



Fourth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

41 Elizabeth II

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Denis C. Rocan
Speaker*



VOL. XLII No. 36B - 8 p.m., MONDAY, APRIL 5, 1993

MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	Liberal
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	Liberal
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	Liberal
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Liberal
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Cliff	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Liberal
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Liberal
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Liberal
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALLOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 5, 1993

The House met at 8 p.m.

ORDERS OF THE DAY (continued)

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe when five o'clock arrived, we were debating Bill 20. It is my expectation that you will call Bill 20 at this time.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 20—The Social Allowances Regulation Validation Act

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Deputy Speaker, I just want to put a very few last words on this particular bill as it was presented and as we debated earlier this afternoon.

The rules and regulations with regard to social allowances are critical. They are critical for certain people in this society in particular, those who are very vulnerable and those who are going to have real setbacks as a result of the regulations which this government would introduce. It would introduce regulations which will hurt those, quite frankly, who are trying to begin their lives anew, people who are trying either because they are refugees to this country or because they were dropouts in high school, who are trying not to perpetuate a life on the social assistance system but are trying to move forward in new and exciting ways for them.

What this government has done is to close the door in their face, and it has said go on social assistance, social assistance which will pay you less than student social allowance, where you are not able to go to school, where you are not able to get a foundation necessary for a job market which is going to become increasingly more difficult for those who do not have high school or even post-secondary education as we move into the '90s and then into the 21st Century.

I deeply regret the decision that the government has made mainly because I cannot see that it is going to save them any money. If that was the purpose of this, then the purpose was to somehow or other make their budget balance or provide for less deficit. We are all desirous that we get our economic house in order, but I see no way in which these changes, particularly those affecting student social allowance, are going to do anything but cost the government more, because if these people have to go on social allowance the cost to the government is more than the cost of them being on student social allowance.

So it is a regressive step in terms of providing them with any future, any potential to become taxpayers in the province of Manitoba. It is regressive in terms of the bottom line of this government, and I simply do not understand why the government has moved in that direction. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, this bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, would you call Bills 5, 8 and 10 in that order, please.

Bill 5—The Northern Affairs Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), to resume debate on second reading (Bill 5, The Northern Affairs Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les affaires du Nord), standing in the name of the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Stand? Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 8—The Insurance Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 8 (The Insurance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les assurances), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of

Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), standing in the name of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Stand? Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 10—The Farm Lands Ownership Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 10 (The Farm Lands Ownership Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la propriété agricole et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), standing in the name of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Stand? Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, would you call Bill 16, please.

* (2005)

Bill 16—The Public Schools Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 16 (The Public Schools Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) and standing in the name of the honourable member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs).

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise on Bill 16, on which I have spoken already at some length and will conclude my remarks this evening.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the bill clearly is an infringement on the rights of municipalities in the province of Manitoba and will result in no additional revenues to the province of Manitoba, by imposing a 2 percent cap on the special requirement to school divisions and therefore in fact to municipalities.

What the government has done is to usurp the authority of school divisions to do that very thing for which they were elected. School trustees were elected not in 1990, as was this government, but in the fall of 1992, October 28. They went to the electorate and they specifically asked the electorate for a mandate to develop, to pass the budgets of school divisions. That is their authority. It is not the authority of this government. That is why I object to this particular piece of legislation.

What the government has done is to say, in essence, nobody is fiscally responsible except us; nobody is prepared to respond to the taxpayers except us; nobody has a mandate except us. That is simply not true.

The school trustees of this province have a more recent mandate than does this government. It is not true to say they are fiscally irresponsible. The school divisions have tried year after year after year to come down with tight fiscal budgets. In fact, the settlement of Winnipeg School Division No. 1, which is the largest school division in the province, with their employees was less generous than the settlement negotiated by the Finance minister and the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) with their employees.

So to say that school division is irresponsible is simply false. They negotiated an increase of 1.4 percent. That is lower than what this government was able to negotiate. It appears that they were able to negotiate that agreement because of good relationships which they have developed over years with the teaching profession within their school division. To now say to that school division, you are irresponsible, therefore we are taking your authority away from you, presumably in perpetuity, to set your own budget as you see fit, is I think irresponsible on the part of this government.

That is the unfortunate part of what this government is doing. It would let the taxpayers of Manitoba think they are doing something to control expenditures, but it is not just simply a matter of controlling expenditures, it is also a matter of achieving new revenues. This government will get no new revenues from this decision. All they will do is limit, in some cases very unfairly, the opportunity to get new revenues on the part of school divisions.

There is some confusion that somehow or other every school division is allowed to increase by 2 percent. That is not true, because the special

requirement does not permit that. The overall increase of 2 percent will in fact mean that some school divisions cannot come close to that 2 percent.

I doubt very, very much, judging by some of the budgets that we have already seen, that this government is going to come in with an expenditure of less than 2 percent increase. Yet that is what they would impose upon their school divisions. It is not fair, it is not equitable, it is not just. I am not prepared to support it, nor is any member of my caucus.

This government not only offloads responsibilities onto the municipalities and school divisions of this province on the one hand, but it also takes responsibility from them on the other hand. It is simply not fair. It is bad legislation and it should be defeated.

Thank you very much.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton)? [agreed]

* (2010)

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Madam Deputy Speaker, it is my pleasure to rise today to add my comments to Bill 16, The Public Schools Amendment Act. There has been some debate on this bill to this point, and, of course, we are waiting for some comments from the honourable members opposite to find out what their position is with respect to this—

An Honourable Member: The minister gave you our position.

Mr. Reid: Yes, it was not much of a position. On top of that I do not see any other members of that caucus supporting the minister's position on this piece of legislation.

I know that this bill, this particular piece of legislation, is going to have a significant impact upon my own community. I know I have been going through my notes now, Madam Deputy Speaker, for a period of time, and I have been doing some further calculations to determine the impact, and, of course, I have had regular consultations with trustees—[interjection]

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) thinks that only one person from his caucus should have the opportunity to speak on bills that they introduce and

that it should only be the minister introducing the bill. I do not see why members of their back bench over there do not have the same opportunities that we on this side of the House have. Why is he denying them the opportunity to represent their constituents' wishes? [interjection]

I notice that the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) likes to chirp from her seat quite often, but I have never seen her stand up in this House and speak on particular pieces of legislation like this to find out what her position is and how—[interjection]

That is true, the Minister of Finance did introduce it. Has he stood up and told us what impact it is going to have on his community? Or maybe his community is going to receive the benefits of this type of legislation. Is there going to be some rewards for your constituency, while others like mine are being penalized for this type of legislation?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Reid: I notice that the members opposite are a bit sensitive on this topic, and it is probably with good reason that they are sensitive because they are starting to hear the comments from the various communities, trustees and school divisions throughout the province, the impact that this legislation is going to have upon them.

But I like to think of the opening comments at the start of this session when we were looking at the Speech from the Throne. I will quote from the Speech from the Throne, Madam Deputy Speaker. It says: "My government realizes that education and training are the keys that unlock a world of opportunity and a future of economic growth and prosperity."

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I was heartened to see those words and to hear those words in the throne speech when it was introduced at the end of last year at the start of this session, and I thought that maybe we are on the right track, and that education was going to play a prominent and important role for us in the province. That has not come to pass, and that has never been better explained than through the trustees in my own school division, Transcona-Springfield School Division No. 12.

The member for Springfield, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), also happens to represent communities who are impacted by this legislation as well in the sense that he represents communities

that form a part of the Transcona-Springfield School Division. Now, I have attended at least two meetings with the trustees of Transcona-Springfield School Division over the course of the last month, and I have attended their public meetings as well and listened to the concerns of the trustees when they look at what this bill is going to have, the impact it is going to have on their abilities to provide quality education for the students within my community and within the division that they have to control.

The Minister of Agriculture, of course, has not stood up for his constituents. He refuses to take an active role. I will grant you, he has attended one meeting with the school trustees, but have I seen any actions, any positive actions as a result of the attending of that meeting? None whatsoever, and that is unfortunate.

* (2015)

I am sure the constituents of his in Springfield will become aware of his inability to influence his caucus members or unwillingness maybe to influence members of his caucus when it comes to making decisions with respect to the impact upon his own community because, indeed, this legislation will impact upon his community.

This Bill 16, of course, creates several problems for my own community and for the trustees that have to make decisions that control and direct the type and quality of education within the Transcona-Springfield area.

I listened to the minister's comments here that she has made from time to time when she talks about education. She says that she is going to have a 2 percent cap on the way special levy requirements will be allowed to rise within the province. She also says that she is going to roll back revenue from the provinces by 2 percent. Yet the figures that were released by trustees within my community show that the level of funding support from the province is dropping not 2 percent but 3 percent and that we will sustain a real loss of nearly a million dollars for this fiscal year.

Now this million dollars, coupled with the fact that the division has, much like other divisions, uncontrollable costs, costs that have gone beyond their control, utilities, some contracts that they have to sign or contracts that have been signed that they have and should honour—these costs are beyond their control.

They have calculated that it is going to cost the division nearly a million and a half dollars this coming year. That means that this division is going to have to find ways of cutting programs for teachers or services within the community to the equivalent of a million and a half dollars. They had in past budget years—they have had to already eliminate programs within the school division. They eliminated the industrial arts program.

We are quite fortunate in our community to have a French Immersion program that I would say is probably second to none. They also have an English-Ukrainian program—I thank the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale). It has a fair number of students enrolled in the English-Ukrainian Immersion program and, of course, the kindergarten portion of that program has been eliminated, as has above Grade 9 been eliminated. So there are only a set number of years that the Ukrainian language can be taught or instruction can be provided for the students that wish to avail themselves of that.

On top of that, the late French Immersion program was cancelled, so that those students wishing to enroll in the French Immersion program to learn one of Canada's two national languages on top of the mother tongue of English are now denied that because that program has been eliminated.

They have also cut swimming programs and other programs within the school division itself. On top of that, the school division has had to decrease the number of teaching positions by 17. They eliminated 17 teaching positions last year when they had an enrollment increase of 185 students, so we are seeing fewer teachers and more students. Now obviously that only leads to larger class sizes.

It was interesting to note in my discussions with the trustees at the meetings that I have attended with them, and they draw this to my attention very clearly, that the Fort Garry School Division is seeing less students per teacher than the Transcona-Springfield School Division.

I am not sure if this is coincidence or not that the school division that the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) resides in, I am not sure if they have better management of their resources, or is it that they have opportunities that are afforded them that are not afforded other school divisions? Could it be that the school division of Fort Garry has greater abilities to generate school tax revenue to support the education programs within that school division?

* (2020)

That is one thing that the Minister of Education fails to take into consideration when she decreases funding to my school division, and that is one thing that this Bill 16 will impact upon because what it does, it prevents the school trustees from generating, through a special levy, the necessary funds to sustain the type of program that we have become accustomed to within our community.

I have asked the minister questions on this at various points of this session, as I have in the last session. I have raised the concerns of the parents and the educators and the trustees of my school division and made her aware of the concerns of my community with respect to this unfair funding formula.

Transcona-Springfield School Division has a modest enrollment, nearly 8,000 students. Yet our expenditures per pupil are the second lowest in metro Winnipeg, second lowest in the city of Winnipeg. Our administration costs are the second lowest in the city of Winnipeg. Yet our expenditures per pupil for exceptional students is in the midrange.

Our transportation costs are the highest of any of the school divisions in metro Winnipeg, and we are significantly higher in the sense that Transcona-Springfield School Division's transportation cost per pupil is \$254, while the St. James-Assiniboia School Division is only \$68.

I think that the main reason for that is the Transcona-Springfield School Division is comprised of approximately one-third rural. The division itself comprises an area of approximately 400 square miles, which is a very large school division, and we have to transport a fairly significant number of our students, of our total student population, to the schools in the rural areas. I talk in particular about schools that are in the Minister of Agriculture's communities that he represents, in Anola, Hazelridge, Dugald, Oakbank, Cooks Creek and others. These are the costs that are borne out by the division that have not been taken into consideration in the formula calculations in providing offsetting funding for the division, to provide transportation and education for these students.

One-third of the approximately 8,000 students there in the division have to be transported, and yet the minister by her own funding formula will only allow a school division to use the calculation of

divisor of 20 full-time equivalents. Whereas if the school division had been in a complete rural setting like we might find in Brandon or other rural communities around the province, we would have been able to use the divisor of 18.5 full-time equivalent students to determine the level of support for transportation costs and other costs within the division.

So the minister, through her own department, has totally ignored the component, the rural nature of the Transcona-Springfield School Division. School division trustees over the course of the last year and more have written to the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) on several occasions, first saying that the funding formula is unfair and raising their concerns with the minister and asking for a meeting with the minister.

What does the minister write back? The minister writes back and says that she thinks that the trustees were generally satisfied with the new funding model which is totally contrary—[interjection] The Minister of Education said that. The trustees have told me that they were dissatisfied with the funding formula that is in place and the inequities that it creates within the school divisions of the city of Winnipeg, and yet the minister replies that she is pleased that the trustees are generally satisfied with the new funding model—something that they never said. So the minister is trying to put words into the mouths of the trustees, the elected representatives of the community, something that we have seen quite often in this House as she fails to respond to any questions that we have placed before her concerning education.

* (2025)

After a considerable period of time, the trustees had written to the minister asking for a meeting to address their concerns with the minister. The minister stalled and stalled, and after finally four months the trustees became so frustrated with the minister's ignoring their request for a meeting, the trustees contacted the MLAs who are within their school division: the MLA for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), the MLA for Springfield (Mr. Findlay) and myself. We attended those meetings and talked to the trustees, and it was after that point only when we raised questions in this House asking the minister after four months of delay to finally meet with the trustees that the minister finally met with them. Now I am not sure if she does not want to talk to them or

if she has no answers for them or she has no policy—maybe a combination of all of them.

One of the unfortunate parts about this Bill 16, The Public Schools Amendment Act, is that it forces the trustees, the duly elected trustees, to make decisions that they do not feel that they should have to make. It forces them to cut back in areas where they feel that there should not be a need to cut back, because they have cut their costs, I believe, to nearly as low a level as they possibly can. At the same time, this legislation will take away the opportunity for the trustees, it will take away the local autonomy of the trustees to make decisions within our own community.

An Honourable Member: Especially after they have cut funding by 2 percent or more.

Mr. Reid: Three percent. They have cut funding by 3 percent in Transcona-Springfield. Now the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) and this government—something that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) supports obviously because he has never stood up to say anything to the contrary—has taken and cut the special levy requirements.

Now I believe that the only reason that this government has taken that action is for their own political gains. Every taxpayer wants to keep their cost down. I am sure all of us recognize and realize that. At the same time, the school trustees are elected by the communities to represent them on school board matters dealing with education, and yet this government by this legislation has taken away that decision making from the school trustees themselves, and now forced the trustees for the first time in a hundred years to make program decisions that fit the provincial government's policies.

The trustees, on top of that, have raised with myself and my colleague the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) the impact that this decision is going to have upon the school division itself. When we realize that our assessment in our community is decreasing, the assessed value of our property is decreasing, and it is decreasing significantly to the point where the Transcona-Springfield School Division is going to lose on the average home \$24. Now the taxpayers, of course, may think that is significant that they will see a decrease in their taxes by \$24, but this will do nothing to improve or even protect the quality of education within the community.

This is \$24 per home based on many thousand homes, probably in the range of 10,000 homes within the school division that will see a decrease in their taxes. That means \$24 per home decreased revenue that the school division desperately needs to support the programs that we currently have. That means that while we already see classroom sizes in the range of 25, 26, 27 in our division, while classes in the Fort Garry School Division are 18 to 20 range, we are going to see larger class sizes, I believe, within the school division.

Unfortunately, that will put pressure upon the teachers themselves, who I believe are doing a good job in providing a quality level of education within our community but now would put increased pressure on those teachers because not all students within the classes themselves, as I am sure we all well know, are equal in their learning capacity. There are special needs requirements within those classes, maybe not special needs in the sense that where you have to require paraprofessionals to come in and assist or special needs instructors within the class themselves, but children that learn at different rates. The teachers with larger class sizes will then not be able to dedicate the time necessary to provide that one-on-one instruction to the students. So it is ultimately going to be the students themselves that are going to pay the price over the long run.

* (2030)

An Honourable Member: Daryl, he is not listening.

Mr. Reid: I know he is listening. We have discussed this many times. In fact he was quite—the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) was quite instrumental in facilitating meetings with the Transcona-Springfield School Division trustees and our caucus when the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) refused to meet with the division trustees. So I thank the member for Dauphin for his interest in the educational needs of my community.

I hope the Minister of Education is listening, because she has refused to recognize the differences within the division. I can see, by the response of the trustees, that they were not optimistic that we would see any changes by this Minister of Education or this government with respect to the Transcona-Springfield School Division.

They finally had, after many months of waiting, their meeting with the minister, addressed their concerns to the minister and the minister gave no assurances or no understanding that she would do anything to assist them with their dilemma during this current and coming budget year. She has left them totally on their own, while at the same time handcuffing them in their abilities to generate the necessary revenues within the community.

On top of handcuffing them by placing the 2 percent cap, we have seen a significant decrease in the equalization funding from the provincial government to the school division. In 1987, the school division received over \$5 million from the province in equalization funding. Now we are going to see, for the '93 and '94 year, some one and a half million dollars, just slightly over one and a half million dollars. That is a difference of \$3,375,000. This is funding that was used to support the programs within the division.

Yet the minister thinks that it is appropriate for her government to continue to support funding for the elite schools within our province, mostly within the boundaries of the city of Winnipeg, and has given them significant increases in their levels of funding over the last few years at the expense of the public school system, something that does not sit too well with my community. My community has to cut programs and increase class sizes and attend to the needs of the special needs students that are stretched to the limit now, and yet we are seeing a decrease in funding to the public school system.

The Premier (Mr. Filmon), in his comments on December 13, 1991, indicated that he would work co-operatively with the federal government and all levels of government on any programs, whether they be education, whether they be social programs, health care programs, any programs designed to eradicate poverty with respect to the children of our province. Yet we see today, on the very steps of this Legislature here, several hundred young people that want to get off the social assistance treadmill, want to improve their quality of life, to go out and to be productive members of society, and yet find themselves trapped as this government slashes funding and programs.

They cut the students social assistance program. I had a young woman in my community come to see me the other day. She is a single parent. She is just over 20 years of age. She has a high school education and is trying to improve her education to

allow her to move into a workforce that will provide for herself and her young child. She is told that effective with the new budget that is coming at the end of the current school year, right in the middle of her post-secondary education training, she is going to have her student social assistance terminated. Then she will not know which way to turn, because she will not have the skills and the training and the education necessary to allow herself to go out and get a decent job to provide for herself and her young child. She will therefore be forced to go to either minimum wage jobs if they are available and, if they are not available, to get back onto the social assistance rolls, something that she is desperately trying to avoid.

Yet this government fails to recognize the initiative that these young people are displaying as they try to better themselves so that they do not have to avail themselves of social assistance. People who are on social assistance do not want to be there. They want to have a quality job and a good quality of life, something that this government obviously fails to recognize.

This Bill 16 will create other inequities and create other problems for my school division. The minister talks about school divisions using their surplus to support the programs that are necessary that the school division chooses to continue, but she fails to recognize that there are school divisions within the province that do not have that type of surplus. In my own school division the surplus that we have is approximately \$18,000. Now some members of the House may say that that is unreasonable for any school division to maintain a surplus at that level, and it may be, because it is my understanding that the auditors for the division have recommended that a 2 percent level of surplus be maintained.

The school division chose, the trustees chose, over the course of the last few years to keep the tax increases down within the community. They chose to do that. It was a conscious decision they made. Now they are forced to pay the price for those decisions. It is not that they did not make some mistakes along the way. We know that they did, much the same way we all do from time to time.

The school division had applied to the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) to have some special consideration given for a funding shortfall for the division itself, just under \$300,000 I believe it was. The minister did I believe give that approval just recently to the school division to allow them to

recoup those monies from past budget years but, at the same time, while the minister gave approval for that, she ties their hands and does not take into consideration the decreasing apportioned assessment for the community, which is causing a shortfall in the funding and at the same time fails to recognize the urban-rural split, or component I should say, of the division itself.

Fort Garry's per-pupil assessment is \$135,000 and yet the Transcona-Springfield School Division assessment per pupil is \$74,000—half, Madam Deputy Speaker, of Fort Garry. So if you look at the taxes that the division charges on a home assessed at approximately \$30,000, which would be close to assessed value for properties within my community, the taxes for the school division are in the middle of the list, \$517 per home, and yet Fort Garry's is \$520, only a \$3 difference, and yet the monies that we expend in our division per pupil are only half of what Fort Garry's are.

* (2040)

The minister by her formula fails to recognize these differences and the problems that it creates. It is interesting to note that the government has introduced other legislation as well, and it is going to have an impact upon the community. I have to wonder what the thoughts are, or the logic, behind the government's introduction of this legislation. They talk about limitations on school boards and leave without pay and how that is going to impact upon the ability to provide a quality education to the students in my community. The leave without pay is to be taken by teachers, and days to be set aside shall be the teacher in-service days and the parent-teacher conferences.

Now I have to wonder, Madam Deputy Speaker, if the intent of this government is to say that the teachers must provide their services free of charge and must meet with the parents of the community on their own time away from the job and that they will not receive compensation for that. I do not think that is proper. I think the teachers need to be there to have that co-operative atmosphere, to give parents the opportunity to hear first-hand on the progress of their children. I believe that this legislation will take away that opportunity, that level of interaction between parents and teachers. One member of the Chamber here indicated that this legislation borders on a management style that is similar to a dictatorship, and other members may

agree with that. In the sense that it ties or handcuffs the school trustees, it may be closer to that reality.

We also heard—and I know the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) raised this on several occasions. We talk about the loss of the speech and hearing clinicians within the province —[interjection]

The Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) may not have had the opportunity to listen to my comments earlier, or may not have had the opportunity to listen to the comments of the trustees that finally, after four months of waiting, came in to meet with their colleague, the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) where they expressed to the Minister of Education the unfairness of her funding formula.

An Honourable Member: There is nothing unfair about the Minister of Education.

Mr. Reid: The Minister of Education herself may not be unfair, but the funding formula that she uses to calculate the support for the divisions is unfair, and she has been told that time and time again. She fails to listen to those democratically elected representatives of our community that have to make the decisions of hopefully providing a quality education for our children.

The minister gave no assurances. I suspect that she is going to refuse to take any action during this coming budget year to assist the school division with the problems that they have. Yet, at the same time, she handcuffs them when they want to make those decisions themselves and are willing to make those decisions and be responsible to the taxpayers of the community at the same time.

An Honourable Member: Let them eat cake.

Mr. Reid: Yes, quite possibly she did say let them eat cake. Of course, maybe she is saying that taxes are only for the poor—only poor people pay taxes. I think it was Leona Helmsley from New York: Taxes are only for poor people.

By the loss of the speech and hearing clinicians within my community, I think it is going to have an impact. We have one school itself, Park Circle School, that I believe is attempting to provide a reasonable education for the students that have difficulties within the school division, special needs students.

Now, if we eliminate those clinicians within the school division and we eliminate some of the

support services, I think that students in this school and others within the community are going to suffer.

The grant that is provided to offset some of those costs will not be adequate to make up the needs of the school division. It will not come close to meeting the needs. So the special needs students will suffer, not only just the regular program students suffering by the larger class sizes and reduction of educational opportunities, but it will also create other difficulties within the division itself as the division is going to have to face a decrease in programs over the course of the coming years with the decrease.

Yet when the trustees at their recent hearings or their annual general meeting that was held in Winnipeg just recently—the trustees asked the minister for a freeze on all division employees. The minister, by the press clippings that were out, refuses to assist the trustees in doing their job but, at the same time, ties their hands when it comes to making decisions impacting upon the community.

Recent reports indicate that the Transcona division is going to be looking at axing teaching jobs and programs—another year of cuts forced upon them because the minister has tied their hands. It is unfortunate that the minister would do that while at the same time giving such a significant increase over the last few years to the elite private schools, while putting schools in my division, in my constituency, in an awkward position of trying to provide programs with less money.

The Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) has provided 3 percent less funding for my school division this year, and she stands up in her place in this House and tells us she has cut back by only 2 percent when I have the figures right here, if she would care to come over here and avail herself of the figures and look at the figures that are published saying that the division is being cut back by 3 percent.

On top of that, their hands are being handcuffed in their abilities to provide programs to the community. She fails to recognize the needs of the community. She has been asked, as was her predecessor, to take into consideration the needs of the school division in providing funding for the urban-rural division of the school division, but she will not take that into consideration. She will do it for the members of her caucus that are representing rural constituencies, but she will not do it for a division within the city of Winnipeg if it does not

happen to be one of her colleagues. It is unfortunate that she plays political games like this, and she will not represent the needs of all of the students of the province. With that, I will conclude my remarks.

I am sure I will have other opportunities to address this Assembly and to represent the needs of my constituents with respect to the education and the unfair funding formula as the trustees have told us over and over again. We will be watching very closely as this Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) makes decisions that will impact upon my community, and that I find it very difficult under the present wording of this Bill 16, The Public Schools Amendment Act, to find anyway that I can support legislation like this, knowing the impact that it is going to have on my community.

* (2050)

So with those few words, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to thank you for the opportunity to put my comments on the record.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I move, seconded by the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), that debate be adjourned.

Madam Deputy Speaker: It was previously agreed that the bill would remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson.

Mr. Ashton: I am suggesting that it remain standing, but the main thing is we are prepared to call it ten o'clock if members will.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Acting Government House Leader): It is my understanding that the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) was going to speak to Bill 16, but, if not, would you call Bills 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15.

Bill 11—The Regional Waste Management Authorities, The Municipal Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 11 (The Regional Waste Management Authorities, The Municipal Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant les offices régionaux de gestion des déchets, modifiant la Loi sur les municipalités et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), standing in the name of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 12—The International Trusts Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 12 (The International Trusts Act; Loi sur les fiducies internationales), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Stand? Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 13—The Manitoba Employee Ownership Fund Corporation Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 13 (The Manitoba Employee Ownership Fund Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le Fonds de participation des travailleurs du Manitoba), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Stand? Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 14—The Personal Property Security and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 14 (The Personal Property Security and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant les sûretés relatives aux biens personnels et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Stand? Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 15—The Boxing and Wrestling Commission Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 15 (The Boxing and Wrestling Commission Act; Loi sur la Commission de la boxe et de la lutte), standing in the name of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Stand? Is there leave to permit the Bill 15 to remain standing? [agreed]

Hon. Jim Ernst (Acting Government House Leader): Could you please call Bill 19.

Bill 19—The Court of Queen's Bench Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading on Bill 19 (The Court of Queen's Bench Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Stand? Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

What is the will of the House? Is it the will of the House to call it ten o'clock? Agreed.

Order, please. The hour being 10 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, April 5, 1993

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