

THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

8: o'clock, Tuesday, April 10, 1973

SUPPLY - AGRICULTURE

MR. CHAIRMAN: Resolution 13. The Honourable Member for Rhineland.

MR. FROESE: I had more or less completed my remarks that I wanted to make at that time. I had brought to the attention of the Minister that certainly the policy that they are trying to implement now in connection with the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation in that it will no longer be used for the purposes for farmers to acquire land and make loans in that respect, that this was not acceptable. And I definitely feel that we are taking the wrong course in not continuing the way we had because sooner or later the situation will arise again where farmers will be asking for loans, and also I have known on occasions where people have made applications and are refused for one reason or another, and it may not be purely on account of risk at all. There may be other implications than for this reason and if that same application was forwarded to the provincial corporation, this might be acceptable.

I know at one time that -- and I may use it as an example here -- my nephew made an application to the Provincial Credit Corporation and at that time the Board did not accede just purely on account of because it was the distance between the property he was going to purchase was too far away from his farm that he was working and therefore they refused. Later on he got it from the Credit Union, but I think later on he was able to refinance it through the Credit Corporation and, as I mentioned before, that who knows when the banks might again implement their tight money policy and that we might be in a situation where we would be looking for a source of this type and I know that the - what credit unions and other financial organizations have experienced during a period of tight money policy and that farm people especially when they are dependant upon credit, that this can be a very awkward situation and therefore I would appeal to the Minister to reverse his stand and to let the corporation function as it did before.

I certainly have no objection to diversification as the government is doing in connection with the loans for cattle and so on, I don't have any objection to that at all but let us not deny the other function that it carried on before.

Certainly when we have our government agencies they needn't operate in a monopolistic situation only. I don't think that it should be that way. We should make room for competition and for a choice for the people. So once more I would appeal to the Minister to reconsider the position of the government.

I was also interested to hear the Member for Morris and to the incident that he relates where the corporation apparently took a certain stand, or made a certain decision that apparently furthered the presidents of the corporation or the - I think he's called president, is he? - the Chairman of the Board. Certainly I think even if there's nothing in the Act that would prohibit him from doing so, but I think there's a moral obligation here that has to be considered, and I would take a serious look at this if I were the Minister in charge of a corporation of this type and I think a reprimand on this case would have been very much in order at that time, if not more than that, because when you find that actions of this type are taking place and apparently the Member of Morris has proof of this and I think this is a very serious allegation, that we cannot just dismiss just like that, and I certainly hope that something will be done that a thing of this type will not happen again.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I would want to respond to the Member for Rhineland on a couple of points. Before we adjourned for the dinner period he wanted to know the policy of MACC on foreclosures, and I believe I did indicate to the House on more than one occasion that the policy of MACC on foreclosure is to try to first of all renegotiate the arrangements with the owner of borrower, or whatever you want to call him, client. If that is not possible within the credit concept then there is usually an attempt made if foreclosure is brought about to lease back to that original owner. He has the first option to refuse and if that is not possible then of course it's opened up to the public. So in that case the interests of the corporation are always towards the original client. With respect to the second point raised relating to the discussions of this afternoon, discussions as to the propriety of certain members of the board, I would suggest that for historic reasons one would want to take with a grain of salt the comments made by certain members in this House until they could be substantiated.

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(MR. USKIW cont'd)

The Member for Morris and the Member for Lakeside quite often indulge in all sorts of activities that eventually prove to be somewhat off the target, and this may be just one of those activities. And I have full confidence in the chairmanship of the MACC in the board membership. I don't believe that there's any reason to doubt their integrity, and it's my view that all things were properly done. And if it is found that they weren't then action would have to be undertaken. But I have no doubt in my mind that whatever decisions were made with respect to applicants, and in the case of the Bowles application I am told that the application was for some \$396,000 -- a fairly hefty sum of money for a family operation -- whereas the other applicant was involved with a \$100,000 loan. So there's quite a variation. There is also a question as to the net worth of the Bowles enterprise, far below what they had asked for by way of loan. I believe most of the money was going to be for debt consolidation where they were already in trouble financially with a number of lending institutions, and that this was really an application to bail them out. The board in its wisdom decided that they were too far gone the road in the area of excess credit and that this kind of action would be ill-advised and therefore refused to allow that application to be processed.

So that until the allegations of my honourable friend the Member for Morris can be verified I don't think that there's any need to reprimand anyone, Mr. Chairman. Indeed, as I said earlier, I have complete confidence in the administration of the MACC and the board membership.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. WATT: Mr. Speaker, the Minister has indicated that in the case of foreclosures that of course the person that was holding the borrower, as you put it, was given the first opportunity to lease the land back and if this did not occur or could not be brought about, that it was then open to the public. I'd like to know from the Minister what he means by open to the public - for leasing or is the land being put up for sale? And could he indicate how many farms actually have reverted to the Crown in this respect.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the foreclosure actions between April 1/72 and February 28/73 were as follows: Between April 1 and February 28/73 - April 1 of 72 and February 28 of 73 - 21 accounts resolved in the following way: one the corporation obtained title by foreclosure; three accounts the corporation obtained title by voluntary quit claim and transfer; two accounts by giving extension and time to pay; 13 accounts resolved by payment of arrears in full or part; two accounts foreclosure actively proceeding. Now foreclosure action commenced after April 1/72 and processed to February /73 as follows: Notice of intention to foreclose unless certain payment conditions met - 22 accounts to resolved to position as follows: one account the corporation obtained title by voluntary quit claim; six given extensions in time; 11 foreclosures actively proceeding; four resolved by payment in arrears in full or in part. Since inception the corporation has obtained title to seven properties, one of which is being sold to Land Acquisition Branch for erosion control purposes, and so on. The corporation is left with six properties under its ownership.

MR. USKIW: The Honourable Member for Arthur.

MR. WATT: One further question. My question is, I'd like a clear answer from the Minister. What is the policy of the government? Is it to lease back this land to the borrower, or if this doesn't occur open for lease to the province, or is it the policy of the government to lease and not to sell. Are there properties that have been listed and open for bidding for outright sale to the public.

MR. USKIW: The corporation at the present time has the flexibility to sell or to lease. It is hoped that when our new land policy is finalized that we will have a consistent policy as between the Crown lands that we now own and lease for farm use and all of the crown lands obtained through repossession. Now that may take another month or so before we have that kind of co-ordination. The hope is to offer these lands to young people who are refused a line of credit, when they are applying for a line of credit for purchase of land. People that don't have enough equity in order to avail themselves of the credit mechanism in order to get into the industry. So we're hoping to open up that option for many young people.

MR. WATT: You're saying in effect actually that the land that is reverting to the Crown will remain in the name of the Crown?

MR. USKIW: Well, you know I think I've restated that position a number of times.

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(MR. USKIW cont'd). . . . Mr. Chairman, that where we have clients that are interested in that kind of arrangement that in fact is the arrangement. At the present time the flexibility is there to sell or to lease. So the question I believe has been answered.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Pembina.

MR. GEORGE HENDERSON (Pembina): My question is - I'm not just clear on this here repossession. Do they go up for sale or are they advertised, so anybody in the area can put in a bid if you're repossessed - that's providing the tenants don't want to lease it back. Are they advertised and put for bid?

MR. USKIW: My understanding of it is that so far with the few properties that the corporation has, that they have tried to find someone that would lease it and they have not offered for sale any of those properties, although they have the flexibility to do either.

MR. HENDERSON: Are you saying then that they are not offering it for sale they are leasing it out and the land is staying in the name of the Crown?

MR. USKIW: Yes.

MR. HENDERSON: My other question was - the other remark that I'd like to make was, we were talking about a loan that had been approved before in the Bowsman area and then later on rejected. Now I'm not one of those that say they haven't got their limitations in passing loans but after one has been loaned and approved and then to be refused, I can't understand this, and I'd like some explanation of why it would be changed.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. HENDERSON: . . . I can repeat my question if you want. I'm referring to this here land at Bowsman where you're referring to Hoffor, or Hofford, I guess it is. After it was approved and the letter sent out, how come that then afterwards that it would be cancelled out. Now I can see that you have to make judgments and if you didn't choose to accept it in the beginning I can understand that but after accepting it then to reject it, I think this is very poor business and I'd like an explanation to why that should happen.

MR. USKIW: Well Mr. Chairman, I think if the honourable friend wanted all the details on it that could be made available. I don't recall for memory all those facts, but let me say to him that it is not unusual for a board to review a decision, even though it has already been made, if they have new information that leads them to believe that it should - that the question should be reviewed again. That is not uncommon. Now the position of the Board in this instance would be, as I understand it, that it would be better to reverse a decision than to live with a bad decision.

MR. HENDERSON: I've another question before you go on. Are any farmers so large that you wouldn't help them? Do you turn down people because you feel that their unit is large enough and you turn them down on that basis?

MR. USKIW: Not that I'm aware of, no, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: Well, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Minister's response since the adjournment for the supper hour on the matter that has been raised by the Member for Morris is really far from satisfactory. I am pleased to see the First Minister in his Chair because I suspect that this is one of the more serious matters of business that that we have to deal with in this current session. I suspect that perhaps that they might have discussed the question at Cabinet during the supper hour. But, Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Minister chooses to pass off the very - you know, I've sat in this House for some time and I've been party to making some pretty --(Interjection)--serious charges myself and indeed as the Minister has said, maybe some reckless charges myself.

It is one thing for us to trade barbs with each other in the heat of debate and to be, you know, maybe carried away under those kind of circumstances. But, Mr. Chairman, it's quite another thing to have the kind of statement made by the Member for Morris which would indicate the kind of intervention, the kind of political intervention in the operations of the most, you know, respected and worthwhile Crown corporation that we have, namely the Manitoba Agriculture Credit Corporation, and for the Minister to suggest, as he just has suggested just now, begs a great deal of questions, and he has suggested that he is prepared for more information. I want to assure you, Mr. Chairman, that we will insist, we will insist on the broadest of inquiry in this matter within a very short time, because you see, Mr. Chairman, what the Minister has just implied, he has either failed to take note of the import of what the

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(MR. ENNS cont'd) Member for Morris said, is that the board and the chairman of the Manitoba Agriculture Corporation in November approved of this loan. Now if what he just said a few moments ago that there were other circumstances that rejected that, then, Sir, what he is saying is that as the chairman and the board of directors of the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, as it stood in November he had no faith and confidence in. --(Interjection)-- So he changed it, so he changed it, and so he put Mr. Hofford in and then following that change in personnel on the board --(Interjection)-- Well, I respect the Honourable the House Leader and I ask him . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. ENNS: I ask him seriously if he doesn't think . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order please.

MR. ENNS: . . . if he doesn't think that this is not a most serious kind of a situation that we face. Here you have a board of directors, a chairman of the board of directors approving of a certain loan action, namely the loaning of \$125,000 to a certain Bowles family in Swan River Valley.

MR. USKIW: . . . the information that the member has is obviously incorrect in that I just gave him the total sum of money applied for. He's misinterpreting my remarks then.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Speaker, I learnt of this only as the Member for Morris was relating it some three hours ago in the House, some three hours ago in the House. All I know is, and that the Minister has not taken the occasion to challenge the Member for Morris, or to suggest that his information was basically inaccurate, and that is this, and I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that this is obviously a matter that should be brought to a committee of the House, or brought as soon as possible an accounting of this --(Interjection)-- No, no we have an Agricultural committee, we have other committees, let's bring it up, but the fact of the matter is and I'll ask the Minister to challenge my statements by rising on a point of privilege as I go through them one by one, that a loan application by the Bowles family was approved by the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation in November. He is seated, he has remained seated in his chair so I take it that that part of my facts are correct. --(Interjection)-- That in December, or later on, there was a change of personnel on that Board. Mr. Hofford was put on that Board. In January a letter went out to this family declining the loan application and shortly thereafter the records, the land records in the Municipal Offices of Swan River Valley proved that a certain Michael Hofford has purchased the very same land under question.

A MEMBER: . . . not true.

MR. ENNS: The very very same land under question. Well, Mr. Speaker, you know, lets understand something. You know we passed, we passed laws about conflict of interest and the Minister knows whereof I speak. I bought 30 cows not so long ago and it wasn't so much my self doing but my banker said, you know, "Enns you should take advantage of the benevolence of this government and apply for the grants through the diversification program that you're entitled to". I very shortly, and three or four weeks later -- in fact I showed the letter to the Honourable Minister which indicated that I was disqualified from receiving that grant which all other livestock farmers are qualified for, but for a very good purpose. Because there is in our legislation an Act that prohibits members of the Legislature to avail themselves of programs that we have some party to or could in fact maybe influence in doing so. Right.

The Honourable Member from Roblin will indicate another case in a few moments which some members of the House are familiar with. All I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that we impose rightfully these restrictions upon ourselves -- Mr. Chairman, I don't care if there's a law or not a law but surely, surely, Mr. Speaker, if there is any moral sense of what is correct and what is not correct, the chairman, the chairman of the very lending agency itself should not be allowed to, should not put himself in a position where he was, he could be suspected of being instrumental in turning down a loan and then seeing that his son got that loan. Now I appeal to some basic, basic appreciation of what is correct under our system, some decency or some sense of morals on the part of the honourable members opposite. And really none of that, none of that glib tongue that the Minister of Agriculture likes to pacify us with. The fact of the matter is this that an individual farmer and his family, and his brother and his family made application to the Crown corporation for a loan. It was approved. Subsequent to that through the change of a personnel that loan was disallowed. Subsequent to that the son of the person that was just appointed to the board received the farm lands. Mr. Chairman,

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(MR. ENNS cont'd). . . . if you ask us to have confidence in the manner and the way in which the Crown corporations are going to be operated under the guidance of this government, it's begs the, it stretches the -- well to use the First Premier's famous and well used phrase, it boggles one's imagination. It surely does --(Interjection)-- It boggles my mind anyway. And I want to assure you of one thing, Mr. Chairman, it will boggle the minds, it will boggle the minds of many farmers, it will boggle the minds of many farmers, and I suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, there is --(Interjection)-- Fine. The Honourable Minister of Agriculture says we're not necessarily apprised of all the facts. Well, Mr. Chairman, if that is the case then surely the Minister of Agriculture would be the first one to be jumping up and suggesting that let's bring all the facts before us. Let's bring in front of a reasonable forum, reasonable-- (Interjection)-- No it doesn't have to be a Royal Commission. I'm a Conservative and I don't want to waste taxpayers' money. But we can bring them before the Agriculture Committee, and we can bring them before --(Interjection)-- Well, --(Interjection)-- Oh, if we --(Interjection)-- Mr. Chairman, if we want to drag different herrings in front of it --(Interjection)-- Mr. Chairman, I am dealing with a very specific item, very specific matter, the way in which a senior officer of our Crown corporation to the very, to the very objective onlooker would have to, one would have to concur that there is room for grave question as to how his discretion how he used or how he exercised his discretion in this matter. (Hear, Hear)

Well the Honourable House Leader, the Honourable former House Leader says, hear, hear. I would like to think, Mr. Chairman, that that would be some indication that this government intends to bring Mr. Hofford before a committee of this House and have him explain to his full advantage, or to his disadvantage, the actual facts of the matter. Because Mr. Chairman, it's preposterous, it's preposterous, that the kind of speech, the kind of charges that were made this afternoon by the Honourable Member for Morris should even be attempted to be passed off as glibly by the Minister of Agra. There was a day, Mr. Chairman, where such kind of a charge would have brought about an immediate action by the Minister to bring that civil servant before him and ask for an explanation. Indeed it would have been, it would have been cause for a First Minister to bring the Minister on the carpet and ask for a full explanation, if not in fact his resignation. Now, Mr. Chairman, I leave it with you. If that is the way this government intends to run Crown corporations, and we have reason to believe that that is the way they're prepared to run Crown corporations, Manitoba Hydro being the biggest example, then, Sir, we have every reason to worry about the course that has been prescribed in the Guidelines for the Seventies. These are the kind of Crown corporations that this government envisages. These are the kind of -- this is the kind of power structure that this government wants to set up. --(Interjection)--where their friends, where their friends and where their appointments . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. ORDER! Order please! There's one speaker on the floor at a time. The Honourable Member for Lakeside is that member. The other members will kindly keep quiet and allow the honourable member to make his presentation. You'll all be recognized in turn. The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: ORDER! ORDER! ORDER please! Order please. I am asking the honourable -- ORDER! ORDER! The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman, I have just about finished my remarks and I appreciate your efforts to contain the spontaneous contributions by members of the House when not indeed having the Chair or the floor of the House.

Mr. Chairman, I am only suggesting, Mr. Chairman, that I think it will become evident when the nature of the charges begins to sink in to the public of this province, and I want to assure you, particularly to the farmers of this province, particularly the farmers of this province -- after all, this is the very same man this is, under the same Minister that has refused to tell the hog producers of this province what kind of contractual arrangements he has undertaken for them. This is the same person, the same Minister to whom the hog producers of this province have entrusted some, over a million dollars of their funds in a one and a quarter percent check-off levy. Mr. Chairman, I suspect that by tomorrow morning the First Minister of this province will call for a full dress hearing of this matter, that we will have an occasion to get to the bottom of the most serious charges that were placed in this House by the Member for Morris.

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MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, I think that the Honourable Member for Lakeside should want to be reminded that this is not the first time that he has given us a speech wherein he showed some indignation about the wrongdoings of government. But I would like to remind him that on many occasions after he had resorted to the gutter politics of his style, that all of his findings were found untrue, and all of his allegations were found wanting. And I suggest to the Member for Lakeside, that this is probably another one of those episodes and --(Interjection)-- and if my honourable. . .

MR. ENNS: But did Michael Hofford buy the farm? Did Michael Hofford buy the farm?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order please.

MR. USKIW: Well, Mr. Chairman, the Member for Lakeside . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Now I tried my very best when the Honourable Member for Lakeside was on the floor to have order. I would ask the honourable Member now to please try and give the same co-operation to the Chair.

MR. ENNS: Mr. Chairman, I apologize I will contain myself and abide by your ruling.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

MR. USKIW: I suggest, Mr. Chairman, that there are many farms bought and sold in the province and that is none of my concern, that is the private concern of ordinary citizens of the province. The question that the honourable members wants to raise essentially is whether or not there was some wrongdoing in reversing or refusing, and I'm not sure which it was, it could be one or the other, a loan applied for by another party and in that connection, in that connection I have reason to believe that that decision was a good decision in the public interest of Manitoba. Even if it was a reversal of a position, it's a good decision, in that there was almost a half a million dollars at stake, in which case there was almost no equity whatsoever on the part of the borrower. Now surely my honourable friends opposite don't want to suggest that even if the Credit Corporation had made an error in judgment on the first count that they should not have the right to correct themselves. That would be ludicrous, Mr. Chairman, and would not want to set up dozens of little CFIs all over the province I can assure you.

Now I had indicated to members opposite and to the Member for Rhineland that I will undertake to check into the procedures and if there is any wrongdoing the proper course of action would be taken. At this point in time I only have the accusations of my friends opposite, which most often times are found wanting.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Minnedosa.

MR. DAVID R. BLAKE (Minnedosa): Thank you Mr. Chairman, I just have one or two questions. I have a letter that I have received in returning to the House this afternoon, and the Honourable Minister has a copy of it also. It's from a young farm- a young man from the farm community of my constituency and he's enquiring in regards to loans to assist young farmers. And I just wondered - the Minister I'm sure if familiar with the contents of the letter. Just to sum it briefly he is with nothing but frustration in his efforts to find out where he can receive assistance to become established in a farming operation and he and his father are anxious to increase their dairy herd to become shippers of industrial milk. And he is being shifted from one department to another and just doesn't seem to be able to find out what the government policy is in providing loans to assist young farmers in becoming established without their father guaranteeing the loans or the fact that they have very little equity themselves to become involved. And I just wondered if the Minister would briefly outline the policy that his department has to provide assistance to young farmers of this type.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, I would, Mr. Chairman, with your permission I would . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. PAULLEY: . . . the Honourable Member for Minnedosa to table the letter

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, if you permit me the pleasure, Mr. Chairman. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: I thank you, Mr. Chairman. --(Interjection)--

MR. CHAIRMAN: The honourable member is going to table the letter.

MR. BLAKE: I'd like a copy of the letter for my files.

MR. PAULLEY: Okay, as long as it's tabled.

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MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, in reviewing the allegations made this afternoon by the Honourable Member from Morris, and having sat in this Legislature for several years, there are certain principles of government, there are certain principles of ministers, that have to be recognized from time to time. And some of those principles, Mr. Chairman, are credibility, honesty, and the fact that you're using taxpayers' dollars. And, Mr. Speaker, in this debate unless the Minister of Agriculture is prepared to stand up and deny the allegations that were made by the . . . he should resign. If he's not prepared to stand up and charge that the Member for Morris and the allegations are false and they're untrue that either the Member for Morris or one of you have got to go.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear.

MR. McKENZIE: I suspect --(Interjection)--

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please. Order please!

MR. McKENZIE: And, Mr. Chairman, in all sincerity, in all honesty, I've reviewed the documents that the Member for Morris has laid on the table today, and I've read them I see them, and they're credible; they're honest and they're sincere. So therefore, there's \$125,000 at stake. And, Mr. Chairman, in all honesty, I've got several farmers in my constituency that have made loans through the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation and they've been denied those loans. Now I suspect I'm going to have to write them back and say, No, Max Hofford's son got those loans. I got three. They are only \$40,000. That's 125, 120,000. Hofford's kid, you know, he got 125,000, so that that denies three loans from my constituents who were given letters of great wisdom and great philosophy that you're denied for various reasons. Now the truth comes out, Mr. Chairman. The truth comes out that it's a . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. McKENZIE: Well the Minister of Labour can have his day in this debate but I'm telling you this is a serious allegation. I'll get . . .

POINT OF ORDER

MR. ALLARD: Point of order please.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Order, please. The Honourable Member for Rupertsland on a point of order.

MR. ALLARD: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman. I accept my guilt when I interject at the wrong time but it seems to me that it will be impossible for you to keep this House in order as long as the Minister of Labour, the worst offender in this respect, is allowed to interject whenever he can, whether he wants to, and unless you take him, put him in his place, you cannot keep order in this House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I'm glad to see that the honourable member is in his chair when he's making remarks, because he was not in his chair before.

MR. ALLARD: What is the meaning of that particular comment?--(Interjection)--I am. Well what difference if I don't have the floor? If I don't have the floor.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Chairman, my speech was basically supposed to be addressed to the First Minister, and unfortunately the First Minister when he heard the speech from my honourable colleague from Lakeside he took off through that side door like a scared rabbit because, Mr. Chairman, the First Minister of this province has got to stand up. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. A point of privilege raised. The Honourable Minister of Labour.

MR. PAULLEY: Mr. Chairman, on a point of privilege. The Honourable the Premier of this Province did not leave the Chamber on this occasion or any other occasion as a "scared rabbit". I happen to be the Deputy Premier of this province and I'm prepared to answer for the First Minister on any allegation made by the Member for Roblin and I would suggest, Mr. Chairman, that it's improper for the Honourable Member for Roblin to indicate or suggest that the First Minister ran out of the Chamber as a scared rabbit because we're not afraid, the Honourable the First Minister is not afraid, neither is any member of the Treasury Bench afraid from any of the remarks that may come from the Member for Roblin.

POINT OF ORDER

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. McKENZIE: Well, Mr. Chairman, . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: I would refer the honourable member to Citation 155 of Beaufort and I think if you would read the remarks there. . .

MR. McKENZIE: Which member, him or me? Am I getting a lecture or the Minister or Labour?

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, I'm trying to get you on an even keel. I just want to mention to the Honourable Member for Roblin that there are certain boo-boos that we must not use in this House. Order, please. And I think that abusive and insulting language -- and Lord knows there's been enough of that in this House -- I think that the honourable member would reconsider his remarks that he just made.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, I hope that the day hasn't arrived that we can't address our remarks to the First Minister of this province, and this debate -- I'm sure Mr. Chairman, you must understand the Minister of Agriculture is not going to stand up and deny or even answer the allegations that are made -- it is a serious allegation, and I'm addressing my remarks to the First Minister. As much as I like the Honourable Minister of Labour he's not the Premier of this province. This is a damn serious matter where \$125,000 of taxpayers' money from Max Hoppard has gone to his son, Michael, through political manipulations. Father and son, chairman of the board, all NDPs, and that's a serious allegation to make in this House and I want to stand up and, Mr. Chairman, and I've got some. . . that will be most interesting because last year, Mr. Speaker . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Order, please. Order, please. That is not the remark that I was referring to. The remark that I am referring to was the one that the honourable member made that the First Minister ran out of this room like a scared jack rabbit and I think that is an insulting remark.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, I'll say he walked out. --(Interjection)--

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think the honourable member should reconsider that remark.

MR. McKENZIE: I retract the remark and I'll say he walked out or he had other pressures of business and . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. McKENZIE: . . . the Minister of Labour can have his own -- but nevertheless the Premier is not in his chair and my speech is basically addressed to the Premier.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, it's a real tragedy in this province that tonight we have to deal with the Minister of Labour rather than the Premier on this charge alleged by the Honourable Member for Lakeside. The Premier is not in the House and so we have to give the thrust of our debate and the thrust of our remarks to the Honourable Minister of Labour, who is the House Leader tonight. But let me address my remarks to the Honourable Minister of Labour who says he is the vice-premier tonight on this debate.

A MEMBER: Acting. Acting premier.

MR. McKENZIE: Acting premier where an allegation has been made that a certain Max Hofford has taken a certain parcel of land from a guy by the name of Bowles and gave it to his son, Michael.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. PAULLEY: Mr. Chairman, just in order that the record may be straight, I didn't raise any objection to what my honourable friend may have to say in regard to the Chairman of the Hog Marketing Board or any other board. I stood --(Interjection)-- Oh quiet.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is the point of order?

MR. PAULLEY: Mr. Chairman, my point of order was in connection with the allegation by the Honourable Member for Roblin that the Honourable the First Minister of this Province ran out because he was not . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Order. That point of order -- the Honourable Member has withdrawn the remark. The Honourable Member for Roblin. ORDER. . .

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, in my earlier remarks in this debate I mentioned the principles of credibility and the government's responsibility --(Interjection)--

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. McKENZIE: Oh did you hear that remark, Mr. Chairman that he --(Interjection)--

POINT OF ORDER

(MR. McKENZIE cont'd). . . . I heard it. Now if he wants to make a speech on that . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. PAULLEY: Mr. Chairman, from my seat I was not referring to the Honourable Member for Roblin but one of his colleagues who is seated, it happens, behind him.

MR. GIRARD: Mr. Chairman, on a point of order.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, I heard the word "stupid"

MR. GIRARD: On the point of order. I would like the Honourable Minister of Labour to acknowledge what he said, and to whom he said it, and why. If I'm to be called stupid I'd at least like to know why.

A MEMBER: It's obvious. It's obvious.

MR. GIRARD: Well then, Mr. Chairman, if it is that obvious, I would like the matter withdrawn, because if it is that obvious I don't think it should be said in this House.

MR. CHAIRMAN: I think the honourable member should withdraw that remark.

MR. PAULLEY: Yes, Mr. Chairman, I'm prepared to withdraw the remark that in the opinion of the Honourable Member for Emerson the remark that I said that he was stupid should be withdrawn . . .

MR. GIRARD: Well on the same point of order . . .

MR. PAULLEY: . . . but because of the fact that I was not standing in my seat - neither was the Honourable Member for Emerson - I question whether or not it's parliamentary for either one of us to be on our feet at this time.

MR. GIRARD: Well, Mr. Chairman, on the same point of order. I don't call that a withdrawal at all. He is suggesting that he is withdrawing because I think. I want to know what he thinks and if his withdrawal is not to be . . .

MR. PAULLEY: I think you are stupid.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Minister of Labour I would ask you to withdraw that remark please.

A MEMBER: Hear, hear.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister. Order, please.

MR. PAULLEY: Mr. Speaker, or Mr. Chairman, the Honourable Member for Lakeside like the Honourable Member for Emerson when he first introduced this was not seated in his place. I am an amiable individual . . .

A MEMBER: Stupid. Stupid.

MR. PAULLEY: . . . and if I made a remark while I was seated which is unparliamentary, to make a remark while I was seated, that offends my honourable friend, I will withdraw the remark that I think he is stupid because of parliamentary procedure.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Speaker, Mr. Chairman, you've been here a long time. Now did that member have all those rights to make all those kind of statements under the laws of this Legislature? I suspect he hadn't, Mr. Chairman. Because, Mr. Chairman, the remarks that I want to read into the record are a lot more important than the allegations that came up from the supposedly vice-premier of this province, and if that's all the wisdom and benefit the people of Manitoba can gain from this province with that being the vice-premier, I would tell the Premier I wish to hell he was in his seat tonight and get rid of that vice-premier, because if that's the kind of direction we're getting on this debate where there's \$125,000 of taxpayers' money involved and we get that sort of a line. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. McKENZIE: . . . I tell the Premier of this Province get rid of that . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Order, please.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Chairman, I'd like to rise on a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs -- Mines and Resources.

MR. GREEN: I believe that we're still on the Estimates of the Minister of Agriculture and I think that we would all be better off if we stuck to the those estimates.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, in all respect to the House Leader I've been trying for about 20 minutes to -- and you get your deskmate there to get off my back so I can make my speech and he's -- the Honourable the House Leader just come in. This man that's sitting on your left there said he's the vice-premier.

POINT OF ORDER

MR. GREEN: It doesn't matter when I came in. Any person, regardless of when he comes in can raise a point of order as to relevancy of debate and I think that the honourable member if he wishes to make his speech should try now, and I'm sure that he'll make some progress.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, all due respect to the House Leader. I was basically trying to make my speech to the First Minister of this province, and the First Minister unfortunately is not in the Chamber, and I said that he rushed out. They said he didn't. I said, then he walked out. Then we got in that harangue, and the vice-premier of this province, who is sitting on your left there, now he wants to get into the debate. But, Mr. Chairman, . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order please.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, let's go back to the debate that's at hand.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Order, please. We've settled the points of order. I think everybody is amiable. We have had their withdrawals. Now I would suggest to the honourable member that he proceed. According to our House Rule 64 (2) "Speeches in Committee of the Whole House must be strictly relevant to the item or clause under discussion." We're under Resolution 13. The Honourable Member for Roblin to that point please.

SUPPLY - AGRICULTURE cont'd

MR. McKENZIE: Well, Mr. Chairman, the allegation that has been in this, . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. McKENZIE: A certain Max Hofford, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Manitoba Development Corporation, and so on. But let me relate a case, something similar. I want to talk on principles. Last year when we come to pick our cheques up when the House closed, I went to get my cheque, no cheque. And why didn't I get a cheque? Because I happen to be a country storekeeper and I was doing business through the voucher system through the Department of Welfare in Dauphin and there were certain welfare accounts in my store that had

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Order, please. I think -- I can appreciate the honourable member, he has a problem and I know what the problem is. That should come up under the Department of Welfare not under the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation. Would the honourable member please speak to the Resolution 13 which we are on.

MR. McKENZIE: Well, Mr. Chairman, in all due respect. I am talking on principles and credibility. I had to pay back \$800.00. I had to pay back \$800.00.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. A point of order has been raised.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, in all due respect . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. The Honourable Minister of Labour on a point of order.

MR. USKIW: The point of order is that the member insists on talking about matters that are not before the House, and I object.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Correct. Resolution 13 please. The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, in all due respect to you and the Minister, I'm talking about the credibility of Mr. M. G. Hofford and the bill is a hundred and twenty-five thousand bucks. I had to pay back \$800.00 last year out of my own back pocket because I'm doing a vouchersystem with my little country grocery store. In all credibility and all sincerity the Minister of Finance who came and drew it to my attention. I paid it back in all honesty and sincerity because an MLA can't do business, period, and that's the laws of this province, and that's what I'm standing up here tonight and demanding of this Minister of Agriculture and this First Minister, what the hell kind of laws have we got in this province where Max Hofford can give a hundred and twenty-five thousand bucks to his son, and that is what I want to know in this debate.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. McKENZIE: Is the Minister going . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: ORDER PLEASE.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, on a point of privilege.

MR. CHAIRMAN: What is your point of privilege?

MR. USKIW: The member is alleging that there has been a law broken--(Interjection)--which in fact has not been substantiated, and I don't think the member should cast those kind

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(MR. USKIW cont'd). . . . of remarks on members of the government or members of the . . . (Interjection)-- Mr. Chairman --(Interjection)--

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. USKIW: Mr. Chairman, the . . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. I would suggest to the honourable member that if he has a point of grievance at any time - and I don't think he's used his point of grievance. Now this what I think the honourable member is discussing is a personal point of grievance, and I'm quite sympathetic towards the honourable member, but I'm asking you to speak to the resolution that we are dealing with and your \$800.00 is not in the estimates here. The Honourable Member for Roblin.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, in all good faith, in all good faith to the taxpayers of this province and the laws of this province, Mr. Chairman, if you can justify to me any way where a certain M. G. Hofford through becoming chairman of a board can manipulate and deny a man by the name of Bowles of a loan for \$125,000 and give it to his son, that's not credibility. That's why I'm asking for this Minister's resignation or for the Premier to change it, or change Hofford Somebody's gotta go. Because I paid my eight hundred bucks last year back.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Point of order. Order, please.

MR. McKENZIE: . . . Mr. Chairman, I did .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Order, please. The Honourable the Minister.

MR. DOERN: There is a rule of this House that refers to repetition and I have sat here and listened to the member rant on about five times and start in and continue to hammer the same point. I think that in the interests of the House he has no right to repetitively just hold the attention of the House ad nauseum. I think that he should make his point -- he's made it five times -- move on to something else.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Rhineland.

MR. FROESE: If the Honourable Minister raises a point of order in connection with repetition, I think there is another point of order that should be raised and that is that justice must be done and that not only (applause) justice must not only be done but appear to be done, especially when it's considers Crown corporations of the type that we're discussing here tonight.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The Honourable Member for Lakeside.

MR. ENNS: On the same point of order. Just to make very sure that we don't establish and accept that point of order, or rule of order here, that would be detrimental as far as we're concerned. The fact of the matter that a major, a major question of credibility of how \$125,000 was loaned out by the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation is under review we'll not simply be silenced because we'll repeat it once, twice, three or four times. Mr. Chairman, in fact, we intend to repeat it a hundred times if it's necessary.

MR. McKENZIE: Well, Mr. Chairman, I see the report is under the signature of Mr. Leggett and I think most of the members of the House are quite familiar with this man's credibility and his principles, and I think he should be called before the committee. I think he should because he was part of that -- his signature must have been on that loan that went to Bowles, and I wonder was his signature on the Hofford loan? You see these are some of the questions that the Minister is not prepared to answer and I hoped that the Premier would be in his chair tonight and would answer, but unfortunately the Premier is tied up tonight so he's left the Minister of Labour as the vice-premier, and of course I'm sure with the benefit of the wisdom that we've got from this Minister of Labour since he's been in the Cabinet, it's unbelievable, Mr. Chairman, unbelievable, especially on agricultural matters. And we were in the debate last night about salaries between him and the Minister of Agriculture. But in all sincerity, Mr. Chairman, and I can talk for another hour but the clock is running out on me

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. McKENZIE: Mr. Chairman, in all sincerity, on behalf of the people of Manitoba, on behalf of the taxpayers of this province this is a Crown corporation. . . .

MR. BOROWSKI: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Point of order has been raised by the Honourable Member for Thompson.

MR. BOROWSKI: Yes, I wonder if you could do something to tell the Minister of Labour

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(MR. BOROWSKI cont'd). to keep quiet while the member is trying to make his remarks. We can't hear at this end.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. I think the point is well taken for all members. There are a few members in this House, including myself, who's trying to hear what's going on but it's impossible. I would ask the honourable members to grow up. Look in the galleries and see the people of Manitoba are looking at you.

The Honourable Member for Roblin. You have two minutes before time expiry.

MR. McKENZIE: Well, Mr. Speaker, it's quite evident that the government doesn't like this thing that dropped in their laps and I'm sure if I was the Minister of Agriculture, and, you know, I couldn't run the department any better than he's running it, I wouldn't want it either because that allegation is a serious charge, a serious charge, and he gives us a snide remark tonight that he knew it about a year ago. What the hell did he do about it? He said in the debate in the earlier part, he knew about it, he knew something about it. He didn't do anything. The First Minister didn't do anything in this matter. This is a serious charge. An M. G. Hofford from a Crown corporation has the rights of this government somehow to give his son \$125,000 of the taxpayers' dollars. Mr. Chairman, that is a serious allegation. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. McKENZIE: . . . I demand an investigation. . .

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please. Order. I would refer the member to Rule 39 of our House Rules. "The Speaker or the Chairman of any Committee after having called the attention of the House or of the Committee to the conduct of a member who persists in irrelevance or repetition, may direct him to discontinue his speech". ORDER PLEASE. "May direct him to discontinue his speech and if the member still continues to speak, if in the House the Speaker shall name him, and if in a Committee the Chairman shall report the matter to the House". Now the honourable member has repeated allegations of M. G. Hofford at least on five occasions. I would ask the honourable member to proceed with the resolution before the House.

MR. McKENZIE: Well, Mr. Chairman, I'll not raise the name of M. G. Hofford or his son, Max, again tonight.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Order, please.

MR. McKENZIE: Let's deal with the loan. Four loans in my constituency denied, Mr. Chairman.

MR. CHAIRMAN: The hour being 9:00 o'clock the last hour of every day being Private Members' Hour, is it the will of the Committee to rise and report? Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions and directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

IN SESSION

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Logan.

MR. WILLIAM JENKINS (Logan): Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Ste. Rose, that the report of the Committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' HOUR

MR. SPEAKER: Tuesday night, Private Members' Hour. The first item is private bills of which there are none. Public bills for private members. We have Bill No. 10, proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Thompson. The Honourable Member for St. Matthews.

BILL 10

MR. WALLY JOHANNSON (St. Matthews): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Honourable Member for Thompson when he proposed this bill was following a rather regular practice of his and that is he was engaging in a scatter gun approach to achieve his objective in this particular area. Scatter gun approach. The matter that he really wants to achieve has to be achieved in the Parliament of Canada. His real objective of course is to do away with abortions and this must be done in the Parliament of Canada. However he will attempt to get this bill passed through this House and if it was passed he would use the passage of that bill to justify support for a federal bill abolishing abortion, and I can see the logic of his position; I can see why he's doing this.

I read over his speech carefully, and I'd like to deal with a number of arguments that he raised. He pointed out the fact that in the United States it is standard procedure for people to pay for abortions, and pointed out that most abortions were paid for by individuals rather than by the state. But I would point out to the member that so do most people pay for having babies in the United States. The state doesn't pay for people having babies, and in fact my sister happened to have a baby in the State of Minnesota not very long ago and it cost her a great deal of money even though she was covered by several private plans. So the logic of this argument of course would be the abolition, the abolition of Medicare, if you're going to follow the analogy of the practice in the United States.

The member also stated - he didn't provide proof but he did state that in practice abortion on demand is being practised by doctors. Now I would like to have proof that this is going on. This is a very serious allegation and the member provided no proof. I would like to have proof provided by the member. I would also point out the fact that this particular bill wouldn't affect this in any way. It wouldn't solve the problem if this is being practised, this bill wouldn't solve that problem. All it would do is it would restrict abortion on demand to those who happen to have the money to pay for it, in other words, those who are reasonably well-to-do. So his bill doesn't achieve what he wants to achieve.

He quoted a number of religious authorities from all or virtually every religious denomination. He quoted Karl Barth, "The unborn child is from the very first a child. He who destroys germinating life kills a man." And on moral grounds I would have to agree with the member. I would agree with that statement only I would say that what is being killed is potential life rather than life, but it's certainly potentially the life of a man. He quoted Schweitzer, and Albert Schweitzer is a man I admire a great deal, although his concept of Christianity would hardly be one that the Member for Thompson would accept. But he was a very very great man and a very profound biblical scholar, and the statement that the honourable member quoted was, "that reverence for life, life of all kinds, is the first principle of civilization." And again I find that statement one that I could agree with. It, I think, is a very profound statement and one that morally is close to my own principles.

However I'm a little puzzled because I know the honourable member, and I don't want to be unfair to him, but I believe that he believes in capital punishment and I'm not -- again I don't want to be unfair to him, but I believe he does believe in capital punishment, and yet he quotes, and yet he quotes in this instance a statement by Schweitzer which preaches reverence for life, life of all kinds. I can accept these philosophic statements, and also emotionally I share some of the member's repugnance, his instinctive repugnance at abortion. I get physically sick almost at the stomach when I think of what abortion involves and it touches me very closely too because my wife and I just adopted a little child and I don't like to bring up personal things, but this seems to be a habit in this particular debate. You know children that are adopted are usually what people would consider unwanted children initially but I can tell the honourable member that they certainly aren't once they are adopted and there is a shortage in this province today, there's a shortage of children for adoption. So I share with him this feeling of repugnance that he has against abortion.

He quoted the precedents of the Plymouth Brethren being given the privilege of opting out

PRIVATE MEMBERS' HOUR

(MR. JOHANNSSON cont'd.) of paying union dues on religious grounds. This was done in an amendment to The Labour Relations Act last year, and I at the time opposed that particular amendment. I didn't agree with it. I still don't think that his analogy is a correct analogy, it's a false analogy, because this does not deal with a tax levied by the state. It deals with a fee chart by an organization within the commercial world. One of the problems of the resolution is that it denies to those who don't have money what is available to those who do have money, and the Member for Inkster, the Minister of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management, did bring up the horrors of the back room abortionists and this might result in some people who couldn't afford abortions within the regular hospital system being consigned to the tender mercies of these back room abortionists. Now I don't know if it would or not.

Another point that the Minister brought up, which I think is one of the key objectives of this bill, is that it's wrong in principle and the principle the honourable member is proposing and which was supported by the Member for Lakeside, the Member for Rhineland, was that on moral grounds you can refuse to pay taxes for something you object to, that you find morally repugnant to you, some policy of the state. Now the implication of that is simply chaos. It would mean that any person could refuse to pay taxes on grounds that he disapproves of the policies of the government. I --(Interjection)-- The Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell likes that. Now, Mr. Speaker, I was a taxpayer for many many years before I was elected to this House. I paid taxes to a Provincial-Liberal Government, a Provincial-Federal Government -- a Provincial-Conservative Government; I paid taxes to several Federal-Liberal Governments and one Federal-Conservative Government. I didn't agree with their policies but, Mr. Speaker, I never never . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order.

MR. JOHANNSSON: I never never raised the option of opting out of paying taxes because I objected to policies. I followed I think the correct course of action and that is I joined a party which is pledged to change those policies, and finally of course I was elected, the Party was elected, and we are changing the policies. If 20 years from now, or 16 years from now, there's a change of government and policies again are followed that I object to, I would never never withhold taxes on the grounds that I objected to those policies.

MR. FROESE: I'd have to challenge the honourable member on a point of order that he would . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Would the honourable member state his point of order.

MR. FROESE: Yah. He said he would never opt out. Didn't he opt out last year when we had the resolution on the aid to private schools?

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. That is not a point of order. The Honourable Member for St. Matthews. Order.

MR. JOHANNSSON: Yes, Mr. Speaker, at least I stay in this Chamber and I vote on issues unlike the Member for Rhineland who skips out because he's afraid of offending some people in his constituency no matter how he votes. I stayed in here and I've voted, and I voted on the resolution he refers to, and in fact I used this very same argument to justify my position on it. I wouldn't object -- The honourable member, as again the Mines Minister pointed out, has very strong feelings on things and he did go to jail in the past because he objected to paying the sales tax and he was following the practice of people like Thoreau or Joan Baez. Of course he went to jail for rather different reasons than Joan Baez. --(Interjection)-- Pardon? Well I classified the honourable member with Thoreau and Thoreau is a very respected figure and he of course always, we will never prevent him from going to jail for his principles.

He used a number of other arguments, stated that this bill would save taxpayers' money, and I really think that that was a rather bad argument to use in this debate because his objection is principally a moral one and he should have stuck to that. He also claimed that this would save five or six hundred babies. He provided of course no proof, and I really don't see how that would work out in practice because those who could afford abortions would still pay for them. And he said that this would release hospital beds for the genuinely sick. Well I understand that very many abortions take very little time, so what he's talking about there is rather a side issue.

Another thing that I object to about this particular bill is that the Honourable Member for Thompson is copying a tactic of the "waffle" within the --(Interjection)-- copying a tactic of the waffle within the New Democratic Party. Now I know he doesn't agree with the waffle and I'm

PRIVATE MEMBERS' HOUR
BILL No. 10

(MR. JOHANNSON cont'd.) not saying he does, but he is using the tactic that the Waffle uses within the New Democratic Party and that is that they --(Interjection)--

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Health on a point of order.

MR. TOUPIN: I'm attempting to listen to the gentleman behind me and it's completely impossible. Could we get some order in this House, please?

MR. SPEAKER: I would appeal to all honourable members that they maintain decorum in this House. It's true, it's most difficult to hear the speaker when there's a lot of hubbub and noise going on. I'm sure the same problem is apparent in the galleries as well. The Honourable Member for St. Matthews has six minutes.

MR. JOHANNSON: The honourable member, as I say, is copying a habit of the waffle within the provincial NDP, and that is he is introducing matters which are fundamentally of federal jurisdiction into provincial party debate, and I have always disagreed with this practice and I disagree with it now. I think his resolution has to be dealt with at -- or his basic objection has to be dealt with at the federal level and there it should be dealt with.

Now I, in a couple of minutes, Mr. Speaker, I intend to move the six months' hoist and I would like to briefly explain why. I have no intention of -- I think by doing that I am not in any way restricting debate on the principle of the bill, and every member in this House can make a speech on the principle of the bill following the hoist, so every member has that opportunity and I think that doesn't really restrict debate. I do it because I, like the Member for Thompson, like to win my objective. Now he is attempting to win his objective, which is basically a federal one, by also moving on the provincial level. I would defeat this bill because I object not so much to his moral objective, but the way he's trying to achieve it. And I would defeat it by voting against it now, but some members may have different reasons why they don't want to vote on it now so I will give them that opportunity by moving the six months' hoist.

And I'm also interested in finding out whether the honourable member really has a mandate to campaign on abortion. When he was elected in 1968 and 1969 he was elected campaigning on policies that as far as I know didn't center on abortion, and I would like to know whether he can campaign and be elected on that issue. And I'm going to give him the opportunity to prove that he has that mandate by moving the hoist. --(Interjection)-- Yes, we will find out.

So I move, Mr. Speaker, seconded by the Honourable Member for St. Vital, that Bill No. 10, An Act to amend The Health Services Insurance Act, be not now read a second time but read this day, six months hence.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. BOROWSKI: Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: Does the honourable member have support? Call in the members.

A STANDING VOTE WAS TAKEN, the result being as follows:

YEAS

Messrs. Adam

Barrow

Boyce

Burtniak

Doern

Evans

Gottfried

Green

Hanuschak

Jenkins

Johannson

Mackling

Messrs. McBryde

Miller

Paulley

Pawley

Petursson

Schreyer

Shafransky

Toupin

Turnbull

Uruski

Uskiw

Walding

PRIVATE MEMBERS' HOUR

BILL No. 10

(STANDING VOTE cont'd.)

NAYS

Messrs. Allard
Barkman
Blake
Borowski
Einarson
Enns
Ferguson
Froese
Girard
Graham

Messrs. Henderson
F. Johnston
Jorgenson
McGill
McKenzie
Patrick
Sherman
Spivak
Mrs. Trueman
Mr. Watt

MR. CLERK: Yeas, 24; Nays, 20.

MR. SPEAKER: In my opinion the ayes have it. I declare the motion carried. Proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Rupertsland. The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. HARRY SHAFRANSKY (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I beg the indulgence of the House to have the matter stand.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Morris state his point of order.

MR. JORGENSON: The vote that was just taken was a vote taken on the amendment proposed by the Member for St. Matthews. What you have before you now is the motion as amended and . . . --(Interjection)--

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable House Leader.

MR. GREEN: I respect my honourable friend. I don't think that it would change anything but I believe that the bill not now be read but be read six months hence leaves a standing motion.

A MEMBER: That's right.

A MEMBER: And he knows it.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. We have Bill 21 before us. The honourable member has asked it to stand. Agreed?

MR. ALLARD: Ayes and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

MR. SPEAKER: There are no ayes and nays on whether it stands. We either agree or disagree. The Honourable House Leader.

MR. GREEN: Mr. Speaker, I believe that the honourable member, if he likes, can deny leave to have the matter stand.

MR. ALLARD: That's what I'm doing.

MR. GREEN: No there's no ayes and nays. You've denied leave, you have a right to deny leave, and we can't let the matter stand. That is the rule.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. PAULLEY: . . . Bill 10.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Minister of Labour.

MR. PAULLEY: Mr. Speaker, I beg to move, seconded by the Honourable Minister of Mines and Natural Resources, that the debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: We are now under Private Members' resolutions. We have Resolution No. 12. --(Interjection)-- pardon? Sorry, another bill here. I missed it. Bill No. 12, the Honourable Member for Brandon West.

MR. MCGILL presented Bill No. 12, An Act to amend the Brandon Charter, for second reading.

BILL No. 12

MR. MCGILL. Mr. Speaker, the intent of Bill No. 12 is to provide authority for the City of Brandon under its charter to correct an oversight which occurred when an agreement was reached between the city and the Keystone Centre in the province in respect to the operations of the Keystone Center. Mr. Speaker, it's coming to the attention of the House at rather an appropriate time because last week a number of the members, including you, Sir, travelled to Brandon and enjoyed the evening show at the Keystone Center. The Royal Manitoba

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(MR. MCGILL cont'd.) Winter Fair concluded last week at the Keystone Center and I read in the press, The Brandon Sun, that the results of that week's show produced a modern record for the Manitoba Winter Fair in terms of attendance, and I'm sure that those from the assembly who did visit Brandon and the Keystone Center were much impressed by the facilities.

But, Sir, to get to the purpose of this bill, when the land on which the Keystone Center was erected belonged to the Provincial Exhibition, there was already authority in the City of Brandon Charter to provide an exemption from taxation for all of the buildings of the Provincial Exhibition. When the change occurred and the land was transferred to the Keystone Center, the fact that this exemption did not apply then was, I believe, in the first instance overlooked, and it's for the purpose of now retrieving that oversight that the City of Brandon requests this amendment to its charter.

Mr. Speaker, if this amendment is approved, it will place the Keystone Center in the position of having an exemption from school taxes, and this I think would be rather in keeping with the present government policy in respect to government buildings where ordinary taxes are accepted but where school taxes are imposed. So, Mr. Speaker, the bill does have one feature that I must explain, I have in the past been somewhat hesitant to accept, and that is the principle of retroactivity. However, on examining this and consulting with the city solicitor, he points out to me that while indeed it would become effective as of the 1st of January when it is passed, the fact that it does not impose a tax in a retroactive way and the fact that it merely corrects an oversight in that previously this land had been subject to a tax exemption. And so, Mr. Speaker, I feel that this amendment is a reasonable one. I think that the House should accept the exemption that the city proposes to give to the Keystone Center, and I would hope that the House will see fit to pass this bill.

MR. SPEAKER: Are you ready for the question? The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. SHAFRANSKY: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre, that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

MR. SPEAKER: We are now under Resolution No. 12. The Honourable Member for Osborne. Order, please.

MR. TURNBULL: Mr. Speaker, if I may, I would like to have this matter stand.

MR. SPEAKER: It'll drop to the bottom of the Order Paper. Resolution No. 13. The Honourable Member for St. Johns is absent unavoidably.

MR. PAULLEY: Mr. Speaker, I just want to point out to colleagues in the House that unfortunately the Honourable Member for St. John's mother-in-law passed away. That is the reason for his absence and I suggest that this go down to the bottom of the Order Paper in view of that fact.

MR. SPEAKER: Agreed? Proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek. No. 17. The Honourable Member for Birtle-Russell.

MR. HARRY E. GRAHAM (Birtle-Russell): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order,

MR. SPEAKER: Will the honourable member state . . .

MR. GRAHAM: It should be noted that members of this side of the House would like to express to the Member for St. Johns the sympathy of our Party in the recent bereavement in his family.

MR. SPEAKER: Proposed resolution of the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek. The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I would like to move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Emerson,

WHEREAS the people of Manitoba have been paying five percent tax on meals purchased over \$2.00 since 1967;

AND WHEREAS the cost of food, labour, taxes, utilities and maintenance has caused the price of meals to nearly double since 1967;

AND WHEREAS many Manitobans in the performance of their jobs, e.g. truckers, miners, construction workers, etc. are required to eat all or part of their meals in restaurants;

AND WHEREAS the intent of the tax was not to impose a penalty on the ordinary working man's meals;

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(MR. F. JOHNSTON cont'd.)

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Government of Manitoba consider the advisability of changing the legislation to only require the tax to be paid on meals costing \$3.00 or more.

MOTION presented.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, the resolution in itself is explanatory. There is no question that the fact of this particular tax being placed on meals was placed for the purpose of collecting tax on meals that were for recreation or entertainment. It was never designed at any time to place a burden on the working man or people who work and have to eat a noontime meal in the restaurants, or on many occasions the man who works in the north not living in the bunkhouse of the mines, etc. who has to eat his noontime meals plus his evening meals in a restaurant. Most of these people are in the type of jobs that require a great amount of physical exertion and they require a substantial meal to maintain themselves in a condition that is beneficial to their jobs for their own benefit as far as earning a living is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, since 1967 the cost of all of the different commodities that had to be put together to produce a meal in a restaurant have almost doubled, and certainly, Mr. Speaker, the taxes that are upon those meals at the present time have been increased considerably by governments, both federal and provincial. The taxes on equipment, as far as production machinery is concerned, are there and, as we have shown and the Honourable Member from Morris has shown on many occasions that in a loaf of bread there are over 100 taxes. So now we have a situation where a man goes in to purchase a meal because he's required to do so when he's working; he's paying the taxes on all the commodities that go into making up that meal, and because of these taxes again the prices have gone up the same as the commodity or the raw produce has gone up, and we find ourselves in the position in most cases, most cases, a substantial meal for a working man is over \$2.00 and now he's having to pay, because of that, an extra five percent on his meal. So we're taxing him in the price of the meal and then we're adding an extra five percent tax on that meal.

Mr. Speaker, the burden of this is sometimes by many people not realized, but all you have to do is if you drive down the highway and drop into many restaurants that service truckers or men who are doing their daily job throughout the country, and you'll find that the meals in these restaurants are over \$2.00 for a substantial meal. You will find that in the cities where there are even people who specialize, yes, Mr. Speaker, specialize in a noon meal for working people, that the price is now over \$2.00. And, Mr. Speaker, when I presented this resolution on the Order Paper, at that time these prices aren't what they are today. They've gone up since. They've gone up considerably in the last two to three weeks as far as beef prices are concerned. We will find, Mr. Speaker, that there is no question that the working man should have a break in this respect.

But, Mr. Speaker, it's obvious that the government didn't consider this in their budget; they didn't consider it in the Speech from the Throne, as to giving some relief to the people who have to eat in restaurants. When I was in the north, Mr. Speaker, I had this position brought up to me by men who work, in this particular case the men I was talking to in a mine, and I thought I would take the time to check with other men and I went out and asked questions and they all have the very same problem, an extra five percent tax on their meals which, Mr. Speaker, was never meant to be. Mr. Speaker, as I said, the resolution speaks for itself and I can assure you that what was never meant to be should not be carried on forever. Government should be continually looking at all times at unfair taxes, and I think, Mr. Speaker, this can be reconsidered.

I am sure, Mr. Speaker, that when I hear from the other side of the House on this particular resolution, I'm sure the Member from Radisson, who I have called the horn blower from the other side, will get up and he will amend — I'm pretty sure will amend my resolution to say that I would like to compliment the government for giving back our Medicare payments and we have now got a budget which is giving back so much per month on real taxes, so therefore, Mr. Speaker, we will remove from the last line THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED "I compliment the government for what they have done." And I'm sure I can expect that from the Member from Radisson. But quite frankly I tell him now, if he does, it's hogwash. He knows very well that the price of meals have gone up considerably and really, Mr. Speaker,

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(MR. F. JOHNSTON cont'd.) I really don't expect from the other side of the House, who are a group of gentlemen who will claim they are fair men, you know, who claim they are fair men, I would like to know, Mr. Speaker, how they will accept this resolution because, Mr. Speaker, this tax the way it is at the present time is unfair to the working man who has to buy meals, and in fact, Mr. Speaker, one of the gentlemen who brought this to my attention told me that he brought it to the attention of the Premier on one particular occasion, yet we still hear nothing on this bill. Mr. Speaker, again this tax was never meant to be a burden on the working man who has to buy meals because he is working in his daily job and, Mr. Speaker, I certainly believe that it should be upgraded. This is the government who believes that things should be upgraded and fair to everybody so, Mr. Speaker, that's all I have to say. I would be willing to hear from the other side of the House, especially from Mr. Hornblower over there. And --(Interjection)-- I'm not concerned . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. Order, please. The Honourable Member for Radisson.

MR. SHAFRANSKY: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. I believe that the windbag on the other side has not identified anybody . . .

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. That's not a point of order. The Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek.

MR. F. JOHNSTON: Mr. Speaker, I was inclined to be very nice in this resolution and I must admit that I have called the Member from Radisson Mr. Hornblower at times because he's always the man that's blowing the horn from the other side of the House. But when he calls me a windbag I could become very disturbed, you know. This is enough to make a person very very annoyed when you're standing here trying to tell the government that they have an unfair tax at the present time. You know. --(Interjection)-- No, I'm not going to . . . So, Mr. Speaker, as I said again, this tax was never meant to harm the working man and this should be adjusted as to the way the resolution reads. Thank you very much.

MR. SPEAKER: The Honourable Member for St. George.

MR. WILLIAM URUSKI (St. George): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. In listening to the Honourable Member for Sturgeon Creek present this resolution, I think there is probably some merit. I don't know whether, when it will be put to a vote, how it will -- how the members of the House will react, but there are some comments I would like to make in respect to the allegations or the points that the member has indicated in his resolution where he indicates that the price of meals has nearly doubled since '67 or since the \$2.00 ceiling on the -- five percent on the \$2.00 ceiling of meals was instituted. I know that -- you know, for instance I question the validity of the honourable member's statement where miners, you know I have never worked in a mine but I assume that -- I've carried a lunch box and I've worked in retail stores and outlets, that most miners and most people on construction that if they are married or the like are probably carrying their food to the construction site. I see the validity that the honourable member makes with respect to truckers who are on the highway but I think you know I've travelled across the country and across the province and in most instances where I stop - I don't know where the honourable member eats whether it be the Charterhouse or places like this - I would say there are many restaurants in the Province of Manitoba that have full course meals at \$2.00 or less, but I must admit --(Interjection)--

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please.

MR. URUSKI: Why don't you come into Arborg, Ashern, Gypsumville? On the road, No. 1 Highway. I know that the cost of meals has risen in the past number of years. Additionally, I just, you know -- the member indicates that it's a very unfair tax, the sales tax on items, and you know, I tend to agree with him. I think the members of this side, when the sales tax was brought in, was generally intended to be used for education in the Province of Manitoba to support education costs, and I really don't know whether that has ever happened and I doubt whether that was the intent. Now the member must be chastizing his other -- his colleagues on the other side for instituting this type of a tax that he says is bad --(Interjection)-- I would imagine he must have had a comment for his members. I would think that a government, when preparing its budget, you know, on the global amount and sums of money, will have to and has had to set its priorities on what tax relief or tax measures that the government will assist its residents and the people of the province on, and this government, as the member indicated, has moved in many of the directions in tax cuts, especially in this budget that has just passed, in relieving the burdensome cost of education of the property owner to a substantial degree, and

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(MR. URUSKI cont'd.) in fact from a local cost dating back to the early Sixties of about 49 percent to the present cost of 21 percent on the local taxpayer, which is a very very substantial amount in relief, and these measures have been carried out of course by the Property Tax Credit Plan and now the newly announced Property Tax Credit Plan where there are people who may not have -- such as old age pensioners who also eat in restaurants and the like, who may not have school taxes to the degree of the basic \$100.00 exemption, they will get an additional benefit of municipal taxes, a reduction in municipal taxes off their tax statements.

Now additionally, there is a major tax cut - you know, the member said Medicare premiums, that's right. In '69 the promise of the New Democratic Party was to relieve the flat poll tax that was imposed by the Conservative administration when they sort of backed into Medicare. They got forced into the Medicare issue. They imposed the flat premium of \$17.00 a month on every family whether he was the Member for Sturgeon Creek or a pensioner in my constituency. The reduction in 1969 resulted in a saving of approximately \$90.00 a year to every family, and effective June 1st of this year there will be no flat premium tax in Manitoba for any person in health and hospital costs. The premiums have been reduced to nothing. Additionally there will be a saving to the taxpayers of Manitoba in some administration costs and the Minister, because of the possible dislocation of people within the Health Services Commission, they will be given the first opportunity to seek available employment within the civil service in existing or new openings that will appear.

MR. SPEAKER: Order, please. The hour of 10:00 o'clock having arrived, the House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 2:30 tomorrow afternoon.