



First Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
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DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
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DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
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ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
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EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
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FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
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GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
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McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
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McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
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RADCLIFFE, Mike	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
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SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
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STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
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TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
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WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 5, 1995

The House met at 2:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

**Emergency Health Care Services—
Community Hospitals**

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Yolande LeQuéré, Lorraine Krywy, Patricia Thompson and others requesting the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) to consider making a commitment to the people of Manitoba that emergency health care services in Winnipeg's five community hospitals will remain open seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Federal Immigration Policies

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

WHEREAS Manitoba has been immeasurably enriched socially, economically and culturally by immigrants and their families; and

WHEREAS it was for this reason that successive provincial and federal governments have encouraged immigration to Manitoba; and

WHEREAS since 1993, the current federal Liberal government has reversed these policies by instituting a series of changes making immigration more difficult; and

WHEREAS the 1994 changes in quotas for family reunification class of immigrants were unfair and punitive; and

WHEREAS the fee increases for immigrants instituted in the 1995 federal Liberal budget are neither fair nor justifiable and border on racism; and

WHEREAS the new \$975 fee being imposed on adult immigrants is more than many immigrants make in their home country in an entire year, and will make it even more difficult for people from these countries to immigrate to Canada;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the Government of Canada cancel these fee increases and instead institute policies that will encourage immigration to Manitoba.

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk), and it complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

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WHEREAS it was for this reason that successive provincial and federal governments have encouraged immigration to Manitoba; and

WHEREAS since 1993, the current federal Liberal government has reversed these policies by instituting a series of changes making immigration more difficult; and

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WHEREAS the new \$975 fee being imposed on adult immigrants is more than many immigrants make in their home country in an entire year, and will make it even more difficult for people from these countries to immigrate to Canada;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the Government of Canada cancel these fee increases and instead institute policies that will encourage immigration to Manitoba.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I have two reports to table, one the Annual Report for the Manitoba Foundation for 1994-95, and the other, the Annual Report for the Fiscal Stabilization Fund for 1994-95.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I have four reports to submit: the 1994-95 Annual Report for the Universities Grants Commission; the University of Winnipeg Financial Statements for the year ended March 31, 1995; the Annual Financial Report for the year ended March 31, 1995, from Brandon University; and the Annual Report 1995 for the University of Manitoba.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Health Care System Emergency Services

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

Madam Speaker, for the last period of time we have been asking questions to the government's Minister of Health about the status of the community hospital emergency wards, and I do not know whether the Minister of Health did not have the answer or he wanted to not let this Legislature know the status of the

emergency wards, but we certainly were not given straight answers to questions we raised this week.

Madam Speaker, there have been a number of public statements made that, in fact, the community hospitals have been notified by the provincial government that the emergency wards would be closed for a period of time late evening, early morning.

I would like to ask the Premier, what is the status of the community hospital emergency wards, and what is the status in terms of reduction of services for the public in the five community hospitals?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the honourable Leader of the Opposition is aware that mediator Jack Chapman the day before yesterday made a report which has been extremely helpful to all the parties in resolving the labour dispute, but Mr. Chapman did recommend and all the parties have accepted that we forthwith get on with members of the Manitoba Health staff in conjunction with appropriate officials of the facilities and the Manitoba Medical Association and its members to immediately commence a full and complete review of the provision of emergency medical care.

We accept that and that has begun, that review. That work is underway. We expect to see the doctors returning to work very soon, perhaps as early as tomorrow, which will bring on stream even further capacity in our emergency services in Winnipeg, so that with that happening and the discussions going on with respect to the future of the hours of delivery of services at the various hospitals, we will have further to say as we go along with that process.

I do say, though, one thing that was a very positive aspect of the labour disruption was that rather than having seven institutions acting all independently one from the other—we have had seven institutions where their CEO, their medical staff and ambulance personnel, everyone working in a more integrated fashion, which we think bodes very well for the future, especially with the infusion of all that medical staff after the end of the labour disruption.

Mr. Doer: Perhaps the Premier (Mr. Filmon) can clarify to the public and be very specific with the public on the status of the hospital emergency wards in the five community hospitals, Madam Speaker.

I think the public is hearing various stories from hospital administrators, various decisions that are being passed on to those administrators from the provincial government, and I think the public is entitled to, for once perhaps from this government, straight answers to straight questions about the status of patient services.

I would like to ask the Premier—I will table some minutes from the emergency department review working committee, Madam Speaker, from 1993, a committee co-chaired by Dr. John Wade. This is a committee of people who deal with patients. It is not Mr. Chapman's report, who is, of course, a lawyer, and the committee states that: If a decision is made because of doctors to close these emergency wards, this group will indicate that this is not a medically sound decision.

The committee goes on to say: If the emergency wards were closed in the community hospitals, grave concern was expressed in making this type of move with the limited amount of dollars that would be saved.

I would like to ask the Premier, has he considered advice from the medical subgroups in the decision that the government has passed on to our community hospitals, and can he just tell the public what is going on for once, Madam Speaker, instead of bafflegabbing in this House?

Mr. McCrae: I believe Dr. John Wade, to whom the honourable member refers, is presently the Deputy Minister of Health in Manitoba, Madam Speaker.

There have been a number of reports dating back as far as 1990 that have told us all that we have a capacity in emergency services in Winnipeg which exceeds the demand that is there.

I think in light of all of the circumstances today, especially with the pressures being exerted upon us by the colleagues in Ottawa of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and his colleagues here, we owe it to the population in Winnipeg and in Manitoba

to spend every emergency services and every health care dollar very, very wisely.

I am somewhat encouraged, Madam Speaker, by some of the willingness that I have seen recently, and even over a longer term, on the part of people in the government and people in the facilities, the medical profession, nursing profession, to work together to put the patient first and to deliver the best possible and the highest quality services in Manitoba that we can within the resources that we have.

* (1440)

Mr. Doer: I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon) a question dealing with this.

We have seen priorities of this government to spend taxpayers' dollars wisely. We had the infrastructure money for an arena that is not going to be built. We have contracts that are being paid for by this government. We have the Kenaston underpass that has proceeded, in the Premier's riding, with no underpass—and this cost saving is \$1.6 million.

I would like to ask the Premier, in light of the subcommittee's report which indicates that bypassing an emergency department at a hospital and adding an extra five minutes to a call could affect the quality of care that a patient receives, is it his decision to put in jeopardy or potentially put in jeopardy the safety of Manitoba patients or people in our community areas who rely on these hospitals, to add that extra five minutes, and is it worth risking life or limb to save \$1.6 million in terms of the decisions his government is making on these community hospitals in our communities?

Mr. McCrae: We cannot at this time confirm any figures the honourable member might use in terms of cost savings or cost related to any particular model that might be entered into in the near future, Madam Speaker.

The point is not the cost so much as it is to put the care of the patient first. The honourable member refers to an extremely important part of the equation, and that is, what is the safest thing to do?

The honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) raised with me yesterday a number of cases where he felt that there should be some review. I undertook to do that, but it would have been helpful if the honourable member for Kildonan had been a little more open in terms of details, so that we could get our review completed.

We have had a difficult time with that, Madam Speaker, but I can give a preliminary response from what I have been able to learn and that is that a preliminary review that we have conducted to this date suggests that each case the honourable member referred to, if indeed we are talking about the same cases, were responded to by ambulance, resuscitation measures were instituted at the site, other ambulance personnel with advanced skills attending, including the very highly trained paramedics, attempts to revive the individuals continued onsite, as is appropriate.

It is probable, but we are not yet able to confirm, that the time taken to transport the patients to hospital was the normal procedure and was not affected by the strike.

Health Care System Emergency Services

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, most of what the minister said this afternoon is utter nonsense and clearly indicates he does not understand the issues.

My question to the Minister of Health: How can we have any confidence in anything this minister says when yesterday he was denying that emergency wards would be closed and ducked the questions? At the very time he was doing that, his Deputy Minister of Health, John Wade, was phoning hospitals and telling them that they had to shut down their emergency wards. How can we have any confidence in anything this minister says?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I think that the honourable member is quite incorrect in paraphrasing or quoting me as saying something which I have not at any time said. Indeed, I have referred to past reports which have suggested the

closure at least at nighttime of some of the emergency wards in this city.

Up until recently, I have not felt it appropriate to go along with such recommendations because I had not any experience on the matter, and the last month has shown the experience of some pretty dedicated people operating shorthanded who have been able to manage within the bounds of what we have been saying.

Now with the infusion back into the system of the emergency physicians and pathologists, we have even more capacity at our disposal. If that capacity is channelled in the right places, we can provide very good emergency services to the people of Manitoba.

* (1445)

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, can the Minister of Health try to explain how it is by mere coincidence that on the very day the doctors' strike was being settled and the parties had agreed to settlement, his Deputy Minister of Health was phoning hospitals and advising them that, to quote the head of Grace Hospital: They had no choice but to close their emergency wards at night.

How can the minister explain that coincidence, other than it was government's plan throughout this entire strike and that is why they took a hands-off attitude throughout the whole strike?

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, with all due respect, I do not think the honourable member should be claiming any surprise. He has been asking questions about this since the beginning of the strike.

The honourable member, I assume, has also read the same reports that have been made available to everybody else about the overcapacity in the city of Winnipeg, so that it is not like he is surprised today and so is raising the question. He has been raising these questions for some weeks now. They are perfectly legitimate questions, but he ought not to be expressing any surprise.

One of the cases the honourable member referred to with even less detail than the others concerned a matter

arising at Victoria General Hospital. I understand that what the honourable member was referring to was something that was simply some miscommunication somewhere along the line, because the patient to whom that matter refers is, I understand, alive and well.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, I put those questions to the minister in writing and I would appreciate a response back in writing.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Kildonan was recognized for a final supplementary question. Please pose your question now.

Mr. Chomiak: Madam Speaker, my question is to the Premier.

Will the Premier stop hiding from this issue and confirm what his Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) has obviously said today, that in fact they are going to close emergency ward hospitals at night at some of the community hospitals without public hearings, without input from the public and without an opportunity to review the effects of the strike?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I will confirm that the Minister of Health, acting within his area of responsibility, is indeed doing the things that he has said today.

Foster Families Rate Reduction

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, yesterday in this Chamber, we heard that Manitoba embodies the principles of compassion and generosity. Regrettably, the current Minister of Family Services is well on the way to giving us a reputation for being known for being heartless and cruel.

This Minister of Family Services has tried to redefine the poverty line in spite of the fact that two parents and two children on city welfare earn less than half of the poverty line for Winnipeg. This minister has asked the Children and Youth Secretariat to address the issue of child poverty while she is taking the axe to the rates for food for children on city social assistance.

I would like to ask this Minister of Family Services, if she has any compassion left at all, how she can explain why the foster family rates in Manitoba have been cut by 6 percent recently?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, I would ask that my honourable friend ask Child and Family Services agency of Winnipeg for the reasons why, when they made the decision to reduce the foster rates.

Mr. Martindale: Can the Minister of Family Services then justify the lack of funding to Child and Family Services agencies, including Winnipeg, that have forced them to make these kinds of cuts, which is the third time in three years that this minister has forced reductions in the foster family rate?

Mrs. Mitchelson: Madam Speaker, I thank my honourable friend for the question because it does provide me with the opportunity to indicate to all Manitobans that we have made a major commitment to children and families in the province of Manitoba. Through our Child and Family Services agency in Winnipeg, there have been major increases year after year. We have covered their deficits on a yearly basis, so I reject any assumption that in fact we have spent less on children and families through our Child and Family Services system by this member.

Minister of Family Services Resignation Request

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Will the Minister of Family Services, who is totally out of touch with the needs of children and families in Manitoba and who believes that all you need is love to feed children and put food on the table and who is trivializing the plight of 7,010 children on city welfare and now has forced a reduction in foster family rates, will she do the honourable thing and resign so that a new minister can put the needs of children first?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Family Services): Madam Speaker, absolutely not. I will not resign. I believe that we as a government over the last number of years have put children and families first, and we will continue to do that.

It is fine to sit in the opposition benches and think that \$1.5 million is going to solve the problem of poverty when we look at the Honourable Joy MacPhail in British Columbia, the Honourable Bob Pringle in Saskatchewan dealing with the same very difficult issues that we are dealing with today.

* (1450)

Maintenance Enforcement Credit Bureau Reporting

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): Madam Speaker, two weeks ago when we asked the Minister of Justice to confirm that the maintenance enforcement legislation so urgently passed by this House this spring will not be in force until next year, the minister said, and I quote: "sections of the bill came into effect on Royal Assent such as reporting to the credit bureau. That, in case it has escaped the notice of members opposite, has really a great effect on those people who are, for instance, self-employed and should certainly encourage and provide a penalty for those who do not pay."

My question to the Minister of Justice is, would she now tell us when and how many of the approximately five and a half thousand parents in default on their maintenance payments have been reported to the credit bureau?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I am aware the member across the way has been circulating some numbers from—I do not even know what year he is dealing with. Let me just reassure Manitobans again that we have brought forward legislation which we believe is the toughest in Manitoba.

But, Madam Speaker, the member across the way, I believe, has done what many members across the way do. They will ask a question, get up and answer it in the next question. So let me just remind the member the purpose of the legislation.

The legislation deals with enforcement. The other part that the legislation deals with, never dealt with by the other side ever, is the resources able to be attached. You can have all the enforcement measures that you

want to have but if you do not increase the resources available, which this government has done through its new legislation, pension benefit resources, joint asset resources, then you can have all the enforcement measures you want but you still will not collect any money.

The bill that we passed deals with both parts, enforcement and resources, and we believe that it will make a difference to the women of Manitoba and anyone who is collecting a maintenance benefit.

Mr. Mackintosh: Would the minister then confirm that over the course of the three months since the bill passed, only 100 defaulters, just 2 percent, have been reported to the credit bureau, which only occurred after our question? Does this 2 percent solution represent the government's commitment to custodial parents?

Mrs. Vodrey: I say to him, 2 percent of what? What figure is he using? Is he using a figure of people who are required to pay within this province? Is he using a figure which includes people who are required to pay who do not live in this jurisdiction and whom we depend upon other jurisdictions to enforce the maintenance order?

We are acting on the enforcement measures which are available, and we will be acting on the resources area that is available. We collect on 74 percent of the maintenance orders in this province where the payor lives here.

Of those where we have been unable to collect, that is why we increased the resources available, Madam Speaker, so that we will be able to collect from people who previously were able to hide their assets.

Point of Order

Mr. Mackintosh: Madam Speaker, on a point of order, is there unanimous consent for me to answer the minister's questions?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. Johns does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Mackintosh: Madam Speaker, would the minister confirm what the district manager for the credit bureau tells me that for the future the minister plans to report only 100 defaulters a month to the credit bureau, which means that all of the current defaulters will not be reported until February of the next millennium.

* (1455)

Mrs. Vodrey: Madam Speaker, the member flies high again. No, I will not confirm that.

Madam Speaker, I would just like to say that he should never lose sight, none of us in this Chamber should lose sight of the fact that many people do pay their maintenance—in fact, the system does work for many people—and that the system itself in its accounting process records as a default someone who is one day late. However, for the payor and the payee, sometimes there is an agreement to that being one day late because of the date of a payday.

So, Madam Speaker, the record of default that the member is looking at, and if he is trying to say of those people who are defaulting, all of those people should be eligible for reporting to the credit bureau, that is not necessarily the case.

Madam Speaker, I just would like to refer to an independent study done by a University of Manitoba criminology student survey which gave us some very important statistics about satisfaction in the Maintenance Enforcement Program—overall satisfaction of recipients, 79.4 percent; and satisfaction of the payors, 76 percent; satisfaction with the communication centre, 80 percent.

I believe the program is working and we will continue to work with it to make it do better.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, while Beauchesne's Citation 416 makes it clear that the minister may decline to answer a question, Beauchesne's 417 indicates very clearly that

answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate.

The minister was asked a very specific question in terms of reporting of deadbeat parents who have not paid maintenance and was asked three specific questions.

If she does not want to answer any of those three questions, Madam Speaker, that is her choice, but she is now engaging in debate, and it is not answering the question. I would ask you to call the minister to order.

Madam Speaker: On the honourable member for Thompson's point of order, in my opinion, the honourable member for Thompson did not have a point of order.

Health Care System Emergency Services

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

I must start off by saying that there is a great deal of disappointment in the way in which this government has handled the whole emergency services crisis that was out there, and now that we have a government that appears to be wanting to reduce those emergency services in our community hospitals, I think that is with great disappointment.

My question to the minister: Because now he is going to be relying very heavily on the review of emergency services, will he or this government be prepared to make a commitment that no changes in emergency service hours will be taken into account until this whole review process has come to an end? Will he at least make that commitment to Manitobans today?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): I think the only disappointment there needs to be, Madam Speaker, would be the disappointment of the people of Manitoba, who sometimes look to the honourable member and his colleagues for some leadership, and the only leadership they displayed was to insist that we

legislate the doctors back to work which, I suggest to you, would have had a very unhappy impact in the workplace.

These are difficult enough times, Madam Speaker, in light of the massive reductions in transfers that provinces are receiving from Ottawa, without the honourable member trying to make matters even worse with some of his suggestions.

With respect to emergency services and the review that is being undertaken, I answered the questions put by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) and the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), and basically the answers that I gave to them would be the same as the answer to the question put to the honourable member now.

* (1500)

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I would ask the Minister of Health, in terms of who is going to be the author of this emergency services report, given some of the response even Mr. Chapman had in the report from the mediator where it is very clear that this government does not have the confidence and trust from individuals or organizations such as the MMA and which the minister knows full well because the mediator pointed it out himself—[interjection] Yes, page 8, page 9.

Mr. McCrae: I am not sure I heard a question in all of that, Madam Speaker, but I would just remind the honourable member again that the mediator did say that we ought to proceed working together with appropriate officials of the facility, of the MMA and its members, and, no doubt, there will be others who will be consulted as well as we address this matter.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Speaker, I will make it very clear so the Minister of Health can understand: Who is going to be heading the review of the emergency services and request for assurances that the public is in fact going to have input to this directly?

Mr. McCrae: Well, as the honourable member knows, there have been previous studies headed by Barer and Sheps and by Dr. Moe Lerner. Today, I know that Dr. John Wade, Deputy Minister of Health, has been

directly involved in the discussions, so in terms of the review and its leadership, I think it is important to note that the Deputy Minister of Health is involved in that. If you want to identify somebody as the leader, I suggest that would be an appropriate person.

Division scolaire franco-manitobaine Mediator's Report Release

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, there is a serious issue in the town of Laurier, where 38 children are attending school in the community hall under the auspices of the Division scolaire franco-manitobaine, while the Laurier school division under the Turtle River School Division houses 56 students and clearly has some excess capacity.

Madam Speaker, the parents in this—and it is a difficult situation—the parents have waited patiently for over a year at the request of Clayton Manness. They have now waited a long time at the request of this minister until her mediator reported.

I want to ask the minister today why she has refused to release that mediator's report to these parents who have waited so patiently for it.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, the mediator's report has not been asked of me directly, at any rate. It may have been asked of department officials. The mediator's report is a very simple, short report and the mediator has reported not just to me. The information has also been relayed to the parents. The information that they know absolutely was that the mediator was not able to have the two parties come to an agreement under his mediation. The two parties know that because they were the two parties involved.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, will the minister confirm then that I wrote to her on September 12 asking for a copy of that mediator's report and will she confirm again that she has not and will not release that report to the parents in that school division?

Mrs. McIntosh: Madam Speaker, I thought in the first question the member was asking about a request that was made to me by the parents of Laurier. If she is

referring to correspondence between the member and myself, that is a different question.

But I repeat for the member's benefit that the mediator's report simply indicated that he was not able to bring the two parties to agreement under his mediation. We now have the situation back at the local level for local resolution. All due processes of law have been followed and the legally elected people in that area are now charged with the responsibility to make their legal decisions.

Government Action

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, could the minister tell us what steps she intends to take—and she has powers available to her under the act—to bring together what is a very divided community? These are families, these are cousins divided against each other. What steps is this minister going to take to bring that community back together again?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I cannot make a cousin love a cousin. I can only do what by law I am permitted to do and, by law, I have done all that I am permitted to do. I have put a mediator in place, as I am entitled to do under the law. I have examined that all due processes of law were followed. Every decision made has been made legally by the people legally elected to make those decisions.

There are alternatives and choices available for the duly elected trustees involved in this particular situation and therefore they have an obligation under the law to fulfill their legally given responsibilities to choose one of the alternatives available to them. This is not a situation where there are no alternatives for the elected officials to choose from.

Flin Flon General Hospital Budget Reduction

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, my questions are for the Minister of Health.

Can this minister tell the House and the residents of Flin Flon the results of the Compensation Committee of

Cabinet meeting yesterday on budget cuts at Flin Flon General Hospital?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the honourable member asks about, I assume he is asking—what? What the allotment or the budget for the Flin Flon Hospital will be for—what? This fiscal year, next fiscal year?

He is not very clear on what he is asking, but if he is asking another question relating to the implementation of the staffing guidelines which came down late last year, Madam Speaker, I have given answers. I will be prepared to find and give other answers for the honourable member if he has something specific to ask.

Layoffs

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Specifically, how many bodies will be laid off at the hospital tomorrow?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, if notices have to be given to people at the Flin Flon Hospital as they grapple with the staffing guideline issues there, as has been done in other facilities, I hope they will do so with much more sensitivity than that displayed by the honourable member today.

Health Care System User Fees—Northern Manitoba

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): My final supplementary question to the Minister of Health.

With the \$4-million cuts to staff and patient care in northern hospitals, is the minister at least considering dropping the onerous \$50 user fee this government has imposed on northerners?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I would ask the honourable member and his colleagues who represent other communities as well in this province to review the staffing guidelines in detail, review the process that was used in arriving at the conclusions arrived at by the staffing guideline review committee and review also the sensitive way in which the hospitals and the government have attempted to

deal with those staffing guidelines before he asks the kinds of questions that he asks today.

I ask him also to remember that the planning for northern Manitoba includes major enhancements, Madam Speaker, of mental health services. The people in the North have never had the mental health services they have today under any government previous to this one, and that includes acute psychiatric care at the hospitals.

Infrastructure Works Agreement Rural Gasification

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, the announcement to use infrastructure money to expand natural gas to rural Manitoba certainly got a lot of positive response. We heard the government use that announcement to gasify rural Manitoba many times during the election, but after the election it just became a lot of hot air.

I want to ask the minister responsible for infrastructure, why, before the election, he, along with many of his other cabinet colleagues, met with the Swan River council and told them that there would definitely be money available for the gasification program in Swan River, and after the election that money disappeared? In fact, just this week, the Swan River council got a letter saying that there was no more infrastructure money available for their proposal.

* (1510)

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): The member is asking me a very similar question to what she asked me the other day, and I informed her at the time, if she recalls correctly, that the community had, in fact, been informed. I believe the letter was sent on Thursday of last week, Madam Speaker, and the question was in this House this week if the member wants to check her information.

Madam Speaker, the issue is, there is a very successful rural gasification initiative taking place here in Manitoba through the infrastructure program. In excess of \$21 million was allocated for rural gasification initiatives, and at this particular point in

time, all of that money has been allocated. Decisions were made back in the early part of the year in terms of the projects that would move forward.

Projects are moving forward with Centra in southwestern Manitoba. Projects are moving forward in Gladstone through a co-operative approach, and at that particular point in time there were still the resources within the infrastructure program for Swan River to potentially be a part of it. Subsequent to that, all of the resources have been allocated.

There have been various problems with the Swan River proposal and initiative in terms of getting their project moving, Madam Speaker, in terms of a business plan, in terms of other financing aspects and so on. At this particular point in time, all of that allocation has been distributed. It remains to be seen what happens as these projects continue to move forward.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, in fact, this government lied to the people of Swan River.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

I have cautioned many members in this House on many occasions to pick and choose their words carefully, and I do not appreciate such direct insults being hurled across the Chamber, either to members collectively or members at large.

Would the honourable member for Swan River please pose her supplementary question now.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, I want to ask—

Point of Order

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, I understand your caution to all members with respect to parliamentary language, but, clearly, the member for Swan River used an unparliamentary term and ought to be asked to withdraw.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Madam Speaker, I take it that the government House leader is challenging your ruling.

I would like to ask if you had made a ruling and then recognized, first of all, the member to continue with the statement, but if the member is through this point of order challenging your ruling, I would like to point out that the member said that the government lied during the election.

The member for Swan River did not reference any individual, which is the basic definition in terms of unparliamentary, and, quite frankly, Madam Speaker, the government House leader should know that we have raised a series of issues that we feel fall in that category, and we feel they fall within what is our basic duty and our basic right in this Legislature to call something what it is, and we find it unfortunate that the minister would now suggest that we cannot say that a government lied.

The member did not accuse any individual member of lying. It was a statement related to the election and the Conservative Party in the election. That was what she stated was the context of the word "lying." Madam Speaker, we would strongly urge you to reject the government House leader's point of order and allow the member for Swan River to speak out on behalf of her constituents by continuing her question.

Madam Speaker: On the honourable government House leader's point of order, I had not made a ruling. I was being very lenient in my opinion in cautioning the member only. However, on the honourable member for Thompson's point of order, I still take strong exception to the word "lied," regardless of which context it has been used in. It is my understanding that in this House that word has continually been called unparliamentary and it does appear on the list of unparliamentary words in many contexts, and in the other lists it appears where there has always been intervention by the Speaker of the House in the Beaudesne's listings.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Swan River, for a very quick question.

Ms. Wowchuk: Madam Speaker, I want to ask the minister responsible for infrastructure why this

government misled the people of Swan River and encouraged them to put forward a proposal. Just recently, they were encouraged to put forward a proposal when this government knew there was no infrastructure money left. Why did they encourage them to put forward the proposal, and I have it in a letter that you did encourage them.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Finance, for a very short response.

Mr. Stefanson: Madam Speaker, there has been no misleading of the community whatsoever. I have outlined for the member the process in terms of the utilization of the \$21 million for rural gasification, that early in the year decisions were made in terms of the projects that could move forward that had the rest of the financing in place to move forward, had the proper business plan in place. That has not been the case with Swan River and the Swan River region.

All of the money within the rural gasification portion of infrastructure has at this particular point in time been allocated to projects that are moving ahead. We have indicated to the community we are prepared to continue working with them, but we do require a solid business plan from the community. We do require that the rest of their financial commitments be in place. This is a significant project, I believe, some \$5 million to \$7 million, and those kinds of requirements have to be fulfilled, Madam Speaker.

We are prepared to sit down and work with the community, but I have outlined for this member that at this particular point in time the amount of money for rural gasification has all been allocated to other projects that are moving forward.

Health Care System Emergency Services

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Madam Speaker, we have confirmed that all of the community hospitals have been told that their emergency wards will be shut down.

Will the minister finally come clean in this House and advise the House that they have contacted

community hospitals and they will be shut down at nighttime, or if that is not the case with all five hospitals, what specific hospitals at this point are going to be shut down?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the question has been asked and answered today already. As I said, Mr. Jack Chapman, Q.C., mediator, has recommended that the various parties get together to discuss the provision of emergency medical care, and the option suggested by the honourable member is very much there as an option. It is the one that was used for the last month or so, contrary to our wishes, but that is what we had in place throughout the duration of the strike, is the nighttime closure of those emergency wards.

But now, Madam Speaker, with the infusion of all of those emergency physicians and pathologists, we can see a properly integrated program running city-wide, one program, a number of sites. That is what we have been wanting to see happen all along, whereby rather than having seven independently operating emergency rooms, we have one emergency program operating in various sites.

Health Care System Emergency Services

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, we have asked this question all week. We have asked this question throughout Question Period. I think the public and the patients of Manitoba and Winnipeg are entitled to very straight answers to very specific questions. Concordia, Seven Oaks, Misericordia, Grace and Victoria, are all those five hospitals going to have their emergency wards closed down, late evening and early morning as a result of a government decision, yes or no?

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Health, with a very short response.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, I think the comments that have been made and recorded over the last month or so should be pretty clear, that we plan to make whatever adjustments are

necessary to provide the best emergency care we can with the resources that we have.

The honourable Leader of the Opposition thinks that he can bully his way around here and force answers in the way that he wants them to be made. The fact is, we are working with the hospitals—

* (1520)

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would like to remind all honourable members that when the Speaker is on her feet, all members are to sit down immediately, and I would appreciate your co-operation.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order—[interjection] Well, Madam Speaker, I think the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister) should understand that when one stands to be recognized and one is recognized, one remains standing and one does not sit, but I wanted to raise a point of order on the statement that was made—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Would the honourable member for Thompson quickly address his point of order.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, my point of order was that the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), in his so-called answer, referred to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) as "bullying" his way around. I would like to ask him to not only withdraw that comment but actually for once answer a question in this House.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson indeed does have a point of order. I would ask that the honourable Minister of Health quickly withdraw the unparliamentary word "bullying".

Mr. McCrae: Madam Speaker, I apologize to you for remaining standing and talking after you rose. I apologize to the Leader of the Opposition for my language.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The time for Oral Questions has expired.

Speaker's Ruling

Madam Speaker: I have a ruling for the House.

On Monday, September 18, the Deputy Speaker took under advisement a point of order raised by the deputy House leader about the length of private members' hour. What was at issue was if the House had agreed to call it 5 o'clock at four minutes to 4 p.m., whether the first portion of Private Members' Business should terminate at four minutes to 5 p.m.

Indeed, the deputy House leader did have a point of order. Subrule 19.(2) provides that Private Members' Business shall be considered for one hour.

It might be useful if we get into this situation again to have the Chair put on the record exactly when the first private members' hour will expire, and I will endeavour to do this.

If the House finds itself in similar circumstances in the future, the Chair will inform the House at the start of private members' hour of the exact time when it will end.

NONPOLITICAL STATEMENTS

Mennonite Central Committee— 75th Anniversary

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, may I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Wolseley have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, I would like to invite all members of the Legislature to join in recognizing the Mennonite Central Committee on the occasion of their 75th anniversary.

As most Manitobans know, the Mennonite Central Committee is a highly respected international relief

agency whose Canadian headquarters are in Manitoba. The committee was founded in the 1920s to assist Mennonite and other settlements along the Dnieper River in Ukraine.

Combining word and deed, Canadians and Americans from all across the Mennonite community bound together to aid the victims of revolution and civil war. With donations and volunteers, they have continued to assist those in need around the world.

In the interwar years, they helped to resettle thousands of refugees in Paraguay, Brazil and Canada. After World War II, the Vietnam War, the Gulf War and today in El Salvador, Honduras and the Balkans, MCC is there to relieve suffering and to provide both food and technological expertise.

Thousands of Manitobans and Canadians have offered their services both abroad and at home, in thrift shops, in relief sales and through donations.

The Mennonite Central Committee has given birth to many other relief organizations—the Mennonite Disaster Service, the Mennonite Economic Development Associates, the self-help crafts of the world which provides 12,000 jobs a year in 35 countries, the Canadian Foodgrains Bank, the Mennonite conciliation services and the urban community service programs to assist victims and offenders, the disabled and those with mental illness.

Madam Speaker, this is not a community which seeks the recognition of any state, but let us acknowledge today the millions who have been and continue to be touched by the work of our fellow Manitobans. The Mennonite Central Committee remains for all of us a powerful witness of hope.

Winkler Bible Institute— Inner-City Ministry

Mr. Peter Dyck (Pembina): Madam Speaker, I ask for leave to make a nonpolitical statement.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Pembina have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Dyck: Madam Speaker, I would just like to concur with the points that have been made by the honourable member opposite, and this is very much in the same vein.

Over the past several days, 10 students from Winkler Bible Institute have been in Winnipeg's core area volunteering at soup kitchens and inner-city ministries. This initiative is organized on an annual basis with the Winkler Bible Institute whereby students go to work and reside with those who are less fortunate than themselves.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair)

I would like to take this opportunity to praise the efforts of these young men and women as they seek through compassionate means to make a difference in the lives of those who are in very different circumstances than their own.

It is when I see young people such as these take this type of initiative that I feel confident the future of our provinces lies in good hands. Thank you.

Mennonite Central Committee— 75th Anniversary

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): Could I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is there leave for the honourable member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) to make a nonpolitical statement? [agreed]

Mr. Penner: I certainly want to concur with many of the things that have been said in regard to the MCC and the services of the Mennonite Central Committee to the peoples of the world. It is certainly an experience that few have demonstrated could in fact be made possible by a group of volunteers such as the Mennonite Central Committee.

The 75 years of service that they have rendered to virtually all countries anywhere in the world that needed help is a demonstration of their dedication, the will of the people and the powerful witness that they have demonstrated to mankind.

I believe that functions such as the auction sale that they hold annually at Morris and at Brandon to raise large amounts of money, the farm community coming together to give of their produce through the donation of wheat and other things, is clearly a demonstration of the kind of commitment that many of the other peoples of the world share and partake of.

Many of the shops that they have set up around this country, and specifically in Manitoba, are a demonstration that they are willing to get involved in promoting industry and industrial development through the retailing of those goods that could be produced by foreign countries, and in that manner make the full circle of self-help come true.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think it is imperative that we note that a major percentage of the people who have given of their time are in fact Manitobans. I think it is a clear demonstration that the willingness to help a fellow human being, regardless of where they are, that spirit remains true in Manitoba and the people of Manitoba. I think it is a clear indication of how we have conducted ourselves as Manitobans within the Canadian mosaic and our clear indication as to how willing we are to share our wealth with others in the world. The Mennonite Central Committee has certainly demonstrated its ability to lead that process and that demonstration in that context.

* (1530)

4-H Week

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): May I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

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

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Deputy Speaker, this week is 4-H Week, and I would like to take a moment to recognize the many young people who belong to 4-H clubs and the many volunteers who give of their time in order that young people can participate in this very good organization that gives young people the ability to learn many, many skills varying from cooking to sewing and home living. One of the most important skills that I

think they have the opportunity to learn is public speaking. It has served young people from rural communities very well, who do not have the ability to access many of the programs that urban children have.

They also have the ability to travel to many areas, and I just want to commend the many people who work at it. It is a program that is sponsored to a degree by the Department of Agriculture and we have home economists involved in the program. I want to pay tribute to one particular club. It is a new club that has just been started in the community of Camperville. It has been a dream of mine for a long time.

My children went through 4-H for many years and I recognize the values of the program. I was a leader for many years and I have always been encouraging the people from Camperville to organize a club. I am extremely pleased, and I want to extend my best wishes to all 4-H'ers but, in particular, to the 4-H'ers at Camperville who are in their first year. I congratulate Ms. Rosteski who organized the club and I wish that they have many successes as many other 4-H clubs across the province have had. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder if you would canvass the House. I believe there may be a will to waive private members' hour today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour today? [agreed]

Mr. Ernst: Would you please call, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Bills 28, 25, 12, 31, and then the balance of the bills as listed in the Order Paper.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 28—The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1995

Mr. Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on Bill 28, The Statute Law Amendment (Taxation) Act, 1995 (Loi de 1995 modifiant diverses dispositions

législatives en matière de fiscalité), standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am very pleased to deal with Bill 28 today and put a few comments on the record regarding this bill.

This bill is really a hodgepodge of measures that further illuminate the fact that The Income Tax Act is basically cumbersome and unworkable in this province and this country. Now there are many things wrong with the taxation system in the country and one only has to recognize that 10 percent—did you know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that 10 percent of Canadians own 51 percent of the total private wealth of the country and that the richest 20 percent own 70 percent of the wealth of the country? So that means that 80 percent of the people in this country own only 30 percent of the wealth and that is a situation that has developed over the years. That system has developed in large part because of the nature of the tax system that we have developed in this country. It speaks to the point that we have to change the tax system in the country to create a more fair system for the country as a whole.

Now the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), I think, would agree with me that unequal distributions of wealth in a country are both economically and politically dangerous to a democratic society such as ours. We only have to look at other countries around the world where the tax system is skewed in favour of the wealthy to see very few people controlling most of the wealth of the country and the masses of people controlling very little.

What does a situation like that lead to? Well, the member for Lakeside well knows that a situation like that leads to political unrest, instability and leads to overthrows of governments and violence. We in this country have to work together to try to avoid a situation like that from occurring here over the long haul in 50 years. We have to be mindful that 50 years from now

we may not be here, but we want to work today to leave a system that is fair and equitable for the generations that follow us.

I do not believe that any of us in this House would feel satisfied upon retiring from political life knowing that he or she has furthered the cause of political unrest in this country. I think that we want to work together to work for a better system that gives a fairer share or fairer distribution of the country's wealth to all the citizens of the country.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have said that the act is unworkable, that over the years it has been amended. It has been amended in the interests of pressure groups. It has been amended in the interests of wealthy people to benefit wealthy people. So what we have is an unworkable hodgepodge of acts, and people do not understand these acts. People in this Legislature in fact, I do not believe, fully understand the implications of The Income Tax Act. If that was the case that people understood it, we would not have armies of accountants and lawyers to sort out the tax rulings for people in the country. The whole system is designed to be so complicated that it is only understood by these armies of accountants and lawyers.

The system is worked by private interests who can lobby the politicians and who can get favourable tax rulings for their particular interest of the day, and then the tax changes they get are interpreted by the accountants. The whole system is just one big circle and at the end of the day favours the people that run the system.

We have said that the public has to have a sense that the system is fair; otherwise they will not accept it. If we expect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the underground economy will disappear, that the underground economy will come aboveground and people will pay their taxes, those people have to understand and have to believe that the system is fair. And they do not believe. They do not believe that the system is fair. That is why we have the underground economy to the extent that we do.

People do not have faith in a system which they believe is fundamentally stacked against them and

favours certain groups. All they have to do is read articles in the paper, and I am going to make some reference to some of them, that totally blow any faith that they have in the tax system. Tell me what sort of faith would you have in the tax system, what sort of willingness would you have to pay your taxes when you open the Free Press or the Winnipeg Sun and you look at an article which states that a restaurant chain goes under owing the provincial tax department \$400,000, and you find that the minister is making no attempt to collect the money? What sort of faith would you have in a tax system that operates that way?

What sort of faith would you have in a tax system when you open the newspaper and you see an article in the Financial Post which indicates that of two million-plus Canadians who earned more than \$50,000 in 1992, 12,120 had enough deductions and credits to end up paying no tax? What sort of faith would you have in the tax system when you find in the same article that, at the highest income level, 36,970 people who made \$250,000 or more, 340 of them filed income tax returns which resulted in no net federal or provincial tax? What sort of faith are you to have in a system that operates like that?

* (1540)

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, one of the root causes of these stories to be printed year after year has to do with the fact that there are so many deductions allowed in the system, deductions that came about as a result of pressure on the part of interest groups who lobby the politicians at a given time, under given conditions, that allowed them to knuckle under, buckle under and give the interest groups what they wanted in terms of deductions. Then another group comes to the fore. It lobbies, in its own way, for its set of deductions and the government caves in and so it goes, and we have an act then that becomes Swiss cheese. We have a Swiss cheese act that has got tons and tons of loopholes that you could drive a truck through, that would allow these 12,000 people to pay no income tax.

Unless we get a grip on this, unless we come to terms with this problem over the next few years, we are going to see a deterioration in the ability of respect for the tax system, we are going to see a deterioration in the

government's ability to collect taxes and we are going to see a deterioration of the country's services. You are going to have what I had said we should try at all costs to avoid at the beginning: that is, a super-rich class and a super-poor class which will lead to trouble that we at this point do not want to even think about. That is something I think that is fundamental.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know, and members in this Legislature know, that over the next 20 years an unprecedented amount of wealth is going to change hands as the older generation dies and passes the wealth on to the newer generation, and governments of all stripes, I believe, realize that the debt load, the debt problems in this country are too overwhelming to be solved by the current system that we have right now. We know that the government, I believe, of Saskatchewan has a plan of a 30-year retirement in the debt. Perhaps, over 30 years, it will be possible to reduce the debt to a sustainable level.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is possible that the levels of debt are just too high. We have a \$500-billion-plus federal debt and growing. We have a \$6.9-billion general-purpose debt in Manitoba and growing. We have public debt service costs of \$647 million in this year. That is larger than some government departments. What I am suggesting here is the problem just may be too big for us to deal with in terms of simply looking at reducing services.

I am not saying that is really the way to go in the first place, but that is what the government is attempting to do through their balanced budget legislation. They are hoping to curb tax increases without referendum. They are attempting to solve the problem by cutting services, and they can get away with that to a certain extent.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, fundamentally, the problem, I believe, is going to be solved through a combination of measures. One of them may be the expanded pie, which people hope for, but I think government is going to have to come to grips with the whole idea of succession duties or perhaps some sort of version of a net wealth tax when, over the next 20 years, this unprecedented amount of wealth changes hands and comes to, well, essentially, the younger people of today, the middle-aged people of today.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the bill, while it deals, as I said, with a collection of measures, it does not deal with the problem fundamental to the whole system.

Now, one of the observations that I would like to make having to do with, I suppose, the education of people on finances—and it would be a suggestion—is that, in the school system, I think it is a valid argument that children should be taught financial affairs and budgeting and so on because, when people come out of high school, they know their subjects, their maths, their history, geography and so on, but, when it comes to finances, I believe—and I could be wrong, but I believe—that people are largely ignorant and that we learn our financial experiences basically on a trial-and-error basis. It is sort of like a brain surgeon learning his or her craft on a trial-and-error basis, going out and practising with the patients to learn brain surgery.

That is how people learn about finances, unfortunately. It is sad that we see young people getting out of high school and responding to totally irresponsible advertising on the part of the bank, the financial institutions, luring them into debt to buy cars that they perhaps do not need, to take vacations that they perhaps do not need, going into debt to do it. The people find themselves with their future mortgaged at age 17, 18, 19 years old to the extent that they never will get out of this morass. This is just a fundamental problem with the society.

I am not suggesting that we demand that the financial institutions be more responsible in their advertising and that the banks perhaps be a little more responsible in the way they loan their money, but I am suggesting that perhaps it should be an educational process.

Perhaps we should be mandating some sort of financial training courses in the public school system so that the people graduating from high school at least have some sort of idea of money management so that we do not have to look at the business and law digest every week and find people in their early twenties declaring bankruptcy and losing faith in the system because they have managed to get themselves into debt to too high a level and had to go bankrupt and cause all sorts of family problems. It is a vicious circle that once the debt is incurred, then families break up and all sorts

of other problems occur as a result. So perhaps we have to look at those elements as well.

* (1550)

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I noticed in the bill the bill makes reference to the health and education tax levy. I have to look at this government and see a certain amount of hypocrisy over there when it comes to a health and education tax levy, because this government, back in 1986, before they were the government, went around the province promising people that they would get rid of the health and education tax levy. That is what they promised. At the end of the day, we still have the health and education tax levy.

So, obviously, they have recognized one of two things: they cannot get rid of it because they need the revenue, or they recognize that it is not such a bad idea after all and, in fact, all they have really done is move the limits. They have moved the threshold up a few times so that fewer and fewer people are actually paying, the smaller businesses are not paying the tax. That is what the NDP government did in its last couple of years as well. It increased the limit.

But here is a government that made considerable political hay talking ceaselessly and endlessly about this terrible—they called it job stifling. They called it all kinds of things. This was a vile tax that these people were going to get rid of and now eight years later—you know, speaking of hypocrisy, I just cannot let this pass.

I remember in '86 going door to door and having motorcyclists accost me about the helmet laws and I remember the Conservatives—well, I know there were a few around here—that were actively participating and gleefully egging these people on, suggesting that somehow if you only change the government that these motorcyclists' problems would be solved. Then all of a sudden when the government changed hands, the motorcyclists demonstrations stopped all of a sudden but the helmet law is still here.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, as I had indicated before, this particular bill deals with a number of measures, and I do want to make some comments on the bill relating to

the whole question of where Proposition 13-type legislation gets us at the end of the day.

Now, we all know that people in California may in fact be affected by the sun, I am not sure, but there are a lot of ideas that get started in California, and one of them 20 years ago or so was the Proposition 13 in which people willingly walked forward and straitjacketed their government and themselves by mandating that governments could not increase taxes without referenda, and 20 years later we are now seeing in spades the effects of this particular type of legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We are seeing entire counties going bankrupt in California because the system cannot sustain itself. The services have been cut to the point where they cannot be cut any further, and the local government is out of money.

This government feels that by bringing in balanced budget legislation, which they could have done anytime in the last seven years but did not do—they could have balanced the budget at any time in the last seven years but did not do it. They could have changed the tax system anytime in the last seven years, but they did not do it. They are essentially straitjacketing by passing this legislation, straitjacketing themselves, or certainly straitjacketing the next government that comes into office. I think that the logical extension of this legislation is that services are going to have to be cut. There is no question about it, that the services are going to have to be cut, and there is a limit to how many services can be cut.

The government is going to have to search for new sources of revenue—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

The honourable member is tending to drift a little bit. We are dealing with Bill 28, and I have visited the bill itself and what you are discussing at this time is Bill 2. The honourable member will have an opportunity on Bill 2 to discuss that bill. At this time I would ask you to speak to Bill 28.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am quite aware, as the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) has reminded me at various other points, that there is a wide latitude

that is normally given in the debate on these bills. The member knows full well that I have the bill in front of me, that I have the spreadsheets.

You know, I think it is about time that we perhaps dealt with some of the minister's spreadsheets and minister's own words dealing with this bill, because I ask the Deputy Speaker whether he can make any sense, or anybody else for that matter can make any sense out of this statement: Eligible expenditures for the research and development tax credit will include proxy amounts as used for federal income tax purposes. The proxy amount is a simplified method of calculating overhead expenses which qualify as a qualified expenditure for purposes of the federal act. The definition of "eligible expenditure" for provincial purposes will more closely parallel federal legislation.

Now, if anybody understands that, anybody can explain that, if the minister understands it and can explain it, I wish they would come and do it because this is at the heart, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of what I have been talking about today. This is the heart of the whole bill, and the member knows it. The average person cannot be expected to understand this. I am not arguing the merits about whether this is particularly good or bad. I am just saying you cannot understand this.

The tax lawyers will now be visited by each of the companies affected by this for opinions. This is not the way for the tax act to be drawn up. We have to take away all of the exemptions, the loopholes, that are allowing companies, these 12,000 people and all these companies, to walk through, earning tremendous amounts of money without paying tax.

I have more than enough material today to use up my own time and a few others. I want to get to some other examples here of people walking through the tax system. You know, my good friend the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) will certainly appreciate this one.

In 1990, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Finance Minister Paul Martin—now we all know who he is—his company, the CSL Group, made a pretax profit of \$19.7 million. Now that is more than Keith Tkachuk. And guess what

he paid? Does anybody want to venture a guess as to what he paid of these \$19 million?

An Honourable Member: Probably half.

Mr. Maloway: Well, a member says he should have paid half in taxes. The point is that he paid zero. The company paid zero in taxes and not only that, they got tax credits equalling \$400,000. So he earned \$19.7 million pretax, paid zero in taxes, and on top of that, even that was not enough, got tax credits. Your tax money—the sum of \$400,000. Now does that sound like a fair system that has so many loopholes that people are able to walk through?

Now I remember John Rodriguez, a former Member of Parliament, used to use his corporate welfare bum of the week example. He would stretch a story out like this for a number of weeks. But I will save the members waiting around for four or five weeks. We do not have four or five weeks.

So I am going to give the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh), who probably needs the lesson as much as anybody over there, the information today so she can digest it and think about it a little bit.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, did you know that in 1992 the Royal Bank made a profit of over \$63 million? And they paid how much in tax? Zero. Just like Paul Martin's company. A Royal Bank teller in B.C. earning \$25,000 paid \$5,732. More than the bank.

Now the Liberal party, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), the member of the Liberal party, I think would agree with me that he would never see \$63 million in his lifetime nor will most of us here. Even he should rise up and do the right thing for his constituents in Inkster and demand that Finance Minister Mr. Paul Martin pay his fair share of taxes, that his companies pay their fair share of taxes regardless of loopholes. This man is the Finance minister of the country, has the ability to close the tax loopholes, so that companies will pay their fair share, and the problems of the country will not be solved unless this is done. I am sure the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson) understands that. I am sure the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) understands that,

that the problems in the country will only get worse as long as big companies can walk away, literally walk away from their tax obligations.

* (1600)

Between 1961 and 1992, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the percentage of tax dollars that the government received from individuals jumped from 32 up to 48 percent, and during that same period the percentage of revenue from corporations went from 21 percent to seven.

Point of Order

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder if the member would be willing to entertain a question as to the extent of information he would like to put on the record.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable minister does not have a point of order. It is up to the member if he wishes to take a question at this time, and the House would have to give leave for the honourable minister to pose that question, so that she did not lose her standing on the bill.

* * *

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have had numerous requests over the last nine and a half years for questions, usually from the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns). Nobody has managed to catch me yet on any questions. I will tell the member at this point that if there is time left at the end of my time, I certainly will happily take questions from her.

This whole bill is about loopholes to the tax system. It is about giving concessions to the member for Assiniboia's (Mrs. McIntosh) friends in the private sector, those tax avoidance experts, her friends, her supporters, those loads of companies who donated to the Tory party and their campaigns in the last election—

Point of Order

Hon. Brian Pallister (Minister of Government Services): I wonder if the member is aware of the

concessions given the Canadian Autoworkers Association for their \$49,000 donation to the Manitoba New Democratic Party in the past election or the concessions given—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member did not have a point of order.

An Honourable Member: He does not know what he got, but he knows what I got, and that is very interesting.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable government minister did not have a point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I would ask, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that when this kind of abuse of the time of this Chamber takes place that you cut the member off, that that is nonsense. That is no point of order. That was engaged in free-style debate.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order. We have clearly got a dispute over the facts between the honourable members on both sides of the House.

* * *

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Deputy Speaker, well, you know, it is obvious to me that the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) would not get herself into so much trouble if she did not have such a thin skin. In the political life that we are in, one learns to develop a thick skin in this business, and people with thin skins—

Point of Order

Mr. Pallister: I believe that the member for Elmwood, with all due respect, should withdraw his personal attacks on the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh), and I ask you to consider the comments that he has just made in view of Beauchesne's interpretation of what is and what is not parliamentary in this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Exactly what the honourable member is referring to I am not aware

of. I was having a little bit of trouble hearing what the honourable member was saying because of some of the disruption in the Chamber at the time, but I will take the matter under advice and report back to the House at a later time.

* * *

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Deputy Speaker, you know, the member for Assiniboia is very sensitive over there. We are talking about loopholes to the tax system, loopholes that she and her government create for—

Point of Order

Mrs. McIntosh: Specifically, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the member is revising history. Specifically before, he said that my friends were given tax loopholes by me, and I would like clarification, which friends, which loopholes, by me, when.

I would like that clarification or a complete withdrawal with an apology. I want names, dates, places, and I want it now, or I want a withdrawal, and I do not want revisionist history that he now changes into me and my government create loopholes for a generic group of people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I have already taken that matter under advisement. I will review Hansard and I will get back to the House.

* * *

Mr. Maloway: The fact is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Bill 28 just continues on the same path, that this government, her government, Conservative governments of her stripe—she is a member of this government—promote loopholes which benefit their friends and their supporters, their friends and supporters who give them their donations to run their campaigns, to keep the playing field—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

I am having great difficulty hearing the honourable member for Elmwood, and I ask all members to choose and pick their words very carefully so as not to provoke

any more debate than we actually have to have, other than what we are dealing with and that is Bill 28.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I really do not want to provoke the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh). I can provoke the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) and Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), and do, and they do the same to me, and we have no problem. We have been going on for years this way, but the member for Assiniboia, on the other hand, seems to react rather quickly to comments—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I have advised the honourable member for Elmwood to please refrain from directing references to other members at this time. Let us deal with Bill 28 which is before us at this time.

The honourable member for Elmwood, to continue.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Deputy Speaker, all I was saying was I was commenting in reference to comments that were made to me from my seat. If they were not made, I would not have made the comments.

I want to deal with Bill 28, once again, the promotion of loopholes that companies use that are supporters of that party in power, and reference is made to the election donations and so on of the parties. It is very clear to me that the perpetuation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of this system is done by governments, like the one across the way, who owe their allegiance to the people who pay their bills. It is as simple as that.

Now, why get upset about that? It is the truth; accept it. But what I am saying is that is not necessarily the proper attitude to have, the proper attitude and the proper approach for the good of the country, and members over there know that. They know that if you skew the tax system too much, in favour of the rich too much, what you are going to have is anarchy in the streets. That is all we are saying, and we want to avoid that. [interjection]

Well, the member for River Heights (Mr. Radcliffe) is concerned about increased taxation, and the argument will be that companies will go somewhere else. Well, if you follow his trickle-down theory, his race to the bottom approach to life, then all companies

will be in a no-tax—you know, in the tax havens, in the Caribbean. You cannot sustain a system that gives tax loopholes continually to wealthy friends of Conservative governments, both here and across the country, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and that is straightforward. [interjection]

* (1610)

Well, you know, the member is now talking about big money from unions, and the NDP does get donations from unions. There is nothing wrong with that. The point is, the Conservative government that bends like a pretzel to the Chamber of Commerce and draws up the rules the way the Chamber of Commerce wants them drawn up, that is the big menace in this society, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is the absolute hijacking of the tax system by a few powerful corporations and company people, and the Conservative Party and the Liberal Party are merely pawns. They are merely puppets, acting on the instructions of their controllers in the boardrooms, and the member knows it. The member knows full well what I am talking about. All I am asking is that she be reasonable and simply admit it, that, yes, we are puppets of the corporate establishment.

I mean, how else, Mr. Deputy Speaker, can we explain Paul Martin and his company making \$19 million and paying no income tax? How else could you explain that unless you could explain that the tax system is designed by the very people who benefit by the tax system that is drawn?

That is all we are saying, that in 1992, Mr. Deputy Speaker, 93,405 profitable corporations paid no income tax at all on \$27 billion in profits. Yet this government is prepared to tell the working-class people in Elmwood that they have to pay their fair share of tax and they are supposed to have respect for the system. They are supposed to have respect for the system when they see what Paul Martin's company paid in taxes and they see what they paid on their very small incomes. They are supposed to have respect for the tax system and then they see that companies that run amuck and run aground in this province do not pay the PST and this government lets them off. This government lets them off. Clancy's Ventures owes \$400-and-some thousand

in PST, and that is just one example, and this government does nothing, will do nothing to collect this money.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired. The honourable member for Inkster, to continue.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is actually with pleasure I can stand up and rise to speak to Bill 28 and add a few words. I always enjoy listening to the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway). He has this way of ensuring that everyone is—at least he attempts to put them in their place and at times exaggerates somewhat.

If you listen to the member for Elmwood, you might be of the opinion that, in particular, the Liberal Party—and I am a bit sensitive on that particular issue—being in the pockets of corporations or something of that nature, and he points out to a piece of paper that says, it says it right here. Well, it also says right here—and this is an annual report of the Chief Electoral Office in which the New Democratic Party does actually exceptionally well when you look at contributions from unions, \$18,000 here at the UFCW Local 832, U.S.—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I would like to advise the honourable member we are not dealing with The Elections Act at this time. We are dealing with an act which deals with taxation. It is Bill 28, and I would ask the honourable member to be relevant.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Deputy Speaker, not wanting to reflect of course on the ruling, but all of these donations and many, many more that the unions have donated, in fact, are tax credits. When the member talks about inequities and how money is taken away, this is one of the areas in which the New Democrats have absolutely no problem at all of taking away money from the working person and they have demonstrated that.

So, ultimately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, yes, there are many different forms of tax loopholes that are out there, but I take exception to the member for Elmwood trying to give the impression that it is the Liberals or it

is just the Conservatives when this is in fact a party if there is ever a party that is in a political pocket of an interest group, it is in fact this party.

Bill 28—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I have reminded the honourable member once already that we are dealing with Bill 28. I have allowed the honourable member a few extra minutes, so I could carefully listen to where he was headed, and I still have not found him heading in the direction of Bill 28. So I would ask him to carry forward.

Mr. Lamoureux: Bill 28—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There.

Mr. Lamoureux: —every so often you are supposed to make reference to the number, I am told—provides for an extension of the manufacturing tax credit, changes The Income Tax Act to more closely parallel federal legislation in the area of proxy amounts, a method of calculating overhead costs which qualify as deductions for research and development, a credit based on unused dividend tax credits of mutual funds trust is created, sales tax rebates for the first-time buyers of new homes, bad debt allowances to forgive taxes on bad debts, several new or expanded exemptions from sales tax, simplification of sales tax collection and processing for used vehicle sales, exemption from fuel taxes for cargo component of intercontinental passenger flights, exemptions from land transfer tax on the transfer of land for the benefit for an Indian band, amendments to allow the taxpayer to appeal an assessment or a reassessment to the Tax Appeal Commission.

These are all aspects, if you like, of Bill 28, but the principle of the bill talks about tax and what is fair. The member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) made reference to the importance of how he perceives taxes collected in areas in which it is not being collected. I guess, in just listening to the remarks, because there was a considerable amount of heckling that was going on during that particular speech, that it is important that we all realize that, yes, there is a need for change, and this is why we see a bill of this nature in front of us. We need to see, through evolution, hopefully, we will

see, and hopefully it will not be too long of a period of evolution, taxation policies that are more fair to all Canadians. We all attempt to strive for that.

Why is that important? And why is it that we would want to see this particular bill go into committee? Well, there are different ways in which we finance the many different programs that are out there: through taxation, through deficits in many cases and through other forms of revenue. With respect to the taxation, people want to feel that the money that they are contributing towards taxes is, in fact, being utilized to its fullest degree.

Over the last couple of weeks, to give a specific example, we have a government that has been talking a lot about the emergency health care services. We have to take a look at what tax dollars we have and what sort of services that we can provide. There are certain areas in which we would agree and there are certain areas in which we would not agree.

I want to use, for example, the emergency services as a specific example. Here we have an envelope, if you will, in health care in which tax dollars are brought in and we spend over one and a half billion dollars on expenditures, and we would question in terms of why it is government would be allocating some tax dollars towards one service and not towards the other service.

* (1620)

That, for example, is the reason why I brought up last week to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) why it was so very important that we preserve the emergency services in our seven community hospitals, Mr. Deputy Speaker, something which we believe very firmly in. Obviously, the Premier and Minister of Health take a look at those tax dollars and say, we believe the priorities need to be elsewhere. So it is a question of establishing priorities in the many different government programs that are out there. But, when it comes to coming up or providing the financial resources in order to implement those programs, we have to evaluate on an ongoing basis.

We have seen The Statute Law Amendment Act in different forms in previous sessions where there are in

some areas significant modifications; in other areas, it is somewhat mild or a modification that does have somewhat of an impact but relatively a minor one. There is no doubt I would like to see much more in terms of tax, changes in the way in which we collect our taxes.

I have stood up on so many occasions inside this Chamber and talked about the property tax and the school portion of the property tax, and how it is that we should be attempting to shift more of that school tax, property tax, if you like, onto the general revenue side. Maybe if we approached in a more aggressive way tax reform, we would be able to facilitate that change much more quickly. Because there are many different forms of taxation, some of them are much more progressive than other forms of taxation. Ultimately, one of the more regressive taxations that is out there is, in fact, the property tax. A more progressive tax would be, in fact, our income tax.

The member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) makes reference to loopholes. Yes, there are loopholes, and there are big-time loopholes. It is not just the multimillionaire, if you like, that takes advantages of loopholes; there are loopholes in taxation law that individuals of almost every economic strata will attempt to take advantage of. Ultimately, the biggest winner, in my opinion, in many cases is, in fact, the accountants and the H & R Blocks and these organizations.

I would like to see a tax form in which the average person with a Grade 12 education can actually sit down and fill it out and make a submission and not have to worry about, well, gee, did I fill it out properly? You know, I have assisted or had discussions with people that I represent. One of the concerns that they have is that, look, if I do not go to H & R, or if I do not have an accountant, I could be losing out more money than if I would have had H & R and they might have found some little loophole in there that I could take advantage of that would have paid for the actual cost and given a further enhancement on my tax refund.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that over the years there have been some changes to try to simplify them, but we need to go a significant distance yet in order to try to

put people, the public, as I say, the ideal, the average individual that has that Grade 12 diploma to be able to make them feel comfortable that they are not losing out on monies that they could be receiving by not bringing it to H & R, by allowing them themselves, or him or her, to fill out their own tax forms.

There are other forms of taxation that frustrate. We talk about the GST. We talk about the PST. In fact the GST—and I was here when the GST was being introduced and remember quite vividly the uproar that was out in the public, in the communities. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I actually had petition cards that were circulated in my area and received just an overwhelming response.

You know, it is interesting when you compare, let us say, the GST to the PST, the provincial sales tax compared to the goods and services tax. You will find in many ways that the GST is more of a progressive tax than the provincial sales tax, yet we parliamentarians want to say let us get rid of the GST. Ultimately, I would love to be able to see us get rid of the GST, but equally it would be nice to get rid of the provincial sales tax too.

Ultimately what is needed, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is there has to be some sort of a rationalization of the way in which we collect our taxes, and, you know, I expect and I wait, I will have my fingers crossed, the federal government did make a commitment to replace the GST. Many would argue that they made the commitment to abolish it, and I have read in the past the actual red book commitment in terms of replacing. I believe the intent was to try to attempt to make it more of a harmonized, a fairer tax. Now what seems to be coming out of the national government regarding this tax is some form of a value-added tax which would include or incorporate the provincial PST. You know, I do not want to be premature in making any sort of statements that might not be happening, but I do believe that this whole area of discussion has been lacking, in terms of inside this Chamber.

In fact, I recall the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) when he made reference in private members' hour to how wonderful it would be to have a resolution in which everyone can just kind of speak their minds

and not have to worry about the political repercussions of doing that. One member says: maybe on another day. Well, it sure would be interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to try to get individual members' opinions on some form of a harmonized value-added tax, or whatever one might want to call it, in which the PST and the GST are no more. I think that sort of a discussion would in fact be most interesting.

No political party can come out shining on this particular issue. Ultimately, the New Democrats might argue that the Conservatives brought in the PST in the province of Manitoba, but then I could argue, or the Conservatives could argue, that the New Democrats increased the PST on a couple of occasions, thereby also reinforcing that they believe in a sales tax.

I bring it up primarily because when we talk about income tax or property tax or sales tax or consumption taxes, if you like, we have to acknowledge that there is a need for change. This Bill 28 does not significantly change the ways in which we are going to be collecting taxes. When I say significantly, it could be a relatively large sum of dollars, and no doubt there is a certain amount of equity that it will be bringing in and so forth. But in the broader picture of overall reform of taxation it really does not go far enough from my personal perspective.

Hopefully, in time, what we will see is a broader debate on taxation policy. I know that the Estimates do provide us that opportunity to exchange thoughts and ideas on different forms of taxation because I have only alluded to a few of them. There are many others. One that comes to mind, of course, is other consumption taxes, whether it is your gasoline tax or your tobacco tax. Your tobacco tax in particular has been a very controversial one over recent years because of the way in which the federal government was trying to address the smuggling issue.

* (1630)

But again it was an issue which proved to be very interesting when it came right down to the impact on the province of Manitoba. When you try to take the politics away from it, as I believe we did in committee one day with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson),

the Minister of Finance indicated the impact on Manitoba was almost insignificant. That is in essence what the Minister of Finance was trying to imply. The following day the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) tried to imply that it was actually very significant.

It proves, or at least it demonstrates, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that, yes, there is a lot of politics played when it comes to taxation and the way in which government generates its funds.

With those few words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do not have any problem in terms of seeing Bill 28 going to committee.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid).

Bill 25—The Real Property Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable Attorney General and Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), Bill 25, The Real Property Amendment Act (2) (Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les biens réels), standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? No.

Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns): I believe the member for Burrows had turned this for me, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

This bill certainly at first appears innocuous, and the minister described this bill as dealing with the correction of typos and improving consistency and allowing for administrative efficiency. As well, she said that the bill addressed more technical aspects of the act, but as my comments will bear out, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it appears that the legislation signifies something greater than that, and I will get to that later in my comments. [interjection] I am going to leave you hanging.

First of all, the bill recognizes the changes to government services as a result of what has become known as Filmon Fridays, and what it does is it loosens

up the requirement on the Land Titles Office to remain open on a consistent basis with regular hours. I think this is an example of how Filmon Fridays has affected the public services provided by government at the provincial level.

Land transactions take place every day, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and land transactions cannot stop simply because of different arrangements for employees, and as a result of closure on certain Fridays of the year. We have a concern that the turnaround time for the closing of transactions are affected by Filmon Fridays, and I will pursue this matter further in committee with the minister to determine the number of complaints, if any, and I do not know how extensive the complaints are right now, and, as well, we will also be looking to see what the turnaround time is currently at the Land Titles Office.

I know there have been some delays that have been suffered due to the computerization of the titles. Whether that has been worked out now, I do not know, but we would like to know whether the Filmon Fridays have resulted in problems and extensive delays, particularly in the later weeks of summer.

Second of all, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the bill does something that we certainly support, and that is to put the liability for sloppily prepared documents on those who prepared the documents. In particular, the Land Titles Office is relieved of any liability to pay compensation where errors are made by the lender to the name or the serial number on the standard-charge mortgage terms and also relieves the Land Titles Office of liability where the standard charge mortgage terms are not even filed. That amendment only appears to affect lenders. It says that the problems are those of the lawyers for the lenders and not that of the Land Titles Office and the general public of Manitoba. We support that change. We think it is common sense, and I am not aware at this time of any other thinking on that.

The third area dealt with in the bill is to remove the requirement that notices given under the act be published in the Manitoba Gazette. I think this raises the whole question of what is the future role for the Manitoba Gazette. It raises a question about its relevance and whether government is committed to

maintaining that official publication of government. By withdrawing its support for the Gazette in this particular instance, is the government spelling the end of that publication? I do not know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, but we will want to pursue that issue with the minister. I understand that it has become practice that notices are not always published in the Manitoba Gazette and that causes some concern.

I now want to deal with what I see as the main issue in this bill. Essentially, it is twofold. The bill removes the obligation to file a plan of survey when there is an easement filed in the Land Titles Office. What it does, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it instead enables the deputy registrar to require a plan of survey but only where the deputy registrar is of the opinion that the easement is not sufficiently defined on any registered plan. This gives a great deal of discretion to the deputy registrar and it gives that discretion without anything but a very vague guideline to the deputy registrar.

What is the meaning to the landowner and to the public, Mr. Deputy Speaker? We have to always ask that question. We have to get beyond the legalese and beyond the concept to see how this may affect ordinary Manitobans.

* (1640)

The bill says that where an easement is registered no longer must you file a survey plan. The survey plans show exactly where a utility cable, for example, is buried. It will indicate for the homeowner and for anyone else where Manitoba Telephone lines are buried, where Manitoba Hydro lines are buried.

We are aware of many instances where not only have people been injured—and I am sure there has been loss of life—but where utility services for an area have gone out because of interference with a utility line. I think more recently we have seen difficulties in the city of Winnipeg regarding the gas lines. We have seen a real effort on the part of some utilities to educate the public and convince them to call before you dig. I think that is the term that is used. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are currently in many homes, plans of survey which show where easements have been granted and where utilities are buried. All the caveat on a title will show is that

there is in fact an easement, whether by MTS or Hydro or another utility, and usually there is no detailed description. Sometimes there may be a sketch.

So that leads me to the second part of my concern here. I looked at the minister's comments on second reading where she said, "This amendment will provide improved protection for the public by facilitating registration of utility easement agreements which disclose the location of utility installations such as telephone, power or gas lines which are often underground." She went on to say, "The implementation of these amendments to The Real Property Act do not represent any additional cost to government and will reduce costs associated with utility easements." The minister is purporting to convince Manitobans and this Chamber that these amendments will improve protections to the public. What in fact they do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is they remove a protection to the public, the protection being the detailed plan of survey of buried utility lines.

I do not know if the minister had a hand in preparing the notes. I suspect that the notes for this bill and this type of bill are prepared by staff, but this raises an issue that goes way beyond this bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It raises an issue again of the credibility of this government. It raises an issue once again of how this government cannot wait to engage in every opportunity even when dealing with relatively technical matters like The Real Property Act amendments, to engage in public relations exercises and to say things which do not bear out. Now one thing that does appear accurate, by eliminating the need or the requirement for filing plans of survey, costs will be reduced and they will be reduced to the utilities.

I wonder where the demand for this legislation came from. Was it from the Manitoba Telephone System? Did MTS come to this government and say, hey, reduce our costs; do not require us to always file surveys and the detailed descriptions of where our lines are buried; do not do that, and do not do it because that will save us money?

Well, there may be some money in the short term saved for MTS, or for any other utility for that matter, but what are the real costs to the community? What is

the effect on the greater good if you are removing this requirement? Where can it be shown that these amendments will improve protection for the public? I do not see that borne out whatsoever. All I see here, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the removal of protections and a protection which could make all the difference between life or death.

Why is it that even in such technical legislation the government has to come in and give a bunch of baloney? It makes no sense to those on this side of the House. I can see the government where it has major policy initiatives that it wants to fool Manitobans about, and we have seen enough of those lately, to get out there and engage in public relations stunts, but now it has drifted down even to the level of the technical bills before this House. What it says to me, as a relatively new member in this Chamber, is there should not be one piece of legislation that is not thoroughly reviewed. There should not be one piece of legislation that should not be passed out in the general community or to those that have expertise or interest in a bill because the credibility of this government now extends even to the more mundane.

We have seen, particularly from the Department of Justice, the public relations stunts over the last couple of years. I think that the nine-point plan on youth crime is a real doozie. It was a promise a year and a half ago that nine initiatives would be undertaken, and we have seen now, a year and a half later, how six of those initiatives have still to be put in place. Only three out of the nine have been fulfilled or are now in place, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We have seen two councils promised: the youth advisory council on youth crime, as well as a provincial council on youth crime promised. There is nothing there, but I will go so far as to say, and I think this is where the real PR stunt is exhibited, that the provincial council on youth crime is actually one part-time volunteer. We see underneath, when you scratch, near-tokenism, if there is any action at all.

Today we raised the issue of the reporting of defaulters to the credit bureau. The minister got up just two weeks ago and she said to this Chamber, do not worry about the lack of proclamation of most of the sections of the bill because the provisions regarding the

credit bureau came into force on Royal Assent. And she says, and I quote, that has a really great effect, current tense, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

She wanted Manitobans to believe that people were now being reported to the credit bureau, not only that but it had a really great effect. But not one person had been reported to the credit bureau when she made those comments, not one person, and in fact not one person was reported until after we raised the question about the maintenance enforcement amendments in this Legislature. I think that is sad that we have to have, we have to stomach in this province a government that will resort to cheap stunts like this, that has to completely abandon its responsibility both as a moral force and as a tool for action and betterment of the community.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have gone from nine-point plans and amendments to The Maintenance Enforcement Act. Oh, we have had boot camps and it was so sad to attend a meeting the other day of the minister's staff and seeing them so embarrassed—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for St. Johns is debating Bill 25, The Real Property Amendment Act, at this time. I would ask him to be relevant to the bill.

* (1650)

Mr. Mackintosh: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can understand why you thought I might be straying, but what is very important here and the principle on this bill is the misinformation that is contained in the minister's remarks when she described what this bill is purporting to do, and it is that issue that is critical to this House. It is that issue, of the lack of credibility of this government and the minister and her department which are at issue now.

It goes way beyond the amendments to The Real Property Act or what the Land Titles Office does or who files just a plan of survey or an easement or any of those issues. We are talking here about how a government has stooped so low that it now goes into The Real Property Act amendments. It goes into it in a way which does not do any service for elected legislators.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the minister wishes Manitobans to believe that the changes will improve the protection for the public, she should be considering requiring plans of survey to always be filed, and I will pursue that with the minister in committee. If that is her intent, then we will hold her to that.

We will also be asking the minister to tell us why these amendments were brought in. Where did the pressure come from? What is the problem with the current regime that required her department and Legislative Counsel to go through all of the rigmarole that is needed in order to bring legislation into this Chamber. What great pitfall is there in the current regime, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

So with those comments and those concerns, we will allow this to go to the standing committee. As you know, we have a serious reservation about the changes to the requirement for filing plans of survey, and we look forward to the presentations. I hope there will be presentations there on this issue, and I will look forward to hearing the answers from the minister, but, at this time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are prepared to let the bill go to committee.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 12—The Louis Riel Institute Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister responsible for Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik), Bill 12, The Louis Riel Institute Act (Loi sur l'Institut Louis Riel), standing in the name of the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), who has 27 minutes remaining. It is also standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows? Leave? [agreed]

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupert's Land): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to carry on where I left off two days ago, when we made some remarks about the Louis Riel Institute. There are some questions that we have that, I am sure, will be addressed at a later time in committee. I believe I left off with: Will this institute credit be recognized with other institutions? As well, we would like to ask—and this will come up in committee, I am sure, under Section 5(g)—what kind of agreements? Another matter we will like to pursue is: Will the mandate of the institute focus specifically on Metis contributions, issues and so on, or will it encompass First Nations and Inuit, thus carrying on with separate arrangements according to status?

I was most pleased with the remarks made by the Governor General yesterday in this House with respect to the realities that were faced in this province concerning the very real problems. Certainly Metis people are also experiencing the whole illness of child poverty and the other issues that the Governor General raised yesterday, and certainly his recognition of the role of the Metis people was truly appreciated in the remarks that he made in this House yesterday, and also the recognition that the Governor General made of Louis Riel.

Quoting from a book called *The Ojibwa of Berens River, Manitoba*, by A. Irving Hallowell, edited by Jennifer S.H. Brown, in his book, he said that, when the Manitoba Legislature first met in 1871, it was composed of men typical of the new frontier. Moccasins could be seen on the feet. The Cree and the French languages mingled with English, and rough suits, bright shirts and gay sashes were à la mode.

In 1881, the population of the province had increased by 40,000, as a steady influx of settlers, mainly Ontario British, arrived to take up homesteads under the Dominion Lands act of 1872. In the same year, 1881, the eastern and western boundaries were extended to include all the new settlements that had sprung up, and the northern boundary was advanced to 53 degrees north of latitude, which included the mouth of the Berens River.

In 1912, the boundaries of Manitoba were expanded further north to reach Hudson Bay and to encompass

the 251,000 square miles of land and water that is seen on modern maps now.

This is something that I believe we can only imagine in our own minds, as to how the Manitoba Legislature first looked when they first met here back in 1871.

The point I am trying to make is the unique language that the Metis people have come up with, which we commonly refer to as Michif, which is a mixture of the French, the Cree and Ojibway languages.

We believe that the institute is unique to the advancement of cultural awareness amongst non-aboriginal populations in Manitoba. We respect the government's acknowledgement and appreciation of the contributions of aboriginal people of Manitoba.

We believe it strengthens the movement toward aboriginal self-government in Manitoba, since "aboriginal" encompasses Metis, Indian and Inuit people. We believe it will enhance the historical, cultural, educational, linguistic qualities of eventual aboriginal governments once autonomy is achieved.

Metis people's lives have somewhat improved in this province, but conditions are far from being perfect in many, many Metis communities throughout this province, and work is carrying on. There was one time that Metis people were not acknowledged. If I can refer back to my earlier remarks about Metis people being the forgotten people, in fact, they were the forgotten people in this province at one time, and most particularly were the ones that lived next door to First Nations communities in years gone by.

I had the opportunity of witnessing that firsthand. They are now recognized under the Canadian Constitution of 1982. We believe and support any achievements and the aspirations of the Metis people of this province.

As a First Nations person, we regard the Metis people as our relatives, and together with the Inuits we are the aboriginal people of this province. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I will be the last one on behalf of our party to be speaking on this. We are prepared to now move this into committee stage.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When I had previously canvassed the House, someone had said yes to leaving it stand in the name of the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale).

Is there leave that this matter not remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Burrows? Agreed? It is agreed? Agreed.

Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion? It is agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): I believe that you may find that there is a will of the House to call it six o'clock.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? [agreed]

The hour being 6 p.m., this House now stands adjourned until tomorrow morning (Friday) at ten o'clock.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, October 5, 1995

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