that time.

The need for activity in the Churchill area is, to say the least, critical. We have seen a town, and adjacent area, of a population at one time of approximately 4,500 people. Those were the days when there was a lot more shipping in Churchill, when the military activity, both naval and air, was very significant.

The support services industries' employees required was what fleshed out the numbers of population at that time. What we have today, unfortunately, is a population—by the latest statistics I have—some people say it is around 1,200. The number I have is around 800. It is a far cry from what we did have not so very long ago. We have really seen that change over the last 10 to 20 years.

Almost all of the military buildings in Churchill and Fort Churchill, which is the airport site, are gone. There are a few remaining ones on the airport site itself, but not a lot. We still have the nose hangars from the US air force days and a couple of the warehousing buildings. We also have a large hangar dating back to

wartime days that has been refurbished by Transport Canada, and serves as both a hangar and as the present terminal building. That facility, however, is likely to be decommissioned as soon as a new terminal is built, whenever that might happen.

We are still waiting for the federal Tories to come forward with the necessary monies to implement the construction of a terminal that has been in the planning for some, I think, eight or nine years now. The building has been planned, it has been sited. The preliminary work has been done, but there is no funding yet. But when that funding does finally come from the federal Conservatives, then I see we will lose the hangar that is the only facility there for large aircraft.

The requirement to continue scientific activity, and for the creation of further jobs in the Churchill area is an absolute must. This Address for Papers is something that should come forward and be answered as soon as possible. We see, with this issue, the fact that the Government has said some of the right things. It has addressed its concern, but we have yet to see any action either on its own or in concert with federal and local authorities. There have been visits up to the Churchill area by Government Ministers of this administration along with support staff, but in all the visits that have been there and all the discussions with the local authorities, and the managers of other Government agencies, and businesses in the area, and the railroad, et cetera, nothing concrete has come to date. I think that is unfortunate, and if I were a resident of Churchill, I would be more than a little concerned about the lack of action.

The activity one sees is the planes coming in and out with the Ministers and the officials and the support staff, but where is the resolution, where is the action? It ain't there. As I have been wont to say before, this Government is a good candidate for NATO, that is No Action, Talk Only, and it is sad that the people for Churchill are still waiting.

An Honourable Member: Harold, do you ever look in the mirror? When you were in City Council, you never did anything.

Mr. Taylor: Well, the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) from his seat says, do you ever look in a mirror? When you were at City Council, Harold, you never did anything. Well, I do not have to make any apologies for my track record because it is what got me re-elected, and re-elected very solidly. On the issues that I took on at City Hall, I was noted for the leadership that I offered and that is why I am called upon to address groups all over the city and in fact on some issues all over the country. So I am quite proud of my track record at City Hall.

I am not sure what the Member for Portage (Mr. Connery) is so proud of in his community record in his home town with the problems that we have there with sewage and garbage dumps and industry moving out and military bases closing. I think the Member for Portage would do well to look in that mirror and say to himself in the morning, well, I have not done that much yet, but I guess I better get moving on it.

Back to the matter of the necessary information required on the Churchill Rocket Range. The potential to reactivate this site, to get it back to where it was in its heyday where scientists from all over the continent, in fact all over the world, were coming to aid in the launching of these rockets with varying payloads on board of research equipment and monitoring equipment for all sorts of high level atmospheric studies, was one I found quite heartening. Scientific endeavour in this country has never had the importance that it should have had.

We have had this present administration in Ottawa removing the scientific tax credit from the Income Tax Act, which, as far as I am concerned, was certainly a retrograde step. We had all the hoopla in the 1984 federal campaign about how important science was going to be in Canada under the Conservatives. Well, Mr. Speaker, that has become a very, very poor and a very sad joke because scientific undertaking in Canada has become one of less and less activity, whether it is in the private sector, whether it is in the institutional context, or whether it is in the Government sector itself. It has all diminished.

In fact, what has happened is that under the Mulroney administration we are just getting more and more of the branch plant mentality, and more and more of the branch plant activity. This means that when it comes to scientific initiation, innovation and investigation, there is less of it. It is all at the parent plant, it is not in the branch plant location. That sort of thinking in the federal administration has led to more of that.

So the importance of this scientific facility to be retained is most important, and I look forward to initiations out of this Government. If they are not forthcoming, then they will come out of the official Opposition because that is all too often in matters like this where the leadership has been over this last year and a half. We will offer our solutions to Churchill in the hope that we will see that rocket base reactivated and doing what it should be doing, and providing necessary jobs and security to the community of Churchill. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme).

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), Address for Papers, standing in the name of the Honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner). Stand.

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Agreed. The Honourable Minister of Finance.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I rise to put some matters of fact on the record with respect to the goods and services tax and the debate at hand. I guess I am going to blink again. I was accused the other day by the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) of blinking on the goods and services tax. I am going to blink for the second

time on that issue over the next few minutes, as I try to address certain aspects of, and some of the misrepresentation that has occurred with respect to the goods and services tax and the role of the Government, indeed the role of the Minister of Finance with respect to it.

Mr. Speaker, what is patently obvious to everybody is that the Liberal Party in particular is in a position of sheer desperation. One only has to reflect on Question Period in this House to understand really the significance of their plight. How many provincial issues are asked by way of questions in this House? Now there are some questions directed towards the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) on health issues, some directed to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) on family services issues. That number has of course been diminishing greatly—and I am sure the Minister of Family Services is quite happy about that.

How many pure provincial issues, over the course of the last two months, have filled up the Question Period as coming from the Liberal benches? Mr. Speaker, precious few. But what have we had? We have had federal issues such as drought payment; we have had federal issues such as unemployment insurance changes, something that was unilaterally foisted upon us by the federal Government. We have had VIA cutbacks that we have had to answer and address. We have had base closures that we were somehow made to appear, at least by the Liberal Party, to have been fully responsible for. Churchill and the fact that the Canadian Wheat Board had decided to direct grain shipments through other ports for whatever reasons, indeed we were held responsible for that. Established program funding, equalization—we have been called upon to explain all of those.

The one, of course, that is so highlighted over the last number of weeks is the goods and services tax. Why are the Liberals preoccupied with respect to this federal tax, Mr. Speaker? What is the reason? I am the Minister of Finance. I guess that is known in some parts of the province. I am in charge of, supposedly, the land transfer tax, the corporation capital tax, the gasoline tax, the insurance corporations tax, the payroll tax, the mining tax, the motive fuel tax, the oil and natural gas tax, the retail sales tax, the Revenue Act tax, the tobacco tax, other taxes, so on and so forth.

Mr. Speaker, I am responsible for these areas of taxation that bring in roughly \$1.8 billion. Colleagues, how many questions have been asked with respect to the 14 taxes that I have just listed? Not one question has been directed to me as the Minister of Finance during Question Period with respect to any of the Manitoba taxes that are under my purview. There was one tax that is not provincial in nature, which was not read out in that listing, which I have been asked to answer question after question after question, and which is nowhere recorded within the Budget. It is called the goods and services tax.

Yet the Members opposite of course would make it appear as if it is my tax. Buy why do they do that? Mr. Speaker, of course because this Government has done well within its pure areas of responsibility. We have squandered no money, firstly. We have provided some

tax relief, not a big amount, but some tax relief, \$80 million, in the terms of the problems that we face and the terms of the size of this province. A significant amount of money which of course the Liberal Opposition decided in their wisdom or lack thereof to vote against. So we have done and performed some activities and reached some conclusions and some decisions that I think put us in good favour with the people of Manitoba.

We set up the Fiscal Stabilization Fund. We have not squandered some of the windfall money as the Members across the way like to say—that we were so fortuitous, or fortuitous circumstances caused us to receive. Mr. Speaker, I think we have done some things of which we are quite proud, and Manitobans recognize that there is credible Government in place.

Mr. Speaker, have we turned the corner to prosperity? In all fairness, no, we have not. As I said in the last budget, this budget, as we looked into '90-91, we were still looking at a deficit of \$300 million. So we have not misled Members opposite. We have not misled Manitobans. There is still lots of work to do.

Yet, Mr. Speaker, everywhere we go Manitobans realize there is a Government in place that is trying to deal in a responsible way with the problems that face us. So why are we criticized? Well, the population statistics—yes, the population of Manitoba is not growing as quickly as maybe we all would like. But as the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has pointed out, 26 out of 28 years we have not had a rapid expansion of the population.

Yet I know, particularly the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) has made his history in this House reciting population statistics. He came into Government straight out of the university, having some knowledge of this area, and of course that is the area he likes to cultivate all the time.

Mr. Speaker, while there have been some bankruptcies in the Province of Manitoba, we acknowledge that, but yet the Minister of Industry and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) told me the other day, and I am sure he will be wanting to make high note of this in due course, that although there have been 100 or 150 or 200 businesses that, unfortunately, have not been able to succeed, there have literally been thousands of new business registrations in this province over the past year. The entrepreneurial spirit still lives here and people want to try and profit in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the Members opposite provide some criticism and yet, let me say, we have done our best. In the minds of many Manitobans we have done well. So out of desperation, because the Liberals have not been able to make their point with respect to bankruptcies and to shifting populations and the fact that we are not governing well, they turned to something called the goods and services tax. I can understand that. It is easy in Opposition to try and make all Manitobans believe that we are responsible, but there are some myths that they are perpetuating that I have great difficulty with. I want to address them for a few minutes.

First of all, they say over and over again, because they believe the axiom that if you say it long enough

people will believe it. They say that we support the goods and services tax. Mr. Speaker, I have shown the Members opposite exactly what we have put on the record in front of Blenkarn's committee when he came to Manitoba. Secondly, to the federal Minister of Finance officially, indeed, what the Premier has said at the First Ministers' Conference. We do not accept it.

They say we now support the 7 percent solution. Well, Mr. Speaker, nothing is further from the truth. We said that if a bad tax was going to be made a little bit better than it is when it was 9 percent, obviously 7 percent is better than 9, but in saying that, for the Members opposite to say that we now accept it is sheer folly.

They also say that we are working behind the backs of Manitobans to try and embrace the goods and services tax. Mr. Speaker, let me again indicate as I have said on several occasions, that we have done nothing outside of the stated commitment that we are not supportive of the tax. We have, however, as I indicated in Question Period yesterday, if there are ways, any ways, that can make this tax less onerous on our businesses, less costly on our businesses, less of a draw on their net profits, I think it is our responsibility to try and find that solution.

I am not now talking about collecting on behalf of the federal Government, because we certainly have not made that representation. But nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, one can be assured that we have not, behind the backs of Manitobans, been encouraging the federal Government to bring forward the goods and services tax.

* (1730)

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition says that I have been claiming that there will be immediate benefit to the Manitoba economy if the goods and services tax comes in. I have said exactly the opposite. The fact that I reported that the Conference Board of Canada said that in 1995 there is supposed to be some positive effect on the economy—the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) has seen fit to try and make it appear that I have said it will be a benefit to the economy immediately. That not only is untrue but it is unfair. So it begs the question, why all this deliberate attempt, in my view, to build the case that we favour the goods and services tax?

It is obvious to me that the official Opposition, particularly, are desperate. They know they have not put many marks on this Government. They certainly have not put many marks on the management capability of this Government. So, consequently, Mr. Speaker, they are reaching down to sheer desperation, and that is to make to Manitobans appear that it is a tax of the provincial Government, and failing that, it is a tax that the provincial Government somehow embraces.

Let me again state for the record, for the hundredth time, that is not the case. Indeed, the Members opposite, particularly the Liberal Party, will come to realize pretty quickly that there is a differentiation in the minds of Manitobans as between the provincial Conservative Party that is in Government here, and

the federal Government in Ottawa. Mr. Speaker, indeed their polls will prove that, it will prove it to them in spades. So let not Members opposite continue to perpetuate the myth, that somehow the provincial Government of Manitoba is in support of the goods and services tax, because it is false. Thank you.

HOUSE BUSINESS

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, with the leave of the House, I would like to revert just for a moment to motions, if I could, for the purpose of making a motion.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to revert back to Notices of Motion? (Agreed) The Honourable Minister.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Under whatever order of business I happen to come, it is a matter of House business.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that Bill No. 7, The International Sale of Goods Act; Bill No. 76, The Real Estate Brokers Amendment Act (2), be withdrawn from the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations; and Bill No. 33, The Ecological Reserves Amendment Act, be withdrawn from the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources; and that all Bills be transferred to the Standing Committee on Law Amendments.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to transfer Bill No. 7 and Bill No. 76 from Standing Committee on Industrial Relations; and Bill No. 33 be withdrawn from the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources; and that the Bills be transferred to the Standing Committee on Law Amendments. Is there leave to transfer these Bills? Agreed.

It has been moved by the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae), seconded by the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that Bill No. 7, The International Sale of Goods Act, and Bill No. 76, The Real Estate Brokers Amendment Act (2), be withdrawn from the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations; and Bill No. 33, The Ecological Reserves Amendment Act be withdrawn from the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources; and that the Bills be transferred to the Standing Committee on Law Amendments. Agreed.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would like to announce in connection with the motion just passed that the Standing Committee on Law Amendments will sit tomorrow morning, Thursday, 21st of December, at 10 a.m., in Room 254, for the consideration of Bills referred.

Mr. Speaker, if Honourable Members in either of the other Parties have difficulty with committee changes, I would like to be the first to say that I would be satisfied that there be leave that committee changes can be made at the committee by using the appropriate motion at that time.

COMMITTEE CHANGE

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I move, seconded by the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs be amended as follows: Rupertsland (Mr. Harper) for the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski).

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Government House Leader for that clarification.

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), the Honourable Member for Selkirk.

Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, it was just a short—I guess about 19 months ago, that I recall this Government in an election campaign boasting about how they could just pick up the phone and talk to the Prime Minister, and perhaps that was one reason why they should be voted into power, because of this connection they have with the federal Government. Now, less than two years later, they are trying their very best to backpaddle up the stream so they have nothing to do with the federal Government, and all of a sudden the same connection that they boasted about before is now to be denied in great vehemence.

I want to make a simple analogy, because the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) speaks about how he really has no authority over the GST. I think as a mother I can see that quite often in my everyday life, when I have my seven-year-old, for instance, go by something that has been dropped on the floor, and I ask him to pick it up and he turns to me and says, but Mom, I did not put it there. It is true, it may not be his responsibility. It may not be his ownership, but being part of the family and having a direct responsibility for what goes on in that family—therefore, the authority that was handed to him in his position in the household—he should pick it up and do something with it.

I think in the same way the GST is something that is going to be handed into the lap of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) if he is still around when it is put in place. Therefore, it will be under his responsibility, and that will directly affect the citizens of Manitoba.

The Minister denies that he has any responsibility for the GST, and I suppose directly so, just as the item on the floor for my seven-year-old, it is not his direct item, but indirectly the responsibility is within his realm. Manitobans will be affected by the GST, and what affects Manitobans should be in the authority of this Government—to at least have some concern and care about, to be able to predict as well as possible what that effect will be on the economy and on the livelihood of the people of Manitoba, and, therefore, to put in place whatever is required to counteract or support these effects on the citizens of Manitoba.

It is for these reasons and in this belief that we in the Liberal Party have constantly asked this Government

what it plans to do, just as we have asked on free trade, what does it plan to do on the effects of free trade. It is not always that it is going to be totally negative in all respects, but at the same time, there are going to be negative effects that you have to deal with.

* (1740)

We have asked in this House questions on retail sales, and that they keep going down, and outward migration goes on, but the Minister does not want to talk about the negative impacts of his fiscal policies on the Province of Manitoba. He wants to ignore what he has not done, and talk about items that perhaps are progressing in a standard procedure. I guess the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) forgets what the role of Opposition is, and that is not just to stand up and ask the Government questions upon what is going well. It is to represent the peoples of Manitoba in this House in putting forward the opposing viewpoints, and putting forward the alternative options for the Government, and pointing out areas of concerns that Government should be considering.

Then again, I guess I recall that this was the Minister that really did not want to sit in to committee, and is quite willing not to have opposition in this House—this Government that denies the democratic process, and would rather not have Opposition Members in here—because we are a bit of a bother to him, in that he is not given his free hand to govern or dictate in the way that he would wish to go.

I do recall the early hours of the morning after he denied the Opposition the ability to speak and hear about a major sale of our natural resources in the province, denied them the option to find out, before the final agreement was signed, any accountability of what was going on under the provisions to sign that. He did not think that the people of Manitoba, in a minority Government, had any right to know about why one-fifth of their province was going to be sold off to a company, at that time unknown as to what they were going to be doing with the rights to that property.

This is the Minister that really does not care about the political and democratic process, so I guess it is not surprising that he finds it is inconvenient that we ask him about something that will concern Manitobans. It is a very interesting prospect of why he bothered to run in a democratic system. There are many countries in this world without democracy, and perhaps he would feel more comfortable running somewhere where Oppositions were not able to stand up and ask questions, somewhere where federal politics and provincial politics do not intermingle, and perhaps where they could just have a straight dictatorial system where we would not have this bothersome and cumbersome progress of one jurisdiction overlapping the other, and one jurisdiction having to take some control over what is imposed upon them by another jurisdiction. I suppose he would see that in a very sorry sense but I, on the other hand, as have Members of the Liberal Party and I hope the NDP Party, am very supportive of the democratic process.

We tried very hard to stay in the Committee of Economic Development and talk about the Repap sale,

and we offered the Government to come back and sit early in the morning and be able to talk about this proposal and find out what this sale was going to be, not in the hopes of squashing the deal, but in the hopes of making the deal better, in the hopes of making the people of Manitoba aware of the program that was going to be put forward in Repap's situation.—(interjection)—

The Minister is saying it was not a deal. Well, it seems to me there was an awfully large legal paper put together if it was not a deal. I do not know what Repap's sale was all about if it was not a deal. It seems to me that it was a sales program.

I find it astonishing that this Government, and this Minister in particular, finds it inconvenient that we ask him questions on the goods and services tax. The fact that it may cause an economic slowdown of the province for any period of time does not seem to concern the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness).

After all if it is not his responsibility, why should we bother him with a slowdown of the economy and the problems of Manitoba? Why should we bother him with the fact that perhaps poorer people will not have the same amount of money available to them, or once again that the middle class will be hit with the goods and services tax? The first year in particular will be very hard on them.

I guess we should not really bother him. It is kind of difficult for him to concern himself with the people of Manitoba when really he is more concerned about putting his own portfolio in place and being stood up and made to look good in this House. Perhaps maybe we should not ask him questions at all, because it might embarrass him. Perhaps maybe he would rather sit there and just be glorified. That would make him feel very good.

Unfortunately, we take our role as Opposition very seriously in this House. We will continue to ask the Minister about the goods and services tax, and we will continue to embarrass him on counteracting the statements made by the Premier (Mr. Filmon). I am very sorry if that disturbs him, because it is certainly not the season where I really do want to disturb anybody. I hope we can all go home and enjoy our families.

As you well know I do not very often take a very sarcastic vein in this House, but it very much annoys me when this Minister, who made the one mistake of walking out of a committee, and locking Opposition Members out, an unprecedented parliamentary procedure in all the world, for all of history, is going on to say now that we have no right to ask him questions. This is insult upon insult, and I find it just very amazing, because I have always held him in high regard.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have recognized the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) to address the motion of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), which is an Address for Papers, to issue praying for a copy of the report on the impact of the goods and services tax on the province. I would ask the Honourable Member for Selkirk to be relevant.

The Honourable Member for Selkirk.

Mrs. Charles: Mr. Speaker, I was speaking on the goods and services tax as the Minister does not want to really talk about it. The goods and services tax is obviously one of the main concerns of everybody in all the communities, and I dare say that the Government has heard as many complaints about the goods and services tax as we in the Opposition have.

The people are astounded that this has gone through without any concern for how they care about their economies. Small business—and this being a Government that represents rural Manitoba where so many small economies and businesses are the lifeblood of the regions. It is astounding that this Government has not risen up in a louder voice and taken active measures to participate in opposing the GST.

It seems to be verbally just wishing to say, yes, we oppose it, and sit down and say, but it is really none of our business. Therefore, just going along the lines of if we shut our ears and eyes that perhaps it will be okay and we will let the federal Government, after all we do not want to be connected with them, rise and fall, even though 19 months ago they could just pick up the phone and make the difference.

Mr. Speaker, the goods and services tax is indeed going to infect all Manitobans not only in the effect it will have on our pocketbooks, but the effect it has on the disbelief that people have, and the lack of support people will have for politicians over the time where this is being implemented in a fashion that they feel has been a straight hoodwinking. The fact that this provincial Government has not taken an active role in opposing the GST is a mark on their record.

I hope that we will see a more verbal and active opposition to GST and that this Minister will not find that we are bothering him with questions on GST but will, therefore, take action and do something to prepare Manitobans and develop programs that will retrain and encourage economic growth in Manitoba, and perhaps we will have an inward migration instead of outward migration if this Government got to work and prepared itself for such things as the effects of GST and free trade on the Province of Manitoba.

* (1750)

COMMITTEE CHANGES

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, on House business, I have a committee change.

I move, seconded by the Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: Radisson (Mr. Patterson) for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema); Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) for Assiniboia (Mr. Mandrake).

Mr. Speaker: Agreed.

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, I have been trying to prepare for this for months now to speak on this Bill. Earlier I heard the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) get up and ask, why are we criticized so much? At least, he is now recognizing that the people in Manitoba, including the people from Assiniboia, it is a widespread criticism of this Government.—(interjection)— He says that indeed and I believe him, when he said that they are trying to deal in a responsible way with the business of Manitobans.

It is a little known secret, Mr. Speaker, that I used to be a Tory some years back until I smartened up. I was at their leadership convention in '76 and I was at the leadership when the Premier, as a matter of fact, I am not ashamed to say, I supported him, he was the best I saw around at that time.

One of the things I liked about the Tories was because like myself, they were sort of business people and I thought that was great, but the one thing that they were not, Mr. Speaker, they were not people people. Most of my friends, if not all my friends, were Liberals, and they appeared to be people people. I noticed that and I wish that the Tories would have been somewhat.

This bringing in this GST in the way that the federal Tories did, and they are just cousins, they go to the same meetings, the same luncheons, the same banquets, the same business things. They are associated, just like Liberals are associated, they are apt to be close together but there is an association. The fact is that these Tories cannot separate themselves from their cousins in Ottawa, no matter what. We cannot separate ourselves either. You would like to sometimes perhaps, but we are the same type of people.

When the Tories brought this Bill in, they knew what they were doing all the way along. They knew that they would come in at 7 or 6 and so they started out at 9 thinking—well, this is an old Mulroney style, I met him in '76. Incidentally in '76 there were 16 candidates running for the Leadership of the PC Party and at that particular part, I worked for some six months directly for Joe Clark, who eventually did win by a very narrow margin. So what did we see? We saw Mulroney, who was my 17th choice, finally get enough money to scuttle their leader and this is typical of the Tories.

If they had been more forthcoming, it does not matter what the Tories do, it is their style. The substance may be there, but it is the style that they use to deceive the people and we see this day after day after day. We have seen this in the applications of the GST.

I think if you go to the people with a proposition, whether it be taxation or not, we have all recognized that the present federal tax on goods at the manufacturing level —(interjection)— Pardon me? I will tell you that the NDP has always had an alternative, Mr. Speaker, and the alternative from them was clearly shown on April 26 when Mr. Walding forced this Government out of business and the alternative turned out to be the Liberals.

Mr. Speaker, if I may also say in reply to the Leader of the third Party, that that alternative still rests and

we are waiting to take over the job that we started and continue the job that we did on April 26, 1988. So do not worry about people on this side. There is an alternative and we are ready and waiting to govern.

This GST Bill is the sort of thing that we would not impose upon the people of Manitoba. Things are already tough here. You know, we have had drought, we have had forest fires, now we have the most untimely weather in some 100 years and we have very poor snow cover. We will have a deep frost this year and so it does not look well for the future of Manitoba. On top of that, on top of having a Tory Government who want to look out for business all the time, but not for the small people, they have imposed upon us, the cousins of these people here, and secretly, and I wish he would own up to it, I think the Minister of Finance really does agree with this type of tax. I think if he were the federal Minister he would have imposed the same thing, and if he had a chance he would do the same thing in Manitoba.

I can realize that all his caucus does not agree with him, so he does have some problems, but I would think, knowing Tories, that the vast majority of the Tories do agree with the GST, whether it be 7 percent or 9 percent. The deception, the thing that really worries me, is the matter of trust with the Tory Party; that always bothered me. You never knew where you were going because they were always saying one thing and doing another, like Meech Lake, for instance, there was another one. We had him come out one day, the Premier, and Meech Lake was the greatest thing since sliced bread. Then all of a sudden he got whispers in his ears, and I am sure we all know about this because we heard it all over the Legislature halls. We heard about people saying, hey, Mr. Premier, we are not going to go along with you on this and that and the other thing on Meech Lake. There was a bit of a revolt within the Party; that is an open secret.

So what did he do? He came in and all of a sudden he is the hero. Meech Lake, he is going to do this and he is going to do that, he is going to squelch it, but in his mind, heart of hearts, the Premier and his caucus still believe in Meech Lake, just as in the heart and core of this Party they still believe, the Tories, they still believe that the GST is the finest alternative.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: On a point of order.

Mr. McCrae: Well, I am the first to acknowledge that the comments being made this afternoon by the MLA for St. Vital (Mr. Rose), we know how important that can be to a person, and I am the first to admit that his comments are extremely interesting and they cover a wide range of topics. That is my only concern and I wonder if the Honourable Member could be called to order on the grounds of the irrelevancy of his comments to the matter before us.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Opposition House Leader, on the same point of order.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on the same point of order. This is on an Order of Return trying to get some information out of this Government about the GST, information which they refuse to provide because they secretly support this Bill. That is what the Member is saying. It is exactly what he is saying and he should be allowed to say it.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised, I would like to thank both Honourable Members, and I would like to draw to the attention of the Honourable Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) that we are dealing with an Address for Papers and they do issue praying for a copy of the report on the impact of the goods and services tax on the province and a copy of the study commissioned by the provincial Finance Ministers from the Conference Board of Canada on the regional impact of the goods and services tax. So I would ask the Honourable Member for St. Vital to have his remarks relevant to that question, please. The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

Mr. Rose: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am sorry if I did wander a little bit from my text here, but I guess it is -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Mr. Rose: I guess, Mr. Speaker, we were talking about the GST here and you know the fact is with GST or anything else, their philosophy on the GST is, if the shoe fits, for goodness' sakes wear it. The trouble with the House Leader for the Government was that he does not like to hear the truth, because he knows that I may not be, and I am certainly far from being expert on taxation, and I am certainly far from being an expert on the GST. In fact, I am not even an expert on the manufacturing sales tax, but one thing I feel that I am somewhat of an expert at is the difference between the Tories and the Liberals, and right now I am very happy where I am. I am very happy, Mr. Speaker, to be on the side of the House that does not support such bad management, such deception, such hiding the facts from the public, and then thinking we are going to come in with a 7 percent and fool us.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the 7 percent fools me and my Party not one bit, because as the Globe and Mail, and I will throw out, and I was just going to read him some garbage, but the Globe and Mail says, remember this, the GST will begin at 7 percent, but it will not stay there long, because history has shown over and over again, whether it be provincial, they start at five and it goes up to seven or 10, whether it be federal. So let us not be fooled that we are going to be sitting at 7 percent long. We know that they cut from 9 percent to 7 percent, and they did that mostly on the backs of the poor, the backs of the poor who are already underprivileged, and the Minister knows, or should know, that this is true in Manitoba.

They cut out—what have they done? They said at first that they would remove personal and corporate tax surcharges. But what have they done now? They

have failed to reduce the income tax rate, they have reduced the indexing of the thing, and they have reduced credits. That hits the poor people of Manitoba more than anybody else, the people in this society who need more help than anybody else.

The amounts of money that are taken out in here in the millions are staggering. It is an economy, as I already pointed out, particularly at these tough times, that we cannot stand. We know that we cannot stomach it. We cannot afford it, for one thing, and the people of Manitoba realize this. There is overwhelming objection to this GST imposed upon us by the Tories. But, Mr. Speaker, one thing I am absolutely sure of is that in general, bluff or whatever, there is general support in the Tory Party for this type of taxation. Therefore, what

we are seeing from this Government day after day after day—and the media and everybody in Manitoba is not fooled, not fooled somewhat like they were on other matters. They know that this Government at heart supports the goods and services tax—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member will have four minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday).