



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

42 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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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
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, Clif	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
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>	Rossmere	
<i>Vacant</i>	Rupertsland	
<i>Vacant</i>	The Maples	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 6, 1993

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would rise on a Matter of Privilege.

Mr. Speaker, in accordance to our rules, it is imperative that when a Matter of Privilege or a violation of privileges has occurred, one has to bring it to the attention of this Chamber at the first opportunity. This is in fact the first opportunity that I have in bringing the attention of this particular issue to the Chamber.

Last night, Mr. Speaker, in the Committee of Supply, in one of the committee rooms outside of the Chamber, we saw a deviation from the rule book, which I believe is very undemocratic and very unfortunate for all members of this Chamber. What occurred was—Rule 64.1(9)(c) provides that “the estimates of a department shall not be introduced after 10:00 o’clock p.m.”

We know from the past, when the government House leader has stood up and asked for leave, unanimous consent to allow for other departments to in fact be introduced and got that unanimous consent from within the Chamber, not within the committee, Mr. Speaker, the government House leader himself knows full well that what occurred last night was in fact a violation of a very important rule.

I want to comment in terms of what actually took place. Yesterday, I, myself, had done some consulting with the Clerk’s Office just for a clarification of a rule. I felt that it was important that we are assured and know in terms of what the proper procedures are of this Chamber. The rule book is very clear if you read Rule 64.1(9)(c), very clear. After ten o’clock, you cannot introduce any other departments.

Mr. Speaker, what had happened was there was Civil Service and Housing inside the Chamber. It was after ten o’clock, and once those departments

had gone past ten o’clock, the government in the committee room took advantage of a situation in which one of the opposition parties was not in attendance, and received unanimous consent to bring in another department.

This is something that should be protecting all opposition parties. Mr. Speaker, you yourself, if you walk outside of this Chamber after we break into Committee of Supply, quite often you will see the minister and the Chairperson sitting in the Chair. If the Chairperson asks, is there unanimous consent that all the departments in this committee room be passed, and because there are no opposition parties—and that happens—then the government can do that. No, they cannot do that. The rules say they cannot do that.

The Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) yesterday, inside the Chamber, was standing up giving his opening remarks as the Minister of Housing, and there was no opposition member in here. Had the Minister of Housing and the Chairperson said, is there unanimous consent to allow the Department of Housing and two or three other departments, because there was no opposition member in here, you are saying, and you might be arguing that the government had the ability to do that.

* (1335)

Well, Mr. Speaker, that should not be allowed to occur, because the moment that we say what happened last night in committee room, we are setting a very dangerous precedent. We are allowing a government of a majority to be able to shaft every right, every member’s rights inside this Chamber.

I was very disappointed when I raised it as a point of order. I was disappointed—because the concern is, if the right has been violated, the committee continued on in debating Industry and Trade. Hours went off the clock because of Industry and Trade. I would argue, Mr. Speaker, that Industry and Trade should never have been allowed to come in. The rule book itself says that.

The government House leader might try to justify this by saying, well, the rules do not necessarily take into account every possible scenario. Mr.

Speaker, the rules do protect the minorities inside this Chamber. It is important and imperative as legislators that we follow the rules.

If you do not want to follow the rules, at least have the tenacity to get the unanimous consent of the Chamber. Do not try to hide around a rock and to change the rules because you, as a government House leader, might be frustrated because you are not getting things the way you feel you should be getting them.

Mr. Speaker, we, too, want to see co-operation. We do want to see the business of this Chamber proceeding, but we are not going to put into jeopardy the rules of this Chamber that we need to rely on in order for this parliamentary process to work.

Mr. Speaker, I really and truly believe that the committee should not be meeting again until this matter has been clarified. How can we allow Industry, Trade and Tourism to continue to burn off the hours—

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Where were you?

Mr. Lamoureux: Where people were is irrelevant, to the Minister of Labour, Mr. Speaker. What is relevant is that you have a committee that violated a very serious rule.

Mr. Speaker, you are the only one who can defend the rights of the opposition parties, and, in fact, not only the opposition parties but every member inside this Chamber. I ask with all sincerity that you do not allow—or you get an opinion immediately before the committee continues. I do believe that the two hours or however much time should be taken off the clock, for example, because that committee did not have the mandate to sit last night. They could have had the committee rise.

I, too, want to get into Industry, Trade and Tourism. Jobs are very important to the Liberal Party. We have been commenting on the economy since this session has been going, but nothing prevented the committee from rising and then we could have gone on. Let us not bend the rules and twist the rules of this Chamber in infringing upon the rights of members of this Chamber.

It is completely unacceptable, and I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that you review quickly in terms of what actually occurred last night, and come back

with the ruling so that what we will see is that the rights of each member are in fact protected.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), that this House refer the events which occurred during the meeting of the standing Committee of Supply, July 5, 1993, which were contrary to Rule 64.1(9)(c), to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections.

* (1340)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, certainly the government and I take this issue very seriously, although at times I am kind of bemused at the goings-on of the Liberal Party. You have a situation where the government House leader is trying to exert some type of leadership, because obviously there is a leadership void now within that party.

That was played out in spades last night at approximately 10:10 when big smiles were provided by certain members, critics of the Liberal Party, once they had achieved the ten o'clock-plus time, because, of course, their desire was to frustrate the responsible review of the Estimates as called by the rules of our House.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards), of course, wants to go back to pizza and beer, as is the Liberal tradition whenever there is a long sitting. They have a long-standing course of action, of course, whenever we sit late to follow that approach.

Let me say, Mr. Speaker, again, the member gives his version of what happened last night. I, too, have read very seriously the rule. I asked for leave of the House yesterday to consider new departments, and yet there are times, from time to time, when sets of circumstances present themselves which the rules do not contemplate.

Mr. Speaker, I say last night was one of them. We had a situation where a department did not finish. The reason for this rule, "the estimates of a department shall not be introduced after 10:00 o'clock p.m.," is to safeguard the fact that a department cannot be run through in a very short period of time with the absence of a particular critic and/or a particular party.

Now, Mr. Speaker, last night most of the members of this Legislature wanted to do work. They wanted to do the people's work. They did not want to rise at 10 after 10, like the Liberal Party

wanted to. They wanted to continue the examination of certain departments of government.

Mr. Speaker, when the Chair of the committee, presented with this unprecedented set of circumstances, asked the committee for direction, those in attendance unanimously supported the moving into and the review of a new department, not to complete it, but to consider.

Now, Mr. Speaker, realizing that there were some uncertainties with respect to the approach that was being taken, I personally went and told the critic—I am led to believe the Industry, Trade and Tourism critic—that indeed was what was happening and that we were considering the department, and that is indeed of the Liberal Party. So when the member says that we did not let them know, he is not speaking the truth. The reality is he is not speaking the truth. I personally delivered that information to the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), so the third party did know that there was a consideration. So I say to him that it is important that he provides the truth.

Mr. Speaker, I indicate to the individual now, and the members of the House as, indeed, the Chairperson ruled, the Chairperson ruled to the largest extent possible as under Rule 64, I believe it is, that the rules of the House for the most part should apply to committee when these sets of unforeseen circumstances come forward. Indeed, that is what happened—the rules of the House. Unanimous consent was sought in the committee and was provided by the members there in attendance and indeed we now have considered another department.

* (1345)

Mr. Speaker, let me make one final point. The member says, well, there may have been a problem and therefore he would like to play the whole third period over again, because maybe the referee erred or maybe there was not any rule and until we get a rule, let us play the game over again—typical Liberal. I remember the former member for Fort Garry who wanted to have retroactive insurance, crop insurance. It seems to be the Liberal bent, that if you do not like what the rules are at the time, let us play the game over.

So, Mr. Speaker, I say to the member, he has a point. This is a rule that should probably be revisited, given that there is not a rule that takes into account these sets of circumstances.

Whatever the House wishes to do on this area, but I say as far as the events last night, certainly from the government's point of view, no rule was broken, because the rules did not contemplate this set of events that occurred last night.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, there are a number of issues raised in the matter of privilege. I first of all want to deal with the procedure.

Our rules, Beauchesne is very clear in terms of a matter of privilege. It is not something that is enforced by the Speaker. Your role is to determine strictly whether there is a prima facie case. So I disagree with the Liberal House leader in that regard, although the enforcement of the rules of the House is within the very clearly understood parameters of a matter of privilege. To the extent to which the Liberals are raising this matter as a breach of the rules of the House, I would suggest that there is a prima facie case.

I want to deal with a couple of other issues though, Mr. Speaker, that I think are quite relevant. Let us recognize that this problem arose in this case because the Liberals had no members in the committee. Beauchesne Citation 289, under the heading of Attendance of Members states, Standing Order 15 states that "every Member is bound to attend the service of the House unless leave of absence has been given him or her by the House."

Now, Mr. Speaker, in practice both in the House of Commons and in this House, it has been accepted in practice. Beauchesne states that: "The duties of Members have become extremely varied and Members must travel frequently." That rule has not been enforced.

I would point out that the difficulty that arose last night in the view of the Liberal Party would not have happened if the Liberals had had a member in that committee. There would have not been a difficulty in terms of the unanimous consent.

I want to deal with another question, Mr. Speaker, that is also relevant because what you are essentially dealing with in this particular case is the question as to whether we are bound by the rules as they appear—and the Liberal House leader (Mr. Lamoureux) is quite correct in terms of the rule that states that departments should not be called after ten o'clock—or whether the fact that committees do have control over their own sitting

and do in many ways have the powers, subject to a number of limitations, of the House.

I point out that Beauchesne's Citation 18 deals with the unanimous consent within the House, Mr. Speaker, and I want to state very clearly, the question here is whether this also applies into Committee of Supply. Beauchesne's Citation 18, Section (1) says: "Within the ambit of its own rules, the House itself may proceed as it chooses; it is a common practice for the House to ignore its own rules by unanimous consent. Thus, bills may be passed through all their stages in one day, or the House may decide to alter its normal order of business or its adjournment hour as it sees fit."

I would also point out that Beauchesne's Citation 19 states very clearly that: "Whenever the House proceeds by way of unanimous consent, that procedure does not constitute a precedent."

So, Mr. Speaker, let there be no doubt that what happened last night did not set a precedent, regardless of the House's ruling. [interjection] Well, if the Liberal Leader (Mr. Edwards) wishes to read Beauchesne, the point is that regardless of what happened yesterday, whether it was in order or not, Beauchesne is very clear that it does not set a precedent.

I think there are a number of questions that have arisen out of what happened yesterday. I would point out that unanimous consent was reached in a committee not to pass the Civil Service Commission. At that point in time it was not passed until the end of the committee hearing to make sure that there was ample opportunity for all members to be there.

* (1350)

I point out that the department, Mr. Speaker, did not complete its considerations. There may be some question that arises as to whether it was in order to pass motions. It may or may not have been in order to have debated, by leave, essentially, the matters of I, T and T, but I think there is some question as to whether any motions that were passed yesterday were in order.

I think there also are some questions in terms of the time allocation, but I do think that this is not the NHL. We do not have instant replays, and we cannot wind the clock back quite the same.

I would suggest that the Liberal motion, while I do not agree with all the arguments put forward by the Liberal House leader (Mr. Lamoureux), would

perhaps be of assistance here in the sense that this is something that should be referred to the Rules Committee.

I point out, Mr. Speaker, that the Rules Committee has not met, I think, for something like nine or 10 years, and I would suggest that we might want to consider it. I know there have been discussions between all parties, perhaps dealing with the many ambiguities that occur in our rules, and I think this is indicative of it, where you have a rule, you have clear precedence in terms of unanimous consent. The real question here is whether the committee had the ability, through unanimous consent, to do what it did.

Mr. Speaker, the correct thing I would suggest to you is to deal with it as a prima facie case of privilege which I believe it is, to put the motion to the House and the House will deal with the motion. I think the appropriate way would be for the House to send this to the Rules Committee.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank all honourable members for the advice on this matter. Indeed, a matter of privilege is a very serious matter.

I will take this opportunity to advise the House that I am going to take this matter under advisement. I will be perusing Hansard as to what was said today on this matter of privilege, and I will return to the House with a ruling on said issue.

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Deborah Nytepchuk, Joann Shields, Marie Killbery and others requesting the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Richard Tytgat, Dan Desautels, Phillys Barnes and others requesting the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Storie). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS there is a very serious solvent abuse problem in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS according to the RCMP over 100 crimes in Thompson alone in 1992 were linked to solvent abuse; and

WHEREAS there are no facilities to deal with solvent abuse victims in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for over three years, the provincial government failed to proclaim the private member's anti-sniff bill passed by the Legislature and is now proposing to criminalize minors buying solvents even though there are no treatment facilities in northern Manitoba; and

WHEREAS for nine years, the 25 Chiefs who comprise the Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, supported by medical officials, police and the area Member of Parliament, have proposed a pilot treatment project known as the Native Youth Medicine Lodge; and

WHEREAS successive federal Ministers of Health have failed to respond to this issue with a commitment; and

WHEREAS the Manitoba provincial government has a responsibility to ensure that there is adequate treatment for solvent abuse.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Premier to consider making as a major priority, the establishment of a solvent abuse treatment facility in northern Manitoba.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Plohman). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health

care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Santos). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr.

Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

* (1355)

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Clif Evans). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Mr. Jack Reimer (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Economic Development): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the Sixth Report of the Committee on Economic Development.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Economic Development presents the following as its Sixth Report.

Your committee met on Thursday, June 17, at 7 p.m.; Friday, June 18, 1993, at 1 p.m.; Tuesday, June 22, 1993, at 9 a.m.; Thursday, June 24, 1993, at 7 p.m.; Friday, June 25, 1993, at 1 p.m.; Monday, June 28, 1993, at 9 a.m.; Tuesday, June 29, 1993, at 9 a.m. and 7 p.m.; Wednesday, June 30, 1993, at 4 p.m. in Room 255; and Monday, July 5, 1993, at 9 a.m. in Room 254 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

At the June 17, 1993, 7 p.m. meeting, your committee elected Mr. Penner as chairperson. At the June 18, 1993, 1 p.m. meeting, your committee elected Mr. Reimer as Chairperson.

Your committee adopted at its June 17, 1993, 7 p.m. meeting, the following motions:

MOTION:

THAT as a result of the large number of Manitobans wishing to make public representation to this standing committee considering Bill 22, and given that all presenters should be given a fair allocation of time, at a reasonable hour of the day,

THAT all presenters be allocated a maximum of 15 minutes for their presentations, including the time required to ask and answer all questions put by members of the committee.

MOTION:

THAT the motion before us be amended to allow presenters not a maximum of 15 minutes, but 20 minutes for presentations and questions on Bill 22.

MOTION:

THAT this committee not sit past midnight at any future sitting in regard to Bill 22, and that out-of-town presenters be accommodated first, wherever possible at the beginning of committee hearings.

Your committee adopted at its June 29, 1993, 7 p.m. meeting, the following motion:

MOTION:

From this point forward for the consideration of Bill 22, no person who has indicated their desire to present to this committee, shall have their name,

their organization's name, or a combination of the above, called more than twice.

Your committee heard representation on the bill as follows:

Bill 22—The Public Sector Reduced Work Week and Compensation Management Act; Loi sur la réduction de la semaine de travail et la gestion des salaires dans le secteur public

Len Howell - Private Citizen

Kathy Ducharme - Private Citizen

Nancy Riche - Canadian Labour Congress

Brian Arden - Thompson Teachers' Association

Enid Leskiw and John Chalaturnyk - Retired Teachers' Association of Manitoba

Evan Casselman - Turtle Mountain Teachers' Association

John Rennie and Barbara Kehrstephan - Portage Teachers' Association

Judy Bewer - Birdtail River Teachers' Association

Peter Dyck - Private Citizen

Darryl Gervais - Pelly Trail Teachers' Association

Alan Schroeder - Private Citizen

Steven Roznowsky - Private Citizen

Bill Vail - Private Citizen

Ron McLean - Canadian Federation of Labour

Bill Featherstone - International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 2034

Lyle Stevenson - Private Citizen

Robert Dooley - International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 435

Peter Olfert - Manitoba Government Employees Union

Jeff Brown - Private Citizen

Deborah Jamerson - Private Citizen

Patti Pugh - Private Citizen

Gail Watson - Manitoba Association of School Trustees

Ron Tummon - Private Citizen

Ron Kristjansson - Private Citizen

Mel Willis - Private Citizen

Kelly Ivory - Private Citizen

Ray Benoit - Private Citizen

Lillian Boudlerlique - Private Citizen

Myrna Phillips - Private Citizen

Ron Wally - Man. Assoc. of Health Care Professionals

Brenda Froese - Private Citizen

Clarence Clarke - Private Citizen

Susan Hart-Kulbaba - The Manitoba Federation of Labour

Neil Harden - Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada

George Bergen - Private Citizen

Maureen Hancharyk - Manitoba Nurses' Union

Glen McCoubrey - Private Citizen

Diane DeDelley - Private Citizen

Gaynor Powell - Telecommunications Employees Association of Manitoba (TEAM)

David Turner - Manitoba Teachers' Society

Bob Davies - Winnipeg Teachers' Society

Levi Reimer - Seven Oaks Teachers' Association

Marilyn von Stein - Charleswood Jr. High

Neil MacNeil - Lakeshore Teachers' Association

Geoff Tuckwell - Transcona-Springfield Teachers' Association

Dave Normandale - Private Citizen

David Lerner - Private Citizen

Bob Bastable - Regional Support Centre Daerwood School

Jim Nickarz - Private Citizen

Rollie Gilles - Interlake Teachers' Association

Richard Robertson - Manitoba School Councillors Association

Bill Smith - Private Citizen

Joan Seller and Judy Darcy - CUPE - Canadian Union of Public Employees

Denis Fitzpatrick - Private Citizen

Chris Thain - Private Citizen

Linda Geary - Private Citizen

Bill Hales - Private Citizen

Lewis Coelho - Private Citizen

Bernice Bryan - Private Citizen

Debbie Meilleux-Reid - Private Citizen
 Blair Hamilton - Private Citizen
 William Sumerlus - Private Citizen
 Patrick McDonnell - Private Citizen
 Sel Burrows - Private Citizen
 Mark Olafson - Private Citizen
 Ed Blackman - Private Citizen
 Dave Hardy - Private Citizen
 Barry Hammond - Private Citizen
 Richard Orlandini - Private Citizen
 Paul Moist - CUPE - National Research
 Department
 George Harris - Private Citizen
 Don Sullivan - Private Citizen
 Nicole Campbell - Private Citizen
 Stephen Holborn - Private Citizen
 David Johns - Private Citizen
 Marie Speare - Private Citizen
 Dr. Dan Gietz - Private Citizen
 Mark Golden - Private Citizen
 Jessie Vorst - Private Citizen
 Paul Fortier - Private Citizen
 Paul Phillips - Private Citizen
 Tom Booth - Manitoba Organization of Faculty
 Association
 Richard Park - Private Citizen
 Dr. Ian Goldstine - Manitoba Medical
 Association
 Jim Silver - Choices
 Aian DeJardin - Private Citizen
 Ken Guilford - Private Citizen
 Dr. John Loxley - Private Citizen
 Tracy Libitka, Shauna MacKinnon and Twilla
 MacDonald - Private Citizens
 Mark Gabbert - Private Citizen
 Michael Shaw - Canadian Union of
 Educational Workers
 Kenneth Emberley - Private Citizen
 Robert Chernomas - President, U of M Faculty
 Association
 Diane O'Neil - Private Citizen
 Jettie Zwiep - Private Citizen
 Barry Wolfe - River East Teachers'
 Association
 Mary Wallace - CUPE Local 500 - Hospital
 Unit
 Richard Sparling - Private Citizen
 Robert Hilliard - Private Citizen
 Laurie Todd - Private Citizen
 Kerniel Aasland - Private Citizen
 William Seymour - Private Citizen
 Bernie Lopko - Private Citizen
 Ostap Hawaleshka - Private Citizen
 Written Submissions:
 Ester Fyk - Private Citizen
 Dale Yeo - Private Citizen
 Hazel Anderson - Private Citizen
 Jack Boyko - Private Citizen
 Alvin Funk (Chairperson) - Intermountain
 Teachers' Association Professional
 Development Committee
 Boris Bugera - Private Citizen
 Teachers - Goose Lake High
 Barb Grexton - Private Citizen
 Staff - Rorketon School
 Katherine Bellemare - Private Citizen
 Staff - Gilbert Plains Collegiate
 Staff - Reston Collegiate Institute
 Carole Free - Resource Teacher, St. George
 School
 Robert Rondeau - Private Citizen
 V. Stephenson - White Horse Plains Teachers'
 Association
 Sharon Woodman - Private Citizen
 Russ Reid - Private Citizen
 Jan Chaboyer - MGEU, Local 2003, Brandon
 University
 Bob Babey - Agassiz Teachers' Association
 Errol Black - Brandon University Faculty
 Association
 John Blake - Private Citizen
 Joseph Dolecki - Private Citizen
 Betty Granger and Mr. Krahn - Winnipeg
 School Division No. 1

Barry Wittevrongel - St. Vital Teachers' Association

Your committee has considered:

Bill 22—The Public Sector Reduced Work Week and Compensation Management Act; Loi sur la réduction de la semaine de travail et la gestion des salaires dans le secteur public

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendment:

MOTION:

THAT section 16 be renumbered as subsection 16(1) and that the following be added as subsection 16(2):

Arbitration proceedings void

16(2) On the coming into force of this act, no arbitration proceedings relating to compensation for medical practitioners for the 1993-94 year may be commenced or continued, and any such proceedings, including any decision by a board of arbitration, are void and of no effect.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

Mr. Reimer: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Annual Report of The Surface Rights Board for the 1992-93 year.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the loge to my right, where we have with us this afternoon Mr. Bob Banman, the former member for La Verendrye.

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this afternoon, sir.

Also with us this afternoon, seated in the Speaker's Gallery, we have Mr. Guy Brown, the MLA for Cumberland Centre from Nova Scotia, and also l'honorable Marcelle Mersereau, députée de Bathurst.

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this afternoon.

We also have seven adult student visitors from The Original Women's Network. They are under the direction of Ms. Doreen Emms and Rhonda McOrister. This training centre is conducted in the constituency of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes).

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this afternoon.

* (1400)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Home Care Program
Homemaking Services**

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, it has been more than a year now that this government has been talking about a rational approach to health care reform and putting community care in place before cutting institutional care. Regrettably, we have seen very little evidence of that to date.

Mr. Speaker, today I am tabling a letter from the head of geriatric medicine at St. Boniface General Hospital in which he says: "... many patients are independent in self-care but need some help with domestic care in order to achieve independence in the community. This, presumably, is the very objective of our current health care policies. Removing these community supports will just keep people in institutional care longer and is the very negation of all that we are working for."

Dr. Powell goes on to say that this government's changes to Home Care mean giving a greater sense of gloom that "Health Care Deform" has actually disintegrated into a money-saving operation.

Mr. Speaker, given that very serious letter, I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon) today if he can assure this House and the people of Manitoba who depend on Home Care services that there will be services available so that people who may not be able and should not have to pay for private homemaking services—which is something his own Minister of Health has advocated—can be discharged from hospital and can achieve an independent life with dignity in their own homes in their own community?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the intent of the program, and that continues to be the intent of the program.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I find it quite interesting that, again, the member for St. Johns was around the cabinet table that established Support Services to Seniors in 1985, wherein senior citizens assessed for home care, for housecleaning, for meal preparation, for laundry services, would be referred to buy those services, to purchase those services from Support Services to Seniors groups which would be started up with modest volunteer co-ordinator funding. That policy is exactly the policy that is in place today.

I find it quite interesting that my honourable friend the member for St. Johns today says that policy of Howard Pawley, when she was in cabinet deciding for that policy, implementing that policy, advocating that policy in 1985, all of a sudden she finds it to be contrary. Mr. Speaker, that is not so.

Mr. Speaker, the NDP in 1985 saw the need to invest in more intensive service delivery in home care, and that where possible seniors would be referred to outside, paid-for housecleaning, meal preparation and laundry where they had the ability to arrange that.

That policy has been in place since 1986 under the NDP. It works exceptionally well. It has allowed the NDP and this government to continue to purchase more needed services to maintain the independent living all of us so desire for our senior citizens under the auspices and the assistance of the Home Care Program.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Again, for the record, the minister should know, and I hope the Premier knows, that back in 1985, the government supported a community-sponsored initiative. It did not make a single change to Home Care, did not cut anyone off Home Care services.

Let me ask the Premier, since again the Minister of Health is so evasive about what changes they are making, what is the real story? According to Dr. Powell, a meeting took place on June 23 where case co-ordinators were informed there would be no homemaking service for clients from September henceforth.

Is the homemaking service being cut completely, or will home support services only be provided to clients who have medical care requirements?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, exactly the same assessment criteria will be made today as was made in 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, where this is a single service for the individual, and the individual

has the ability to arrange for those services. Be it from Support Services to Seniors or other providers, the individual will be referred to alternate services and will purchase those services, just as the policy understood and committed to do in 1985 that my honourable friend does not want to acknowledge was part of her cabinet decision-making process in 1985.

Now, Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, I look forward to seeing the geriatrician's letter because while we are on the topic, one might consider the comments of Dr. Stuart Hampton, geriatric medical consultant, and his quote is: I think it is obviously sending a message out that people have to be more self-reliant and utilize other resources in the community. I would hope that it could strengthen other aspects of Home Care which are the nursing, the bathing and the personal care kinds of things that Home Care really does very well indeed.

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly the policy we are following. That was the policy that my honourable friends the New Democrats put in place in 1985, followed diligently, with many seniors having to purchase housecleaning, meal preparation and laundry, 1986, 1987, as a result of the policy they put in place.

The only thing that has changed is New Democrats are now in opposition.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Well, Mr. Speaker, what has changed is that thousands of people have been cut off of Home Care by this minister.

Let me ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon) again, since we are getting no clear answers from the Minister of Health about the fact that this is such an inexpensive, preventative part of the Home Care Program. I want to ask the Premier if he will look into the basis for which Home Care was established to begin with and consider the words of one of the founders of that program, Jeanette Block, who states that the homemaking component is an essential part of Home Care. It is an inexpensive component and it is preventative.

How does this Premier justify cutting or eliminating a most cost-effective, preventative aspect of our health care program?

Mr. Orchard: Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, my honourable friend keeps asking for more information on the Home Care Program, which I provided in a great amount of detail, although my honourable friend was not present for that

discussion of the Estimates, but I provided a substantial amount of detail as to exactly what we expected the shifts in care to be in the Home Care Program this year over previous years.

Mr. Speaker, that is why the program has grown from \$34 million when we first came to government to \$68 million today. That is why we purchase continually more volumes, more hours of nursing services, more volumes of VON services, and that continues this year.

My honourable friend the New Democrat—and I will provide her with information as soon as I can put it together in my office, but in 1986, there were literally thousands of Manitobans, seniors, who had to buy housecleaning services, laundry services and meal preparation because of the policy my honourable friends the New Democrats put in place in 1985.

Mr. Speaker, it allowed the program to deliver medical care, which is what Dr. Hampton is referring to, which is exactly where we have reinvested those dollars, back into more sophisticated, more needed care, to maintain independent living for a longer period of time in a senior's own home.

* (1410)

Home Care Program Homemaking Services

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, if the minister had provided that information, why does the good doctor's letter therefore state that no information was provided, and why were caregivers not provided with it?

But my question to the minister, Mr. Speaker, is: Why does the Manitoba League of the Physically Handicapped have to have a special meeting today to find out whether their members are going to be cut off from the minister's program? Why is he not telling us who is being affected and how many thousands are being cut off? Will he simply state that information?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Well, Mr. Speaker, while my honourable friend is wanting complete information, first of all, my honourable friend might reconsider the phrase he has used that 1,500 home support workers will be laid off. That is inaccurate, and that was a statement of my honourable friend in Question Period.

Mr. Speaker, I have told all who have asked that that is not an accurate statement by the New Democrat. There will be reduced hours which I explained in the Estimates process, as it was the year before, as it has been every year that Support Services to Seniors has been put in place by the New Democrats.

Secondly, I want to indicate to my honourable friend that there will be a number of Manitobans on reassessment as of September 3—not immediately as my honourable friend the New Democratic critic has alleged—who will have Home Care services, which involve, singly, housecleaning, laundry, meal preparation, referred to paid-for suppliers, as has been done since 1986. That process will take place from now until September 3.

It is not today, as my honourable friend the New Democrat has alleged in some of his statements inside and outside the House.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to this minister.

Can the minister advise me whether or not individuals who are living independently, disabled individuals who are living independently, in focus and cluster housing, supported by Ten Ten Sinclair, whether or not their home care will be cut off?—because Ten Ten phoned me this morning to ask whether or not that is the case from this minister who is supposedly so forthcoming and has provided all this information and has changed the policy dramatically since 1985.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend said I have changed the policy dramatically since 1985. At least my honourable friend is now recognizing that in 1985, Support Services to Seniors was introduced by the government of the day which happened to be Howard Pawley, which happened to be New Democrat, which happened to bring in the process where housecleaning services, meal preparation and laundry would be paid for by those individuals assessed by Continuing Care as needing that service, and the individuals would pay for that service since 1985. Finally, my honourable friend has acknowledged that new program.

Now, Mr. Speaker, discussions with Continuing Care, Ten Ten Sinclair and all user groups are in process now, and those very questions will be answered in collaboration with those organizations. But let me tell my honourable friend that we value the support that Ten Ten Sinclair provides to

independent living, to the ability for disabled Manitobans to enjoy a very, very more complete lifestyle through the provision of services that are available through Ten Ten Sinclair, and that will continue.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, can the minister at least outline for us, if this program is so valuable in keeping people independent in the community, why he has cut \$3 million from this budget, why thousands of people are going to be cut off this program, why all of the caregivers, the doctors, the service providers, nurses who are writing us, did not know the program was being cut, why he is doing this and why he is changing the program that has been the most effective and recognized in Canada since it was brought in?

Mr. Orchard: Why, Sir, might I rhetorically ask, has my honourable friend already forgotten what he stated, that in 1985, that was the intention of the New Democrats in government, to allow, where the services can be supported by Support Services to Seniors, for seniors to purchase housecleaning, meal preparation and laundry? Now, that is what we are continuing to do. We have since 1988 and we did in this budget.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend asks why. Why did we remove those \$3 million estimated services? To reinvest them into nursing services which is expected to be up by 11 percent this year over last, to reinvest them into home support work which is expected to increase by 8 or 9 percent, all of which I shared in full detail with my honourable friend in the Estimates process, outlining the increased number of people to be served, the increased number of hours of service provision by nursing, by home support workers, by therapy, all of which is an increase in service.

I will provide my honourable friend the page number in Hansard so he can refer to that and refresh his memory of week-old information.

Property Classifications Large Lots—Rural

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Urban Affairs.

In February of 1992, when we were discussing in this House the Headingley secession bill, the minister stated: Many had criticized the government's decision to allow Headingley to

secede on the grounds that it signalled the beginning of the end of Unicity and that that was a wrong perception.

He went on to say: Given the very special circumstance of Headingley, I would suggest to the members that there is no legitimate basis for concluding that allowing Headingley to secede means other communities will be permitted to withdraw one by one over time. I can assure you this is not the government's intention, nor will that happen.

Now, Mr. Speaker, since that time, we have now learned that the minister has indulged in threats, which can only lead to a further escalating of the division between St. Germain, Vermette and the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, my question for the minister: Based on the statement yesterday from the deputy mayor that they proposed that the province create a separate classification for large-lot properties in 1989, did the province, in fact, get that request from the city in 1989 to create that separate classification? If so, why did they turn it down?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, yes, indeed, the City of Winnipeg did provide a request to change or to add another residential category to the three categories already existent in the portioning and classification of property.

They wanted an R-4 classification for large-lot residential property to apply, not just to Winnipeg. They wanted that to apply to the entire province of Manitoba, that all of a sudden, now, large-lot properties in the Rural Municipality of Woodlands or in the Rural Municipality of Dauphin or in Swan River or any place in rural Manitoba would have the same application, whether or not there was a problem and whether or not new problems would be created by providing a classification province-wide over all those municipalities.

So I suggested at the time to the City of Winnipeg that this was not necessarily a classification problem, as far as that was concerned, but a taxation problem related to Winnipeg, and that a taxation problem related to Winnipeg required a Winnipeg solution.

There was no point in attempting to maneuver a new classification and apply it province-wide to create a whole new set of problems elsewhere in

our province, Mr. Speaker, rather than trying to deal with a Winnipeg problem with a Winnipeg solution.

Mr. Edwards: That is absolutely ridiculous. We have an act called The City of Winnipeg Act. This is the Minister of Urban Affairs. There is one urban centre under his jurisdiction. It is Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, he could have dealt with this problem in Winnipeg for Winnipeg and for the people who were in Winnipeg until he created other jurisdictions.

My question for the minister: Why is he refusing to do what would solve this problem according to the city, according to the people who live in the outlying regions who are frustrated with their taxation situation? Why is he passing the buck? Why does he not solve the problem, instead of being a problem creator by making this type of threat, which can only make this situation worse?

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) suggests I should read The City of Winnipeg Act. The member for St. James ought to read what legislation there is in this province, because all assessment, classification included, is included in The Assessment Act that applies province-wide, not just to the city of Winnipeg. All assessments are equal across the whole province, not just in the city of Winnipeg.

What has happened, of course, Mr. Speaker, is since that time, as well, we are addressing the situation of problems associated with differences in residential categories, the fact that rental accommodation is different from a condominium accommodation that is different from an ownership, rental or occupied in a single-family residence situation.

What we are doing over a period of time is trying to meld those together so that all residential properties pay a single rate of portioning.

The problem, as I said earlier, Mr. Speaker, and I understand his naivety, the member for St. James, that he does not understand how municipal government works and so on, but the fact of the matter is it is a taxation problem, not an assessment one. It is a Winnipeg problem, not a Manitoba overall problem, and it needs a solution related to the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Edwards: This minister is abrogating his responsibility. He knows full well that The Municipal Assessment Act exempts certain sections and defers to The City of Winnipeg Act.

The City of Winnipeg Act, itself, specifically sets out provisions dealing with taxation, dealing with these issues. He could very easily deal with this matter under his jurisdiction in The City of Winnipeg Act, Mr. Speaker.

Is he saying that this reason, which I believe is a false reason, is the only reason he can come up with, that he will not act to solve this problem for the people of this city?

* (1420)

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Second Opposition Party had bothered to follow this issue at all, he would have known that two years ago, I wrote to the City of Winnipeg—I have been writing to them ever since—proposing alternatives to deal with this specific issue.

I offered to the City of Winnipeg a potential solution, legislatively created under The City of Winnipeg Act, that would have allowed them to solve not only the problem with respect to St. Germain, it would have solved the problem for Headingley without having to take the kind of action that ultimately was taken.

It would have, and still would, resolve the problem with respect to south St. Norbert, to the south Charleswood group of people, south Transcona, east St. Boniface and Old Kildonan, all of the areas where there are large-lot, unserved residential properties, the cost of which would have been approximately \$900,000, about half of what they lost when Headingley left Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, the City of Winnipeg turned that down flat and dreamt up this idea of a new category for assessment which had nothing to do with the problem. I offered them a solution; they turned it down.

Pharmacare Reimbursement Delays

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Mr. Speaker, since variety is the spice of life, I am going to deliver this quotation in a different way.

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under Heaven, a time to get and a time to lose and a time to have and a time to cast away.

Mr. Speaker, there is a time to file a Pharmacare refund claim, and there is a time to expect the reimbursement cheque. We know one claimant who sent his claim, registered mail, by the

beginning of April, and when he checked, they had no record of it. We also have another claimant who delivered his claim by hand, and when he called to find out, the clerk there blamed the Post Office and said it is now taking about eight weeks. When we phoned Pharmacare, 786-7141, we were told there were two to three weeks additional backlog.

Mr. Speaker, to the honourable Minister of Health: Given this government's callous and unforgiving treatment of seniors with respect to deadlines in filing Pharmacare claims, how does this minister justify this double standard of unreasonable delay to seniors who are now waiting for their reimbursement?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the song-making of my honourable friend leaves me speechless, but not willing yet to recommend him to a record company.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend persists in indicating that seniors are the ones who failed to file before April 30. I want to tell my honourable friend that when he says that, he does a disservice to seniors. Very few seniors missed the deadline of April 30.

My honourable friend mentioned two specific circumstances, one of them registered mail and the other one a hand-delivered application dropped off presumably at the Pharmacare office. Mr. Speaker, I would very much appreciate my honourable friend sharing both of those circumstances with me so I can investigate them, because something would seem to be amiss, particularly with a registered mail delivery if it was on time.

Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to my honourable friend that with the April 30 deadline, a vast majority of our claims are filed in that last week or so period of time. We bring on additional staff for a short period of time to expedite claims, but, yes, there is an additional two- to three-week lag time in getting refund cheques out because of the substantial increase in claims at the end of the year.

Mr. Santos: Mr. Speaker, in view of the government's workweek and wage reduction policy whereby certain employees who want to work on Fridays cannot, what steps will this minister take in order not to force seniors to suffer this kind of unreasonable delay?

Mr. Orchard: Well, Mr. Speaker, the one thing we did as of 1988, one of the very first things I did when

we came into government on May 9 was to authorize additional staff to clear up a backlog which the previous administration—my honourable friend was not part of it at that time—had allowed to build up, so there were three- and four-month delays as of 1988.

Mr. Speaker, at this time of the year, yes, we have a longer period of time for refund, but we have for the last six filing years brought on substantial additional part-time staff to expedite the refunds. Many of them are received in the month of April, and probably two-thirds of our claims go out in a short period of time.

We have consistently brought forward additional staff ever since I first walked into the office on May 9, 1988, to expedite that refund to all Manitobans, Sir.

Northern Manitoba Emergency Telephone System

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, the events of last week have been quite disastrous for a lot of communities. Unfortunately, they could have been more disastrous in terms of personal welfare in many communities in northern Manitoba.

Apart from the difficulties experienced in Lynn Lake as a result of the fire, the flooding in Swan River knocked out the telephone system in virtually all of northeastern Manitoba. On Sunday, on Monday, it was almost impossible to reach any community in the northeastern part of the province.

My question is to the Minister responsible for MTS, the acting minister, or perhaps the Minister responsible for the Emergency Measures Organization.

Why is there no alternative communications network, microwave network, some other network available to northern communities so they will never again be isolated the way they have been as a result of the incidents in the last week, so that in the event of an emergency, for example, the medical air flight evacuation plane can get into a community to rescue someone?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I will take down some information for the Minister responsible for Telephones.

However, I would like to instruct the member for Flin Flon that there was a temporary system set up very, very shortly after the main tower went down

and after the main cable, as I explained yesterday, was severed. What they have been doing is monitoring the calls and making sure the emergency calls were handled.

Under my leadership, we are now doing a mobile study that will try to connect the highways and all emergency measures throughout the province. I wish the member, when he was in cabinet, had looked at an emergency situation, and these people would not be inconvenienced today, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Storle: Mr. Speaker, there is no communications network. The people in South Indian Lake, for example, did not know that they were to use an alternative. When they dial zero, they get no response. They simply cannot, and that is occurring for more than 24 hours.

My question is simple. I am not placing blame. I am asking the minister responsible, what is going to be done to ensure that an alternative means of emergency communication is available in remote communities, significant-sized communities in northern Manitoba?—a simple, straightforward question.

Mr. Ducharme: Mr. Speaker, what I explained yesterday and explained outside this House was that we are looking at a mobile system. As the member can realize and is yelling across the floor, put in a 911, well, 911 is not the answer when you cannot have an immediate rescue to the situation.

A mobile system is being looked at. I disagree with the member. There was access to the mobile lines and to the telephone lines as a result of emergencies. They were handled very, very fast by EMO.

* (1430)

Disaster Assistance Lynn Lake Area

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, given that there are likely to be literally hundreds of individual and community-based claims as a result of the fire in Lynn Lake, can the minister responsible for emergency measures tell this House when representatives from the Disaster Assistance Board will be available or whether they will be available in Lynn Lake, so people will have a face-to-face opportunity to explain their circumstances and to seek compensation and redress in a reasonable fashion?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, the member well knows that there is a process in place, a cost-sharing agreement with the federal government. I have notified the federal government in regard to the disasters in the northern area. That is done by this minister.

He also should know, with his experience, that local municipalities have these types of forms to fill out, and also our EMO, Disaster Assistance constantly works with the municipalities in the area. They work with them, and some of them are working in those particular areas now.

No-Fault Auto Insurance Top-Up Insurance

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, one of the consequences of the government's policy to reduce benefits available from the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation is the creation of a private market for what the government describes as top-up insurance.

I wonder if the Minister responsible for MPIC can tell us whether or not he has had discussions with private insurance companies about filling this gap.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, I have not met on a one-to-one basis with the companies, but I have made inquiries about the availability of additional income insurance, and I made inquiries regarding the availability of this type of insurance or the demand for this type of insurance under the Quebec system. As a matter of fact, the demand under the Quebec system has not been very high.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, could the minister describe for us the estimated size of this market here in this province, given the workup that they did prior to introducing this new policy?

Mr. Cummings: As I indicated, I made inquiries as to the demand for this service in the one other jurisdiction that uses this system, and the demand was not high.

Our plan does cover a much greater percentage of the community to 90 percent of their net income. It seems to me that leaves a fairly small market that would be potentially covered in this province.

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker, the information the government sent out promoting its new policy is advertising the need for top-up insurance.

Is it the government's intention to have MPIC provide this insurance?

Mr. Cummings: No, it was not our intention that MPIC would venture into this area, but I would assure you and Manitobans that we will be watching the development in this area.

It certainly seems to me that the demand will decide whether or not there is an increase in competition for this type of service or whether in fact—and if the member is advocating that MPIC should expand its services, then perhaps that is something he might want to advocate when we get the bill into committee.

Senate of Canada Abolition

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

Support for abolition of the Senate is growing every day in this province and indeed across the country. I was intrigued to note that seven or eight Premiers supported the abolition of the Senate, Sunday in Vancouver.

What position did the Premier of this province take, and did he agree with the abolition or not?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): As usual, the member for Elmwood does not have his facts right. There were only eight Premiers there, and Premier Bourassa, Premier Klein and I did not support. So he can take his figures from there.

I also happen to know that Premier Wells does not support abolition, so there could not possibly be seven or eight who support abolition.

Mr. Maloway: If he does not agree then that it should be abolished, would he support saving the taxpayers over \$50 million a year, and would he agree that abolition of the Senate should at least be put on the ballot along with the federal election?

Mr. Filmon: I know that the abolition of the Senate has been a long-standing New Democratic policy tradition. I for one, though, believe there has to be an alternative voice for the less populous provinces of Canada in the Government of Canada, Mr. Speaker.

I would not be willing to just simply abolish the existing Senate without having an answer—
[interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I do not think the New Democrats are serious about this. If they were, they would want to listen to the answer.

Disaster Area Public Inquiry Line

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, the flooding situation in Swan River is still very serious; in fact, communities continue to be evacuated. There are many communities stranded and also with no telephone service. Yesterday, the minister gave us a statement and a briefing, and we appreciate that. However, he said that things were well under control and that a public inquiry line was set up so that people who have relatives who are stranded could get information.

Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the minister why these calls are going to the legion hall and a caretaker is answering the calls, rather than to EMO. It is a very serious problem. They are not getting the information. Has this situation been corrected?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware that they are going to another location. I just talked to the member who talked to my department late this morning. She could have made the department aware of that at the time instead of waiting until 2:30 in the afternoon to make them aware.

I fully briefed the member from across the way, and she has a briefing again at 3:15 this afternoon, so I am sure she could bring her concerns, and we will get that question answered for her when she gets her briefing at 3:15.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, I hope the problem can be corrected because it is serious.

Disaster Assistance Swan River Area

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): I want to ask the minister responsible for Disaster Assistance whether staff has been brought in, whether cabinet has taken the proper steps to allow that disaster assistance be offered in that area and whether there are going to be people in the area very soon to offer assistance to the hundreds of families who have had flood damage to their homes and who are not covered by insurance at this time.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services): Mr. Speaker, first of all, the provincial and the federal governments work with the local

municipalities on a cost-sharing basis. When it is all reassessed, each municipality is on a per capita basis. I think it is a dollar a head. Anything over a million dollars up to the first \$3 million is 50-50 share. After \$3 million, it is 75 percent share with the federal government.

We have people who are assessing the situation, and they will be receiving the applications that are available in the different municipalities. They usually come forward to our department and then pass through cabinet through Treasury Board. So that is how the claims are handled.

Disaster Assistance Crop Loss

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, the next question I have goes to the Acting Minister of Agriculture.

Since there are thousands of acres of crop land that are flooded at the present time and will be in that state for many days to come, is crop loss covered by Disaster Assistance, or are there any steps being taken to offer assistance to farmers through another channel because of the tremendous loss they are facing and the difficult situation they are facing right now?

Hon. James Downey (Acting Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, let me first of all indicate that any time this kind of disaster situation takes place, it is very difficult for the farm community or anyone to have to deal with it.

At this time, it is too early to assess the damage that has taken place on the farm community. However, let me assure you I will bring it to the attention of the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) as soon as possible. That is why farmers buy crop insurance, and coverage of that nature is available to the farm community.

* (1440)

Child Protection Centre Government Funding

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (River Heights): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Family Services.

In 1992-1993, the Child Protection Centre received \$807,000. The budgeted amount this year was \$578,000 because they had a surplus. The government has now clawed back that surplus.

Will the minister today confirm that the grant to the Child Protection Centre will not be \$578,000, which is what he said in Estimates, but will be \$776,000, which is 3.8 percent less than they received last year?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, our funding to the Child Protection Centre is as I had indicated in Estimates. We are providing them with a grant. We are asking them to use the accumulated surplus they have had for some time.

There has been an issue of the level of that surplus, and I have indicated we are going to address that. Their total funding will be 3.8 percent less than it was last year.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, they have taken back the surplus. The figure should be \$776,000.

Will the Child Protection Centre have \$776,000 in money to spend this year from the provincial government?

Mr. Gillehammer: Mr. Speaker, I have indicated the process that we went through in terms of establishing the funding for the Child Protection Centre. I indicated that in Estimates, that they will have the grant at a certain level, the surplus that has been accumulated.

We are currently in the process of meeting with them to determine the exact level of that surplus. Their funding will be consistent with what I have indicated, 3.8 percent less than it was the previous year.

Mr. Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statement

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for St. Norbert have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House today to recognize the outstanding achievement of the graduates of two high schools in my constituency, Fort Richmond Collegiate and St. Norbert Collegiate. These two schools saw over 200 students graduate this year.

Mr. Speaker, it is not too often that we have the opportunity to have one of our graduates present on the floor of the House. This particular graduate had an outstanding scholastic record and set a fine example for all the students to follow. She

graduated this year from Fort Richmond Collegiate magna cum laude with a 90 percent average and received the proficiency award for the highest mark in History 300 with 98 percent.

This graduate also received the Gord Huber Memorial Scholarship for interest in government and current affairs, with a value of \$500. She also received a Carleton University scholarship for \$6,000 over four years, as well as a University of Manitoba scholarship, Mr. Speaker.

This young woman is certainly an inspiration to all students in the province of Manitoba and across Canada. She has demonstrated perseverance and dedication to her studies while at the same time serving the members of this House in an efficient and courteous manner.

Mr. Speaker, today I ask all members to join me in congratulating one of our Pages whom I am honoured to represent as the member for St. Norbert, Karen Tymofichuk.

Committee Changes

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis); Broadway (Mr. Santos) for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), for Tuesday, July 6, at 7 p.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) for Broadway (Mr. Santos), for Wednesday, July 7, 7 p.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: Thompson (Mr. Ashton) for Transcona (Mr. Reid); St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), for Wednesday, July 7, at 7 p.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be amended as follows: Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) for Broadway (Mr. Santos), Thursday, July 8, 9 a.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that the composition of the Standing

Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar); and Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie), for Thursday, July 8, 9 a.m.

Motions agreed to.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Niakwa): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development for July 6, at 7 p.m., be amended as follows: Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) for Emerson (Mr. Penner); Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson) for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau); St. Vital (Mrs. Render) for Morris (Mr. Manness); and Riel (Mr. Ducharme) for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger).

I also move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources for July 6, at 7 p.m., be amended as follows: Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer); Morris (Mr. Manness) for Emerson (Mr. Penner); River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) for Ste. Rose du Lac (Mr. Cummings).

Motions agreed to.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), and that is for Tuesday, July 6, 7 p.m.

I also move, seconded by the member for Crescentwood (Ms. Gray), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: St. James (Mr. Edwards) for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs); again, that is for Tuesday, July 6, 7 p.m.

Motions agreed to.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would ask if you could begin by please calling for introduction for second reading, Bill 54. As well, if you could call for continuation of debate on second reading in this order, please: Bill 41, Bill 34, Bill 20, and Bill 32.

Following the completion of that business, I will have further announcements for the House.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 54—The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act (2)

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Rural Development): I move, seconded by the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), that Bill 54, The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Derkach: This amendment to The Municipal Assessment Act before this House today could be described merely as a housekeeping change. It is simply extending the authority provided to the municipalities when The Municipal Assessment Act was first introduced in 1990. The provision in question allowed municipalities to phase in tax increases resulting from the 1990 reassessment.

As some members of this House may recall, through this provision, the new assessment act provided municipalities with a means to phase in reassessment-related tax increases which they believed to be unreasonable for ratepayers to absorb in one year. The provision provided them with the ability to deal with localized increases which were unique to their municipality.

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

This section is permissive in that it allows municipalities, at their discretion, to phase in reassessment-related tax increases to local taxpayers which may otherwise be difficult to handle in one year with only a few months notice.

Madam Deputy Speaker, several municipalities in rural Manitoba used the provision for the 1990 reassessment, and the City of Winnipeg has already indicated their desire to use this authority for the upcoming reassessment.

Accordingly, Madam Deputy Speaker, our department is putting forward this amendment to ensure municipalities have the tools they need to deal with changing assessments within their jurisdictions. I say again that this particular amendment to The Municipal Assessment Act before this House could be viewed as a

housekeeping matter which would accommodate municipalities in dealing with their reassessments which are occurring for the 1994 tax year.

It is something that municipalities, indeed, have expressed an interest and a desire to have as a tool in dealing with reassessment. So, I recommend this bill to the House. Thank you.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 41—The Provincial Parks and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading, Bill 41 (The Provincial Parks and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant les parcs provinciaux et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Bill 34—The Public Schools Amendment (Francophone Schools Governance) Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading, Bill 34 (The Public Schools Amendment (Francophone Schools Governance) Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (gestion des écoles françaises)), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Bill 20—The Social Allowances Regulation Validation Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 20 (The Social Allowances Regulation Validation Act; Loi validant un règlement d'application de la Loi sur l'aide sociale),

on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No?

An Honourable Member: No leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No leave? Leave has been denied.

Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 20. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 32—The Social Allowances Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: Bill 32 (The Social Allowances Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), standing in the name of the honourable member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Madam Deputy Speaker, this in many ways follows on the heels of some comments I made with respect to Bill 20.

I do not have to tell anyone on that side that this is one of those pieces of legislation—members on this side are going to be opposed to this piece of legislation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am going to try and explain as carefully and as dispassionately as I can why I think is a terrible, terrible, terrible, terrible, terrible mistake. This piece of legislation, I think, symbolizes what is wrong with the current thinking of the front bench and perhaps even extending back into the back bench. I think probably that thinking has escaped or perhaps not touched the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns). The member for Lakeside is his lucid self; he remains untouched.

* (1450)

But I think this is a serious, serious flaw on the part of the Conservative Government. There seems to be an impression that everyone who is

currently being given a hand is somehow, No. 1, undeserving; No. 2, that person is almost incapable of being helped, or that person is not deserving of help.

It has become apparent in virtually everything that this government has done in terms of the social services that it has lost touch with the notion that the economy and social well-being of Manitobans are inextricably linked. They have forgotten that, when it comes to health care. They have forgotten that, when it comes to education, and now we see that they have forgotten that, when it comes to our young people.

I have watched as time after time after time when questions were raised, when individual cases were presented to the Legislature, first the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), then the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) and then the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) stood in their place and said we are the only province that has this program, therefore it should go.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are not the only province that has a similar program. We may be the only province that has this unique individual program, but that in and of itself should not be justification for eliminating it. The question you would hope that government members would ask themselves, the question you would hope the Minister of Education, the Minister of Family Services, yes, even the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) would ask themselves is: Is there a net benefit to Manitobans through this program?

It reminds me of an argument that we had in this Chamber back in 1984-85 when the legislation on daycare standards, The Day Care Standards Act, was introduced in the Legislature. I remember the cries from this side saying that we cannot afford it, it does not make sense, it is simply a drain on taxpayers and on the social envelope of the province of Manitoba. But, thank goodness, there were some individuals who were not necessarily of the New Democratic Party persuasion who were interested in getting to the truth of the matter, who were interested in really assessing the net economic benefit or the net economic costs of social programs.

Well, to my surprise, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, a body which I have often disagreed with, came to the government and said we are going to study the issue of child care. We are

going to try and determine whether child care, the provision of not universal child care, Madam Deputy Speaker, but the best that we could possibly provide at that time. And the president of the Chamber of Commerce during that period was a Mr. John Doole, someone whom I respect a great deal, who is an independent thinker, undertook, on behalf of the Chamber, to do the study.

Approximately a year later, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce came to the Minister of Education, the Minister of Family Services, and said that they had completed their study, and surprise of surprises, the Winnipeg Chamber concluded that there was in that economic benefit by providing child care, that in fact, in terms of the social and economic benefit to the province, this was a reasonable course to take.

I think that the government should apply the same logic to every decision it makes. It should ask itself: Where is the sense in this; where is the economic sense? We are not standing here saying this is simply a matter of us being more right, more morally correct, more compassionate than members opposite, although that happens to be true.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that members opposite, by and large, want to do the right thing, but wanting to do the right thing means being responsible. It means not simply going with what your colleagues may think is true or what the conventional wisdom of the Conservative Party happens to be at the moment. Reason means assessing the pros and cons, looking at a balance of probabilities, doing some objective analysis.

So I have to ask the member for Roblin-Russell, the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), whether he is aware of any objective study that says this is going to save taxpayers money now or in the future.

We know that the savings that the government is supposedly going to have by this program are going to be assumed by other programs, by other levels of government. The vast majority of the savings are simply going to disappear and be assumed by some other level of government. That is the fact of the matter.

What we are doing is saying to someone who is getting an education and on social assistance, you cannot do that. Do not educate yourself; do not improve yourself; do not improve your potential.

We are saying to that person, no, what you can do is go on welfare, that is what you can do—essentially that is the choice that is being given—we are saying, go and return to your family if that is possible. In many cases it may not be, but go and return to your family and despair, essentially despair.

The fact of the matter is that programs of this kind—and I include many of the ACCESS programs. The programs that were specifically designed and targeted to move people from a position of disadvantage to a position of opportunity and hope, have been successful. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that it is a progressive and an economically viable option.

The government simply cannot talk about investing in people while at every turn taking out from under them the programs that they have to turn to to survive, that they have to turn to to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves. They simply cannot be taken seriously when they talk about the importance of having an educated population. They cannot talk about the importance of education as part of our industrial infrastructure and then cut back on the opportunities for people to become educated, to gather training.

It does not make sense, particularly for the weakest, for those most disadvantaged, but we have to look at it in a more positive vein. These young people stand to gain us economically the greatest benefit if we invest in them. Who knows what impact the decision of the government to withdraw support for hundreds and hundreds of young people is going to have ultimately on their lives? They are now relegated to watching reruns in their parents' livingroom or relegated to moving on to assistance with the City of Winnipeg or moving from place to place as opposed to gaining the education and the self-esteem that they are going to need to be contributors to our society.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) has given us some indication of what the Student Social Allowances Program offers per individual. I can assure the minister that it pales into insignificance the cost of supporting someone for a lifetime and then perhaps supporting their children, all because of a lost opportunity, all because we said, no, it makes more sense to cut these people off than

have them getting an education. I just cannot believe that makes sense.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have said the same thing about many other programs. It does not make sense to me. It never did make sense to me that we should tell people who are unemployed, no, you cannot go to school and upgrade your training, you must be unemployed, that is your job now. It is a waste of money. It is a waste of opportunity.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government is honing that to a fine art. They are basically saying, we are not going to give anybody an opportunity, we are not going to invest in people, particularly people who require the investment the most. These hundreds, these thousands of students—some thousand students are affected—are those people.

Madam Deputy Speaker, maybe one of the things that is lacking on that side is experience. I do not know how many members on that side have had an opportunity to attend the graduating class of the Winnipeg Education Centre, of the BUNTEP centre, of the training programs that were put in place by the previous Core Area Agreement, training programs that took people who saw no hope, who had lived on welfare in some cases for many, many years, who were in many cases single parents supporting children—I do not know if anyone could ever really understand the sense of accomplishment that these people feel when they have succeeded.

* (1500)

An Honourable Member: I do.

Mr. Storle: The former Minister of Education says he does. Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, it disappoints me to hear that he says he understands, knowing that the Minister of Education was the minister responsible when many of these programs began their decline. That is the problem.

I see the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) shaking her head in dismay that I would say such a thing. Madam Deputy Speaker, I am quite certain that the Minister of Education does not know whereof I speak. We know the Minister of Education's background. We know where the Minister of Education is coming from. I would hazard a guess that the Minister of Education has not seen a soup kitchen in some time.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the fact of the matter is that many of the people who this government is turfing out of the Student Social Allowances Program came from there. They have been on Main Street. They have been part of the homeless. They have been the unemployed. They have been those in despair. That is where they came from. This government is relegating those people to certainly a life of uncertainty from this point on. We can only hope that it does not go beyond that, that somehow they are able, with their own resources, their own strength of character, to find their way out of their current situation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think the government's decision to close this program for lack of understanding the real value of the program is the real tragedy. The government does not appear and none of its members appear to recognize the value of the program. What is even more startling is that none of them seem prepared to do the analysis, to say, what does it cost to provide a student with assistance for a year versus what it is going to cost if we do not educate and offer hope and opportunity to those students over the long haul.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that this program paid dividends to the province of Manitoba, and I happen to know and have as a friend someone who has been involved in this program for a long time. I can tell you that there are not many jobs in the civil service, in the Family Services department that are consistently rewarding but working with these students in this program has been, because it is positive and it does work and it does change people's lives for the better.

What the government has chosen to do is to take away that hope all in the name of some sort of perceived economic responsibility, when it is a double-edged sword and when all of the evidence points to the fact that this will not save money, it simply offloads the cost and destroys hope in the meantime.

So I will be opposing this legislation. I know that my colleagues as well will be opposing this legislation. I would have wished that there would have been some more independent thinking by some of the members opposite.

I want to assure members opposite that these are the kinds of actions, these are the kinds of

symbols that people grasp on when they come to vote.

I can tell the members on the government front benches that when I talk to people on the street and say, does this make sense, the answer is a resounding no. What the government is doing is going to make sure that they do not get re-elected.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to read finally from a Free Press article of June 13, and it says: "Premier Gary Filmon is putting himself into Manitoba history as the premier who kicked poor people out of high school and into welfare. Why he wants this reputation he alone can explain."

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that is a question that needs to be answered. Why does this government want this reputation? Why has this government consistently failed to look at the facts? Why has this government and its ministers consistently refused to acknowledge their obligation—the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), the First Minister (Mr. Filmon)—their obligation to ensure that young people in this province get an opportunity, that they get a chance at an education, that they get a chance to move themselves out of the cycle of poverty and despair and abuse and so forth. That is the history and the role, the lot of many of the people who are involved in this program.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as I say, I had the privilege of knowing someone who worked with these young people, these people in the program. For all of the people that worked with them, who shared sometimes their successes and many times their failures and successes, this is a real tragedy. The government is not going to be left off the hook by the people of Manitoba, particularly the people who supported this kind of programming. People can have a long memory. In the end result, I believe that the elimination of this program and Bill 32 is going to come back to haunt them. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 32. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No? All those in favour, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Deputy Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Deputy Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On division, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: On division.

* * *

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, I would ask if you could now please call in this order, Bills 26, 27, 35 and 36.

Bill 26—The Expropriation Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 26 (The Expropriation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'expropriation), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Deputy Speaker, it gives me some pleasure to rise today to speak to Bill 26, The Expropriation Amendment Act. I do not intend to have lengthy comments. It is the position of our party that this bill should move to committee.

It is a bill which deals with the expropriation process and, of course, that is a very important process in the province. It is an important public power to be able to expropriate property. It is a power that has on occasion been abused by government authorities and must be used very carefully.

This bill essentially provides for the Land Value Appraisal Commission to have the final say for both the expropriated person in addition to the expropriating authority. Currently, of course, the Land Value Appraisal Commission decision is only binding on the authority. This does take away that second look of the Court of Queen's Bench with

respect to the appeal which could have been launched by the expropriated person. However, it is important to remember that both parties, both the expropriated party and the expropriating authority, still have recourse to the Court of Appeal as a final court of decision making on those issues of law, in fact, under the normal rules of judicial review, which are restricted grounds of appeal.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to put on record again that one of the things which disturbs me about the no-fault bill before the House, and I have some concern about this bill, although I look forward to further discussion in the committee on this point, is that we are moving increasingly away from the impartial, learned decisions of judges and toward the decisions of politically appointed individuals whose terms are set by politicians, whose pay is set by politicians, who do not have all of the safeguards of neutrality that the courts offer.

Now, the courts have become, in many cases, cumbersome and too expensive. I acknowledge that; almost everyone in the system acknowledges that. That is why I proposed the quick court solution. What I see here, and I see in particular in the no-fault legislation, is that we are moving away from the neutral decision making, the guarantee of neutrality in the courts and more and more toward final adjudication power in the hands of tribunals which are much more tied to the political system. I know from working with the Workers Compensation Board Appeal Commission that it is not the same, it does not give the same hearing, it does not offer the same fairness, it does not offer the same neutrality that courts do.

* (1510)

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I do have some concern about moving generally away from courts and towards politically appointed tribunals. I do note that this does not appear on its surface, and I have simply read the minister's comments in this regard, and I am trusting him in that respect that this does not do that. It still allows for the Court of Appeal to be the final court of review; however, it does simply provide for a binding decision from the Land Value Appraisal Commission to both parties, the expropriated party and the expropriating authority.

With those comments, Madam Deputy Speaker, I look forward to presentations at the committee stage on this bill.

Madam Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, this bill remains standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

Bill 27—The Environment Amendment Act (2)

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 27 (The Environment Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave? Leave has been granted.

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to Bill 27, The Environment Amendment Act (2). This is an act which is of particular importance to me, because I, since being elected in 1988, every year raised this issue with the government and every year was told that there would be no recourse, there would be no ability to control the abuse of burning stubble. I do not say and I have always said that the agricultural community itself should always be involved in reaching a consensus solution. I have said that the vast majority of farmers who did stubble burn I am sure did so responsibly. There were some who did not, and that was by and large the genesis of the problem.

I represent an area, the St. James area, and I am sure my other colleagues who represent ridings in that area will attest to the fact that that area has consistently over the years been particularly subject to large clouds of stubble smoke.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Acting Speaker, it is not that it causes an unpleasant odour for people for a period of time. That is not my concern. My concern stems from the fact that this poses a real health risk to many thousands of people. Just ask Dr. Chochinov, the head of emergency at Grace Hospital, just ask the people in the field who have to deal with the dozens and dozens of children with asthma, seniors with emphysema who show up and need treatment, and

they are still needing treatment long after the smoke has cleared. They start feeling the medical effects before perhaps you and I have even noticed that it is in the air. The sensitivity in people is widespread. Those with any difficulties with breathing feel the effects of this.

We needed to do something. I stood up year after year and greatly resented the government saying, you do not understand, you are from the city. You do not understand. You want to restrict farmers from doing their job.

Mr. Acting Speaker, no such thing. I stood up year after year because it was a health hazard. I stood up because in fact I had spoken to the people in the agricultural community. They agreed with the approach that I advocated, which was one of structuring a committee including the farming community, coming up with some ability to restrict stubble burning in a sensible, common-sense, reasonable way. That is in fact what the government did at the end of the day, and I am pleased that they did that.

We now have a set of regulations. It is going to be tested for the first year this year. I have some concerns about those regulations. I have expressed those to the members of the committee, but I am very willing and desirous of giving these regulations a test run. Let us see how it works.

I am very concerned that there are adequate enforcement provisions there, and for that reason I am pleased to support this bill, which does allow the RCMP to act as the enforcement officers and does, the minister advises, assist in the enforcement of those regulations. So I am pleased to do anything to expedite this so that we can put it in place, so that the mechanisms can be there for the fall burning season.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I hope that if there are flaws in the regulations, and I am sure there will be some, that after we have had a chance to see how this works in the fall season, we will look at revisions to improve the system because we have, for the first time in the last year, come to a common goal, that we do have to provide some relief to those thousands of people in this city, and indeed I think in many other locations around the province, who suffer greatly because of this practice.

It is preventable, and there are ways to work around it, and that is what we are working towards. So I am pleased to say that we would like this bill to

move to committee. We look forward to hearing any comments at that time, but we do want this framework in place in sufficient time to do all that is necessary to regulate this effectively and efficiently in the coming fall season. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I want to speak on this bill. I can testify first-hand to the problems from stubble burning under the current system. My son has asthma.

I still remember driving down Highway 6 last fall with the suffocating smoke on Highway 6 from stubble burning, the unrestricted stubble burning at that time, and the difficulties that placed my son in. I know, having seen the impact on many residents of Winnipeg and surrounding areas, particularly children with asthma and others with asthma and other breathing problems, the terrible impact that unrestricted stubble burning has had on them.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it is unacceptable that we have not had proper controls on stubble burning and that we are only now dealing with this bill. I say that all have to accept some responsibility for this fact. I go beyond that and say that, in my view, it is not a question of trade-offs or compromises. I believe that the onus in the case of this has to be on those who will stubble burn, to do it in such a way that it is not a health hazard.

I feel too often in the past we have treated it as something that is sacrosanct and something that is essential to agriculture, the unlimited right of stubble burning. That is not the case, that is not acceptable, and I will be looking very carefully at this particular bill, any regulations that follow and any enforcement that takes place, because this bill should be enforced in its entirety. I think people have to understand that this a serious health problem. I feel that some who have said that they will ignore the law should be fully prosecuted. That is not acceptable.

We live in a society where I think we all recognize the impact of pollution on individuals. Stubble burning is a form of pollution. It is like any other form of pollution, it can create major health problems. Like any other form of pollution, it needs to be restricted, eliminated wherever possible, and where it cannot be eliminated, it needs to be regulated and regulated very strictly. I hope that this will happen with the passage of this bill.

I must say, Mr. Acting Speaker, given some of the politics that sometimes surrounds this type of issue, I am skeptical. I really am, but this issue should not be driven by political compromises. It should not be driven by political lobbying.

The fact is, we saw this past fall in particular and we have seen in other years how serious a problem it is. One has to remember that those who suffer from asthma, particularly children, that there is an increase in our society in the number of people with asthma. This is actually despite the reduction in many other diseases and health conditions. In terms of asthma, there has been an increase and there has been an increased number of deaths from asthma. It is a very serious health concern.

* (1520)

I will say, Mr. Acting Speaker, having driven through some of the densest smoke I have seen, worse than half the forest fires I have seen up North in terms of the amount of smoke that was produced and having seen the entire city of Winnipeg surrounded by this haze and knowing my son, who is only eight years old, and the fear that smoke put in him because he knows he is susceptible as being an asthmatic in terms of his breathing from smoke, I just imagine the terrible burden that placed on people, the many people in this city and surrounding rural communities who have far more serious asthma than even my son does.

So in conclusion, I want to say there should be no politics with this bill. There should be no unnecessary compromises, Mr. Acting Speaker. Any stubble burning that is in place should take place only under the strictest of conditions, and we should seek every possible way of eliminating it as a practice where other practices are available of an equivalent.

That has to be the message from this Legislature, and I hope it can be a three-party message, because I have never seen a more clear example of a health problem that has not been dealt with, a problem that needs to be regulated. It is up to us now, and it is the many people in Winnipeg and surrounding rural communities that have asthma and other breathing problems that are depending on us. Let us not let them down.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

Bill 35—The Fisheries Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), Bill 35, The Fisheries Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Pêche, standing in the name of the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Flin Flon? [agreed]

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to thank the member for Flin Flon for allowing me to put some very brief comments on the record. I will, of course, look forward to reviewing his comments as well.

This bill, of course, changes the quota entitlement system in the inland fisheries industry in this province. There is a departmental administrative practice which this is formalizing and to that extent it does put into legislation what I understand is already the practice in the industry, Mr. Acting Speaker, and that is that individual quotas are handed out in the major lakes. Of course, there are lake quotas for the lesser lakes where fishing is done, but those individual quotas are then of some value, some considerable value, I would assume, in some circumstances, perhaps something like a quota for milk production in this province or other such quota systems.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this is formalizing that process in legislation which, of course, then will allow those who have the quotas to sell them, and because presumably there will be some limit, there will be a limit on the amount of individual quotas so that there can be a control of the amount that is harvested from the lakes. Now, that is moving from a system where the lake has a quota, which then allows everyone to fish, everyone to participate, and then it is simply controlled by, whomever has taken it out, whenever the amount that is determined can be taken out, has been taken out, that is it. That is the end of the season.

Mr. Acting Speaker, that system allows everyone to participate and sets a quota for the lake. This system, like the milk system in this province, other marketing schemes, allows only certain individuals to harvest again up to that certain level. It is certainly easier to regulate, to make sure that no

more than is allowed is actually taken out. Why?—because you have a set number of people who are fishing at all. They reach a certain point; then it is over.

The difficulty is, of course, that it does restrict the number of people that can get into the industry. The argument, of course, in favour of that is, well, you set quotas at a level that somebody can do this and earn a reasonable living, one hopes. One has a quota that is based on what is necessary to purchase the start-up equipment to get into the business. If you just simply stick with the lake quotas on the larger market basis, the larger lakes, then you may sacrifice that and there may not be people who are going to do this on a large enough scale to maintain the industry.

So there are pros and cons to both of these systems. I generally, of course, like, I am sure, the minister, favour free enterprise. Obviously, in certain sectors of our economy, it is not a perfect system. If we want to maintain an industry, we have to deviate from that, and I look forward to some discussions at committee about what this system has meant in terms of people getting into the industry, specifically, how difficult is it for those who want to, to get a quota.

I would like to think that we are prepared, of course, to have the industry expand if the market is there. I understand that it has not been a very good market in the recent times, and so that problem has not arisen. I do want to have some discussion at the committee with respect to the overall way that the minister sees this industry going. It is a very important industry to certain sections of our province, certain communities. It is the mainstay of those communities, and we all, I believe, in this House want to do whatever we can to reasonably, within the bounds of a sustainable approach to this, have people enter and be able to earn a living. I have every faith, Mr. Acting Speaker.

I can tell you, many of those in the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corporation whom I have dealt with from time to time—and I believe that they as well have done a good job in this area. I think that corporation has worked, can work, but I also know that it is very important that we maintain the ability to do what we can to maintain the ability of those who are committed to this industry as a way of life to be able to provide for themselves, to be able to have a reasonable standard of living because,

otherwise, they will not be in this business and there will be no industry.

I would not want this industry to simply be one where it was populated by people who did it from time to time as a hobby. I think that it is an important way of life for many communities. I think that we want to respect that. If this bill formalizes a system, and the minister seems to indicate in his comments that it does, which is beneficial and the commercial fishermen's associations are in favour of this, and he indicates that they are, I look forward to that being made clear at the committee, Mr. Acting Speaker, then we are certainly prepared to have this go to committee to have that fuller discussion with those comments about the concern for the industry overall being noted on the record, and we look forward to some detailed discussion at the committee stage. Thank you.

* (1530)

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Acting Speaker, I appreciated the comments of the member for St. James on this bill, and I think he raised a number of questions that needed to be raised. I intend to raise a couple of other considerations for the minister's review prior to this bill going to committee.

Mr. Acting Speaker, while this is a very thin bill, I think it does have major repercussions for fishermen across the province, but I think more than fishermen it has major repercussions for many of our communities. Representing an area where there are literally millions of pounds of whitefish taken from our lakes, I am very concerned about the direction the minister is taking us in this legislation.

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

I know that the minister has indicated to one of my colleagues that the intention here is to simply open up and allow the sale of quota, to allow quota to become a commercial entity in the Lake Winnipegosis-Lake Winnipeg area.

Unfortunately, I think that this legislation certainly leaves open the door that the areas that are going to be prescribed under which this legislation will have sway is going to be left to the minister's discretion, and the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council's discretion.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to put on record the case against moving very quickly to do what the minister intends to do through this legislation.

I know that the industry and particularly some of the larger quota holders, fishermen who have experience, some would say the wealthier fishermen to the extent there are any wealthy fishermen today, are anxious to have this quota entitlement be considered a commodity in effect. We all recognize that there are certain beneficial aspects to having it a commodity because it will, as I am sure the minister suggested in his remarks, make it easier for fishermen to access capital, to get operating loans if there is some sort of certainty to the allocation of fish quotas. That is in itself a legitimate goal.

Certainly, from another perspective, you have fishermen who have been fishing a lake for a long period of time, who like most small-business people, are lacking in significant financial resources, who see the sale of, someday, their fishing enterprise as a nest egg, like farmers see selling their lands. They see it as an opportunity to retire by selling their business.

As it stands, that is sometimes a difficult proposition, because, although you may sell your boat and your equipment and your nets and all the rest of it, the fact of the matter is that until we implement a system like this, you cannot sell the quota, that in fact the Department of Natural Resources can allocate the quota to whomever they wish. There is no search fee for the individual operator, and that is a legitimate problem for some operators.

I want to simply express concern over the potential that the spread of this particular system would have for a lot of Manitoba. I know that the minister's intentions may be honourable, but the fact of the matter is that we are now amending The Fisheries Act so that the regulations now cover and give the minister more opportunity to impose his own will and the department's will and the government's will over what is actually most beneficial to the fishermen themselves and to the fishing community.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think there are two dangers in this. If the minister is going to stand and say, no, this is simply for Lake Winnipeg and Winnipegosis, I am not sure that all of the

fishermen in those two areas are going to be supporting this legislation.

I would certainly like to think that if it is the government's intention to have this particular bill affect those two areas only, what we do is enshrine that in the legislation, that we not simply add another piece of legislation which gives effectively unlimited authority to the minister and the government of the day, that I think this is of significant enough importance that it deserves a debate in the Legislature before we start amending it further, that if all we want to do is to offer that opportunity in areas where we think there is enough competition, where there is enough venture capital to make it realistic to ensure that we do not see the amassing of fishing quota into the hands of fewer and fewer and fewer people, then let us specify the areas in the legislation.

I think we can do that, Madam Deputy Speaker, and I for one will be looking for some indication on the part of the minister that that is what we are going to do. I will tell you why I think it is so important. I have already sent this legislation to all of the fishermen's associations, all of the Northern Association of Community Councils reps in my area, sent it to Northern Affairs communities individually, because I am concerned about the implication.

I can explain, Madam Deputy Speaker, what is going to happen if this system spreads, and there is going to be tremendous pressure on the government, because there are large "fishermen" people involved in commercial fishing in northern Manitoba, people who have their roots in many cases in Lake Winnipeg and communities along Lake Winnipeg, but they have been the most successful and they already enjoy the advantage of having substantial quota in northern Manitoba.

That in itself is a contentious issue because there are many communities that watch as someone from some other part of Manitoba comes in, fishes the quota, provides some short-term employment, perhaps, perhaps not, and then just disappears.

What is going to happen, if this is introduced, unless there are some careful controls, is that the fishing quota that is allocated currently to individuals in northern Manitoba is quickly going to be amassed by a few individuals. What is going to happen is a few successful fishermen, perhaps in the region, perhaps that already have experience

and are well bankrolled in southern Manitoba, are going to buy up, one at a time, the individual licences that individuals have in northern Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is going to be possible and perhaps this year is a typical year for primary agriculture. The fish prices, particularly whitefish prices, are disastrously low. We have a glut of whitefish on the market, and, of course, fishermen out there, who have been fishing for many years, may be in desperate circumstances. They may not have enough money to meet their loan obligations. If someone comes along and says, yes, well, you have got a licence to fish on this lake; I want to buy your licence now and here is the money, or I will pay off your loan—

An Honourable Member: It is the same as farmers.

Mr. Storle: Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Rhineland says—Rhineland? I do not remember. It is Emerson or Rhineland, I can never remember. I wish he would quit moving around—the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) says, well, the same as farmers. Yes, there are similarities, but fishermen and the communities that they represent have even fewer choices than farmers.

What is going to happen is that over a period and maybe a very short period of time, a few fishermen in the province will amass these quotas. Yes, it may be a benefit to a few individuals who are at a point in their life where they want to sell, but it also may be to their disadvantage because they may be at a point in their life where they have to sell.

So what is going to happen is that southerners, a few individuals, not necessarily southerners, are going to basically take control of a resource away from the community. So where once a few local fishermen fished local lakes and employed local people, you are now going to have a situation where that control is lost.

Madam Deputy Speaker, let us just look at it from a business perspective. Anyone that has done any fishing, and the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) knows this better than anyone in this Chamber, that the cost of transporting fish is prohibitive, for many of the fisheries in northern Manitoba, it is prohibitive.

So what is going to happen is that, while we would like to believe that the employment will be maintained regardless of who has the quota, if I am

a fisherman from southern Manitoba and I happen to enjoy having a whole raft of quota in northern Manitoba, licences to fish in northern Manitoba, when the prices go up, I go up north and I fish. Yes, I do hire people. When prices go down, I simply abandon northern Manitoba. I fish where it is convenient, where it is less expensive to transport, and I fish in southern Manitoba.

So they lose twice, Madam Deputy Speaker. Certainly in periods when fish prices take a plunge, and that happens, they are going to lose employment and they have already lost control of the resource. So I think and I do honestly hope that the minister's suggestion to my colleague that this is to apply to only Lake Winnipeg and Lake Winnipegosis can be enshrined in legislation so that we can be very clear on the area of the province that we are talking about, so that I will not—or my friends, my fishermen friends, my commercial fishermen in northern Manitoba will not wake up one day and find that the government, by Order-in-Council, has changed the regulations and opened up the sale of quota across the province, because they are going to lose in that process.

* (1540)

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have already spoken to the fishermen's association in Pukatawagan, South Indian Lake, Granville Lake and Brochet, and they have all indicated they are concerned.

The minister could solve this problem if he insists on introducing this, I think, in a couple of ways. Number one, he can, by amendment, define the regions where this is going to be in effect. He could also mitigate any effect that it will have even on those regions by allowing a moratorium for a year, that there was a full year after coming into force of this act to give people who may want to be in a position to bid on a quota an opportunity to arrange their finances, so it is not simply the people who can be bankrolled, the people who have access to capital, the people who have a significant line of credit at the bank, can go and buy quotas, that there is some thought gone into this so that people who want to have a chance to be commercial fishermen have that chance. So I think that is one possibility.

The second one, certainly if this is going to expand beyond a very small area in the province and maybe the south end of even Lake Winnipeg, I think there needs to be a right of first refusal

granted to communities, local fishermen's associations, local fishermen's co-ops for any licence that is to be offered out. So that what you have, Madam Deputy Speaker, is an opportunity for local people, local co-ops, to say, well, yes, this quota is for sale, this person in the community is selling it and give them the right of first refusal to purchase it at fair market value. If it can be done quietly with a handshake anywhere, any time, there is a grave concern that that will happen without any input from the community, without any input from local fishermen and from their representatives.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I think there are three possibilities that the minister should investigate with respect to this legislation. I think, one, we want to be very clear, before we support the legislation, where this is going to be in effect. It should be in the legislation. Having said that, even recognizing that that is the government's stated intention, there are going to be concerns, and we will want to hear what people say at committee. The smaller communities, the communities of Bloodvein and Princess Harbour and Big Black River, Berens River, all the way up the east side of Lake Winnipeg, I think, have to be heard in this process. The same could be said for Lake Winnipegosis, that we want to hear certainly from some of the smaller communities and the people with an interest in this. So that is No. 1.

Number two, I would certainly be encouraged if the minister would introduce the idea of a year's moratorium after coming into force of the legislation to allow everyone who may be interested in commercial fishing an opportunity to pull together the financial resources, put together a business plan so that they can go to CEDF or some other lending institution to bankroll the purchase of quota. I think it is important to recognize that many of the people in these communities do not have a great deal of experience dealing with the commercial banking system. They are not the kind of people necessarily who simply go and write out a cheque for \$50,000 for a quota.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the fact of the matter is that the people who the minister may intend to aid through this legislation may in fact be the very victims of the legislation in the long run.

The third thing the minister can do, obviously, is offer in some way in the legislation the right of first refusal so that northern communities are not once again put in the position where their birthright, and

that is how many communities see it, their resources, where they have lived all their life, is being sold out from underneath them. The right of first refusal will at least give community councils and fisherman's associations, fishermen's co-ops, individual fishermen an opportunity to say, this is what is being sold, this is the price being asked, I have some time to try and meet or better the price that is being offered.

It just would be extremely unfortunate if this were to progress even piecemeal over a few years to the point where northern communities again lost control or lost even more control of their resources.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I look forward to the minister putting some remarks on the record at some point and perhaps in committee sharing with myself and other committee members where we are actually going with this legislation.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, those are my remarks, and I am sure there are other members who want to discuss this because it is a significant change in the way that we operate in terms of the fishery industry.

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill 36—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 36 (The Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

* * *

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, I would ask if you could please call now in this order, Bills Nos. 2, 10, 20, 25 and 33.

Bill 2—The Endangered Species Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 2 (The Endangered Species Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les espèces en voie de disparition), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, I just want to indicate that we in fact do have someone who wishes to speak if the bill could be called somewhat later and we actually may be in a position to pass that bill through at that point in time.

I just ask that we proceed to the other bills on the Order Paper as called, then return, and we should be able to pass this through to committee.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there leave of the House to revert back to deal with Bill 2 after reviewing the order listed? [agreed]

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

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading, 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). Is there leave to permit the bill to remain to standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Deputy Speaker: No, leave has been denied.

Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. John Plohma (Dauphin): Madam Deputy Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to speak on this bill, Bill 10, and pass it through, hopefully with the support of the other parties, at least to pass through to committee for input from the public. Bill 10 deals with some changes to the legislation that was brought in in 1982 by the New Democratic

government, at that time the Minister of Agriculture, Bill Uruski.

The bill is an amendment to The Farm Lands Ownership Act, and we have noticed, Madam Deputy Speaker, the actions of this government with regard to implementation of that particular act over the last five years that they have been in government and have seen, as a matter of fact, that the Farm Lands Ownership Board has approved every single application that has come before that board.

* (1550)

We wonder whether, in fact, it has ever been treated with any degree of sincerity by the government in terms of the mandate and jurisdiction of the Farm Lands Ownership Board, whether there was any effort at all to implement the act as it was envisaged. The act was put in place in 1982 by the New Democratic government because it was believed, based on what we considered very factual information, that speculation had a lot to do with increased land prices, especially during the '70s in Manitoba.

As a result, the government of the day, under Howard Pawley and Bill Uruski, who was Minister of Agriculture, brought forward the act which put on some very strict parameters as to who could in fact own land in Manitoba and that it specifically dictate that those who were owning land would actually be involved in an active way in farming that land.

We felt that that was a way to preserve the family farm in Manitoba, to support family-operated farms in this province and to limit the impact of corporate farming in the province. In fact, I think the legislation had that kind of impact for a number of years.

However, it seems that since this Conservative government has come into office in the province, we have seen a different approach with regard to the administration of this particular act and the work that was undertaken by the Farm Lands Ownership Board, a different view of the world, shall we say, being taken by this board where, in fact, every single application was approved by the board. There did not seem to be any that they would even have concerns about, none to be rejected. Every application for a variance from the act was approved.

I have to question, Madam Deputy Speaker, this government's support for the concept of family

farms in this province as a result of their failure to implement this act and now their desire to make changes in the act that would broaden the definition of a family farm corporation, of a farm corporation, broaden the definition to allow other not-so-immediate family members to be considered family under the corporation, in fact to change the percentage of active farming interests from the previous 60 percent to 50 percent.

That indicates to us, again, a desire to open up the corporate farm concept insofar as its influence and impact and extent on the farming community today. That, I think, reflects the general philosophy of this Conservative government with regard to farming in this province, a move away from the small family farm to the corporate farm, and that is something that we fundamentally disagree with in the New Democratic Party and in this opposition. I say that because, although they have never stated publicly in this House that I recall, any members, that they do not support family farms, it seems to me that there is a growing movement within the Conservative ranks to in fact move away from the traditional support for family farms to more corporate farm support.

I say this in a provocative way for some members opposite because in fact it did come up as a subject of debate somewhat when the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae) was running for the federal nomination, which he was unsuccessful with just a couple of weeks ago. It seems that the member for Brandon West had made a statement in an advertisement in The Brandon Sun about his position on agriculture and on family farms.

A person, who was undoubtedly a supporter of the Conservative Party and member, by the name of Donn Mitchell of Klondike Farms of Douglas took exception to the position that the member for Brandon West had enunciated in his ad in the paper.

She wrote or he, this is Donn with two Ns and I am not sure if this is a male or female, wrote this letter, and I quote, Madam Deputy Speaker. It is short, and I think it is relevant, so I want to read it into the record.

As soon as I read Jim McCrae's advertisement on the third page of your Saturday's edition, I felt compelled to use your columns in order to send a message to Manitoba's Attorney General. This man is seriously out of touch with both the PC

policy and the agricultural economy which keeps Brandon ticking. When Jim McCrae sings the praises of the small family farm, he is endorsing the policies of both the NDP and the NFU. While there may be a nostalgic ring to it, any reference to small family farms is far removed from the efficient farming world of today where farmers are making more of their own marketing decisions. It surprises me that a man who wants to represent Brandon-Souris appears never to have had a chat with Canada's Minister of Agriculture.

Of course, we are talking about Charlie Mayer there.

If he had done so, he would never have written that ad—Donn Mitchell, Klondike Farms, Douglas.

It seems that this person, who would give the impression of being in tune with the PC policy, as stated, and who seems to think that the Canadian Minister of Agriculture, Charlie Mayer, has a different view, which we also believe is the case, of family farms, and that he supports large corporate farming at the expense of the small family farm, is saying that Jim McCrae, or I should say the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae), is not in tune with the mainstream of PC policy on agriculture.

Now the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) points out that when we are talking about "small," in fact, that is all relative in today's terminology, that what was small years ago is no longer considered even viable and that maybe what was considered large a number of years ago is now considered a small farm. So it is all relative. But the point is, they used the terms—they are not my terms—that the small family farm should be supported. If in fact the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae) did support small family farms in his eyes, I give him credit for doing that, but it seems that the federal Minister of Agriculture has moved away from that.

Clearly, in his policies of doing away with the Crow benefit and the total support for deregulation and free trade and all of these things, the removal of barley from the Wheat Board, and oats—certainly supported by this Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) in Manitoba—would indicate to us that the policies of the Conservative government in this province and nationally are not in tune, in sync, with the member for Brandon West's statements in his

ad when he was running for the nomination for Brandon-Souris.

So we have a serious concern about where this government stands with regard to the support of the family farm. When we see a bill like this, which is making it easier to be considered a farm corporation under the guise that somehow this is making it consistent with The Revenue Act, as the minister said in his opening remarks when he introduced this bill, it is really abandoning the traditional concept of the family farm and moving towards corporate farming. That is probably the mainstream policy of the Conservatives in this province, unlike what it used to be when they would not be caught saying that they did not support small family farms.

I believe that they are now moving away from that traditional support, and that is of concern. I think that those of us who look at this bill, Bill 10, which is now hopefully going to be passed through to committee to hear from members of the public in Manitoba. We look at it, and we wonder why the government felt it was necessary to make these changes.

* (1600)

How many corporations have applied for remission of land transfer taxes under the existing Revenue Act legislation? How many corporations have applied to the farmland protection board, which have between 50 percent and 66-2/3 percent shares owned by farmers or very close relatives, because that is the change being made here? Is this a big problem? Were there a lot of corporations applying, that there had to be special considerations made by the farmlands protection board? Was this a major concern and consideration? We want to know those things and those pieces of information.

We will be asking those of the minister when we get to the committee stage, when we are doing clause by clause, once the public presentations have been made, because, in fact, they may be able to give us some idea as to why the government and the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) felt it was necessary to change the definition for farm corporation.

We will ask what is wrong with the current legislation. Really, what is wrong with the current legislation in terms of its application? We know the government does not support it because it did not

support it in the Legislature in 1982. It has not implemented it in a realistic way because in fact the board, which they have appointed, has not turned down one application.

One can only assume that they are applying the rules in a very loose way. They are making exceptions for everything that comes forward, which is rather odd. There are not too many boards that are appointed. Even political boards, commissions, that are appointed by governments will make the same decision every single time when they are considering applications.

Because the government does not believe in it, it is obvious that they had to bring in legislation to legitimize exemptions. I think that is what in fact they did. I note that W.O. Pruitt, a professor, had written a letter saying that when he referenced Bill 10, it says and I quote: It appears to me that this entire exercise is an attempt to legitimize exemptions to the sense of the original act by the FLO Board, the Farm Lands Ownership Board.

He said, and I continue the quote: I think a better route would be for the government to direct the Farm Lands Ownership Board to stick to the law and not give exemptions.

What the government found was that it was making a farce of the legislation by not applying it, so the board was having to make all these exemptions and on that basis decided to bring in amendments to legitimize what the board was already doing. I have to agree that is in fact what they have done with this piece of legislation.

They have also made a couple of other changes. They will not have to bring in a report to the Legislature. The reports have essentially been "nothing reports" up to this point in time since this government has been in office, because they just simply said that there were no applications turned down. So since the government was not turning any applications down, it was not a very involved report that was brought forward. There was no controversy, no changes that were being recommended, because, indeed, the act was not being applied in a very thorough way by this government.

There were a few aspects of this bill that the government felt extremely sensitive about and therefore decided to make the changes with regard to the definition of corporations, with regard to who could be considered family, with regard to the

percentage required of active farmers and with regard to the need for an annual report to be provided to the Legislature. They also are going to charge fees for applications to recover their costs. I do not think that there is anything particularly wrong with that.

One wonders though, since they are not applying the act in any way, why they would even think they need it any longer? Why did not they just move to delete the farm lands protection act in the Province of Manitoba because by the government's very actions—[interjection] The member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) says, is that what you are recommending? No, that is not what I am recommending. I am saying, by the government's actions, it would seem that they do not believe in the act. They do not believe in the integrity of the act in terms of its application, therefore, they might be more truthful and open with the public and just simply implement their policy, which is to not follow the act, and, therefore, do away with it.

They have chosen instead to take this act, to in fact remove some of the requirements that will make it easier for them to ignore the act and to legitimize the practices that have been in place for the past five years under this Conservative government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am going to close my remarks on Bill 10 to indicate that while we do not support the changes in this bill, we do support the opportunity for the public to provide input and to have some of our questions answered by the minister in the committee as to why these changes are necessary at this time, some of the questions that I have posed in my remarks here today. We are prepared with that to have it pass forward to public hearings.

I want to express one more time though the concerns that we have with regard to where this government is going in support of family farms, in light of the evidence and information I have brought before this House, as to where they stand with regard to farming corporations as opposed to the traditional family farm operation that we have known in this province and which we think has still a very valuable role to play in agriculture in this province.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 25—The Public Schools Amendment Act (4)

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 25 (The Public Schools Amendment Act (4); Loi no 4 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. Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Deputy Speaker, I just want to put a few comments on the record. I want to indicate that we have a number of speakers, but we are prepared to put this to committee.

The bill is one of a number of bills that deals with The Public Schools Amendment Act. This one deals in particular with Frontier School Division. I just want to put on the record some concerns representing northern communities affected by Frontier School Division and point to the unique nature of Frontier School Division.

I do not know if all members of this House are aware of the difficult task that Frontier School Division performs in providing education to many northern communities scattered across northern Manitoba, in communities that often lack road access, lack scheduled air service and lack many of the amenities that people in this House take for granted on a daily basis.

I want to point in particular to the fact that it is unfortunate when we are dealing with The Public Schools Act in general, Madam Deputy Speaker. We are dealing with the impact that can have, some of the actions of the government can have in terms of northern Manitoba, the lot of times it can impact in particular on remote northern communities in ways that perhaps are unforeseen by the government.

More obvious examples I think can be found in the child dental service. I want to indicate it is going to be a major problem for many children in the Frontier School Division. They have relied on the Children's Dental Program, and I think that is very crucial. I think it is appalling that this government has cut back in terms of the children's

dental service in the remote northern communities, in Northern Affairs' communities.

I know I just recently visited the Wabowden School, for example, which is in the Frontier School Division. They have an entire room set up for dental services that have been provided by this program. Madam Deputy Speaker, that has been eliminated as of last week. I wish that members opposite would have to deal with the circumstances facing people in those schools.

In the case of Wabowden, it is probably one of the more accessible communities. Once again, most children in Wabowden are now going to have to access dental services, if they access dental services at all, in Thompson. Other communities have no road access, so they are going to have to rely on train service, on scheduled air service or chartered air service. I can say what is going to happen is many children will not access dental services. They will not access dental services.

* (1610)

The responsibility for that lies with this Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), this Premier (Mr. Filmon), and this government, and that is absolutely unacceptable. I want to indicate that this government may destroy the Children's Dental Program today, but this government will not be in office permanently. In fact, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is very much a temporary government. Its mandate is running out, and it should be aware that one of the first things we will do when we regain government is to reinstate the Children's Dental Program for rural and northern communities, particularly for remote northern communities.

Let us understand, the Frontier School Division does not have the ability to pick up this program. The Frontier School Division does not have the kind of tax base, the property tax base to set up—the former Minister of Education knows this, he is fully aware. Perhaps, I hope, the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) will be aware of that fact. We are not dealing with Fort Garry School Division, or the school district of Mystery Lake, or any of the Winnipeg schools that have an ability to pick up some programs, if not all programs.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we are dealing with Northern Affairs communities that by definition have limited or no tax base. We are dealing with a specific structure that is set up to recognize that

fact. I want to say that if this government is going to cut the program in its entirety across the province, it should at least look at the specific circumstances in remote northern communities. I hope that will in fact happen, and I would appreciate some recognition of that. I think it is unacceptable on the behalf of this government to make these kinds of cuts and deal with the consequences afterwards. I want to put that on the record. I think that is fairly important.

I want to indicate too that the impact of other bills dealt with in this session are also impacting on Frontier Schools. I have talked to teachers, I have talked to principals in communities—in fact, in particular, Bill 22, the wage rollback. I want to indicate that it has been difficult enough over the years to recruit and maintain teachers in remote northern communities. It has been difficult enough. This makes it that much more difficult. It is as simple as that.

I want to stress that education is the key for northern Manitobans. Education is key in remote northern communities in particular. It is particularly important to aboriginal people. I wish members of this House could have attended the graduation in Nelson House that I have referenced in previous speeches in this House—not a Frontier School Division school, but I see the hope in that community arising out of that.

Perhaps come with me when I visit many of the schools in the Frontier School Division—I have been in the school in Wabowden, my own community in Ilford, Thicket Portage, Pikwitonei, because, Madam Deputy Speaker, I think what we will find is that many people who have not had the opportunity for an education themselves beyond elementary grades are committed in a way that many of us could learn a lesson from to the education of their children.

I find that is so much a matter of importance, and it is so fundamental to aboriginal people and a sense of self-confidence and pride for the future. That is something that we should all be supporting. I cannot think of a better investment than investment in our human potential and our human resources, particularly northern Manitoba.

Traditionally, people from remote northern communities have had access up to perhaps Grade 8, and that is it—very limited access to post-secondary education. Things such as the

ACCESS programs have changed it somewhat, Madam Deputy Speaker, some of the programming available in terms of community colleges, some of the programs available through IUN. We still have a long way to go, but we cannot access those kinds of programs unless we get people to a certain level within the school system itself.

Statistics are very clear. The level of education is fundamental to the level of employment. It is absolutely fundamental. If one is to compare 20 years ago, one will find there is only one group in society generally, and it is particularly the case for women, but there is only one group in society that has not expanded its employment levels, its participation in the labour force, which hovers around the 30 percent level. That is amongst those with Grade 10 education or less. Statistics Canada tells the story but I think it can be seen in any remote northern community. Those who are part of the labour force, Madam Deputy Speaker, are those who are educated, who have completed high school and then post-secondary training, whether it be in trades, whether it be in terms of university education, whatever it might be.

That is a stunning statistic if one looks at the fact that 20 years ago we had the same levels of employment for those who did not complete high school as to those we have currently. Every other group in society, and particularly amongst women, has seen an increase of 10, 20 and 30 percent in labour force participation, but amongst those who do not even get into high school, it is much lower.

Let us recognize, Madam Deputy Speaker, that many of the communities involved in this are the Northern Affairs communities. Many Frontier schools do not have complete high school available and people have to go to Cranberry Portage after leaving their home community.

I am in the process of sending letters to graduates of Grade 8 in many communities. The reason for that is because that is the end of schooling in many of those communities.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I wanted to put these comments on the record. I am concerned about the progress of northern education. I am concerned about the impacts of this government's cuts in terms of education funding, the impact of Bill 22, the impact of the Children's Dental Program specifically on the Frontier School Division.

I hope that some of the people who are making these decisions will take the time to talk to people who are affected, because I feel that in many cases out of either ignorance or spite or malice or just out of complete lack of caring or, indeed, as the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) says, perhaps they made the cynical decision that people do not know how to vote right, to use the words of the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), whatever the reason, the situation in those communities today is worse right now than it has been for many years. They are sucking the lifeblood from the communities when they affect education, when they affect health and when they affect dental services. It is as straightforward as that and the bottom line is, that is unacceptable.

I just hope at some point in time this government takes the time to see what it is doing, because I think even this Conservative government would have to have second thoughts when it sees the impact of its callous cutbacks in northern communities. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flin): Madam Deputy Speaker, I only want to add a few words to this debate. I concur with much of what my colleague from Thompson said about the educational conditions that residents in northern Manitoba face, and certainly the prospects for many young people are much bleaker now than they have been for the last decade. This government, I think, has to share much of the responsibility for the deteriorating situation that many young students find themselves in. I say that as a general comment.

Certainly we are all concerned on both sides of the House about the efficient operation of Frontier School Division. It is a very unique school division in our province and has served as a model, incidentally, for other provinces who are looking to consolidate and find a way to manage school divisions in the remote parts of other provinces as well.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Frontier School Division has actually evolved considerably over the past few years. While I have not always agreed with many of the things that the Minister of Education has said—in fact, I have hardly agreed with anything the Minister of Education has said, let

alone done—but I have to say that on balance, I think that the amendments proposed here are reasonably responsible and follow in a vein that will probably be supported by many of the communities in northern Manitoba.

Having said that, Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that there are concerns. The Manitoba Teachers' Society has concerns. I know that some communities may in fact have some concerns about the way this piece of legislation is structured, but I think the bottom line is that the intention here is basically to legitimize what has been a practice in many Frontier School Division communities for many years. School committees have increasingly been empowered over the last decade to make important local decisions about school decisions, school policies.

* (1620)

This legislation, to my way of thinking, simply justifies what has evolved over the past few years in terms of responsibility for Frontier. The legislation basically provides for the structure that may be needed to create local school committees and then gives them some responsibility. To have those responsibilities outlined in legislation, I think, is important. Their responsibilities clearly are to advise the superintendent, to make recommendations on a whole range of issues that clearly affect the school system and the effectiveness of the school in their community.

That is not to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, that like any elected body, school committees are not going to make mistakes and that they are not going to be challenged by other members of the community or by the Department of Education or by teachers or by parents, but I think like every community they deserve the right to be empowered, to make decisions about the effectiveness and the operation of their own school.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the only technical comment that I would like to make, and I would like the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey) perhaps to answer this when she closes debate on second reading. I know that the minister is not listening attentively to my remarks, but I know that given the fact that this is a bill dealing with The Public Schools Act, despite the fact that she is not paying attention, she will be reading very carefully the remarks that I am making. So despite the fact that the minister continues to ignore my remarks

and continues to talk, apparently aimlessly, with another member across the way—

An Honourable Member: And perhaps will not even close debate.

Mr. Storie: Perhaps the minister, if given the opportunity, would not close debate because of not paying attention, which would be a shame. Perhaps, Madam Deputy Speaker, you could tell me how to get the attention of the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey). It would be much appreciated if you could do that, because apparently she is still engrossed in conversation, very deeply engrossed in conversation, and she is still not paying attention.

Madam Deputy Speaker, to sum up, it has been about five minutes—

An Honourable Member: Who was not paying attention to you?

Mr. Storie: Well, I have been trying to get the attention of the Minister of Education who seldom pays attention to questions apparently either and certainly does not appear to be concerned about the fact that I, to this point, have been very supportive of the legislation that she has introduced.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would have hoped that the Minister of Education, whom I seldom commend, would have taken this opportunity to listen to some advice that was freely given and offered in the spirit of co-operation.

Perhaps now the Minister of Education is paying attention, so Madam Deputy Speaker, that is very gratifying to the individual who is speaking.

I wanted to say that generally this bill has not much to commend it, but is worthy of support because it does something constructive. Madam Deputy Speaker, what I am concerned about is one issue. That is why, under local communities to be established, the word "may" is used. It says: "The minister may, by regulation, (a) establish a local school committee . . ."

I would like to think that, where a community requests that a school committee be formed, that be undertaken. Given that all the school committee has is advisory power, the power to recommend to the superintendent, it would seem to me to be a simple matter of democratic empowerment that these communities be given that power. I am not sure why the minister has chosen the word "may" or

the draftspeople have chosen the word "may" rather than "shall." Perhaps the minister can clear that up. Perhaps there is a logical explanation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, having achieved my goal of getting the minister's attention and providing that small piece of advice, I am prepared to allow this bill to proceed to committee for review of the details.

I am going to avoid the temptation to once again chastise the minister and the government for their approach to education in general and for their lack of support to educational endeavours across the province, because I think once in a while you should be positive.

Ms. Avis Gray (Crescentwood): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to put on the record a few comments about Bill 25, The Public Schools Amendment Act (4).

This bill allows for the indirect election of school trustees for the Frontier School Division. Certainly in principle, we support this bill.

I had the opportunity to work in northern Manitoba for a couple of years and certainly am very familiar with one particular school in the Frontier School Division, Cranberry Portage. I have had the opportunity to be at that school on courses and certainly am aware of the importance of a school such as Cranberry Portage and the importance of the Frontier School Division and the difficulties that Frontier School Division often faces because of the fact that they do provide service to a sparse population and that sparse population is also in a wide geographical area.

Certainly the system for selection of the school trustees by the five area advisory committees, that has been in place for some time, Madam Deputy Speaker, and now the government has decided that they want to transfer this format for the selection of trustees from the regulations into the act. We certainly have no difficulty with that. I know the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) commented on some concerns potentially from individuals about that structure, but we will certainly support this bill going to committee so that in fact if there are comments and concerns that they can be brought forth at that time in the committee.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, I suppose I could spend the next 35 minutes talking about the fact of the analogy of how it is unfortunate that the government has not been as responsive to

individual school divisions in other areas of the province as it has to Frontier School Division. I could certainly go on and on and talk again about the many comments that we have already put on the record in regard to the direction that education is taking in this province of Manitoba and our concerns with respect to not only autonomy of school divisions, but decisions that are made with respect to children's dental services, speech and hearing clinicians, decisions which are made which affect the autonomy and ultimately affect the ability of a child to receive education in this province.

Be that as it may, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have put those comments on the record before. I will not take the opportunity to repeat those today. I will keep my comments very brief. So suffice it to say, we support the intent of this particular bill, we are pleased to see it go to the committee stage, and we look forward to hearing from concerned individuals and the public at the committee stage. With that, I will leave those remarks on the record and I thank you very much.

Mr. John Plohma (Dauphin): Madam Deputy Speaker, Bill 25 deals with legitimizing a practice that is already in place as a result of Regulation 118/91, as the minister said during her opening remarks on this particular bill. It in fact reflects existing provisions in that regulation and is therefore one that I think most of us support on the point of view of a structure that is working reasonably well in northern Manitoba in the Frontier School Division in that it provides for a system of electing school boards and ensures that local communities have an opportunity for direct input into decisions that are made about schools in their community.

* (1630)

It is a model that has been followed in other legislation in this Chamber. Before this House at the present time, as the minister well knows, Bill 34, the Francophone school division, would have a similar structure as the one that is proposed here. I guess some people have expressed some concerns about area committees being used as a new kind of school board structure in this province, this being a precedent or some type of policy move by the government to move away from the kind of system that is in place at the present time.

I do not expect that the government is going to do that. Certainly, they may be wanting to look at

boundary review, and we may get an imminent announcement from the minister on that as she said a month and a half or two months ago. All these imminent announcements may be happening now that the minister may find a little more time on her hands to deal with some of these important pressing matters. We are waiting for these imminent announcements from the minister now so that we can respond to them and give her advice and input, and I expect that they will be coming shortly. But, in this particular case, we have a system that is in place and working.

Now, of course, if the government ignores the needs of the communities insofar as their schools are concerned, the education of their children, they do so at their own political peril at least, because we have seen some of that in the last while. It is of the greatest concern for us, not the structure, but the way that the government has responded in terms of providing the funding that is necessary to support these schools. We, on our side of the House, have expressed this concern about the lack of support for the public education system across the province. It includes the Frontier School Division.

Insofar as this bill is concerned, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have discussed with some of the groups what some of their concerns might be and they have said that they feel, with regard to The Manitoba Teachers' Society, for example, that perhaps there are too many powers in the hands of advisory committees. I do not necessarily think that is the case. I remain to be convinced that would be the case. It seems to me that they are only recommended; however, there is some concern that they are expressing about how this might impact on all staffing matters.

We will be able to hear those concerns before the committee to determine with some questioning whether we feel that there is any need for the concern or any way that we would want to support the concerns they are raising. Certainly, Madam Deputy Speaker, the principle of having advisory committees in the communities is one that we all support and that is why it was put in by regulation initially. When the government found that perhaps they were overstepping their legislative authority, they decided that they had to bring in changes to the act to ensure that it was protected and there could be no court challenge to it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I will not continue with a long dissertation on this particular bill. My colleague the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) has indicated and the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) have said we are prepared to pass this to committee to hear if there are any concerns beyond those which I have raised as a result of discussions with the Teachers' Society as to some of those that they will bring forward. Beyond that, we are not aware that there will be serious concerns raised by the public about this legislation.

The only other concern that I have referenced was that perhaps this sets a precedent of change in elections for trustees and I think that is some distance off, at least I would hope, insofar as the actions by this government. I am sure that there would be an extensive process before something like that would take place in the province as part of education reform.

One that we are advocating is that advisory committees at the school level be established and be enshrined in The Public Schools Act. We hope that will be a major consideration and aspect of education reform in this province because parents and communities must have the opportunity to the greatest extent possible to be directly involved. All this is predicated upon the fact that they have adequate funding though. If the government ignores that, does not provide the kind of financial support for our schools, we are going to have great difficulties meeting the needs of the children in our communities. That is the bottom line, Madam Deputy Speaker. Thank you.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

Madam Deputy Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 25. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 33—The Provincial Railways and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading, Bill 33 (The Provincial Railways and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant les chemins de fer provinciaux et

apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): It is my pleasure to rise and speak to this legislation, something that we have been studying for a period of time since the minister came forward and introduced this bill for second reading in the House.

We have had the opportunity to review in some detail the concerns of other members of the community who are employed in the rail industry, and I will be drawing some of those concerns to the attention of the minister, as well as information that we have been able to—

An Honourable Member: Let us pass it.

Mr. Reid: I know that some of the members opposite would just like to pass this through, but this legislation is important and is in a sense historical for the province of Manitoba.

We do not, from the best of my recollection, have any other short-line operations in this province. This is a first for us, I believe, since the beginnings of railways, when they first came to the province of Manitoba in the 1880s—maybe some of the members opposite might remember the 1880s, and they could probably give us some better information.

I would have to rely on the long-term experience of some of the members opposite. I know some of the members opposite have a lot of experience so, if I say something, since I was not around during the 1880s, that is maybe not quite accurate, they could draw it to my attention and I will be glad to correct it for the benefit of the record.

I thought I would start off just to give members a brief bit of history that came to my attention through family members who have been employed in the railway industry going well back into the late 1920s in this province. We have been quite fortunate in our family to have earned our living through railway jobs for my family in this province and I, of course, continued in that tradition until I was fortunate enough to be elected to represent my community of Transcona.

In going through some of my grandfather's possessions—

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): That admission of luck is pretty accurate.

Mr. Reid: Well, the Deputy Premier says it may be luck and that may be the case that I was elected, Madam Deputy Speaker, but only time will tell if that was luck or not. I am sure that if the government wants to call that next provincial election anytime, we will be prepared to speak to the issues that are important to the people of Transcona.

Going back to my comments a few moments ago relating to the history of rail line abandonment in this province, in going through the possessions that my grandfather had, of course, we came across a particular article relating to rail line abandonment, and the date on this article is June 16, 1938. So this is only some 45 years after the first railway line came to the province of Manitoba.

I will read it for the members opposite. It is titled the Rail Abandonment Program, and it has a map showing various rail lines going through different communities of the province of Manitoba and, of course, on the map it showed railway lines that would be scrapped in Manitoba under the line abandonment program recently submitted to the Senate committee at Ottawa by the Canadian Pacific Railway in representing its case for unification of the railways. So going as far back as 1938, CP Rail was pressing to have unification of the railways.

Under the CP Rail plan, 340-some miles of CN line and 360-some miles of CPR line would be discarded in Manitoba, totalling 706 miles of railway. The unification proposal called for the discarding of 2,200 miles of CNR's main lines and over 1,000 miles of CNR branchlines—744 miles of CPR main lines and 961 of the branch lines throughout Canada. So there was extensive discussion at that time on railway abandonment.

I raise this information because I believe that this program of abandonment that the railways are undertaking now has forced this minister to act, to bring forward short-line legislation to encourage entrepreneurs to take over the class one railway branchlines to allow for continued railway service to rural communities of the province of Manitoba.

Now we have had many discussions, and I now there has been questions in this Chamber relating to what the root cause is with respect to the need to have such legislation at this time. We only have to look back to a recent proposal that came forward by

the National Transportation Agency review commission wherein they stated that—and one of their recommendations, in fact recommendation No. 8, with respect to abandonment of railway lines was to permit the federally regulated railways to discontinue rail line operations, whether through conveyance or abandonment, without being required to demonstrate financial loss or absence of public need.

* (1640)

Their recommendation No. 9 as well recommended that the rationalization of the prairie branchline structure not be delayed. So the National Transportation Agency review commission who made these recommendations, and the chair of that commission, who now happens to be the chairperson appointed by the Mulroney government at that time to head the National Transportation Agency, now has to implement these recommendations. So the same person making the recommendations now has to implement them. In a sense you would think there would be some conflict of interest in there, but I sense the federal government does not view it in that light, although others in the country might sense that that would be the case.

I have had some discussions with members of the railways, with the national transportation agencies, with Transport Canada to find out what is happening in other parts of the country with rail line abandonments and what is happening in Manitoba's situation here. I know during the Estimates process I had asked the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) to provide me with some information which, unfortunately, has not been given to me to this point in time. It was dealing with rail line abandonment in the province. I hope that the minister is still going to follow through with his commitment from his department to provide that information, because it would have been useful for debating purposes and discussion in the House here today and for other members of the Legislature who might want to look at such information.

There were recent articles dealing with line abandonments. The national railways—and there is only one transcontinental national railway that is currently existing. That occurred as a result of CP Rail's decision to abandon a leg of its eastern transcontinental service, which leaves only

Canadian National Railway as the remaining transcontinental railway for Canada.

During the NTA decisions that came about as a result of changes to the National Transportation Act in 1987, the amendment allowed the NTA to arrange for railways to provide for sales without getting prior approval from the National Transportation Agency. The railways have been allowed or permitted, over the course of the last four years, the time period which expired last year, to abandon up to 4 percent of their total branchline network. It is my understanding that they have chosen not to move in that direction of branchline abandonment and have not come anywhere close to the 4 percent allowable limits, which is fortunate for us in this province because we still are provided branch line service for the rural communities in Manitoba. Many of the communities that rely on that service, some of them in fact have no other forms of transportation, alternate transportation arrangements, so these branch lines provide an essential service for them.

The railways, of course, from my understanding, maybe decided to hold on to some of these rail lines, looking at the fact that there has been an expansion of short-line rail operations throughout the country. In that sense, the railways then may be looking at conveying in a form of a sale to any short-line rail entrepreneurs that may wish to come forward and take over such operations.

So, in other words, if the railways had applied for abandonment of those railway lines, there would not be the opportunity for the railways to recoup some of the monies that they have invested in those lines, other than the scrap price for that railway line.

I sense that what they want to do is reap as much profit out of the abandonment of those lines as they possibly can to put towards their own deficit and their own operations. That is unfortunate because that will put more pressure on any of the individuals wishing to take over the short-line operations, and it might be more difficult then for short-line operators to get involved in continued service to these communities.

I had asked the minister, during the Estimates debate, to provide us some information on the impact of rail line abandonment, what it was going to mean to the rural communities. We know that obviously there is going to be some impact upon

the minister's department with respect to highways and then capital and maintenance programs of his department, because if the traffic is diverted from railway lines that are abandoned, that traffic, should it still exist, has to move onto the highways, which will increase the wear and tear and put a further strain on the minister's budget, which I am sure is already being depleted as a result of the flooding conditions in the northwest portion of our province, particularly in the Swan River area. I am sure the minister does not need to have any more expense for his highway network in the province than he is already incurring.

One of the comments that came from short-line operators—and there are other short-line operators in existence in Canada. There is a short-line operation in Alberta, the Central Western Railway Corporation, out of Stettler, Alberta. I raise that because the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) is holding up an article here relating to the province of Alberta; I thought it would be timely for me to comment. What the general manager of that Central Western Railway Corporation says is that short-line railways can be successful.

I know, in my own time, in my own discussions with CN Rail, who turned over this railway line, a 180-kilometre grain line, in 1986 to this company, and it was sold to that line, that CN did continue to provide some level of service to allow that railway short-line operation to become successful. I see that they have become successful. In fact, they are looking to expand their services to other points in Alberta.

The reason they said that they are successful to some degree is that they have more flexibility in their staffing than the Class 1 mainline railways would have. To a degree, that may be true because of the bureaucracy that is in place in the Class 1 railways.

I know in my discussions with people that are employed in CN and CP Rail, they have expressed quite often that when they are providing levels of service to some of the rural communities in the province of Manitoba, they do not have the degree of flexibility that will allow them to provide the type of service that the rural communities need, the grain elevators and the small communities need.

Although there is some possible light at the end of that tunnel and maybe some flexibility that is finally working its way into the mainline systems, I

am told that CN Rail has what they call the Okanagan Agreement which provides some flexibility to the crews operating and allows them to meet the customer needs for the rural communities.

In other words, if the grain elevator needs to have cars moved or spotted, and the crew happens to be there at the time even though it is not on their work order, they will provide that service for the customer. If they have to wait to pick up a car to carry it to its terminal point for movement to export position, the crew is empowered to take those actions on behalf of the customer. If the customer reports any deficiencies in equipment, then again the crews can take action on it at that time, too. So there is some flexibility that is provided in the system through the Okanagan Agreement.

Now if that type of an agreement could work its way through other parts of Canada, then the customers, I believe, would receive an increased level of service which might encourage them to continue or enhance their use of the mainline railway operations. It would not necessitate the need to move towards short-line operations.

I know that we have raised questions with the minister here with respect to why railways, in particular CP Rail, are by-passing the province of Manitoba. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) said, too, during the budget that they gave the railways the fuel tax rebate and that it was going to encourage the railways, hopefully, he said, to keep railway jobs in the province here.

* (1650)

For the benefit of the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Driedger) and the Minister of Finance who are here today, they may not be aware that the individual from CP Rail that was lobbying them for the reduction in the railway fuel tax, Mr. Barham, who is the assistant superintendent at CP Rail, now has a hat placed in his office that says 3.5 on his hat, and it is called the preacher. He was able to come to preach to this government that they needed a tax break to allow them to remain in business, and they got what he wanted, and they are continuing to move the jobs out of the province. So he is now called the preacher, and he has a hat stationed in his office here in Winnipeg that was presented to him by senior management of the company recognizing his ability to lobby this government for a tax break. I hope that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is proud that that

hat is there, and it recognizes the lobbying efforts of members of that company.

It is unfortunate though that we could not have had some assurances of jobs to go along with that tax break and to protect the railway jobs that we are losing in this province. The government likes to talk about jobs that are coming here. In fact, they made a great fuss about the customer service centre that is coming here and the jobs that are attached. The government always says there are 200-and-some jobs. In actual fact, there is a net loss of jobs if you look at the other areas that have been cut by this.

CP Rail has said to their employees in their internal discussions that they do not really want to do business in Manitoba, southern Saskatchewan or northwestern Ontario. In fact, it is very obvious by the way they have diverted their traffic on their north portal line around the province of Manitoba. They are continuing to upgrade those facilities there, and they are continuing to upgrade the railway line there to divert that traffic around Manitoba. So that is putting more pressure on the railway jobs in this province, and I would wish that the minister would have realized that fact when he gave that tax break to the company.

There has been a history of deregulation that has caused the minister to move towards Bill 33. There have been some problems with this legislation in the sense that there are portions of it that the minister has not explained clearly enough.

In fact, if the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Driedger) is listening, there is no definition of short line in this legislation. What is a short line? Is a short line somewhere between 10 and 20 kilometres? Is it 100 kilometres, or is it 700 kilometres like the bayline?

There is no definition of what a short line is in this legislation. The bayline is, of course, one of the major concerns here, and I will raise that in a few moments with respect to the National Transportation Act and draw to the minister's attention something that might have escaped his attention or the attention of his department who have drafted—I take it that they drafted this legislation for him.

The bayline, of course, goes through two jurisdictions here, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Now, I am not sure what effect that will have if CN Rail, who has obviously been pressing for

abandonment of the bayline, has allowed it to move forward after recommendations of the NTA that abandonment procedures be speeded up, how this legislation is going to affect someone that might wish to take over that short-line operation.

With the legislation itself, in Sections 158 and 174 of the National Transportation Act, and I will read this for the benefit of the minister, and he may wish to take this back to members of his department for further clarification. If I am incorrect on my interpretation of this, maybe the minister could provide me with some clarification on this. But in a section of the National Transportation Act, 1987, Section 158, Section 4(d) says: Where pursuant to an approval under subsection 3, a line of railway or a segment is conveyed to a railway company, where the railway company to which the line or segment is conveyed is not within the legislative authority of Parliament and there is not at the time of the conveyance an agreement described in paragraph C in respect of the line or segment, any declaration that the line or segment is a work for the general advantage of Canada ceases to have effect.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Now, that section is also spelled out again, that same section is spelled out again under the same act, Section 174. That can have repercussions for the bayline. All members opposite might wish to make light of this, but the bayline is important to the province of Manitoba, and I know the government has hung their hat on certain aspects of the enhancement of the rocket range and other export opportunities through the community of Churchill.

So we would like to see the rail line continue there, but if the bayline is put in jeopardy as a result of this, then it can create problems for this minister when he has to deal with that.

So if my understanding of this section of the National Transportation Act is correct, that if CN Rail is allowed to transfer this bayline or portions of it to a short-line operator, that short-line operator, should they assume responsibility for the complete section of the bayline, can then apply to provincial government for abandonment of sections of the line that they deem not to be profitable; in other words, only take part of the operations, leaving the other parts abandoned. Now, that would put some pressure on this minister to make a decision on

whether or not he is going to allow that abandonment or not.

But the protected status of that line would not remain according to the National Transportation Act in my interpretation of it here, if that line is transferred to that short-line operator from the Class 1 railway, which is CN Rail in this case.

I am not sure if the minister's department has taken that into consideration, but I ask that the minister take that information back to his staff and that when we do go to committee then we will have the opportunity to find out if, indeed, that is applicable to the bayline operations.

This bill, of course, was brought about as a result of a deregulated environment that occurred as a result of the changes in the National Transportation Act in 1987. That legislation, of course, was brought underway by the then-Transport Minister Lloyd Axworthy who started to move Canada in the direction of a deregulated transportation environment.

An Honourable Member: Lloyd the Liberal?

Mr. Reid: Yes, in fact, maybe I can dig out in a few moments some of the comments of Lloyd Axworthy when he was fighting with—[interjection] Lloyd Axworthy, taxworthy. Lloyd Axworthy was then fighting with Don Mazankowski who was in opposition at the time. At that time, they were fighting over who was responsible for—[interjection] The godfather of deregulation. Lloyd Axworthy, the godfather of deregulation.

In that time, in 1984, there was considerable debate taking place in committee, at the parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, and Mr. Mazankowski who was then in opposition was raising concerns about deregulation. Of course, Lloyd Axworthy who was Transport Minister was saying he was doing all these great and wonderful things to deregulate the transportation industry in the province.

Of course, after that, looking at some of the other discussions in the Hansard from the Commons debate, we find that Mr. Mazankowski is trying to take credit for the deregulated environment. So there is a battle ongoing in Parliament even about who is responsible for deregulation in this country.

The problem is, it has created a problem for us in this province here, and it has caused this Minister of Transportation (Mr. Driedger), I believe, to have to move in a direction that will provide for the

continued operation of railway services in our province.

This minister, of course, says this is enabling legislation. He has also indicated that there are several people who have come to him looking to establish short-line railway operations in this province. In fact, one of them, I believe, Mr. Speaker, is down in the Waskada area, which is the Lyleton subdivision, and the minister has indicated there are people looking at taking over that operation there.

It is my understanding in talking to Transport Canada and the National Transportation Agency people that there are also other opportunities that are being viewed at this time for other short-line operations in this province, even though the minister has not indicated specifically which lines those are.

I hope the minister will be able to provide us some information on which communities are going to be affected and which communities are going to be provided with a continuation of short-line railway operations, because the rural communities themselves stand to be severely impacted by any decision to either allow abandonment or to move to short-line operations which could enhance the service opportunities for those communities.

I know the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) thinks this—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Transcona will have 15 minutes remaining.

* * *

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if there is a willingness to waive private members' hour and stay in bills for the remainder of this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour so that we can stay in bills? Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: No, leave is denied.

The hour being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Business. Order, please.

* (1700)

House Business

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, on House Business, I would like to make these changes.

I would like to indicate that the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources that I called for Thursday morning, Mr. Speaker, we will cancel that and replace that with the Standing Committee on Law Amendments that will consider at that time Bill 32. [interjection] 9 a.m.

We will also add, Mr. Speaker, to the Law Amendments Committee tomorrow night that is scheduled to sit, for its consideration, Bill 20.

That is it at this time, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable government House leader for that information.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS— PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 200—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: Debate on second readings, Public Bills, on the proposed motion of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), Bill 200, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille), standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that that matter remain standing? [agreed]

And also standing in the name of the honourable member for the Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans), who has one minute remaining.

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that that matter remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 202—The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), Bill 202, The Residential Tenancies Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la location à usage d'habitation), standing in the name of the honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that that matter remain standing? Leave? [agreed]

Bill 203—The Health Care Records Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), Bill 203 (The Health Care Records Act; Loi sur les dossiers médicaux), standing in the name of the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that that matter remain standing? Leave? [agreed]

Bill 205—The Ombudsman Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), Bill 205, The Ombudsman Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'ombudsman), standing in the name of the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand. Is there leave that that matter remain standing? Leave? [agreed]

Bill 208—The Workers Compensation Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), Bill 208, The Workers Compensation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les accidents du travail), standing in the name of the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that that matter remain standing? Leave? [agreed]

Bill 209—The Public Health Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), Bill 209, The Public Health Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la santé publique), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that that matter remain standing? Leave? [agreed]

Bill 212—The Dauphin Memorial Community Centre Board Repeal Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), Bill 212, The Dauphin Memorial Community Centre Board Repeal Act (Loi abrogeant la Loi sur le Conseil du Centre commémoratif de Dauphin), standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Stand? Is there leave that that matter remain standing? Leave? [agreed]

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, the member for Dauphin introduced The Dauphin Memorial Community Centre Board Repeal Act on June 8. It is the repeal of an act that has been in place for some 40 years, but because of recent changes that have been made to the board structure, this law is no longer in effect.

The Rural Municipality of Dauphin, the Town of Dauphin, and the Dauphin Agricultural Society have all negotiated and are operating under another agreement now. There is no need for this act. They have asked that this one be repealed, and we would hope the government would give serious consideration that this bill be passed in this session.

The board is now in place. They are operating as a corporation. There are some difficulties the board is facing because of this act, one of them being that they are having difficulties negotiating with their employees because they say they will not negotiate agreements while the old act is still in place.

So, again, on behalf of the people of Dauphin, I urge this government to give very serious consideration and consider passing this bill so that the people of Dauphin, those people who are managing the Dauphin Memorial Community Centre, can continue to operate and work, but not be hindered by an act that is outdated. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: As previously agreed, that matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

Bill 216—An Act to amend An Act to Protect the Health of Non-Smokers

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), Bill 216, An Act to amend An Act to Protect the Health of Non-Smokers; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la protection de la santé des non-fumeurs, standing in the name of the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer).

Stand? Is there leave that that matter remain standing? [agreed]

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 40—Permanent Housing for the Homeless

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), that

WHEREAS every Manitoban has a right to decent housing; and

WHEREAS increasing numbers of Winnipeg residents have become marginalized, especially by being homeless; and

WHEREAS temporary shelters do not provide security of tenure, a sense of community, responsibility, empowerment or decision making; and

WHEREAS the creation of permanent housing addresses both physical and social problems that many homeless people are forced to deal with; and

WHEREAS permanent housing for homeless people has been successfully built in Vancouver and Toronto; and

WHEREAS people are capable of managing their own housing; and

WHEREAS the long-term costs of permanent housing may be cheaper than staffing shelters for the homeless and paying social assistance per diems; and

WHEREAS people in permanent housing are much more likely to upgrade their education and job skills and therefore re-enter the job market.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Housing to consider providing permanent, affordable housing for homeless people which includes involvement by tenants and management.

Motion presented.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, this resolution was put on the Order Paper when I was still the Housing critic. However, it is appropriate that I should still speak to it as I am still very interested in housing and still very interested in the problems of homeless people, although I would say that most of the homeless people in Winnipeg probably live in the constituencies of Point Douglas and Broadway. But I have been involved in tenants' associations and with poor people for many years now and still continue to read about successful projects for homeless people, unfortunately in other cities in Canada but not yet in Winnipeg.

The people that we are talking about have been marginalized by our society in a number of ways. First of all, they probably have no income. They are living on the street. They may be living there due to problems which they themselves are partially responsible for, but nonetheless, regardless of why they are there, they are still there, and they need to be assisted, and I believe that they can be assisted in very positive ways and in ways that are different from the kinds of hostels and short-term accommodation that are now being provided.

There are some good reasons for that. The kinds of hostels and housing that are provided now are very temporary. In fact, most hostels in Canada have rules about how many nights a person can stay, so they are temporary by the nature of the rules that govern them. They do not provide security of tenure. People can be evicted in the middle of the night for almost no reason. In fact, most of them tend to have many, many rules which make them very difficult to live in, and, of course, these people are not the kind of people who would be happy with many rules in any case. They usually do not provide a sense of community, and a sense of community is something that everyone needs.

On Sunday I attended a birthday party at Charles Cathedral Housing Co-operative, a co-op that was built and officially opened by the former Minister of Housing. I was the M.C. of the official opening, having been part of the resource group that organized it and filled the suites.

It was good to be back and meet the people that I knew, who have been there since February 1989, but also to meet new people and ask them why

they moved there and if they were enjoying it. They said, yes, they did enjoy being part of Charles Cathedral Housing Co-op and enjoyed being part of the community and having things like a birthday party to which all residents were invited. They have also torn up the grass at the back of the housing co-op and planted garden plots. So those are the kinds of things that create community, in this case, in permanent housing in a housing co-operative.

A sense of community is something that everyone needs. Everyone needs to feel that they belong to an organization or have friends that they live in community with. Also, responsibility, empowerment and decision making—these are things that people need in order to have control over their lives. When people have control over their lives, they tend to be more responsible citizens, and they act more responsibly.

*(1710)

That is why, in this resolution, I have recommended tenant control or tenant involvement in decision making. I think that my WHEREASes follow in a logical order because I have said that, when people have permanent housing, this addresses both the physical and social problems that homeless people are forced to deal with.

I believe that when people have a sense of stability and a sense of permanency and a roof over their head and some involvement in the place in which they live, their other problems can be dealt with and can come under control by themselves, not because they are forced to conform by other people.

I mentioned that permanent housing for homeless people has been built in Vancouver and Toronto, and I would briefly like to describe a couple of those.

The one in Vancouver that I have read about is called Seven Sisters Housing Co-operative. I believe it was sponsored by the Downtown Eastside Residents Association and that the people who live there now and who are involved in managing this housing co-operative come from that very same low-income neighbourhood. As far as I know, it is a very successful project.

In Toronto, there are a number of organizations that have sponsored permanent housing, particularly the Homes First Society.

Toronto has a tremendous problem in terms of the numbers of homeless people, and we are very fortunate indeed that in Winnipeg we do not have the same proportion or the same numbers of people. For example, in City Magazine, in the spring of 1988, it says that there are 20,000 to 40,000 homeless people in Toronto. This is in an article on homelessness and government. Mr. Speaker, 20,000 to 40,000 people is a huge number of people to deal with and a huge problem for the city of Toronto.

I have more recent statistic from the YMCA, Y-Triangle publication from the summer of 1993, which estimates that the number of homeless young people on Toronto's streets are about 10,000—once again, a huge number of people to be concerned about it.

Toronto is where there have been some very successful projects, and one of them that people may have seen on a segment on The Journal or you may have read the same article that I have in City Magazine called Homeless No More, written by Frankly Bob, the resident mayor of Street City.

Street City is the name of this project, and what the residents did was, with help from the Homes First Society and other people, that they were able to rent an empty postal building for a dollar a year and a grant of \$70,000. There are 72 people living in this abandoned postal depot—actually renovated it for a place to live. They made, basically, apartments inside an empty postal depot. The residents did a lot of the construction. In fact, they had a very interesting construction company which they called Immaculate Construction. Maybe they sort of sprang from nothing.

In any case, these people were unskilled people, but someone showed them how to do framing, and they framed the walls themselves. Someone showed them how to do drywalling, and they did the drywalling themselves. So they actually did the renovations themselves, the people who were actually going to be living there. It is also self-governing. They have their own mayor. It does sound a little bit like Habitat for Humanity, but I think there are also major differences. In any case, a success story.

I have also pointed out in my resolution that people are capable of managing their own housing, and I think Street City and the Homes First Society's sponsored housing projects are good

examples of this. When you empower people and you give people decision making, their lives are transformed. They become different people, and I think this reflects on our view of human nature and what we believe people are capable of. If we believe that some people are incapable of doing anything, then, of course, we will not give them any responsibility, and they will not act like responsible people. If you assume that people are capable and that people can make decisions and can have control over their own lives, then they tend to respond positively.

For example, the former Fred Victor Mission run by the United Church in Toronto was a hostel with a maximum stay of three days, and I understand it was converted to permanent housing. Some of the stories that came out of that are really quite wonderful. The executive director said that there was one gentleman that they had never seen talking before, but he got involved when they had meetings for the tenants and the future residents, and he started talking at these public meetings. Eventually, he became a very outgoing person and in charge of the laundry. So it actually has the ability or capacity to transform the lives of these individuals.

I have said that permanent housing may be cheaper, and the reason is that, when we have temporary shelters, we are paying for all the operating costs; we are paying for the staff, in many cases, three shifts a day; and the government is paying for a per diem for all the residents. I am sorry that I did not look up my Family Services Estimates' information to see what we are paying for places like the Salvation Army, Booth building in Winnipeg, but there are substantial costs and that money could be going to providing permanent housing instead of for short-term temporary hostel kinds of housing.

I said that people in permanent housing are much more likely to upgrade their education and job skills and therefore re-enter the job market. A good example of this is Kinew Housing, whose general manager is Stan Fulham, and Stan wrote a very interesting book sponsored by CMHC. One of the things that I remember from Stan's book is that he said when he began something like 70 percent of his tenants were unemployed. Maybe it was head of households, I do not know. Ten years later only 30 percent were unemployed. I think that is very significant. That is a very successful story.

I think the reason is when people had stability in terms of their housing and permanency in terms of where they lived, then they could get on with other aspects of their lives because they were not constantly moving anymore. They could go back to school and get job upgrading or training which enabled them to enter the workforce. I think another advantage of permanent housing is then people can get on with improving and developing other parts of their lives.

My final THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED says that the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) should consider providing permanent affordable housing for homeless people, which includes involvement by tenants and management.

I think that is the difference between the kinds of housing we have now and what my resolution is recommending. I anticipate that the government speaker today, the former Minister of Housing, is going to talk about some of the existing projects in Winnipeg of which, I think, he will probably mention three, Veterans Manor, the Booth building of the Salvation Army and the Main Street Project hostel.

I think these are providing a public service. They are housing people. In the case of Veterans Manor, it is certainly permanent housing, although I do not know how many of their residents were formerly totally homeless. I think a number of them lived in the Main Street area, and they lived in hotels on Main Street, but I do not know if any of them were actually homeless. If they were, then I would commend Veterans Manor for doing a good job for those kinds of people, as well.

But the difference is, as far as I know, there is no tenant management in any of these buildings. I have been to Veterans Manor, and I have had a tour of the Booth building. I have talked to John Rodgers, the manager of Main Street Project or the executive director of Main Street Project as recently as today. He says there is little or no tenant involvement now; however, he is open to looking at some tenant involvement in their new hostel. I hope Mr. Rodgers will do that because that would be filling a gap in the existing kinds of housing in Winnipeg.

He did point out that he is taking people, he calls them clients, who are difficult to house, people that no one else will take. That is why I said they are providing an important function or a public service. So we commend them for wanting to be involved in

housing people that basically no one else is taking care of.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

* (1720)

I would urge the government to do something a little bit different and something new. Perhaps there needs to be funding for resource groups who would work with homeless people, perhaps an aboriginal organization, maybe even an existing organization who would do some community development and community organizing to get homeless people together and involve them from the first stage, from the first meeting and say, what kind of housing do you want? What do you want it to look like, and how would you operate it? How would you run it, and who would you hire to run it? Could you see yourselves running it, because I believe that is possible.

There is no reason why the people who are living there could not be the security staff, could not be the caretakers, could not be management with some training and some assistance. I hope the government will be open to this. I doubt it. I think we are probably going to hear once again a self-congratulatory amendment which will commend the government for the millions of dollars of capital expenses they are putting out for the kinds of housing I have already identified.

I would challenge the government to be a little bit creative, do something a little bit different and look at examples in other cities. I know the former minister of Housing was nodding his head, and he is aware of Seven Sisters Co-op in Vancouver. I would hope he would do some research on Street City and the Homes First Society and other projects in Toronto and do them in Winnipeg, because—well, for a whole number of reasons that I have already listed.

Winnipeg is a very cold city, and people should at least have the compassion to say, let us build some housing—[interjection] It is hot in the summer and cold in the winter, I will grant you that, but it is a very cruel place to be homeless in winter. We have people living in hotels, in terrible accommodation, and this minister responsible for Housing legislation is repealing parts of the liquor act which govern hotels and is going to take away some of the inspection of hotels. These people are not covered by The Residential Tenancies Act, and they are

going to have absolutely no protection and no regulation of the place that they live.

So we are failing these people as well as people who are on the street and truly homeless. We may be talking about 1,000 people or more in Winnipeg. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Government Services): I always enjoy, not that I always agree, but I always enjoy listening to the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale). I have known the member for Burrows quite a long time. It goes back to the City Hall days when I used to watch him wear his collar and come in and talk about housing. Each one of us has our little niche, and I must say that he has contributed, in his own way, in his own area, and I appreciate that.

He mentions that the government will probably have a resolution that will be passed; and, not to keep him in suspense, yes, I will have.

The member mentioned that he just appeared recently at the Cathedral housing project that we opened in February of '89. I remember it well. It is one of the better projects in the city of Winnipeg that was probably funded under the programs and contributed by Manitoba Housing.

He also mentioned that he talked about the housing unit in Vancouver, and I must say to the individual, yes, I did visit that unit in Vancouver in 1989 when I was there. And not to show him where we differ, I also at the same time did my investigation and looked at the B.C. Housing Authority, which we copied here in Manitoba.

So we do have our differences. I know he probably would not have copied that particular program, but it was interesting to hear him talk about that project. As he is aware, the housing situation in Vancouver and the places that I visited was unbelievable. I have also visited the ones in Winnipeg. I have also gone to the streets in Winnipeg when I was Housing minister, and I have one other very fortunate advantage.

I have also gone through some of them with a brother who is involved in housing, and he fills me in every once in a while when we get together. He is like the member across the way; he has his history built into that. I can appreciate that.

He also mentioned the one in Toronto, Immaculate. It was interesting to hear about that one. I have not seen that one; however, I can imagine the homeless in Toronto with 20,000

people who are involved. I will carefully read about the projects that he did mention.

I know that the minister at the time, the Liberal minister, did mention to me that just housing alone, regular housing, they had to probably produce, they told me, 100,000 units within two or three years because of the population coming into Ontario. We were talking at the time 900, 800 units. So all of a sudden you are in this monster that they have created, that they brag in one part about the population increase, but then they also would say that we had problems with our housing.

He also mentioned, it is not only there, but being a little bit of TV addict, you see a lot of times the TV coverage when you are switching through the channels about different types of housing projects. There was just one the other night where they took over a housing project, and the person had been talking about the homeless for five or 10 years. The only way he got noticed was finally someone had taken over the building, and he was able to get the press there and stress in regard to the homeless.

He did mention that, yes, the government has been involved in several projects, and I guess it is how you talk about what a project is with the homeless. He talked about the Salvation Army Booth Center. I remember, in 1989, we opened that particular project. I know I was through it partway through the completion. I was not the father to that one, but I also did work with the Salvation Army to make sure that it was completed.

It offers a wide range of residential support services for the homeless males, and for the member and those who are not aware, it is a 30-bed short-term shelter. It is not a long-term shelter, as the member has stressed.

The long-term residence has some long-term—I think there are approximately 80 to 85 private rooms. There is a 14-bed crisis stabilization unit built in, a substance-abuse unit consisting of another 55 rooms. There are 17 beds for long-term residents, for mental health patients, and there is a 35-room halfway house for parolees.

It is quite a project. I would say it is probably one of the better ones that you will find across Canada. The Salvation Army have done just a superb job in that particular area.

The project was funded by a mortgage loan. I do not know what the interest rate was, but it was very,

very low, by the province. As well, it did receive \$1.2 million of the Core Area grant.

It was one of the projects that I always felt, as a minister involved in the Core Area grant, was probably one of the better projects. It did very, very well, and it was probably, I think, one of the main reasons why we wanted the core area redevelopment.

The member also mentioned the Main Street Project, was committed just recently under the '92 nonprofit program and will consist of 34 beds, including 22 one-bed and six-bed hostel units. This also was mentioned at the time during Core Area programs, and the difficulty at the time was coming to some agreement on the ongoing costs that the City of Winnipeg is involved in.

Anyone who knows John Rodgers there—and I have known John since probably when John and I were in the Jaycees together. No one probably considered John ever being a Jaycee, but John was always the innovative type of person who would get up at any hour of the night and is a compliment to that type of project. I do not know how any individual could last so long in that particular environment, but John is the one that does everything. He is going to be very delighted when he sees his project replace that terrible existing shelter that we have with a newly constructed building operated by the Main Street Project people.

* (1730)

I am sure John is going to see his dream come true. Unlike the Salvation Army, the project will provide short- and long-term housing for both men and women, including those with behavioural problems who may not be accepted by other shelters. The province will provide again mortgage funding through that nonprofit program to the tune of \$919,000 as well as the ongoing cost, federal-provincial operating subsidies that, as the member knows, are necessary after you get by the brick and mortar.

The member has said that there is a lacking in the long term. However, the member in the Chair will remember or probably knows about the other project that is involved. Maybe the member could tell me when I have approximately three minutes remaining.

The province is also involved in the St. Norbert Foundation, which is a 12-bed residential treatment

facility for teenage females, a very good project. The drug-alcohol addiction will be worked, and this project was committed again under the 1990—I think it was probably one of the last ones that I as minister was involved in—under the nonprofit special purpose program. It was completed in 1991, a very, very good program—again, a loan by the province and the federal government and, of course, the subsidy, and then they had a write-down of about 2 percent on their mortgage cost share with CMHC.

The member did not—and I guess I consider, in some of the cases that were involved, the Osborne House project that I was involved in. When people consider the spousal abuse, these people really are homeless at many times. Those who have had experience in their families about abuse, and not just elderly but spousal abuse, will understand how important the Osborne House project on Assiniboine was brought into focus.

I have to say at the time, a member, the late Gerrie Hammond, was very involved in that particular project. I know Gerrie had a lot of pride in working with my department and hers in establishing that particular project. If they would have seen the type of building that they moved over from, it was a great project.

I could go on and on in regard to the many, many projects. As the member knows, I could sit here for days and talk about housing. I enjoy talking about housing; you noticed last night. I got ribbed a little bit today about taking 30 minutes to ask a question yesterday. But, as the members know, I do not drag the puck very often. When I get into something that I really enjoy, I really enjoy it.

He mentioned the Veterans' Manor. We got the federal minister, Veterans Affairs, in to open that one. I know watching the gentlemen that were there, they were just ecstatic. They were walking around with their war badges and telling you to come to visit their rooms. They could not get away from the old hot plates that they had. They actually had stoves in their rooms. They took you through there, and they were just delighted—another great project.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would at this time, though, like to move a motion. I will move it, seconded by the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae)—or the government will move—I will move a motion,

THAT Resolution 40 be amended by deleting all words following the first WHEREAS and replacing them with the following:

The government of Manitoba, through the Minister of Housing, has displayed a strong commitment to ensuring affordable and accessible housing for all Manitobans; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba has recognized the problem of homelessness and has made efforts to solve this problem; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba, in co-operation with nonprofit groups, initiated several permanent housing facilities for homeless people, including SOS Co-op Housing, Veterans' Manor and YM/YWCA Winnipeg; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba and the nonprofit sector have co-operated to provide shelter facilities for the homeless such as the Salvation Army Booth Centre, the Main Street Project and the St. Norbert Foundation; and

WHEREAS the government of Manitoba has provided a strong commitment to alleviating homelessness resulting from spousal abuse and to that end has funded 10 crisis shelters for abused women and their families.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba support the continuing efforts of the Minister of Housing and the government of Manitoba to address the problems of homeless people in the province of Manitoba.

I look forward to all members in the House supporting the amendment.

Motion presented.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Acting Speaker, I am disappointed that the government could not support my resolution. They have built some housing, and the minister has listed all the different kinds of housing they have built.

Unless there is some that I do not know the specifics about, I would say that the kinds of housing this minister is talking about, the government is talking about, is quite different than what I was talking about in my resolution.

I agree with the fact that they have built affordable and accessible housing. That part is true, but then they say they have made efforts to solve the problem of homelessness. Some of the people who have lived on Main Street, just to use that as an example, will be living in the Main Street

Project hostel. They are living, some of them, in the Booth building and in the Veterans' Manor. But the crux of my resolution had to do with permanent housing, not temporary housing, and with the fact that my resolution would see tenant management or at least tenant involvement in running the permanent housing, and I think that is quite different.

Now, the government has co-operated with nonprofit groups. That is true, and they have initiated housing facilities. I am familiar with what SOS Co-op Housing is. I do not know what the status of those people was before they moved into the SOS Co-op Housing. I would be surprised if any of them were truly homeless. If they are, I give the government the benefit of the doubt. Likewise with Veterans' Manor. As far as I know, most of the people were living in hotel rooms and in the Main Street area.

I confess that I do not know a whole lot about the YM-YW as to whether it is permanent or temporary and whether their people had been previously homeless.

Now the Salvation Army Booth centre is definitely temporary. Main Street Project, according to the minister, will be temporary and permanent, and the St. Norbert Foundation, I am not familiar with the kind of housing there. I was not aware that it was permanent, and I have been to the St. Norbert Foundation.

The minister includes in his resolution "alleviating homelessness resulting from spousal abuse." It is true that because crisis shelters are available these people are not forced to be homeless, and we agree with that. However, it is not permanent housing. It is not intended to be permanent housing, and it is very temporary in that most of them have rules. For example, you are allowed to stay for three weeks, and then you have to leave. You have to find some other kind of shelter.

There is longer-term shelter for people called second stage housing. In fact, my colleague from the constituency of Wellington (Ms. Barrett) was the executive director of WISH, Women In Second Stage Housing. Those people, I believe, were allowed to stay for a year. So that is another kind of shelter, but it is also not permanent. It is a very valuable service, and we need that kind of shelter, but it is not intended to be permanent.

Unfortunately, the government does not agree with my resolution and had to move a self-congratulatory amendment to basically gut my resolution and change its intent quite drastically.

The minister talked about Charles Cathedral Housing Co-op, and I was involved with the minister with that housing co-op. It is providing decent, affordable housing to people living in 20 suites there. However, if you look at this government's approach to co-op housing, you will see that they do not have an approach anymore. They totally cancelled the housing co-op program. They do not believe in housing co-ops anymore.

The former Minister of Housing, now the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme), likes to use Charles Cathedral as an example, and I am glad that he used a good example, but his government does not believe in co-operative housing. They killed the co-op housing program. This was a program that rehabilitated existing buildings to provide permanent housing for people, yes, not for homeless people, but for people, yes, and keep people living particularly in the inner city.

That was part of the strategy of the Core Area Initiative which he and his government supported, was building a considerable amount, actually, of housing in the inner city of Winnipeg, so that our streets have people on them, particularly at night, so that our streets are safer, so that we do not have the kind of cities that are very common in the United States, cities that are basically a doughnut model where, in the inner city, we have a high concentration of immigrants and poor people, and in the United States black and Hispanic people, surrounded by more affluent and usually white suburbs.

In many ways, Winnipeg is like that, unlike other major cities in Canada where in the inner city of Winnipeg we have a concentration of low-income people and immigrants and aboriginal people and people of colour, because that is where the affordable housing is in Winnipeg, unlike places like Toronto and Vancouver where much of the inner city is very expensive kinds of housing.

* (1740)

Part of the rationale for three levels of government spending money on the Core Area Initiative was to revitalize the inner city of Winnipeg, and there were a number of ways that three levels of government sought to do that. Part of it was

through job creation. Part of it was through building projects like North Portage Development and The Forks to keep people shopping downtown so that you have a vital city during the daytime and the evening, but also to encourage people to live downtown or to continue to live downtown or to make downtown an attractive place to live and not just for low-income people, but for people of all levels of income.

So particularly during the 1980s, during the life of the Core Area Initiative, considerable millions of dollars were spent by the three levels of government, much of it through Manitoba Housing, jointly sponsored by Manitoba Housing and CMHC, to build new apartment buildings and through the Co-Op HomeStart program to renovate existing buildings. There were all kinds of different kinds of housing, including some the minister mentioned in his remarks on this resolution, and that was a good thing. We supported the Core Area Initiative. Our government was part of two Core Area Initiatives for part of the five years that each one lasted.

However, both the federal government and the provincial government have undertaken major changes to housing policy. Not only did the Conservative provincial government cancel funding to the Co-Operative Housing program, but the federal government cancelled their funding to the federal co-op housing program as well, and we are disappointed they did this because co-op housing involves many of the things I talked about in this resolution for permanent housing for homeless people.

For example, all of the parts I mentioned about empowerment, about—I did not say the word democratic decision making, but basically that is what it is. Certainly in housing co-ops, democratic decision making is embedded in their charter by-laws because every member has one vote. They must have an annual general meeting. They must have audited financial statements at the annual meeting. They elect their own board of directors, and the board of directors hires the staff, and so co-operatives are very much democratic organizations. They create a sense of community, and I gave a couple of examples of that from the Charles Cathedral Housing Co-Op. There are many ways in which housing co-ops are communities, and that was the same concept I would like to apply to permanent housing for homeless people.

So we are disappointed this government does not believe in housing co-ops, nor do their federal colleagues, since both of them cancelled co-op programs.

The minister talked about the Booth Centre, and it is true that they have a number of beds there, and they provide a public service, but my understanding would be that some of it is shorter term and some of it is longer term, but none of it is really permanent; similarly with Main Street Project, although I need to talk to John Rodgers again and find out more about their new project because I need to learn more about the kind of housing they are going to provide.

When I talked to John on the phone this afternoon, he pointed out that in his opinion, he did not think that providing permanent housing for homeless people in which there was tenant self-management or self-government would work, because in his view, the people whom he calls clients are unable to be involved in tenant management just because of the nature of their problems.

Now he and I have disagreements on this, but he does have a lot more experience than I do on this. I think he has been at Main Street Project for something like 15 years or is it longer, and has certainly garnered a lot more experience.

My experience comes from having visited places like the Homes First Society in Toronto and talking to the tenants there, meeting them and learning, for example, that the tenants provided the security system for their building. I talked to a gentleman who was at the front door and signed people into the building. Unfortunately, this is on Dundas Street East, and it is necessary to do that in that area, they felt, but they hired somebody who lived there to do that.

Also, the building I was at, they have tenants involved in selecting tenants who are going to live there, and the tenants also have a say in who stays and who gets evicted. They were telling me that tenants who live there noticed that there was a lot of traffic going to one suite, up to 60 or 80 people a night going to one suite. Very quickly, they said to themselves, something is going on here. It is not right. We think that it is drug dealing, and they immediately had a meeting of this tenants committee, and they evicted the people from that suite. So that is an example of democratic decision

making and control and self-management by the tenants who live there.

That was what I was looking for from this government in this resolution. Either they do not believe in it, or they are unwilling to put money into it if they do.

The minister also talked about federal-provincial cost sharing for operating expenses. I am quite familiar that the federal government puts up 75 percent of the money, and the provincial government, 25 percent. I know that this has always been a problem for the federal government or for CMHC because the public does not see this money, and I think that has always been a great concern to the federal government because they do not get very much credit for it. I mean, they go to the official openings and they have these bronze plaques. In fact, I noticed at Charles Cathedral Housing Co-op that they had the provincial minister's plaque on the wall, but the federal minister's bronze plaque, this big heavy thing, was sitting on the window ledge. Maybe they are hard to install or they did not have the money to put it on the outside of the building.

Probably people are aware that Manitoba Housing is putting this money in, because they put up their sign during construction. In fact, I took the sign down because it was blowing over in the wind, and I got a phone call, I got a complaint, and we used it for the roof of the play structure, for our kids' play structure in our backyard, after it had served its useful life outside Charles Cathedral Housing Co-op. So it was reused or recycled. It is still in my backyard, with the former Minister of Housing's name on it, the Minister of Government Services. So his sign is still fulfilling a useful purpose.

The federal government has put millions and millions of dollars into public housing of all different kinds. I think they have always felt aggrieved because they did not get the credit. The public is not aware of the money, especially the money that they put into operating, the 75 percent that they put into operating.

* (1750)

I do not know whether that is the reason or whether it is just a lack of commitment to public housing by the federal Conservative government, but we know that they are cutting back every year. Even the current Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst) has complained about this. He has not criticized

his federal colleagues very strenuously; and, when I have asked him if he had written to the federal minister and if he would table the letter, he has always declined my questions on that. But it has seriously affected Manitoba as well as other provinces because there is much less money coming through for housing every year from the federal government. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): I am pleased to be able to rise in support of the resolution put forward by the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) and share his sorrow at the amendment of the resolution. I think I am unhappy with the amendment, not because it is an unusual occurrence, because, Mr. Acting Speaker, it happens in virtually every instance where an opposition resolution comes forward. The government amends the resolution by removing every word after the first WHEREAS, which, in effect, as we all know, means that we are debating an entirely different resolution. In many cases the amended resolution is diametrically opposed in tone and content to the resolution as put forward by the official opposition. So we are not unfamiliar with that strategy, and I will admit that we on this side of the House have on occasion performed the same parliamentary procedure in dealing with and amending resolutions that are put forward by the government.

So it is a process that happens. It is an unusual process, and in normal parliamentary procedures it would be ruled out of order, but in the government rules it is perfectly in order. So I am not unhappy in the sense that this is a surprise, Mr. Acting Speaker. What I am a bit concerned about is that, unlike many of the resolutions that are put forward, both by the government and the opposition, this particular resolution is really not political in any partisan sense.

It deals with a serious issue, and it brings forward what I believe is a very serious and well-thought-out recommendation for implementation for the government to tend to in an attempt to deal with a problem that is becoming more serious in Winnipeg.

So the concerns that I have in the amendment are that it appears, not only from the amendment, but also from the words of the former Minister of Housing when he was speaking to the original resolution and then putting forward the

amendment—it appears that the government really does not understand, or is choosing not to understand, the distinction between short-term shelter, or shelter that is tied to a particular program, and permanent housing for the homeless.

I think that is a problem that this government needs to address. It should address it. I think the chances of it seriously addressing it in any meaningful way in the few short months left to it in its mandate are little or none, but it would be very nice if they would look at it.

The programs that the minister referred to in his amendment, as the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) has discussed earlier in discussing the amendment, deal basically with the short term, providing shelter in a short-term context. The short term can be differently defined. It can be defined as little as the three weeks that women and children are allowed to stay in a shelter for victims of abuse to as long as a year in the WISH program that the member for Burrows referred to earlier.

But it still is short term in the sense that everyone who goes into those programs or into that set of housing knows that this is not their home. This is a temporary place where they are residing; and, in many other cases, such as the St. Norbert Foundation, for the people who are housed in that foundation and using those facilities, that is not even just housing; that is attached to a particular program. People have to apply or be referred to that program. It is not housing for the permanently homeless. There is a very major distinction that needs to be made that is not made in the government's amendment to the resolution put forward by the member for Burrows.

I think the member for Burrows was completely accurate in his comments about the importance of looking at this problem of the homeless and seeing what we can do about alleviating it in the short term and the long term. It is a situation that, if we do not address it now, we will be reaping the whirlwind, to put forward half of a phrase. We need to recognize the problem and start to put into place measures to alleviate the problem and address the root causes of the problem, or we are going to end up, like major cities across North America have ended up, with massive numbers of people who have no home.

It is, as we all know, the fact that, if you do not have a permanent home, that you go from one flop

house to one boarding house to another, it is not just a question of a lack of shelter. That is only the most basic definition of the problem of homelessness. The attendant social, economic and justice issues that surround each and every one of these individuals and the people they come in contact with are the real problem that needs to be dealt with in our society, the problem that this resolution looks to addressing, and the problem that the amendment to the resolution deals with not at all.

I would like to clarify because I think the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) and the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme) were inaccurate in some of their comments that they made to me off the record in earlier debate.

We are not in opposition to any programs that the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Ducharme) put forward in his amendment. Not for a moment would we suggest that those are unimportant services. They are, certainly, important programs, and they provide essential assistance to people in trouble.

We are not in any way, shape or form saying that they are not essential and important and must be supported. What we are saying, Mr. Acting Speaker, is that these programs and these housing units do not provide what is necessary to be in place, which is permanent housing for people who, literally, have no home.

It is not providing shelter for women and children who have been abused and for whom there is an urgent need in a crisis situation. Yes, you need those. You need them even more than they are in place now. You need women and children to be able to stay there longer than the time that they are allowed currently.

We have had this discussion in the House on many occasions. That is a different issue. It is unfortunate that the government is confusing the issue of short-term program and short-term crisis intervention programming with the permanent long-term policies that the member's resolution addressed.

It is unfortunate, because it misses the boat. I guess I am concerned a bit about the thinking behind the amendment to the resolution. If the government is really serious, and legitimately feels that these two issues are compatible, that they are the same, then this government is really less intelligent than even I gave them credit for.

If, on the other hand, the government knows full well the difference between the short-term housing provided by a women's shelter and the permanent long-term housing as proposed in the member's resolution, and chooses to make an amendment such as the one that was put forward, then it is, again, another example of crass political posturing of the sort that the government accuses the opposition of indulging in all of the time, which is actions and statements that are less than forthcoming and straightforward.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, in closing, I would just like to say that we support wholeheartedly the resolution as brought forward by the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale), understanding the importance of permanent housing to facilitate the integration of these people—

Mr. Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member will have six minutes remaining.

The hour now being 6 p.m., this House will adjourn until tomorrow at 1:30 p.m. (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, July 6, 1993

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