

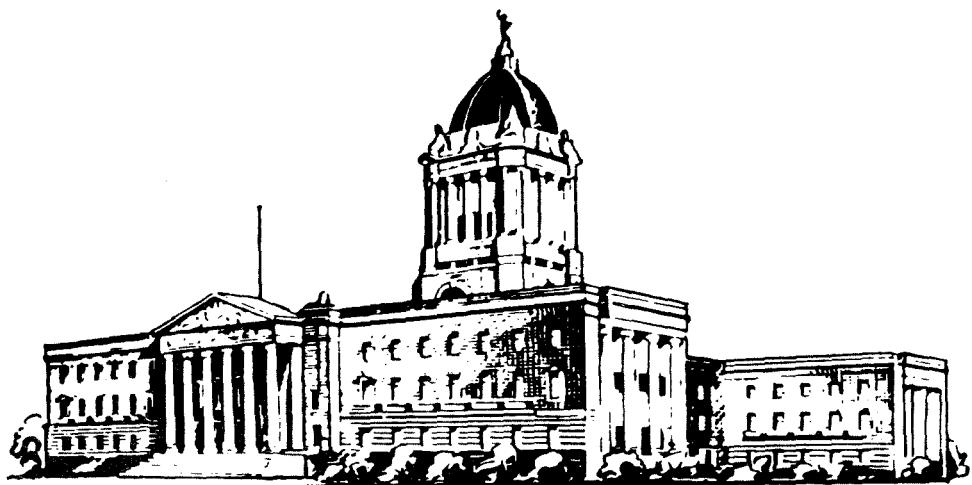


First Session — Thirty-Fourth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)

37 Elizabeth II

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fourth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	LIBERAL
ANGUS, John	St. Norbert	LIBERAL
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BURRELL, Parker	Swan River	PC
CARR, James	Fort Rouge	LIBERAL
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	LIBERAL
CHARLES, Gwen	Selkirk	LIBERAL
CHEEMA, Gulzar	Kildonan	LIBERAL
CHORNOPYSKI, William	Burrows	LIBERAL
CONNERY, Edward Hon.	Portage la Prairie	PC
COWAN, Jay	Churchill	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose du Lac	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James Hon.	Arthur	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Emerson	PC
DRIEDGER, Herold, L.	Niakwa	LIBERAL
DUCHARME, Gerald, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	LIBERAL
ENNS, Harry	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Laurie	Fort Garry	LIBERAL
EVANS, Leonard	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen Hon.	Virden	PC
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	LIBERAL
GILLESHAMMER, Harold	Minnedosa	PC
GRAY, Avis	Ellice	LIBERAL
HAMMOND, Gerrie	Kirkfield Park	PC
HARAPIAK, Harry	The Pas	NDP
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertslad	NDP
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HEMPHILL, Maureen	Logan	NDP
KOZAK, Richard, J.	Transcona	LIBERAL
LAMOUREUX, Kevin, M.	Inkster	LIBERAL
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANDRAKE, Ed	Assiniboia	LIBERAL
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
McCRAE, James Hon.	Brandon West	PC
MINENKO, Mark	Seven Oaks	LIBERAL
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
OLESON, Charlotte Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ORCHARD, Donald Hon.	Pembina	PC
PANKRATZ, Helmut	La Verendrye	PC
PATTERSON, Allan	Radisson	LIBERAL
PENNER, Jack, Hon.	Rhineland	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren	Lac du Bonnet	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	PC
ROCH, Gilles	Springfield	LIBERAL
ROSE, Bob	St. Vital	LIBERAL
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	NDP
TAYLOR, Harold	Wolseley	LIBERAL
URUSKI, Bill	Interlake	NDP
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	NDP
YEO, Iva	Sturgeon Creek	LIBERAL

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, November 16, 1988.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

Mr. Clerk, William Remnant: It is my duty to inform the House that Mr. Speaker is unavoidably absent and, therefore, in accordance with the Statutes, I would ask the Deputy Speaker to take the Chair.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Mark Minenko: I have reviewed the petition and it conforms with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? (Assemblies of Manitoba Chiefs and Others funding request re Aboriginal Justice Inquiry.)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Bonnie Mitchellson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): I want to present the Supplementary Estimates for the Department of Culture, Heritage and Recreation.

* (1335)

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BILL NO. 41—THE LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT ACT

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Labour) introduced, by leave, Bill No. 41, The Labour Relations Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les relations du travail.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Connery: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if I may, just a few words on the content of the Bill. Bill 41 repeals final offer selection and restores balance to the collective bargaining process. Final offer selection is intrusive and one-sided. It clearly results in one side winning and one side losing. My colleagues, and I believe Government, have a responsibility to ensure that labour laws are fair. Repealing final offer selection is a step toward the creation of a fair and balanced climate for a healthy labour relations. Thank you.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Prior to Oral Question Period, may I direct the attention of Honourable Members to the Speaker's gallery where we have with us today two Cabinet Ministers from the Province of Nova Scotia: the Honourable Tom McInnis, Minister of Community Services; and the Honourable Jack MacIsaac, Minister

of Lands and Forests. As well, we have Dr. Fred MacKinnon, Director of Senior Citizens Secretariat for the Government of Nova Scotia.

On behalf of all Honourable Members, may I welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Elderly Abuse White Paper Author

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Deputy Speaker, my question is to the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Neufeld). Elderly abuse is a serious problem in contemporary society with more than one incident a day reported in the Province of Manitoba. Time is of the essence to provide that protection to Manitoba seniors and we need this Government's plan of action right now. Can the Minister please tell the House today who is doing the writing of the White Paper on Elder Abuse?

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister responsible for Seniors): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the last I knew I was Minister responsible for Seniors. It is my agenda, it is my timetable and, when I am ready to report it, I will so do. If the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) is not happy with that, she can go back to her friends in the media and ask for my resignation. It will do her about the same amount of good as it did the last time.

Contributors

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Deputy Speaker, what I do not like is the cavalier attitude in the treatment of seniors who are abused in this province. The question was, who was writing the report. The supplementary to that is, can the Minister inform the House today if experts here in Manitoba like Dr. Betty Havens, like Marguerite Chown, like Lynn Mitchell-Pederson, like Dr. Neena Chappell, can he tell us today if they are also involved in the writing of this report or has it not even begun?

* (1340)

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister responsible for Seniors): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am well aware that the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) is not happy. I am well aware of that. She has mentioned that in the press many a time. I will decide who is going to write the paper and I will decide who we are going to consult, not the Minister, not the Member of the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs). When I am ready to report, I will go and report.

Mrs. Carstairs: With a supplementary question to the Minister of Seniors (Mr. Neufeld), can the Minister of Seniors tell us today if the report has begun its

preparation stage, if someone has been hired to write the report, and who has been hired to write the report?

Mr. Neufeld: I have given the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) the information in her first two questions. If she wants to write the report in eight hours as she once suggested, let her do so. We will look at it and if we think it is appropriate we will use it.

White Paper Status

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): With a question to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), part of the program initiated by this Government in their Speech from the Throne was the preparation of a paper on elder abuse, a paper which in the past Members on the opposite side have indicated the need for and the development purpose of, which was to serve the elderly in the Province of Manitoba. Can the First Minister, since the Minister responsible for Seniors (Mr. Neufeld) seems unable to answer the question, tell us if this paper is in the preparation stage and who is writing it, and when can we expect to receive it?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the topic of elder abuse and the concern about elder abuse is obviously something that has not been addressed in the past. We have had 100 years of Government in this province and there has been no legislation and no white paper and no attention paid to elder abuse. Some three years ago, before the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) was in this Legislature, I proposed a resolution in this Legislature with the intention of developing a policy and perhaps legislation, if necessary, on elder abuse. We committed that in 1986, we committed that in the 1988 election campaign. We have appointed a Seniors Minister (Mr. Neufeld) for the first time in this province so that kind of endeavour can be coordinated. He takes that responsibility seriously, unlike the Leader of the Opposition, who in her cavalier attitude suggested she could prepare a paper in eight hours that would govern the need for legislation and policy on elder abuse.

We suggest that it deserves due care and attention. We have been involved because of our commitment to ensure that this Legislature could deal with a whole new set of Estimates, and a whole new Budget, and a whole new economic framework for this province. We have been involved in doing things that we thought were priorities for this Government in this Session.

The topic of elder abuse is a priority that will have to be dealt with as soon as possible—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: —but as long as we are involved in this Legislature answering questions for the Leader of the Opposition—

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

Mr. Filmon: —of Members opposite and all of those things—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I would just like to remind all Honourable Members that, as is the custom in the Chamber, after the second "order" Hansard has been instructed to turn off the microphone. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

White Paper Author

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): With a supplementary question to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), can the Minister tell us today, is this paper being written in Manitoba or is it being written outside of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): When we present the paper on elder abuse to the Members of this House, the Members will have an opportunity to criticize it, to disagree with it, to discuss whether or not it was properly written or presented or the right people were consulted in any and all of those things. When we present that to the House, all of that information in detail will be contained therein. The Leader of the Opposition can criticize it, as I know that she will, because I know that she will disagree with anything that we put in those papers as she does with everything that we present to this House. But let her at least give us the opportunity to prepare the paper and then she can begin to criticize it.

* (1345)

White Paper Release

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): A final supplementary, I thought this issue was important to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon). Can the First Minister tell the House in clear terms today that the House is going to receive this in this Session, which we were originally promised, and that it is presently, at this very moment, being written?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): The paper will be presented to the House when it is ready, when it has been given the due care and attention that it deserves because it is an important issue. We will not be driven by a timetable set by the Leader of the Opposition in her political interest. We will be motivated by a desire to help the seniors of this province, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That is our only concern.

The Leader of the Opposition may think it is cute in Question Period to set deadlines and place demands on the Government to set dates that she can disagree with or challenge or whatever. The important thing is that we are dealing with the paper on elder abuse and that as soon as it is ready in the forum, which we believe it should be, it will be presented to the House.

Environment Act City of Winnipeg Licensing

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is to the Minister of Environment (Mr. Connery) who is probably handing out a press release that we do not have yet.

My question is to the Minister of Environment. The new Environment Act was proclaimed April 1, 1988. That was after considerable debate that took place in the Session in the year of '87, and a nine-month leave time for the City of Winnipeg to get its affairs in order to deal with the problems under the new Environment Act and indeed the challenges. My question to the Minister is there are certainly 32 times a year the city is illegally dumping under that Environment Act into the City of Winnipeg and it will require a licence. We recognize the billion dollar cost in the sewer systems in Winnipeg. The other deposit of materials through the snow removal is also an area that has been raised by environmentalists in the past. Has the province issued any licences to the City of Winnipeg? Has the province reviewed the method of snow removal and disposal this year in the City of Winnipeg? Does the city have a licence for it or have they changed the methods of disposal of those goods that do contain environmental concerns for the city's river systems?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment, Workplace Safety and Health): I wonder if the Honourable Member was listening to our discussion we had last night, because the very thing that we were discussing was the sewer problem that the City of Winnipeg has and of course the quality of the Red River as it flows through the City of Winnipeg.

Yes, the new Act says that the environment in the City of Winnipeg comes under that particular Act and under the Government of Manitoba. The time to make sure and implement all of the things that are required are not going to happen overnight. We are not going to come in on the city with a heavy hand. We are going to work with the city and we are going to ensure in a reasonable period of time that all of these issues will be addressed. We discussed the snow removal concern last night. That will not be addressed in six months or a year. It might take a little bit of time to address these major issues. But unlike the previous Government, we are going to sit down with the City of Winnipeg and work out their environment concerns and come up with a workable plan for the Government and the people of Winnipeg.

Mr. Doer: The Minister should be aware that the City of Winnipeg, the Gang of 19 again, opposed the new Environment Act, opposed the inclusion of the City of Winnipeg in the new Environment Act. So I would suggest to the Minister that he not be such a toady to the City of Winnipeg in terms of enforcing his provincial responsibilities and our environment. My question to the Minister is—

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): How come you did not act on it in six-and-a-half year?

Mr. Doer: —the Act was passed last year and it was proclaimed April 1. The ball is in your court. Instead of chirping, the First Minister should hold his own Minister of Environment accountable, instead of yapping from his seat the way he is doing today in this Chamber. Maybe you need a longer holiday, Mr. Deputy Speaker, instead of the four days you had.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please; order, please. Does the Honourable Member have a question?

Charleswood Bridge

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Deputy Speaker, my further question to the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Connery), the new Charleswood Bridge has been proposed and passed by City Council on October 27. Under the new Environment Act proclaimed April 1, which the Minister is now responsible for and this Government is now responsible for in spite of the protestations about it, the Charleswood Bridge requires a licence in terms of the new Environment Act.

Has the Minister asked the city for an environmental impact study? Has the city applied for a licence to proceed with that construction in that area of the city?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment, Workplace Safety and Health): The Honourable Member opposite should get some of his facts right. It was not April 1, it was March 31 that the Act was proclaimed. I can recall an article in the Free Press that said that the only danger to the environment was the words of the Honourable Member who has just asked that question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, our department is discussing the possible needs for an environment hearing for the bridge. If our department decides that an environment impact hearing is required, then we will do it.

Mr. Doer: For a person who lectures on 24 hours of facts, we certainly did not get a factual answer from the Minister. It has been three weeks since the City Council approved the bridge. It is clearly under the provincial responsibility, and the Minister has no answer.

* (1350)

City of Winnipeg Licensing

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question to the Minister is, has he totally neglected his responsibilities in terms of the City of Winnipeg, and not issued one licence for one project under The Environment Act, whether it is sewers, whether it is bridges, whether it is snow removal, whether it is disposal of material into the rivers? Has he done anything in terms of licensing of projects under the new Environment Act that he is responsible for that was proclaimed on March 31 of this year?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Environment, Workplace Safety and Health): It is quite interesting to hear the words of the Honourable Member whose Government was last in the rating, of the national rating of all provinces that showed up to be tenth. All of a sudden, he becomes an environmentalist.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are entertaining and entering into some real negotiations with the City of Winnipeg. We met last night with our Urban Affairs Department to discuss the issues that we are going to bring up

with the city and, sure, we could go in and start licensing. As the Member knows, this is a very major Act and it requires a lot of study and a lot of implementation, and to implement some of it will take some period of time. These things will come about but, if we try to rush into it, we would be doing improper things. We want to work in consultation and in harmony with the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Act was passed a year and a half ago. There were nine months given for the city in lead time so they can apply for the various licences required. That time line was March 31. There has been another six months where not one licence has been issued, and indeed the City of Winnipeg is breaking this Minister's Act that he has to administer.

My question to the Minister, when is he going to start to follow his Act, his legislation that he is responsible for in terms of 600,000 citizens in the City of Winnipeg, in terms of the requirements of the environment under that Act?

Mr. Connery: I am responsible for the Act. It is not the Act that we brought in. The Act was brought in by the previous Government. It is flawed in many places. The Member thinks that we are just going to jump in and start hammering at the City of Winnipeg.

The Member says we are going to do nothing. We can go back over the history of the previous Government that did absolutely nothing for years and years environmentally. Mr. Deputy Speaker, unlike the previous Government, we will consult, we will draw up action plans with the City of Winnipeg that are within a reasonable time frame, within a reasonable cost to the City of Winnipeg. As the Member knows, to replace the storm sewers in the City of Winnipeg would cost \$1 billion. We do not think that would be a viable option to deliver on the City of Winnipeg.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Government Reports Distribution

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): My question is to the First Minister (Mr. Filmon). When the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson) rose in her place, we assumed that she was going to be handing to all Members of the House a copy of the Multicultural Task Force, because yesterday she said that she would not be distributing to all Members because it cost too much money. Now we understand that the Government wants to control its expenditures, but surely the First Minister is able to find ways of controlling Government spending other than by limiting access to information that is of critical importance to this province's ethnocultural community. The cost of printing 57 reports is a small price to pay for the time and effort the group of individuals have invested in the study.

* (1355)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. Does the Honourable Member have a question?

Mr. Carr: I do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and the First Minister may wish to know that Members of our caucus do not throw away into the garbage important documents, especially those we have waited a number of weeks for. My question to the First Minister is simple: is it this Government's policy that from now on reports released by this Government will not be distributed to all Members of this Assembly?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Deputy Speaker, it traditionally has been the case that not all reports on every particular subject are distributed to all Members of the Legislature. The fact of the matter is—and I will admit to being one who does not always ask for all the reports, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I am happy to borrow a copy from a colleague and do a skim reading of it from time to time or get a summary from a member of staff, those sorts of things.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are happy to provide copies of reports to any Member of the Legislature who requests them. We do not want to print many, many copies that may not be used in the interests of controlling costs and expenditures, of not wasting money. We do not want to provide copies of every possible report on every possible topic to Members who do not want them.

Now if the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) or any of his colleagues wishes to have a copy of that report and has not been provided, please call either the office of the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation or my own office and we will be happy to supply those immediately to them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Mr. Filmon: We want them to have all the full information that they require.

Minister of Culture Apology

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Mr. Deputy Speaker, with a supplementary question to the Minister of Culture (Mrs. Mitchelson), the Minister is on the record saying to Members of this House that report would be tabled. Now in the Government's Crown Corporation Accountability Act, there is legislation which says that the quarterly financial reports of Crown corporations must be given to MLAs first. Why is that not true also of important Government studies, and will this Minister apologize for the insult to all Members of this House and deliver that report to all MLAs today?

Some Honourable Members: Hear! Hear!

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I thought the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) was here yesterday when I stood up and publicly apologized in front of this House for an oversight in what had happened. I clearly indicated to the whole House yesterday that it was my impression that the Leaders of the Opposition, the Opposition House Leaders and the Opposition critics had received copies of those reports before the news

release went out or in conjunction with the news release and the reports to the media. It was my clear impression from staff that was going to happen. There was a problem. I have gone back to staff and that problem will not happen again. It was an oversight. It was not within my control, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I apologized to the critic quite openly the evening before for what had happened. I apologized in the House yesterday, and I am somewhat concerned and distraught that the Member for Fort Rouge would stand up and bring up this issue again.

Multiculturalism Report Recommendations

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Mr. Deputy Speaker, with a supplementary question to the Minister of Culture (Mrs. Mitchelson), it should be on the record that the House Leader (Mr. Alcock) on this side does not have a copy of that report.

Now my last question to the Minister is very simple. Now that she has had over three months to study the recommendations in this report dated August of 1988, when will she tell Members of this House whether the Government's intentions are to implement or not implement its 68 recommendations?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have clearly indicated that this task force report that was commissioned by the former administration, I commend them for wanting to find out what the multicultural community wants and needs. I commend them for initiating for that study. Under our administration, we asked the task force to complete the study. They have completed that study. I received a copy in August. The reason it was not made public until now was because we were waiting for French language translation. I have indicated that before. It is now ready, it has been made a public document. I have indicated to MIC and to the ethnic community that we are going to consult with them. This is the first step toward a multicultural policy in the Province of Manitoba. There is no way that we want to have an ad hoc multicultural policy.

* (1400)

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Mitchelson: We want to ensure that when that policy is introduced by our Government that it is a comprehensive policy that takes all aspects into consideration.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Child and Family Services Government Policy

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): The First Minister (Mr. Filmon) has attempted to shield the Minister of Community

Services (Mrs. Oleson) by suggesting that she cannot possibly be responsible for directives sent out by her senior staff. Surely, the Minister must be able to assume some management responsibilities in her department.

Yesterday she was not aware, yet again, of another directive which her director shared with executive directors of Child and Family Services Agencies. My question for the Minister of Community Services is, the Minister must have had an opportunity to review this information, the document of November 9, so could she confirm for the House today, are the contents of this document Government policy?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): Yes, I am quite happy to respond to that question that was raised yesterday.

Yesterday in the House, as seems to be the habit of the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcya-Leis), was tabled an unsigned draft of a consultation letter that was taken to the executive directors of Child and Family Services for discussion and consultation. I will table today a redraft of the letter and the letter that will be sent out to the Child and Family Services after the consultation took place. The Member for St. Johns yesterday tried to bring up the fear and scare tactics in this House that somehow children would be at risk because of this document. That is entirely wrong.

This document asks for accountability. It does not put children at risk. No one will be at risk because of the directive. The directive is only to Child and Family Services Agencies that are in deficit and not able to deal with the deficit on their own the rest of the year.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Oleson: This is until December 31, while an audit is taking place.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Centralization

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Whether this document is Government policy or suggestions from this Minister, it suggests that approval for vacancies, hiring, operational decisions all now must go to the Director of Child Welfare. This is clearly centralization of authority. My question to the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) is, how can the Minister stand in this House today and say there is not a move to centralization when clearly her staff and herself are sending out information which clearly suggests centralization of functions? It is in black and white; the suggestions are there. How can you say that you are not moving towards centralization, or does this Minister even understand what centralization is? I doubt it.

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): I find it passing strange that a Member of this Legislature cannot read and comprehend a letter that is directed to people who are in deficit.

Accountability is what we want here—accountability. These people are in deficit. This is a short-term request of them. I met with the presidents of those agencies a few weeks ago. They agreed to this. This was taken to the executive directors yesterday. The executive directors apparently are at some loss to understand it. Nowhere in this letter says anything about centralization.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister said these agencies agreed with it. Then why do we have a letter in our possession from the President of the Child and Family Services of Northwest who clearly is upset and concerned because of this information? Somebody is misleading someone in this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Would the Honourable Member place her question, please?

Hiring Restrictions

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): My final supplementary to the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) is, this discussion paper indicates that for Child and Family Services Agencies to hire child abuse staff, that they are crippled and they are restricted because they must obtain approval. Could the Minister indicate in this House today how she could allow recommendations to go out which severely limit and restrict Child and Family Services agencies from hiring qualified staff because they can only hire those staff on a six-month basis? How are they going to be able to hire those staff and provide a service when they can only hire for six months?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Ms. Gray: You are crippling the services to children in this province.

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Community Services): Well, we will try it again. This is clearly an interim measure to gain accountability with agencies that were in dire straits because of their deficits. Over the years, they have been handed money and said, here, and given no directive, no direction of how they are going to face those deficits, so the deficits keep recurring. What we want is to put some control. Nowhere does it say in this letter that if they request staff and staff is legitimate that they will not be hired. They could gain that permission if it is a legitimate request.

Bill No. 41 Final Offer Selection

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the six few months that this Tory Government has been in office in Manitoba, there has been increasing evidence of its right-wing, anti-worker, anti-labour bias. We saw it on Labour Education Centre cutbacks. We saw it on the Unemployment Help Centre cutbacks,

and we have seen it today with the introduction of Bill 41, a Bill that would eliminate final offer selection, an innovative process that was brought into Manitoba to help prevent strikes.

I would like to ask the Minister of Labour (Mr. Connery) some questions to determine on what basis he reached the decision to introduce this ill-advised Bill today. I would like to ask him how many applications there have been for final offer selection. I would like to ask him how many of them have been settled through the final offer selection process, and how many of them have been settled through negotiation.

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Labour): Mr. Deputy Speaker, as my honourable colleague says, we listened to the advice of a lot of the unions who are absolutely opposed to final offer selection. On Friday, on second reading, I will read some of the excerpts of what these union members said and what they thought of final offer selection. The interest of this Government is the bottom line, the workers of Manitoba. We are not going to introduce legislation just for the sake of a union leader, which the previous Government did. We will introduce or correct legislation that is in the best interests of the workers of Manitoba. That is the bottom line for this Government.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I realize that I cannot require a Minister to answer a question, but I think that was a pathetic excuse for an answer. I ask the Minister, what are the facts on final offer selection?

Since he obviously has not read the information himself, I will ask him if he can confirm there have been 40 applications. The majority of those applications have been settled through negotiations, which is part of final offer selection. In fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of the two that went to selection, half of them were in favour of the employees and half were in favour of the employer. So where is the—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

POINT OF ORDER

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) in his rage seems to forget that it is improper in this House to come to the House with unconfirmed information. It is up to the Honourable Member to confirm the information that he brings before the House.

An Honourable Member: Oh, that is garbage.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on the same point of order. I realize that was a difficult situation. I am not allowed to require an answer from the Minister. I was attempting to provide information the Minister obviously did not have so that he could at least confirm the information that was given to me by the Labour Board. I would appreciate your advice on how I can get an answer out of this Minister.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I would like to thank all Honourable Members for their

advice on the point of order and advise the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) that it is not good parliamentary practice to communicate written documents with respect to certain matters to the House and then ask Ministers to either confirm or deny them. I would ask the Honourable Member for Thompson to rephrase his question.

Mr. Ashton: First of all, will the Minister provide the information on which he based this ill-advised decision?

* (1410)

Final Offer Selection Labour Consultation

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Second of all, to rephrase my question, Mr. Deputy Speaker, will this Minister also indicate who he has consulted with in the labour movement because many people in the labour movement who expressed concern initially about final offer selection have indicated to me that they will be telling this Minister that they now support final offer selection because it is working?

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Labour): The Honourable Member says that we do not have the numbers. I can show him, I can give him a copy of the 29 applications to final offer. I can give him the outcome of the them, of the two—yes, there were two: one settled in favour of the employees, one settled in favour of management. I can show him the ones that were settled out. Final offer selection was opposed by many, many unions. You will find that not one of those unions applied for final offer selection. They just did not use it because they do not agree with it. Final offer selection was a one-sided piece of legislation that favoured one side. It did not allow the other side to have the same option.

We have made the legislation fair. The final offer selection is still available to all people on a voluntary basis.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Connery: That is not excluded. It is a good idea—

Bill No. 41 Withdrawal

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. The Honourable Member for Thompson, with a final supplementary question.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I have some difficulty in phrasing my final question because the statement by the Minister was not accurate. I would like to ask him once again, will he consult with the many of the unions, including many who were opposed to FOS initially and now support it including, for example, not just the Manitoba Federation of Labour, but the Canadian Federation of Labour, Manitoba Section, which would indicate that they now support FOS? Would he also meet with the Labour Management Review Committee since this Government said it would take

legislation to that committee, and has not taken this Bill to that committee, a direct contradiction of their whole approach?

Will he now withdraw this Bill, take it back for reworking and make sure that he consults with both labour and business in this province and finds out that the final offer selection is working?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Labour): Yes, we have consulted with some of the unions. Some of the unions are in favour of final offer selection—there is no question about that—but there are many that are diametrically opposed to it. Management was opposed to it because it was unfair. A lot of the unions were concerned about not being able to go through proper negotiations. There was a window in the beginning, 60 to 70 days before the end of a contract, and there was another one at the end. A lot of the unions thought that if you have that offer, that window, 60 to 70 days after a strike begins, there will not be honest negotiations. That took place in some cases. We have one case where the company—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Connery: —wanted final offer selection and the company turned it down prior to a strike.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order.

Land Titles Office Lien Error

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): My question is for the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae). On August 5 this year, three-and-a-half months ago, I asked the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) to investigate the apparently improper placing of a lien for approximately \$10,000 on a piece of property in St. Clements, Manitoba, and the Attorney-General responded by saying this: "If there are mistakes made at the Land Titles Office, steps will be taken to assure that those mistakes do not happen again." The Land Titles Office is indeed on top of this matter and is working on this matter. Well, far from implementing steps to assure that it does not happen again, this particular problem has not been dealt with in the last three-and-a-half months since I asked that question and the problem was four months old at that time. When will the Attorney-General be getting around to dealing effectively with this mistake made in the Winnipeg Land Titles Office?

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): Unlike myself, the Honourable Member is a lawyer. The Honourable Member should know as well as any lawyer in the City of Winnipeg or anywhere across the country that sometimes these processes do take some time. A dispute resolution, whether it be in anticipation of

litigation or whether it be part of the litigation process, does take time. I am a little surprised that the Honourable Member, who is a member of the legal profession, should himself be surprised that the dispute resolution takes a little bit of time. Our office has been contacted by Ms. Flynn in this matter, and I have instructed the Registrar-General of the Land Titles Office to be in touch with the lawyer acting for the Land Titles Office to seek as early a resolution of this problem as possible.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

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

Mr. Edwards: The litigation process which the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) refers to was not necessary in this case. I am sure that the Attorney-General is aware of The Real Property Act provisions which allow the discretion of the department to be used, to compensate people who have been wrongly affected by liens placed on property.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, mistakes happen, the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) knows that and I know that. That is why the Assurance Fund is there. The Assurance Fund is prepared to provide it.

Attorney-General Involvement

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): My supplementary is this. The Attorney-General has indicated that he has made inquiries with the Land Titles Office. Will he act today to personally involve himself in this matter? If a mistake has been made, exercise the discretion provided for in The Real Property Act to compensate the affected people and instruct his department that they do not need a judgment of the Court of Queen's Bench to compensate.

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): I think we have got Manitoba's version of Will Rogers here. All I know is what I read in the papers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Honourable Member already knows, in his mind at least, that litigation is not necessary. I ask the Honourable Member, how does he know? Is he acting for someone in this case? Is he so closely involved with this case that he knows today that litigation is not nor ever will be necessary.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) knows full well that such remarks are unparliamentary. The activity that he suggests that there would be some sort of conflict of interest is—

An Honourable Member: He asked the question.

Mr. Alcock: He asked the question. He implied that there may be, and I think he should withdraw such remarks. I would ask him to simply withdraw them.

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

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): There was no such implication in my remarks. If some Honourable Members have taken such an implication and those remarks would bear out such an implication, I would withdraw any such remarks. But I think I had asked a rhetorical question and I do not think there is anything wrong with that in this House.

The Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) has asked if I would involve myself personally in this matter, in other words, get my fingers in there because he cannot get his own in, and not knowing what to do with them otherwise. To the extent that my personal involvement is appropriate, that is what I have done and would do. To the extent where it becomes inappropriate, I will not, as the Honourable Member clearly would.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I thank the Honourable Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) for suggesting that he has withdrawn any unparliamentary language that he may have used.

Lien Error Compensation

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): The Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) sinks lower and lower in his comments. What I know and what the Attorney-General does not know are the provisions of The Real Property Act. Those provisions clearly allow where the department sees that a mistake has been made to exercise the discretion to compensate the people affected. That is a role of the department. It is provided for in statute.

My final question is, given that not just the lienholder has been detrimentally affected, but in fact Ms. Flynn has spent many thousands of dollars on legal fees, will this Attorney-General commit today to reimbursing those legal fees? By the way, the mistake has been admitted. Will he reimburse those legal fees to Ms. Flynn?

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): With the utmost of respect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I must bow to the legal training of the Honourable Member with respect to The Real Property Act or any other, but I do not bow to his sense of judgment.

The Honourable Member would inject himself into the proper resolution of a dispute at an inappropriate time and get himself involved in who knows how many other cases that are before the courts or wherever, where he is clearly not entitled to be involved and nor am I as the Attorney-General of this province. I take my responsibilities a little more seriously than the Honourable Member would suggest that I should. I really think the Honourable Member should go back to his law books because not only—it takes more than just memorizing what is in The Real Property Act. There are interpretations involved too. The Honourable Member should understand that. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is a process in place. There is an Assurance Fund in place. If the Land Titles Office is owing any money

to Ms. Flynn, that matter will be looked after and dealt with.

* (1420)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The time for Question Period has expired.

POINT OF ORDER

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

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): On the 4th of November, the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcicia-Leis) tabled in this House a document respecting the Free Trade Agreement.

On Monday of this week, November 14, Mr. Speaker made a ruling regarding that tabling. As part of that ruling, Mr. Speaker said, Sir: "Reviewing previous Manitoba Speakers' rulings, I noted that Speaker Hanuschak, in a 1970 ruling, stated that 'all letters, when read, must be signed and they become part of the documents of the House.' In the same ruling, he indicated that it would not be correct to allow the tabling of such a letter (i.e., an unsigned letter).

Our Speaker also said on Monday, "In 1981, Speaker Graham ruled that 'an unsigned and unidentified document is an incomplete document and cannot be considered to be properly before the House.'"

This was on Monday when the Speaker of this Legislature made that ruling respecting the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcicia-Leis) and her habit of filing documents in the House, unsigned documents.

The very next day, Sir, yesterday, the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcicia-Leis) tabled a letter dated November 9, a draft letter admitted by the Honourable Member for St. Johns herself. It was part of her question, an unsigned draft letter. The Honourable Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson), in the course of the exchange, raised a point of order on the matter and, I take it, in the heat of the exchange our Speaker neglected or did not rule ultimately on the point of order raised by the Honourable Minister of Community Services.

Now, Sir, what I am suggesting is that what we experienced yesterday was an overt and flagrant flaunting of not only the Rules of the House but a ruling made by our Speaker one day before, and on the very next day the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcicia-Leis) attempts and indeed does table an unsigned, admittedly draft letter. I would ask you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if necessary, to take this matter under advisement but to take note of the flagrant abuse of not only the rules, but also a flagrant disrespect for the ruling of the Speaker given the day before.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): I would ask that the Deputy Speaker look at the ruling of earlier in the week. Of course, the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcicia-Leis) did comment on that ruling,

and I think in a very positive way and a way acceptable to the Speaker. The whole area, the letter that was tabled was a draft letter. It was stated as such by the Member for St. Johns. If the Opposition has to deal with all these guidelines and directions that are going out in an unsigned way, that is just the way the cards are dealt by the Government of the Day and that is just the way we have to do our job as responsible Members of the Legislature and I do not believe in any—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), if he had comments, should have directed them directly to the point of order and not debated the issue. I am prepared to advise the House that I will indeed take this matter under advisement and have the Hansard from yesterday and today considered with a view of coming back to the House with a ruling.

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENTS

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): I beg leave for a non-political statement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the Honourable Member have leave for a non-political statement? (Agreed)

Mr. Gaudry: Today marks the anniversary of a great man who passed away 103 years ago, Louis Riel. This morning, we attended a ceremony at the grave site at the St. Boniface Cathedral. It was a pleasure for me to represent the constituency of St. Boniface where he was born and went to school and was raised and fought for the Metis people, for the French people and for all of the people of Manitoba.

The Metis people were ridiculed for a long time. In the last many years, they have come out and fought for their rights. Today at 2:30 p.m., the Mayor of Winnipeg will be proclaiming this week as Metis Week.

For me, being part of that nation is also a great honour. In '85 for the 100th anniversary, I was asked by the SFM in St. Boniface to represent them in Ottawa. I was to personify Louis Riel for the 100th anniversary. It was indeed a great honour.

He was known and he is known to be the founder of Confederation for Manitoba, our father of our land in Canada.

(French translation)

Pour moi, c'était un grand plaisir ce matin d'assister à cette réunion, cette assemblée au cimetière de Saint-Boniface, là où il y avait bien des gens de représentés. Au-delà de cent-cinquante personnes étaient au site de Louis Riel. Il y avait des gens qui représentaient non seulement le Manitoba mais les gens Métis de l'Ouest canadien. Il y en avait de la Colombie, de l'Alberta, et il y en avaient du Manitoba en grand nombre, de plusieurs villages. Alors, pour moi aujourd'hui, je lève mon chapeau à ce grand homme, Louis Riel, que dont nous célébrons la mort. Qu'il n'était pas un traître, mais un homme distingué, qui s'est débattu pour notre province du Manitoba. C'est à lui

aujourd'hui que l'on doit notre province, qu'on est fier de représenter. Puis moi-même étant Métis, ici dans la Legislature du Manitoba, je suis fier d'être présent pour commémorer cet homme, Louis Riel. Merci.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern and Native Affairs): Mr. Deputy Speaker, may I have leave of the House to make a non-political statement? (Agreed)

M. le President, Mesdames et Monsieurs, let me say that I am pleased today to join with the Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) and the Metis community in the commemoration of the 103rd anniversary of Louis Riel. Let me say, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was an extremely touching occasion when we have the opportunity to mark an event where we see a leader of the Metis community which drew from the strengths of the Metis community, drew upon the strengths and the cooperation of the church, the schools, the family and the community to be one of the initial people to be founder or to bring Manitoba into the Confederation.

Let me say as well that I think that the strength of any nation lies within the ability of any group of people, particularly the Metis people who are so proud, to draw upon their roots, to appreciate where they have come, and to recognize the culture and heritage which has been a major part of their development and the development of this province and this country.

I think it would be wise for all of us to see in ourselves the future of our country to work closely together, as I said, to appreciate our heritage, to respect our cultures, but to work together as one, as proud Canadians. With those thoughts and feelings today, I was pleased to participate and pleased that the Mayor of the City of Winnipeg is commemorating this week as Metis Week, and we look forward to a long, good working relationship with the Metis people in Manitoba.

Mr. Elijah Harper (Rupert Island): Yes, may I ask leave of the House to make a non-political statement?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the Honourable Member have leave? (Agreed)

* (1430)

Mr. Harper: I would like to associate myself and my caucus with the words expressed by the Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) and also the Member for Arthur, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey).

We regard our brothers, the Metis people, as sincere people. Throughout history, we have experienced the same kind of struggles that we have had in the past. May I say that many of the aboriginal people, Indian people and the Metis people, fought together to be part of this country. Truly, the aboriginal people recognize Louis Riel as part of the Father of Confederation. The aboriginal people have been part of this country for many years but have never been fully recognized as citizens of this country. Only two nations are recognized, the French and the English.

I am somewhat sad to see in this House and not able to say my language as an official language and

speak my own language. Only two languages are officially recognized in this country. I want to just say that we are extremely proud of our brothers, the Metis people, today and also wish to associate ourselves with the ceremonies that took place today. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend, but I spoke with the Manitoba Metis Federation President yesterday about today's ceremony and occasion. So with that, thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

COMMITTEE CHANGE

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): I move, seconded by the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshamer), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Findlay for Praznik.

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): Mr. Deputy Speaker, have you called Orders of the Day?

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on Orders of the Day, would you be so kind as to call Bills in the following order: Bills 10, 22, 37, 18, 24, and the remainder in the order listed on the Order Paper.

DEBATE ON THIRD READINGS— AMENDED BILLS

BILL NO. 10—THE COURT OF QUEEN'S BENCH ACT

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae), Bill No. 10, The Court of Queen's Bench Act, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski).

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): I do not expect to be very lengthy on this Bill. However, I would like to make a number of comments, not having had an opportunity to speak to this Bill in second reading.

The process involved in amending or bringing in what could be considered a new Court of Queen's Bench revision of rules began a number of years ago under the former—our administration. The Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) in his remarks to this Legislation, in fact, confirmed that process. It has taken a number of years. When one looks back over the history of the Court of Queen's Bench, this rule change is basically the first in I guess almost a hundred years. So even though it has taken a couple of years to reprocess the rules on this legislation, it is deemed to be bringing those rules up to date.

The rules and some of the definitions brought forward in this Act do come about as a result, and these amendments come about as a result, of some of the terminology that was in the old legislation in Latin. I do not think the changes are being proposed and are being made strictly for the benefit of the present Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae), who indicated that he does not speak or understand Latin.

I think they have been really made for the benefit of basically the entire legal profession and society in general in that the Latin terminology is, in terms of statute law, rarely being used as part of the word process although many definitions in terms of description of words still use Latin words, but clearly the Attorney-General (McCrae) himself would not have been the cause of having these changes made.

As I understand the changes, the composition, the rules gave—the process that was utilized in bringing about the bringing of up to date of the rules under this legislation was not left solely to the discretion of the Court Queen's Bench judges but as well included representatives from within the Attorney-General's Department, and I know that there have been copies of the notes prepared by the committee presented to Members of the House or at least Members of the Opposition caucuses and explaining some of the provisions of the Act.

* (1440)

This Bill does provide some fairly major provisions dealing with the question of procedures whereby a plaintiff can in fact reclaim property, and that deals with Part 10 of the Bill, the Interlocutory Proceedings. Within that section, there are some fairly, I would say, far-reaching amendments to the exercising of obtaining or reclaiming property, going so far that once approval is given by the courts, a sheriff has the right to enter into a dwelling if he believes where there is reasonable grounds that property is secured or concealed in that house. He has the power to in fact enter the property to demand delivery of the goods that he believes to be there and, if necessary, if he is not being allowed in, to break open the dwelling house building or enclosure.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this legislation does provide some fairly major powers of enforcement of judges' rulings that in fact if the court under due process determines that property belonging to someone else, or as a result is to be forfeited as a result of a ruling, that the individual who has been awarded those rights may use the provisions of a sheriff to enter the property, but it goes beyond that.

It also provides that if the property is deemed recoverable and may be located on a person that the sheriff has the right to search and seize the property on the person which does provide under—these powers are normally allowed primarily under criminal proceedings and not normally allowed under civil proceedings. In this case here, these powers are provided of search and seizure not only of the dwelling, but also of the person, are provided to a sheriff upon obtaining a court ruling.

There are significant powers conveyed in this legislation to provide for the discharge of court rulings within this legislation. Those rules that are contained under the interlocutory proceedings clearly hand down the ability of the courts to set down injunctions against a person. They do prevent injunctions from being handed down against an individual who might be performing personal services for someone else and that

no injunctions can in fact be brought to bear against an injunction which requires a person to work or perform personal services for an employer.

There is a fairly fine line in the process that is brought in by this legislation and it also gives or allows for that individual if it should happen that the proceedings of the court go beyond what this Bill provides that the person against whom the injunction was applied was to force him to provide personal services for someone else, that individual if he neglects or refuses to perform those services is not in contempt of the court. This legislation clearly disallows that to occur.

As well in this whole area the subject of freedom of speech, there shall be no granting of any injunction that restrains a person from exercising their right to the freedom of speech. The question of exercising the right is provided to anyone who wishes to communicate in a public—I guess you could stand in the roadway—arena of information by true statements, either orally or through printed material or through any other means, is an exercise of the right to the freedom of speech.

This legislation does have exceptions where some provincial statutes might prohibit the use of this freedom of speech. I guess, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the most recent example that we have in the Province of Manitoba has been the debate on the free trade issue, where citizens of this province attempted to call meetings in the City of Winnipeg and their only means of notifying citizens in terms of the money they had available was to make billboards or posters and hang them around the City of Winnipeg notifying people of the meetings, because ads of course in the daily papers are not inexpensive, to say the least.

So the city, in enforcing its by-laws, has or it has at least alleged and the courts have allowed, I believe, in some of the latest rulings for the duration of the election period for the Citizens Coalition to be allowed to post notices, and the city by-law has been set aside for the time being.

So I believe that the citizens' group in this case should have had the right to post notices but, in the event that those notices are not pulled down and public property is in some way defaced, they should be held liable. There may be some provision in the rules that are established dealing with the freedom of speech that can allow for this freedom to be utilized, but place some onus and responsibility on the group that would make sure that public property is not defaced and there is an orderly clean-up if there is an overabundance of notices and the like that is placed on public property.

As well, in our own Elections Act, Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are provisions, or at least either under our Act or under the regulations under The Hydro Act. I know that every candidate when he is campaigning for public office provincially, Manitoba Hydro sends each of us a letter and says that if you want to put notices up on hydro poles, you may but we will be taking them down because it is against our rules and we will be charging you the expense of pulling those notices down. All of us, I am sure, as candidates have received those notices, or at least our campaign managers have received those notices. Although one might argue that may infringe

on one's freedom of speech, there are responsibilities that are there and are put into place on each of us so that those freedoms are not, as one would say, stretched beyond what would be reasonable.

* (1450)

This legislation as well, the second major change in this legislation is the change in the rule-making powers of the judges of the Court of Queen's Bench. This Bill, as has been pointed out by the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae), provides for a committee rather than a committee of lawyers, of six judges, two persons appointed by the Attorney-General, and three lawyers appointed by the Law Society of Manitoba to form the Committee on the Rules of Procedure. So there is some public input in terms of trying to make the rules' provisions under this legislation subject to some greater scrutiny and process other than from a judicial point of view. I am certainly pleased and I am sure most Manitobans, and I am sure even judges of the Court of Queen's Bench would be and are in agreement with these provisions to allow greater scrutiny of the present procedures and allow for individuals and laypersons within this province to examine and have input in future changes to the Rules of Procedure of the Court of Queen's Bench.

I believe that this legislation and the changes made under this legislation is in fact a step in the right direction. It has taken a number of years to bring this about. However, I would hope that the review of the rules become an annual or an ongoing provision under this legislation and the committee that is struck. I am sure that the Attorney-General—and I would hope that he and his staff are in the process of setting up this committee and that the continued revision of the rules takes place on an ongoing basis. There are some provisions here dealing with the oath or affirmation by judges of the judges of the Court of Queen's Bench which—I am not sure whether this in itself, some of those provisions that are required under this legislation dealing with, for example, the residence provision of judges.

Section 9, Mr. Deputy Speaker, talks about or indicates that a judge shall, upon appointment, reside in or in the vicinity of the judicial centre that the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council with the recommendation of the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) after consultation with the Chief Justice may direct. I am assuming that in order to be reasonably located to the judicial district, a requirement is primarily from a costing point of view that in terms of court costs, the provision of transportation and additional costs that would have to be undergone by the public would not have to be as high if in fact the requirement of a judge to live close to the judicial centre that is established within the province. There is some discretion there dealing with the changing of residence under this legislation. I would hope that this discretion is in fact allowed to the Chief Justice and the Attorney-General's Department not to force any of the judges who are appointed on this legislation to move for the sake of abiding by the laws that are put forward in this Act.

The provisions on this legislation do also allow for the designation of administrative centres within the

province. I am assuming that they would be areas such as the judicial court systems of Selkirk and in Neepawa and in Brandon. I am assuming as well, The Pas and Thompson, wherever there are regional court centres, that hearings, other than just the Court of Queen's Bench house here or the Court of Queen's Bench courts in the City of Winnipeg, can be held outside the city to hear applications. I am assuming applications under this Act and in areas of which these judges have jurisdiction as well as civil actions trials whereby hearings can be held either with a jury or without a jury, as well criminal action proceedings that would be conducted by judges under these provisions both with or without juries.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the jurisdiction, or at least a decision of the Chief Justice—and I would hope that there is and I am assuming there has been a fair bit of discretion and leniency on behalf of past judges that hearings, where possible, should be held outside the City of Winnipeg. If we are really speaking about having the justice system decentralized to a greater degree than the justices in this province would in fact allow for the provision of trials and hearings under this Act to in fact be held outside the City of Winnipeg, as close as possible to where the application for the Acts or the actions that are being applied for or the trials that are being held, in fact, the offenses or the dispute per se have taken place in that area.

So I hope, and I have no reason at this stage to doubt that would not be the case but really it seems that, once a process is in place, those responsible for the process tend to take the path of least resistance and the judges of our courts would be, I am sure, no different than the rest in the Civil Service in that it is much easier to conduct a trial in the City of Winnipeg in the comfort of all the chambers than having to move some of the hearings to places like The Pas or Thompson or smaller centres in the Province of Manitoba where the court services are somewhat—the amenities are somewhat less than those in the court system within our city.

* (1500)

So I am hoping that the justice system, the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae), does in fact make sure and that his staff makes sure that these kinds of provisions can in fact be accommodated throughout the province and likely have in the past. But it should in fact be done as often as possible.

There are provisions in terms of the part dealing with judicial administration where the Chief Justice has the sole or the major function of directing the sittings of the court and assigning the judges to their respective duties and the allowance for the appointment of an Associate Chief Justice of the Court of Queen's Bench and between those two individuals, whomever they may be at the time, that the responsibilities of that office be carried out.

(The Acting Speaker, Mr. Gulzar Cheema, in the Chair.)

Of course, where there is an absence of the Chief Justice or he or she is unable to act, these powers will in fact devolve to other members of the Bench and

those being the Associate Chief Justice, the Associate Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench Family Division, and then a Judge of the Queen's Bench designated by the Chief Justice and of course the Senior Judge of the Queen's Bench in that order. As well, the Chief Justice may designate additional judges to hold cases under the Family Division of the Court of Queen's Bench and in fact have and continue to have full-time judges in that area, and as well the process of hearings outside of judicial centres. This is the kind of provision that I have spoken about earlier, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Although in the Province of Manitoba more than half of our population is within 100 miles of the City of Winnipeg, nevertheless in areas beyond that distance, communities beyond that distance and residents beyond the distance should be afforded the ability to have court proceedings as close to their residence as possible.

(Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair.)

The whole area of family court jurisdiction in this legislation provides for the obligation for civil proceedings under this Act and, of course, the judges appointed under this Act would deal with proceedings, whether they are based in statute law, whether they are based in common law or, as I think the legislation reads, the inherent jurisdiction of the court, other than a proceeding by way of summary conviction.

These provisions under The Marriage Act, under The Married Women's Property Act, The Marital Property Act, The Separation or Marital Property Agreement, The Marriage Act for Consent to and Intended Marriage of a Minor, The Reciprocal Enforcement of the Maintenance Orders Act, The Parents' Maintenance Act, The Child Custody Enforcement Act, which is a piece of legislation that has just been passed by this Assembly in the last several years, as well as the new Canada Divorce Act of 1985, and some sections of The Insurance Act where application is made by a spouse or on behalf of a spouse or child of an insured, those are some of the provisions and an authority provided under the Family Division of this legislation and jurisdiction of the Family Court judges.

The part dealing with procedures, in which the committee, I am sure, will be re-evaluating on an ongoing basis, setting down the process where actions may be tried by a jury or without a jury should be evaluated continually. Those deal with actions of defamation of character and I imagine, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this Assembly some Members from time to time are faced with those kinds of actions against them, or members of the public. Although they are few and far between, I am sure that those provisions that are provided under this legislation should be reviewed to make sure that the process involved is as reasonable as possible in terms of cost, in terms of hearing and all of course tied to my earlier comments to be held as close to the area where the applications are made as possible.

Mr. Chairman, this legislation will in fact form the basis of proceedings for the Court of Queen's Bench for the next number of years, but I believe that Part 12, dealing with the question of vexatious proceedings against a citizen, has to be looked at and examined

fairly closely. I can understand where an individual may place a suit against another individual and not succeed, and may not like the ruling and continue to place another judgment in a manner slightly different than the original suit and the court can in fact or the judge can dismiss those actions as being vexatious.

But, Mr. Chairman, this is where the Attorney-General (Mr. McCrae) and his staff play a very, I would say, major role in examining that proceeding and having a second look at those kinds of actions that are placed so that the Department of the Attorney-General has to concur with an additional action by an individual under Section 73 and 74. So the Attorney-General's discretion is required and in fact his staff's deliberation, because I am sure that the Attorney-General in his own right may not be directly involved, in an application by an individual who the court has deemed has been bringing forward applications that have been ruled by a court as being vexatious, bringing them in over and over again. So the Attorney-General in this case has a fairly significant role in examining the whole question of whether an additional trial, additional hearing, may be heard.

* (1510)

It comes to mind, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is not quite analogous to this, but the whole question of the St. Boniface doctor and the proceedings that he has been involved in where he has, in fact, deemed that the Law Society has discriminated against him and his family in the proceedings that he has undergone over the last number of years. The Family Court proceedings that he has undergone with his former spouse and that he has felt that the legal profession has let him down and he has not been able to have an appropriate hearing. He has written to the Attorney-General, he has written, I am sure, to every Member in this Assembly pleading—the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), Mr. Deputy Speaker, says he has not written to him. I have received copies of the letter and I would hope that, although it is not quite analogous to the situation, that individual should be at least provided with advice as to what legal recourse he may have if there is not to be an inquiry into the process of justice in this province in terms of how his personal matters have been handled by the legal profession.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I see the light flashing in front of me. Perhaps you can indicate to me how much time I have in this.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member has two minutes remaining.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to indicate that the Bill provides for public hearings and public access, unlike the provisions that will be debated in Bill No. 37 that was brought in by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), where in fact the whole question of public hearings and responsibility to the public, the court process allows for that. I would wish that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) in fact, in his presentation, in his Bill, rethinks that provision under The Crown Accountability Act.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Bill, I believe, is the beginning of a reasonable process of accountability and a review of the procedures of the Court of Queen's Bench and I would hope that, as I have stated earlier, the Attorney-General instructs the new committee that he is setting up to have those rules updated and revamped on an ongoing basis.

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): I will promise Honourable Members I will be extremely brief, which should come as a great relief certainly to the Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) and Honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans). I know they will appreciate brevity.-(Interjection)- Support for that proposition is growing by the moment.

I appreciate the comments made by all Honourable Members in the debate on Bill No. 10 to amend The Queen's Bench Act. I know I should not allow the debate to conclude before thanking Honourable Members for their cooperation in getting this Bill passed so that a new chapter can be opened for the Queen's Bench in this province and those who are involved with the Court of Queen's Bench. I think the judges and the lawyers and indeed the litigants will be able to benefit from what we have been doing here with respect to Bill No. 10. I think we will have streamlined processes which needed to be streamlined some time ago. I take the suggestion of the Honourable Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) seriously when he suggests that the committee struck for the purpose of reviewing the rules have an ongoing task before them, and that The Queen's Bench Act and rules be relevant all the time and not be allowed to become outmoded or outdated.

I would like to thank all those people involved in the work that was done leading us to this point. I ask again for support from all Honourable Members. I know it is there and I appreciate it. On behalf of the judicial and legal community and also those involved in litigation, I thank Honourable Members and look forward to passage and Royal Assent later today.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

BILL NO. 22—THE LIQUOR CONTROL AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan), Bill No. 22, The Liquor Control Amendment Act, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): I want to make a few brief comments on this Bill.—

Some Honourable Members: Leave, leave.

Mr. Edwards: Oh, leave?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I will gladly give the floor to the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards).

Mr. Edwards: I spoke to this Bill back practically a month ago. I mentioned some potential problems that

I thought were in it. I also mentioned that I thought that while it dealt with an issue in the liquor control area, I thought there was a lot more to do in that area. I continue to think that. I look forward to moves in that area by the Government and indeed, I guess, by all Members of this House. I think it is something that we all share a concern about and we can perhaps all cooperate with.

This is a brief piece of legislation. Not to diminish its importance, I think it serves an important purpose. According to the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), it has the support of the police forces and it has the support of the Hotel Association and it has the support of the great majority of Manitobans, and I believe that to be true. There was a fairly particularized problem which the police made us all aware of with respect to knives in liquor establishments. This does attempt to put some power in the hands of the police to deal with that.

* (1520)

My initial concerns had to do with some of the terminology in it and, in particular, the use of the words "weapon" and "knife." I pointed it out and I pointed it out again in committee that I felt that perhaps was fairly broad and it needed to be narrowed, in that I am sure we did not mean to exclude people from walking in with penknives in their pockets. When a penknife becomes a weapon, that is a different matter, but an absolute exclusion of any knife is certainly not the intent of this Act.

However, having received the assurances of the Honourable Member for Concordia in the committee stage that he had discussed this wording with the various Parties involved and that this was the best way of dealing with it. I am content to have that stay in place and to speak on behalf of our caucus and the Official Opposition in this House in support of this piece of legislation. With those comments, I look forward to its passage.

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney-General): Very briefly, at the third reading and passage stage of Bill No. 22, I would like to state again the support that our Government caucus has for Bill No. 22 and our commendation to the Honourable Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) for bringing the matter forward. A further commendation to the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) for moving at committee stage to see that this Bill becomes law upon Royal Assent rather than some other date in the future.

The Manitoba Liquor Control Commission is prepared and has taken the necessary steps to ensure that all of those who need to be informed of the passage of this Bill will be informed of the new rule that is entailed in Bill No. 22. So I will be as brief as the Honourable Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), and congratulate all Honourable Members for seeing their way clear to support this Bill.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 37—THE CROWN CORPORATIONS PUBLIC REVIEW AND ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS ACT

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill No. 37, The Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability and Consequential Amendments Act, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock).

Does the Honourable Member for Osborne have leave to allow the Bill to stand in his name? (Agreed)

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak to this Bill and to see the introduction of Bill No. 37. I think that there are a lot of positive things in the Bill, although clearly we cannot support the Bill in its entirety on this side of the House as has been said by some of my colleagues.

I think there are a number of interesting questions raised. The first thing that I want to indicate to the Minister in bringing this forward, I was rather disappointed in reading through his remarks when he introduced this Bill that he did so in such an unbecoming fashion for himself as the Minister responsible for Crown corporation accountability in the Government of Manitoba. He did so, and I say that unbecoming, because he did so in a misleading fashion insofar as the facts about Crown corporations in this province and the impact that the Government probably—in his case, he was indicating the former Government, the New Democratic Government—had on what he was calling the horrible and outrageous status of many of those corporations as a result of what he was saying, previous Government action. I think that was misrepresenting in the kindest sense of the word, the facts with regard to the Crown corporations and the involvement of the Government.

I notice the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) is very interested in this subject and I am very pleased that he is going to be listening to this debate. The fact is we have a Minister who referenced a number of Crown corporations as justification for this Act. In the first place, I say, as I said at the outset of my remarks, that I do agree with this Act and our Party does. As a matter of fact, we had brought in an Act that was tougher than this Act.

He referenced a number of Crown corporations that had gone astray in the province, including MTS, MTX, Flyer Industries—although I do not know if he mentioned that one specifically he did in the overall total of the losses—MPIC and Manfor. I want to point to him that I felt he misrepresented the facts with regard to those because he did not go back to talk about the origin of the problems that started in all of those that I have mentioned with former Conservative Governments in this province. He left the impression that somehow the problems were due to the New Democratic Government solely.

I can point out that the Liberals certainly cannot feel a great deal of comfort with regard to the management

of Crown corporations either, if they happen to have that feeling as the New Democrats and the Conservatives argue about the status of Crown corporations in this province. We can look back at federal Crown corporations where the Liberal Governments had to pour in hundreds of millions of dollars in bailing out Crown corporations over the years, such as CN, Canadair, DeHavilland and Air Canada over the years, and Canada Post. There were many Crown corporations and many problems associated with Crown corporations that the Liberal Government had. We certainly cannot leave them out if they were feeling a bit left out in this discussion.

It is the Conservative Government who started many of the ill-fated ventures that resulted in losses. I am not saying that the former Government was blameless in continuing with many of these Crown corporations and these ventures. I know that the Members of the Conservative Party, the Government who are sitting in here, that the truth hurts. It bothers them and so they let out cries of pain when these things are mentioned, and cries of embarrassment that this is being pointed out in public. The fact is—

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I wonder if the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) would submit to a question.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to finish my remarks. I am sure I will answer that question that the Member asks and many more, if he would just sit by for a few minutes. If I have not by the end of the remarks, then I will be very pleased to have a question from him. The Minister responsible for Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) is now indicating that I know everything. I am very pleased to be that high in her books. I cannot say the same for her but I do want to indicate, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that we do have a lot of serious issues to discuss when it comes to Crown corporation accountability as everyone in this House appreciates.

Let me just get back to the points that I was making when I was so rudely interrupted by a request for a question by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey). He asked whether I wanted to submit to a question at a time when I was getting to a very important issue. That was that the Conservatives were responsible for starting many of the ill-fated ventures that they later blamed on our Government. I am not saying that we were blameless because we did continue with those.

But let us look at the MTX. The fact is that the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) was the Minister responsible for Telephones before the 1981 election, when he was moving into Saudi Arabia in joint ventures with other telephone companies. As a matter of fact, he had a staff of MTS operating in Saudi Arabia before the election. He had also undertaken a bid with a number of other telephone companies, I believe Alberta Telephones and Bell Canada, for contracts in Saudi Arabia and he had begun the process of the preparation under his tutorage as Minister of the Order-in-Council that established MTX.

Now, the fact is MTX was not actually in place as a formal entity when the election took place in 1981. But

in fact—this is a fact, and anyone in this House can check the records—the former Conservative Government, the Lyon Government, began the process under the leadership, if I can call it that, of the Minister responsible for Telephones, the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) at that time.

He did not like to talk about that during the time we debated the issue of MTX. The fact is there were very serious problems that resulted, and of course it was the New Democratic Party that terminated that operation.

An Honourable Member: Only after you were forced to.

Mr. Plohman: Now, we took that action, decisive action, and terminated it. Yet, it was the Conservatives who started it. Is that not ironic? The Conservatives started it. The New Democrats terminated it after the Conservatives brought forward the mess that they had started. Is that not true? That is exactly what happened. They started the mess and it got worse, and then we terminated it.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Plohman: Well, we will look at another issue.

An Honourable Member: Yes, CFI.

Mr. Plohman: We look at another issue, Flyer Industries. We are the ones who sold off Flyer Industries and ended that drain on the public purse after many years. Now we have to remember there were many jobs created during that period of time, but let us remember as well that it was the Roblin Government that started the process of providing public funds to the bus firm. It was the Roblin Government, the Conservative Government that started that process.

* (1530)

So again, we have an ill-fated venture started by the Conservatives and it was terminated by the New Democrats.—(Interjection)—I say it was terminated too late, okay? As many of us, if we have even a car, in many cases we like to hang on to it. We have some kind of a feeling that it was a special one that was made just for us, even if it gets to be 10 or 20 years old in some cases, and we drive it and drive it and drive it because we think that there is no car that is better than that one. Well, human nature being what it is, sometimes people do not make the decisions as quickly as they should to get out of a messy situation. In that case, we did not.

The one time that did not occur, of course, was in 1981 when after only four years the people decided to get rid of the Lyon Government, the Conservative Government, because it was so clear, the evidence. They had nothing they wanted to hang on to after four years, so bango, it was gone. We have the issue then of MTX and Flyer both being the brainchildren, if we can call them that, of the Conservatives. Now we go further.

CFI was the product, Manfor, of the ingenuity and imagination of the Conservatives. It was started by the Roblin-Weir Governments.

An Honourable Member: How much did we lose on that one?

Mr. Plohman: We have lost hundreds of millions of dollars on that and it was listed by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) as being one of the reasons that he had to bring in this Act. But again he did not point out that it was the Conservatives who were responsible for the start of that ill-fated venture.

We look at MPIC. We cannot blame the Conservatives for starting MPIC because MPIC has indeed been a tremendously successful and beneficial Crown corporation for the benefit of all Manitobans, and that is without debate, I believe, in this House at this point in time. But that was not true 20 years ago, 15 or 17 years ago when this was started. MPIC was very much a matter of debate. I think that history has proven that it has indeed been good for all Manitobans but there have been some mistakes and it was the Conservatives under the Lyon Government that got into the general reinsurance business in a big way, and that is the one that has lost money. It has not been the automobile insurance that has operated unsuccessfully. It was the reinsurance, and that was what the Conservatives started, the big operators, the big managers, the big insurance managers. They are the ones who started that. I know the truth hurts.

We hear the Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger), the Minister of Highways and Transportation, speaking from his seat because he is alarmed by the fact that we are pointing out things that he does not even like to think about any more. He just puts them out of his mind. He goes out into the hustings, he goes out and meets with people and he actually has forgotten that he was partially responsible and his Party was very much responsible for those ill-fated decisions, and I know that bothers him.

I just say in all seriousness, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is no longer just the right-wing MLA for Morris. Now, he is the Minister of Finance. He carries with him a very responsible position and he should represent the facts a little more accurately and fairly when he introduces a Bill such as this. Rather than talking about how horrible and outrageous things became with the New Democrats, he should talk about who was responsible in starting those ill-fated ventures, and that is where he missed it.

Now, I do not like to hear then from him -(Interjection)—Yes, the holier than thou. He said he spent 30 seconds on it and I could not find it. I guess it was a blank in the tape. The fact is, he did take a holier than thou kind of approach that he is fixing everything up and, as I pointed out, maybe it is appropriate that he is attempting now to fix up something that his Party was largely responsible for starting in the first place.

Now the fact is we as a Government had taken the initiative because we recognized that more had to be

done with regard to Crown corporations accountability and they had not taken initiative with the Act that we brought forward previously. We had established a public investments corporation, the role of which has largely been met through the Crown Corporation Council that the Minister is bringing forward now, so it is just a different name, a different staff. The new Tory staff will say it is different in a way, but the role is essentially the same. Maybe we will see after a couple of years whether it works as well.

The fact is there was a need to establish some mechanism for greater accountability of our Crown corporations and we recognized that. I think everyone in this House and everyone in almost all Governments in Canada would recognize the important role that Crown corporations have played in the history of our country, but they have given rise to problems from time to time. There has to be an assurance for the public generally, for the public funds that are on the line that are being spent, that indeed it is being done in the best interests of the public, and so an accountability mechanism is important.

I say that it is important because there are many aspects of the mandates of the Crown corporations that have to be reviewed from time to time. They cannot just be left there to stalemate and perhaps become outdated, not relevant to the current situations, and so they have to be reviewed from time to time. It is an important function of the council or the Crown Investments Corporation that we established, because it indeed was a mechanism for doing that review, apart from direct political direction and apart from the self interests of the Crown corporation chief executives and board, who are more apt to look at their own operation from their own objectives and their own point of view as opposed to necessarily the public point of view. That is why a separate mechanism is important, and that is why we support the concept of a separate mechanism.

It is indeed very important to ensure that corporations are kept on track, Crown corporations, and are meeting the interests of the public. In fact, there can be policy direction that can be given to Crown corporations through that mechanism or directly by the Ministers and the Government of the Day.

I say at this point that I think it is important, with regard to the Manitoba Telephone System as we discussed in the committee yesterday, that this Government be very vigilant in the area of the impact of free trade, if indeed Canadians are so unfortunate as to have that agreement thrust upon them after the November 21 election, or the impact of deregulation in the telecommunications industries in this country.

Successive Liberal and Conservative Governments have indeed moved very strongly towards deregulation of telecommunications. Lloyd Axworthy's time in Government, the Trudeau Government—I believe Francis Fox, who was the Minister of Communications at that time, was one Minister who was moving very quickly at that point in time. Just as they were with deregulation of the airline industries and the rail and trucking, they were moving in the telecommunication, because deregulation was the new buzzword. It was something that happened in the United States and,

therefore, they felt it was good for the United States, it should be happening here in Canada. They were moving very quickly to implement the same kinds of processes that would lead to deregulation of the telecommunications industry and in the other areas such as in the transportation industry.

* (1540)

One of the things that I am concerned about and our Party is concerned about is that if those policies persist, those Liberal policies and followed by Conservative policies—and no one, I do not think, could argue that the Conservative Government in Ottawa has been advocating deregulation of telecommunication systems—that would have a tremendously negative effect on Manitoba because we have a Crown corporation monopoly. We have a Crown corporation being the Manitoba Telephone System, which has been able to offer the lowest local telephone rates in the country and probably in North America—

An Honourable Member: Saudi Arabia, what did you do to

Mr. Plohman: Saudi Arabia notwithstanding—keeping the lowest telephone rates, and that says something for the fact that they were able to take long distance revenue which was overpriced, I admit, by design, by policy to subsidize local rates to keep them low, so that everyone could have basic telephone service in this country and in this province particularly. As I speak about the vast geographic area that we have, small isolated communities in the North and with the depopulation of rural areas, it is no easy feat to have that kind of service and now, as the New Democrats initiated single-line private-line service to everyone in rural areas as well.

That costs a lot of money, that costs a great deal of money and that revenue cannot just come from the—I initiated. The Member for Gladstone (Mrs. Oleson) seems to have forgotten that it was the New Democrats who had taken the initiative to put in place the policy for upgrading of the rural areas through 22 public meetings held throughout this province, clearly had put the policy on the desk of the Minister when he walked in after the election. So it was our plan that the Minister responsible for MTS announced, and we are very happy to see him go forward with that plan, it was a good plan. But the Member for Gladstone has to admit it was there and it was developed, fully developed, when she took office as the Minister, and I wish she would be straightforward enough with this House and with the people to say that.

So, in fact, it is very difficult to provide that kind of service through sparsely populated areas, vast geographic expanse of the province, without having the cross-subsidization of long distance revenue. As a matter of fact, we heard yesterday that it is a substantial part of the total revenue of the MTS, but we are seeing that revenue being threatened by deregulation policies if they are implemented in this country the same as they were in the United States, a tremendous loss as other private companies cream off the best part of the

revenue-generating portions of the system, of the communication system, the telephone system, and leave the costly stuff, if I can call it that, the costly services to, in this case, the Crown corporation. I do not think that is fair. I do not think that gives them an opportunity to provide that service at a very low cost, reasonable cost, for all citizens—those on fixed incomes, senior citizens, rural residents, all people and Native communities in the North, isolated communities, everyone at a very reasonable price.

Now that is threatened with deregulation policies that Liberals and Conservatives have brought forward in this country and, as a matter of fact, the Conservatives knew that the people of Manitoba and the people of this country would not tolerate a wholesale deregulation of the telecommunication industry. So what they have done is, through regulation, they are cutting the revenue to the MTS by having the CRTC, through their policies, through their decisions, reduce the rates.

I think it is okay to reduce the rates. In fact, I think it is very good. However, if it impacts negatively on the financial situation of the MTS insofar as being able to offer basic telephone services, then I think we have to look at that kind of a policy. I think that this Government is going to have to give strong direction, through Crown corporations accountability, to the public to ensure that the basic services that the public has a right to expect in this province are protected. And that means that they may have to take steps in legislation. They may have to make strong representation through Ministers at the national level, at joint federal-provincial conferences, and they may have to make public pronouncements to make the public aware of the serious dangers that are there. But we hear none of that from this Government. I think they have to wake up.

In addition to that, we have a double whammy situation because of the fact that we have the trade agreement. The trade agreement calls for equal treatment, national treatment for industries competing in the telecommunications sector. That means that companies in the United States, who have enormous financial resources, who have been operating in that environment for a number of years, will have a tremendous advantage over a company like the Manitoba Telephone System, which has to provide the basic service. They have a mandate to provide that basic service as a requirement by legislation. Then we say to them, you have got to go and compete with those companies that are established with tremendous financial resources of the United States that have had the experience of operating in that environment over a number of years and who are prepared to undercut rates simply to break the monopoly. They will indeed come in and cream off those rates, especially if those American companies are given national treatment and equal access to compete in Canada with any other private company that may want to take over some of the creamed services, the better revenue-generating services such as long distance services in this country.

So we have a serious problem with those two combined, the trade agreement and deregulation. We have to be vigilant, very strong, very aggressive to

protect the people of Manitoba in those areas. I say that the Minister responsible for Crown corporations accountability should be accountable to the public in terms of service, as well as accountable in terms of the financial status of those companies. He has to ensure that he looks at that side of it and that he looks at the side of Government policies that will in fact contribute to the undermining of the financial health of the telephone system. And that is the problem.

Now, we have seen little problems. We have seen large problems over the years in various areas of Crown corporations. We have taken steps as a Government, a former New Democratic Government, to see that those experiences were not going to happen again. I commend the Government for following through on those in this particular case.

However, they are missing the boat on some very serious areas. One of the areas is that we were going to require, by legislation, Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Telephone System and the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, the Liquor Control Commission, all, to have public hearings, public meetings throughout the province, so that people could bring forward their concerns, not through the impersonal medium of the telephone in that way by long distance to the Minister's office perhaps to an S.A. or some other person who is a trouble shooter in the office, not by letter, but face to face with senior Crown corporation officials. They could bring forward their concerns and they could get direct answers right on the spot.

I think that is a very important component of Crown corporation accountability and one that is unfortunately missing in this Bill by the Conservatives that they brought in. I do not know why they did that. Frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not know why they would not have honoured their election commitments in this regard. They talked about Crown corporation accountability and how they would run things better and how they would be an open Government accountable to the public, withholding no information, sharing all information so the public would know that indeed things were being managed in the best way possible. What did they do? They take out a very important component which gives the opportunity to the public to come forward and bring their concerns and their problems and their aspirations for service directly to the senior officials of those Crown corporations. And they have taken that out. Frankly, it does not make any sense.

We have the chairman of the Manitoba Telephone System Board, Mr. Paul Thomas, indicate in the committee yesterday that these indeed were very important hearings that they had undertaken to this point this year, and that they want to continue with those hearings because they have brought a great deal of good information. They thought it was a good process. I do not know why anyone would want to hide from that process. Frankly, it should bring an opportunity to dialogue and communicate. With communication comes greater understanding. So in fact the public would have a better understanding of the problems that the Crown corporations face in meeting their mandate. A greater understanding would

ensure less criticism of the operation because people would know why things are done a certain way and why things cannot simply just be changed as they may ask.

* (1550)

So there is a two-way benefit there, both for the public and for the Government. It seems rather ironic that this Government and this Minister responsible for Crown corporation accountability (Mr. Manness) would in fact recommend to his Cabinet colleagues and this Government then would eliminate such a very important provision.

The PUB does not give that opportunity. The Public Utilities Board is there to receive legalistic arguments about why rates should be at a certain level, but they do not have time to deal with concerns of the average person out there from the public who wants to come forward to talk about what they feel are the problems. As a matter of fact, the atmosphere is so intimidating no one would want to go there and talk about that even if they were ruled in order. They probably would not be.

But certainly it is not conducive to the public coming forward and saying, these are the concerns I have, this is the problem I am having with our telephone service here. These are the kinds of things our community needs or, with Hydro or the insurance or with the Liquor Control Commission, suggestions they might have.

So I say to this Government that they have made a serious mistake and I think it will be brought home to them, quite frankly, with the support of both Opposition Parties that in fact there will be an amendment to this Act. The Members of the Liberals have indicated that, yes, there will. So why would the Government want to be forced kicking and screaming into something that makes so much sense in the first place and that they can take credit for doing? It is a tactical error; it is a mistake. It is not too late.

As a matter of fact, I am not even going to dwell on it anymore here. I am just going to let them think about it because I do not want them to feel that they are backed into a corner and that somehow they are forced into it.- (Interjection)- No, no. I am just raising it with them. That is the Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) who just said that we just want to sow the seed. I think we have sown it and fertilized it. Now it is time, Mr. Deputy Speaker, for the seed to grow.- (Interjection)- Well, some people say that I do tend to spit a little bit when I am talking. I am sure that they have received enough water to get started.- (Interjection)- Frankly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not foam at the mouth. I am not quite that bad.

I want to indicate though that I am pleased to see that MPIC and Manitoba Hydro will be going before the Public Utilities Board. It is a very good move to ensure that there is a review, somewhat impartial review, even though that PUB is appointed by the Government of the Day. So we cannot say it is free, if we look at the patronage by the Conservative Government in Ottawa and by the Liberals before that.- (Interjection)- Some may say some patronage even on boards when

the New Democrats were in Government in the Province of Manitoba. I am not going to deny there may have been some.

What I want to indicate is that there could very well be an undue political influence on the PUB and, therefore, decisions could very well reflect political influence by the Government of the Day. So it is not totally impartial, it is not foolproof, but it is a good step, a positive step. At least in the public mind, I believe, that they have more faith and more trust in that system and, therefore, they will support that. They will feel better about rates that are set after review by the PUB, but let the Government not think that is going to be a forum for the public.

As far as the Ministers being on board of corporations, I have never felt that comfortable with Ministers being chairmen of the boards. As a matter of fact, I think it puts the Minister a little bit too close; quite frankly, it puts the Minister a little bit too close to the operation. I think it may be a role when you are establishing corporations and I think it worked very well, for example, in the early Seventies when Howard Pawley, as the Minister responsible for the establishment of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, in fact, was the chairman of the board during those formative years when the corporation was being nurtured against a great deal of criticism from the Conservatives in this province, and probably Liberals as well.

So it needed nurturing and it needed a hands-on approach and, once it was established and was working, then I think it is time to move back a bit. So I did not feel that comfortable. I would not want that position myself had the Premier asked ask me to chair a board of the corporation. I was responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System in 1982 for a year, in 1983, and at that time I believe we had a good board that was doing an effective job. I think it is important to leave it with the board and apart from the Ministers, so I do not disagree with the decision that was made by this Government to disallow Ministers to sit on boards of corporations. However, I do not even know if it is constitutional or if it can even be done. It is possible that is not a legal thing to put into a piece of legislation that the Ministers of the Crown cannot sit on the board. I would be willing to hear different points of view on that because, it seems to me that it may not be consistent with the powers of Ministers.

In any event, we on this side of the House feel that there is a great deal to be said about this Bill in terms of the positive aspects of it. There are some negative aspects, as I have pointed out, that we will want to see changes in. I am hopeful that they will indeed pass. I would indicate to the Minister that I would hope in the future that he would indeed portray the true situation with regard to Crown corporations and not take a position of holier than thou, that somehow he has all the answers.

In fact, all Governments have had trouble with Crown corporations in this country over the years. Despite that fact, Crown corporations have served the interests of Canadians very well. We need look no farther than some of our major Crown corporations in this province

to see that, the results of that, the lowest telephone rates in the country, the lowest insurance rates or second or close to lowest in the country, the lowest hydro rates in the country, automobile insurance rates.

The Member is shaking his head. I believe that they would stand up to comparison and scrutiny, honest comparison that compares the same variables, it will stand up to that kind of scrutiny against any other company. I believe seriously that we have been well served by our major Crown corporations and I think that is a testament to the management, to the wisdom of successive Governments over the years, to the kinds of policies that have been carried on from one Government to another.

However, the Minister does not have a monopoly on how to straighten out and make Crown corporations more accountable. We recognized that fact very much in Government and we took the action that was necessary under the leadership of our current Leader, the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), who was at that time the Leader responsible for Crown corporations reform. He was responsible for Crown corporations reform and he did an excellent job.

Yes, he is now the current Leader and probably will be the future Leader for many years, a lot longer than the Leader of the Conservative Party (Mr. Filmon) who is being threatened from the back by the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) time and time again as he tries to undermine his Leader. He has not forgotten that day just over a year ago, that dark day when this poor Member for Pembina was relieved of some very important duties and the tears are still falling across this province. That kind of thing does not happen, that back-stabbing in this Party. Therefore, we do not have to worry about that kind of thing happening.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I urge all Members to consider very carefully the need for some very important amendments, and I hope the Minister will keep that in mind as we go to the committee stage on this Bill.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to add a few remarks to those that have been spoken by my colleague, the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), on this important Bill No. 37, The Crown Corporations Public Review and Accountability and Consequential Amendments Act. I think that I am on safe ground when I say that the previous Government, the Government of which I was a Member, indeed pioneered in this area of Crown corporations accountability by bringing in legislation, the efforts made by the Leader of our Party, the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), who was then Minister responsible for Crown agencies.

* (1600)

To that extent, I suppose the present Government, the Conservative Government in Manitoba, is paying us a compliment by reintroducing the legislation. On the other hand, I am sorry to say that it is a watered-down version of what we had planned, what we were bringing in and to that extent it is weaker legislation.

It is not as good legislation for the people of Manitoba in my judgment because of the watering down that has occurred.

I think that it is important to recognize, and let us take this opportunity to do so, the Crown corporations have played a very important role in the economic and social development of the Province of Manitoba going back over many decades, going back in the history of this province. Indeed, Crown corporations have played a very special role in Canadian economic and social development. Whether we are talking about railways, whether we are talking about airlines, whether we are talking about the broadcasting industry and many, many other examples one could use, indeed even into manufacturing fields.

During World War II, the Government of Canada entered into various manufacturing fields for the war effort. For whatever reasons, the Government of Canada has gone into the aerospace industry to develop and enhance aerospace manufacturing, aircraft manufacturing in Canada. To that extent, Canada is different from the United States. If you ask what are the differences between the Canadian and the American economy, I would suggest one difference is the role of state investment. It is the role of the state enterprise which we call Crown corporations, and I think that perhaps Canada is rather unique in the rather interesting blend of private and public investment that we have in our economic development.

As a matter of fact, one can read many books on the subject of state investment, of Government investment, in the life of Canada stretching back to before Confederation. But just looking at the period in our country since 1867, one can note the critical role that state investment has played in terms of ensuring the adequate development of Canada, whether it is investment in railways, whether it was subsequently investment in the airline business. We all know the story of TransCanada Airlines now known as Air Canada. We know the story of many railways that eventually became the Canadian National Railways, and of course we know the story or should understand the origins of broadcasting in Canada and certainly acknowledge the vital role played by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation today, the CBC.

In Manitoba, I think we have been very well served by our Crown corporations, by and large. We seem to get very wrapped up in problems that they have had from time to time, and I would acknowledge that we have had problems and one certainly wishes that those problems never did arise. But they did arise and somehow or other we have dealt with them as a Legislature, as a Government. But certainly telephones—in my judgment, we would not have been as well served in telephone communication as we are today if we did not have MTS. I think often, too often a privately owned utility is driven by profit and therefore, as a result, tends to go for the major markets where the profit certainly is, ignoring or leaving aside the smaller markets. In terms of geography that means, in Manitoba, the rural parts of our province, it means northern parts, it means the remote parts where there is not the same degree of population and, therefore,

where there is not the money to be made. And I would acknowledge the very significant role that the Manitoba Telephone System has played to do its best to ensure that there is an adequate degree, a minimum standard of telephone service in all parts of the province.

And one could say that also for Manitoba Hydro. There is a very interesting story of the development of Manitoba Hydro in this province involving more than one party, involving all the political parties that are represented today here. I would recall the Honourable D.L. Campbell played a very significant role after World War II in ensuring that there be proper, adequate rural electrification. There was a massive drive at that time and it certainly raised the standard of living of people on the farms, in particular in rural parts, northern parts of the province then, with electricity, could have so much more in their life and have all the appliances that one thinks of, all the services that are available only because of electricity being made, being provided as a basic service. So Manitoba Hydro has indeed played a very important role and I would say continues to play a role and can continue to play a role in the future.

We are blessed in Manitoba with renewable resources. We talk about pollution of the atmosphere from industrial, operations and certainly one of them comes from the burning of coal, coal as a basic fuel in thermal generation. We in this province are blessed with sufficient water resources that the bulk of our electricity can and will in the future come from a renewable resource, a non-polluting resource.

Certainly we do not have to look towards the alternative of atomic energy as many jurisdictions have to the south of us and across the border and indeed in other provinces. I am thinking particularly of Ontario. We do not have to concern ourselves with the problems of having a nuclear establishment in your territory, so to speak, within your provincial boundaries, because we have the water. We have harnessed that water. We have a very fine Crown corporation, Manitoba Hydro, that is doing, by and large, an excellent job. Who knows? We may be able to assist ourselves by export sales from time to time in the future, over the years, in the decades ahead with surplus power and, to that extent, help Manitoba consumers.

I think that we have been well-served by the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, the newest of the major Crown corporations. Again, I would acknowledge the problems that we have had in rate setting and the turmoil that was created in the past year or two because of the rates that were established. I would acknowledge that. But having said all of that, by and large, it is my feeling that Autopac is serving the people of Manitoba. It can be made better; it can be improved.

But I think the fact that the present Government is not talking about eliminating it, although I believe the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is very sensitive about the question. When asked, well, are you going to privatize MPIC, they certainly shy away from this topic. In fact, they give you a categorical "no." I do not know whether that is because we have a minority Conservative Government. - (Interjection)- You think that is it? Well, maybe that is the reason, because I do recall former Premier Lyon was categorical. He had no truck or trade;

he did not like public investment; he did not like Autopac. He wanted to get rid of Autopac and he said he would try. I am convinced that if he were re-elected, if the Lyon Government had been re-elected in 1977, that Autopac, as we know it, might not be around today.

I think the fact is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Autopac has proved itself and has provided a rather unique service of protecting Manitobans on the move. I think there are ways that we can improve Autopac. The Kopstein Report made a number of suggestions. I think we should seriously explore these suggestions such as the pure no-fault system that the judge recommended. What attracts me to it is that we can save a lot of money. The lawyers may make a little less but, according to Judge Kopstein, we could have better benefits, more benefits, richer benefits for those affected who may be hurt in accidents and so on, but at the same time without any consequent increases in rates. In fact, he suggested you could even reduce rates at the same time.

So we have MPIC which is providing a fairly good coverage in automobile insurance. A lot of improvements can be made; I am not suggesting that for one moment. Let us get on with the job of making improvements. It also provides a lot of jobs in Manitoba, jobs that would not be here otherwise, jobs in the actuarial part of the business, jobs in management, jobs in research and so on that would not be here today.

I would say, in passing, I look at the General Insurance Division of MPIC. If MPIC gets out of General Insurance, jobs will be lost in Winnipeg, jobs will be lost in Brandon. There will be more jobs in Toronto, in my view, because that is where a great many of the insurance companies have head offices. That is where they do these actuarial tasks; that is where they do their research. That is where they make their major decisions. So we would lose, in my judgment, a lot of these senior positions, these good jobs, these well-paid jobs, these interesting jobs out of this province if we did not have MPIC.

* (1610)

There is another aspect as well. I was reminded not long ago that MPIC does provide another service to the people of Manitoba. There is another net benefit of MPIC and that is that it collects capital. It collects a large amount of finance. With those monies, we have been able to finance school construction, hospital construction, nursing home construction around this province. Surely, that is a benefit for the people of Manitoba.

So I maintain, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that these Crown corporations have played a vital role in our economic and social development and will, I hope, continue to do so in the future. I suppose you could refer to the Liquor Commission as being in a rather unique position. I guess we are into that originally because of the views that were held by Manitobans some decades ago that it would be better for people not to drink in public places. Prohibition, of course, gave way eventually to "Men Only" beer parlors, as they were called. Eventually we had some liberalization, I guess in the Fifties, so we have got to where we are today. But we have not

got to the point of saying we will allow the private sale of liquor or the sale of liquor by private enterprise.

As I said, the basis of that is probably a moral basis rather than a judgment of whether or not there should be state involvement in the distribution of liquor in terms of economic benefits. But I suggest there are some major financial benefits to the Crown of Manitoba, to the Treasury of Manitoba, by being in the liquor retail business. I think it is so lucrative that no Government either on the left or right or the centre or wherever would want to dispose of the Manitoba Liquor Commission because of the fact that it does provide a significant source of revenue.

I just might say in passing, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that I find it rather disturbing, however, with regard to the future of the General Insurance Division of MPIC because, as some Members who were on the Public Utilities can tell you, on October 20, Mr. Thompson, the new chairperson of the board of MPIC, advised us—and one can read it in Hansard if you are interested, on October 20—that he and his board were looking at all options regarding the General Insurance Division, including the continuation—these are his own words on page 73 and I am quoting: “Option No. 1 that was suggested was continuation and revitalization of the general insurance operation; that is, continuing in the general insurance field, but on a basis that had to be profitable because we could not continue having a deficit that provides negative income,” and so on.

The Minister of MPIC (Mr. Cummings) also led us to believe he was prepared to look at options, and I was rather encouraged by that.—(Interjection)- Yes, but to my dismay, about an hour or an hour and a half later, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province said very categorically that the Government of Manitoba will get out of the general insurance business, period.

We went back into the committee on Tuesday, November 1, and I asked the chair of the Board, Mr. Thompson, whether he had any communication from the Premier in this regard. He said, no, he had only learned about it. I found it rather strange, since the Premier did make it as a public statement to the media. In fact I saw him in the hallway myself talking to the reporters. But regardless, I think it puts the chairperson of the MPIC Board in a very awkward position. It puts the Minister of MPIC in a very awkward position for those two gentlemen to tell us one thing in the committee and the Premier to say something else contradicting them in public.

At any rate, on November 1, the committee moved a motion. I will not go into all the details but the motion that was passed was an amendment to my motion, in effect, stated and I will read it I guess. It is on page 135 of the Minutes of the Public Utilities Standing Committee of Tuesday, November 1. The motion that was passed:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Committee request the Provincial Government to study available options with particular attention to the interests of Manitobans who may not otherwise obtain insurance coverage.

This amendment was passed with the support of two Liberals, the Minister of MPIC (Mr. Cummings) and the

chairperson who broke the tie between that side and the NDP side, and the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), who was the chairperson of that meeting, and so therefore it carried.

I would like to know, therefore, and many people in this province would like to know clearly is the Government going to take the committee seriously and indeed study these options. Is the Premier (Mr. Filmon) now going to back off his position, his very firm position that he stated on more than one occasion that this Government is going to get out of the general insurance business, period? Is he going to hold to that position in the adamant fashion that he has in the past?

An Honourable Member: Talk about the press release.

Mr. Leonard Evans: H'm?

An Honourable Member: How about the press release?

Mr. Leonard Evans: I will go into that too if you like. At any rate, the point is, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think this Government has to get its act together.—(Interjection)- If the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) will listen, it has a mandate or a request from the committee to study the role of General Insurance Division, and I would trust that this Government will abide by that resolution.

I might add that the City Council of Brandon at my urging and at the urging of the MGEA on Monday evening passed a resolution or agreed that they would ask the Government to back off from selling the General Insurance Division, and they are hoping to be able to send a delegation to meet with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister and anyone else on this subject. I am pleased to see that the community is now coming to the point where they are prepared to take a public stand in this matter, not only the council, but I am sure there are going to be other organizations in that community that will be taking a very strong stand on this matter, because what the Premier is going to do is seriously affect the economy of the City of Brandon, not to speak of the other negative impacts, the other people who are working in Winnipeg as well as Brandon; the impact on those businesses that have told us they cannot get insurance otherwise; the impact on some child care centres and other non-profit agencies which are dependent on MPIC for general insurance. I just make that point in passing.

With regard to Part II of the Bill, in particular, I think that the reference to a council, we now have a council in this legislation rather than a board made up of Ministers. I think what we have here is something that is weaker than what the NDP Government was proposing. I know people like to say we want to get away from political interference and so on. No Party in Government wants to have political interference without the best of intentions. I tell you that from a lot of experience, and I say that for all Parties. I think that by turning the board into a council, a council made up of appointees, is weaker than having Ministers who would be sitting on that board. It would give the Government much better control over the destiny, over

the future of the Crowns. You are sort of moving away from some of the control on that account, so that is one weakness.

Another weakness is that this is a board that is not full-time. If you had a board made up of Ministers, those Ministers are full-time people. This is a full-time responsibility for them and I submit to you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that there would be more attention paid than by a part-time board or a council that is being proposed here.

The other criticism I have of this council that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has proposed is that it suggests that five out of seven must have management experience. They must be management types. In fact, there is specific reference made to the head or the Dean of the School of Management at the University of Manitoba. The reference on page 3 of the Act is to the council being comprised of at least seven members, one of whom is the Dean of the Faculty of Management at the University of Manitoba.

* (1620)

There is reference to one being a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants or nominated by that body, and then at least three of whom are persons who, in the opinion of the Cabinet, have demonstrated management expertise. It is fine to have management expertise, but this legislation requires at least five out of the seven, and I suggest that there should be more flexibility.

The Government is tying itself in. There should be more flexibility. Why tie it to this? What you are doing is there may be a role at some point for a very strong hydro engineer, electrical engineer who should be on this, and maybe at the same time you want to have an actuary or two at some point in time in the future on this board, or what about a communications consultant, or what about an economist? There may be need for other professional expertise, other kinds of experience, so why limit yourself to five out of seven for management? I think you are not serving yourselves well. You are not serving the province well by having so much emphasis being placed on administration.

I am not suggesting that there should not be provision for adequate administration, but there should be provision for these other kinds of expertise. I am thinking particularly in terms of future development that some of these other types of expertise may be better, at various times may be more useful than simply management expertise.

There is another problem, it is a very serious problem, that this Government is going to have with the council. If it is meant to be an effective council and do all the things that are outlined in Section 6(1) and Section 6(2), you are going to have a problem with regard to the role of the Minister.

Does the corporation report everything to the Minister, or does the corporation go to the council and deal with the council, because the council says "it shall"—and I am reading from the duties of the council under Section 69(1)—"The council shall (a) facilitate, in cooperation

with each corporation, the development of a clearly defined mandate and a clear statement of purpose for the corporation; (b) facilitate, in cooperation with each corporation, the development of consistent and effective criteria for measuring the corporation's performance; (c) review long-term corporate plans and expenditure proposals," etc. I am not going to read all this, but the point is who is going to give direction to the corporation, the Minister or the council? If you had the Ministers on the board, if the Ministers were on the council, you overcome that to a large measure, so it is a real serious problem of organization, and this is good advice I am offering to the Government, it is free advice. They do not have to take it, but it is advice I am offering with some sincerity, with the hope that the Government will listen to it because you can get your wires crossed.

If you have a council made up of these outside people who are appointed by the Government indeed, and they are doing their thing as outlined in Section 6(1) and 6(2), and then you have the Minister over here, who is the corporation supposed to start reporting to? Who is the corporation responsible to, the council or to the Minister? So that is an organizational problem and a very serious problem.

Okay, if you were happy that was going to be resolved and you can manage, fine, but I offer that as pure advice in a very productive positive way.

The other point I want to make about this legislation, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is with regard to public hearings. It is unfortunate that the Government is backing away from mandatory public hearings, because this was rather unique in the sense that we were going to ensure that the bureaucracy of the corporations would be out there with the people throughout Manitoba. Surely, these accountability sessions are more than dog-and-pony shows. This is what the Minister of MPIC . . . compares, continues to use this expression—I think it is a demeaning expression—about what could be a very productive exercise.

First, who needs dog-and-pony shows? The bureaucrats must have really got to that particular Minister because it is the bureaucrats who do not want to grow and be accountable and talk to the people and be confronted by people, . . . groups. You people on that side of the House, we on this side of the House, are always with the people, always accountable to the people and indeed we get a lot of complaints from time to time about the different corporations, whether it is telephone rates, Autopac, you name it.

I think it would be a very useful exercise for the senior personnel in the senior bureaucracy of these corporations to go out there and listen to the people first hand about their particular complaints as to how that corporation is operated. You know, that term, "the perimeter complex" is often used out in Brandon, in the Westman area, and surely you should have learned by now that people want Government to be more accountable. They feel it is so remote. They feel too many decisions are made within the perimeter, no communication with people outside of the perimeter, especially 100-or-more miles away.

I say, therefore, every effort should be made by any Government and this is a specific measure that could

have been undertaken to ensure that the utilities, that the major Crowns, were out there on some kind of a systematic basis, at least giving the citizenry an opportunity. People are complaining, as I said, about the perimeter complex. Here is one way to address that. I am not suggesting that all the Crowns should be mandated to go out there. Some of the smaller ones, it is not necessary. Those engaged in commercial operations that have to fight their way in the market, such as Manfor, I would not suggest, but certainly those that serve the general public, hydro-electricity, telephone service, and automobile insurance, MPIC, surely those at least should be mandated and required to go about the province and to make themselves available.

It will help the job, it would help MLAs a lot because from my experience from time to time we get our share of complaints and certainly it would be very useful for us to be able to say that on such and such a date there will be, for sure, the key people from that Crown and you will have an opportunity to tell them directly about some of the complaints that you have, offer your complaints.

I want to take this opportunity to compliment Mr. Paul Thomas, the chairperson of the Manitoba Telephone System, who has said that he has directed or will ensure that the MTS do indeed go about the province and would conduct these hearings. I think that this is very positive on the part of Mr. Thomas and I would hope that the other Crown chairpersons, the other boards will follow suit. But as I said, there would be nothing hurt. You have everything to gain by mandating it or making it mandatory.

In fact, I would suggest that if it does not work that somehow or other you can always change the legislation two or three years down the line. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I notice my light is on. I wonder if you could advise how minutes I have left.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member has approximately 13 minutes left.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Thirteen minutes, okay, thank you. I understand we may be interrupted shortly. I have a lot more to say. I will carry on of course after the Royal Assent but, in the meantime, I believe we have a couple of minutes that I would like to carry on and make a comment with regard to the appearance before the Public Utilities Board.

* (1630)

Normally, when you talk about "monopolies"—and that is what these utilities are, they are monopolies, telephone, hydro and basic Autopac—if it is a Crown-owned or a publicly owned company, you would not think that it would be necessary to go before some kind of a regulatory body. You have a choice of how to go with the monopoly. You either have it owned by the people or you have it privately owned, and the privately owned, such as ICG, would therefore go before the regulatory body. Surely you have to have a regulatory body at work when you are dealing with a private company, because you want to ensure that there

are not excessive profits made and that the profits that are made are reasonable. So there is a need to control a private utility.

That is not the case surely with the publicly owned, in principle I say this, because surely most of our Crowns are at best operating on a break-even basis. Some of them operate at a loss at times, but surely they are not in the business of making excessive profits—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I am interrupting the proceedings of the House because I am advised that His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor is about to arrive to grant Royal Assent to certain Bills.

ROYAL ASSENT

Deputy Sergeant-at-Arms (Mr. Roy MacGillivray): His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor.

His Honour, George Johnson, Esquire, Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba, having entered the House and being seated on the Throne, Mr. Deputy Speaker addressed His Honour in the following words:

Mr. Deputy Speaker: May it please Your Honour:

The Legislative Assembly, at its present Session, passed Bills, which in the name of the Assembly, I present to Your Honour and to which Bills I respectfully request Your Honour's Assent:

Bill No. 10—The Court of Queen's Bench Act; Loi sur la Cour du Banc de la Reine.

Bill No. 22—The Liquor Control Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la loi sur la réglementation des alcools.

To these Bills the Royal Assent was announced by the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly as follows:

Mr. Clerk, William Remnant: In Her Majesty's name, His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor doth assent to these Bills.

His Honour was then pleased to retire.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS (Cont'd)

BILL NO. 37—THE CROWN CORPORATIONS PUBLIC REVIEW AND ACCOUNTABILITY AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS ACT (Cont'd)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The House will come to order to continue the adjourned debate on the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) for the second reading of Bill No. 37, The Crown Corporations Accountability Act. The Honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) has 11 minutes remaining.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): As I was saying, just prior to the entrance of the Lieutenant-Governor for Royal Assent, there normally a Public Utilities Board, the regulatory agency, is called into play when you are

dealing with privately owned companies because you want to ensure that the interests of the public are protected. You want to ensure that private monopoly is not making excess profits and charging unduly high rates, whether it be electricity or gas or whatever. I guess the only one that we do have of any major importance in Manitoba is the gas utility. There is, therefore, certainly a need.

One could argue that with regard to the publicly owned sector there is no need for a Public Utilities Board review. In fact, I guess originally this is why Hydro was not required to go before the board. That was the original idea. Why do we need to have Manitoba Hydro go before the Public Utilities Board when it is already owned by the people and it is providing service at cost? It is not a matter of ripping the ratepayers off. If the rates were too high for whatever reason, presumably that revenue that is held within the corporation would be utilized for the public interest whatever way. I am making a generalization here, obviously.

Certainly, for whatever reason, people have not been satisfied with the rate making. People are very sensitive to inflation. They are very sensitive to rates going up. In our wisdom, it seems to be a consensus that it would be a useful exercise for those corporations to go before the PUB, regardless, to ensure that no rate increases occur without a public hearing so that affected groups could be heard. I suppose what this does is it allows those utilities to fine tune their rate making, to fine tune their rate adjustment. Ultimately, basically, the amount of revenues raised through the rate structure of the Telephone System or Hydro ultimately will be required to simply finance those organizations. Either you are going to have a telephone service available to the people or you are not. There is a certain amount of revenue required.

You can debate, and I guess this is the debate before the Public Utilities Board, as to where the rates should be levied. Should there be more rate levied, a heavier increase on urban as opposed to country people, customers? What about preferential subsidy in a remote area, in northern Manitoba or whatever? There may be various questions about business rates versus residential rates, so there is fine tuning. I suppose there is nothing to be lost by allowing public interest groups, whether it be consumers' associations, senior citizens' groups, trade unions, business organizations, whoever, that wish to appear before the board to have their day in court and to advise, through the PUB, their concerns about rate making.

As I say, nevertheless the bottom line is though that corporation, assuming it is being run efficiently, it is publicly owned, will require a given minimum amount of revenue simply in order to maintain the basic service that we all want. I notice it was, and this is a difficult thing, and I noticed a bit of a quandary that the Minister of Municipal Affairs (Mr. Cummings) was in a few weeks ago where we were discussing whether or not the Government would hold the MPIC to appearing before the PUB. Because while it was very confusing, because while it was stated during and before the election that the MPIC would definitely be required to go before the PUB, then the story was changed, the position was

changed. That is surely there are problems of timing, that rate making has to be done at a certain time of the year. Surely it is not possible to do this before a PUB hearing and, therefore, it would have to be after the fact and some kind of a review and approval.

I understand and appreciate the dilemma that the Minister was in, and it does cause a dilemma in that sense, because you want to ensure that corporation is being operated well and they have to have time, they have to have information in order to set the rates. Judge Kopstein referred to that as well.

It is so easy to go to the extreme and say, everybody has to go before the PUB whether we like it or not, whether it interferes with its operation or not, whether it is good, bad or indifferent, we are going to go before the PUB. But there are some problems. I am willing to recognize that and I recognize the quandary that the Minister was in at that time. I think he reflected the bureaucracy, the senior management in MPIC indicated to him the difficulties that were being posed and Judge Kopstein recognized these.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I want to talk then generally how important it is for Governments to maintain adequate control over Crown corporations in the public interest. I would say that no Government, no Party in power wants to maintain control of a Crown corporation for any interest other than the public. What are we in politics for? What are we in Government for? I am convinced that the present Ministers want to run the Crown corporations in the better interests of the public as we did, as I did when I was a Minister. What was I there for? I was there to serve the public and do my very best, not perfect, we all make mistakes, but to do my very best to make a contribution.

* (1640)

I think, however, the problems that we have had historically with the Crown corporations lie with insufficient control by Ministers, insufficient Government control. I think it is vital for Ministers to know what major policy changes may be in the works within a corporation, what is being planned, what big expenditures they may be undertaking? What are the major problems? While that can be communicated on an informal basis, it is still not good enough. It is very important for a Minister, who is responsible and who is accountable to the public, to have as much information and knowledge as possible.

In fact, there is even a case to be made for Ministers to have key staff, a key advisor who works full time advising the Minister on that Crown. For instance, the key advisor on Autopac to that Minister, key advisor on Hydro to that Minister, key advisor on MTS to that particular Minister, who can be his eyes and ears for the various problems because problems do come up. Even though you have appointed the board, even though your Government has appointed the board and maybe they are working their heads off and they are trying to do their best, nevertheless, when something goes wrong, the can hangs around the Minister's neck. That is where the buck stops. That is where the can hangs, not on the board, not even on the chair of the board

at times. It is essentially the buck stops with the Minister or the buck stops with the Government and that is where the can hangs.

So I say, it is critical that Governments do have this satisfactory control over the Crowns. This is one attempt to do it. I suggested at the beginning that it is a watered-down version of what we had proposed. It is not as good as what we proposed. There is the wire crossing that is going to occur when you have a council made up of well-meaning citizens. They may be good managers and experienced, but they are there to control these Crowns. Then you have got a Minister who has some responsibility. So where do the lines of responsibility go?

It is far better to have the Ministers on the board. Then you void some of that and you have better control. Because, as I say, the can is going to hang around your neck, and you should do everything possible to ensure that you have got that adequate control. I am assuming that control is in the public interests of Manitoba. I will give you that credit. You are going to do it for the interests of the people of Manitoba. That is what you are there for. That is what we are all here for.

I know it is so easy to talk about political interference. I would suggest if there is any interference it should be in the public interest, and generally, historically, it has been in the public interest. Again, I really think there is a major organizational problem in this Bill by not having the Ministers on that board.

By having outside citizenry, no matter how capable they are, are they going to be calling the shots as per Section 6(1) and 6(2) of the Act—you read it—what the council shall do? The Crown is going to report to this council now and bypass the Minister? Are they going to be dealing with this council? Is the council going to run the Crowns rather than the Minister responsible for Hydro or the Minister responsible for MTS? What is the line of communication, and how are you going to overcome this awkwardness?

One way to overcome it, as I said, is to make sure that the Ministers were directly involved and that they were on this board, this holding body, this council. I offer these suggestions and these comments. I have done it in a positive way. I have tried to be productive, and I think that I have tried to be fair. While you compliment us by passing some version of what we were going with, I think we can go a long way to strengthen this, and the public would be better served on that account. Thank you.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I rise to speak to Bill No. 37 at this time and would like to observe initially that this Bill, these amendments are largely the same as the ones that we drafted in the last Session, the main exception being that this Government has refused to force the Crowns to hold the public accountability sessions. We feel that is a very large error on their part and we hope to be able to convince them to change their minds at the committee stage. For anyone who thinks that by passing this Bill it will solve all of the problems with Crown corporations, I suppose that individual would be dreaming.

There will be lots of problems that will develop with Crown corporations. Of course, the fundamental problem, I suppose, that we wrestled with over the past year and future Governments will have to wrestle with in dealing with the messes that develop and are created under their own tenure, is the whole question of responsibility. It is true that the Cabinet Ministers and the Government are ultimately responsible for everything that happens in the Government and within the Crowns, but what is the best method for keeping on top of activities in these Crown corporations?

My colleague, the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) the other day in his speech talked about how a situation of trust develops between the Minister and the board. Ministers of the Crown are very busy people and they cannot run around second-guessing every decision of every board of directors that is within their ministry. That is not their job to be over at the Manitoba Telephone System running the Telephone System, nor is it their job to be running the MPIC on a daily basis, or any other such corporation. The question is how interventionist do you want the Government to be, and how much of a role should the Minister be taking in the activities of the Crown? That is a problem.

My colleague, the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) earlier today talked about some of the problems in the Crown corporations and who was responsible. I know that it is a problem that we have, trying to pin blame, because often problems that have developed in the Crown corporations have spanned two or more administrations.

It is fine for the Conservatives to say that while the NDP Government lost all its money in Saudi Arabia in MTX but, as my colleague pointed out, it did not start with the NDP Government in 1981. Within a month of taking office the NDP Government, I believe, signed the contracts, but these contracts were negotiated by the previous Conservative Government at the time. So, in fact, the responsibility is shared between these two Governments, but one would have to look back to the points that were put forward at the time in making that decision. I mean, at the time you had world oil prices at \$35, \$40 a barrel, and you had a situation where you would be, from a business point of view, probably foolish not to be involved in an economy like that.

I recall and most of you do here, as well, the Alberta economy in the late 1970s before the oil crash. You know, people were leaving this province and going to Alberta in droves to get jobs. People who were working out there were changing jobs every couple of months for higher pay. It was a booming, booming economy. If someone was selling products from Alberta and selling investments in Alberta, there were ready buyers for such investments. People would say well, the money is invested in Alberta property and that was sort of a sign of security and a sign that there was some sort of a guarantee of return and wealth. In fact, it did happen that there were great returns and great wealth to be made during that period in Alberta and the same is true of the oil economy in Saudi Arabia.

So at that time, it may very well be the case that given the conditions under which this decision to get involved in Saudi Arabia was made, that there was

some sense to it. The world economy changed. The price of oil plummeted to \$10 a barrel. Of course, that proposition then became uneconomical. So it was very easy for the Opposition critic at the time, the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), the person who knew what to look for, who had been the Minister when the initial contracts were signed to pounce upon the situation right at that time and make a lot of hay. Perhaps it was the Government's lack of luck that permitted him to do this and get away with it in the manner that he did in terms of the public perception of who was responsible for what.

* (1650)

My point is that if anybody was responsible, I believe that you have a shared responsibility there as between the Governments, but then you have to look at the people who put the proposition together and who were working in the Telephone System at the time. Once again, how can you expect the Minister of either the previous Conservative Government or the NDP Government for that matter to be following around second guessing every proposition that the Telephone System was engaged in at the time. It is unrealistic and unreasonable to think that would be the case.

So there will be all sorts of things oozing out and popping up during the tenure of the current Government. I am sure that Opposition Members will be trying to hold them accountable for all of these things and I am sure they will be sometimes wondering why they ever took the job and wondering how they could reasonably be held responsible for something that has happened on a very arm's length basis by people who are normally under their control. Do we expect them to be running around doing the job of everybody in their department, standing around second guessing each and every person? That is a problem. But I guess in our Parliamentary system, the Minister is to be held responsible even though sometimes it probably does not seem entirely fair.

Of course, I could also talk about the CFI. We have spent hours and hours and hours over the years talking about the CFI. Now I wish that the previous Member for Sturgeon Creek had been re-elected and was here because we could certainly use up an awful lot of time, certainly he could, providing a defence for the Conservative Government's role in CFI at the time. Once again, the NDP at the time was able to tar and feather the Conservatives for this mess in CFI where some \$80 million was lost or stolen. We do not know where the money is—Reiser and Kasser, I am sure, have a lot of it still—and adjusted for inflation. That as the rule of 72 would indicate that money would double every 7 or 8 years. So that would be a major \$300 million-plus fiasco right now that the previous Government was tarred and feathered with. Certainly it stuck to them a long time. Whether fairly or unfairly, that is just what happened. The same thing happened of course with the NDP on the MTX deal. I am just saying it is a shared responsibility that we have to deal with here.

Of course the other fundamental problem, I guess, is the difference between the private business and Crown corporations. The private insurance companies,

which I am somewhat familiar with, do not operate the same way as the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation. I mean, try if you will having a private insurance company appear before a legislative committee. It is a different situation. So you are bound to at any committee hearing when you have the management of the MPIC before you to come up with all sorts of—or blow a whole lot of little things into major issues, that perhaps other companies are doing more or less the same sort of way but, of course, they are not subject to any of the public scrutiny. The fact of the matter is that a company like the MPIC has to be purer than any other company in the same business that it operates in. I mean, a private company does not have to appear before any public forum. They can spend whatever money they wish subject to, I suppose, their shareholders getting up in arms with them, but they can spend as much as they want in terms of perks and salaries and so on. Plus their investments are not really open to any kind of public scrutiny.

The MPIC publishes a list of its investments in its book, its annual report, and it is true—the Member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) says that everyone publishes an annual statement, and they do, but they do not give the same breakdown in terms of their investments as the MPIC does. They just maybe have one line in their book for investments, whereas the Public Insurance Corporation has two or three pages listing their \$187 million in investments. I would also suggest to you that the investments of those private firms are certainly not schools, they are not municipalities such as the MPIC invests in, but they would be things like socially useful projects like extra Burger Kings and things like that.

So it is true, the private insurance company or any private investment firm is going to look at where it can get the best return and, if it can get a higher return out of lending money to a Burger King establishment or any kind of investment, then they will do it, whereas the MPIC keeps its money by and large in Manitoba and invests that money in rural municipalities, towns and hospitals and so on, which the private companies do not.

I suppose if the Conservative Government does ever get around to privatizing, or attempting to privatize, the insurance corporation, it is going to come head to head with that problem. I think that is what held Sterling Lyon off the last time in 1980, was in fact the whole question of the investments. Because fundamentally, to dismantle that corporation would mean the Government divesting itself of \$187 million; \$187 million, by the way, that it would not have had had that corporation not been set up in the first place. In other words, if private insurance had prevailed and had stayed operating, had the Government insurance not been around, that \$187 million would be in the coffers of private insurance companies in other provinces and I submit to you would not be here for Manitoba's purposes. I think the previous Conservative Government of Sterling Lyon recognized that in the end. They recognized that and that is why they pulled off.

They said we may not be socialists but we are not stupid either. This corporation is providing this now \$187 million—it was a lot less than \$187 million in

those days, but providing all of this money and we cannot afford to take this money. If we take this money out of the schools, we take it out of the hospitals and the municipalities in rural Manitoba that we are going to have to replace that and that will add to our deficit, in other ways encumber the Government in such a way that we do not want to do that.

So they backed off I believe for that purpose, even though they were fundamentally committed to that right-wing principle of privatization and the Government that governs best, governs least. Mind you, I think they are learning a little more during this minority Government situation. They have had to work a lot harder than they ever did before and they have had to be a little more moderate which really makes me wonder why they are introducing some of the Bills that they have been introducing. But that is digressing a bit to another subject for another time.

The other reason, I believe, that the advantage that the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation has provided, at least certainly in the—

* (1700)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m., it is now time for Private Members' Hour. When next this Bill is before the House for debate, the Honourable Member will have 24 minutes remaining. The Bill will remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), as leave was granted earlier.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

RES. NO. 9—CHILD CARE SYSTEM

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed resolution of the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcicia-Leis), Resolution No. 9, Child Care System.

On September 13, the Speaker took under advisement the amendment proposed by the Honourable Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) to the proposed resolution of the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcicia-Leis). The advice offered by the Honourable Members has been considered and the proposed amendment has been carefully reviewed.

Speaker Walding pointed out in 1983 that "it is clear that considerable latitude has been permitted in the content of amendments during Private Members' Hour." Additionally, the authorities remind us that an amendment may delete certain words to substitute others, and may suggest an alternative to the proposition put forward in the original motion. Both the original motion and the amendment, which puts forward an alternative proposal, deal with Child Care. I am therefore satisfied that the amendment is in order.

It has been moved by the Honourable Minister for Community Services (Mrs. Oleson), seconded by the Honourable Member for Kirkfield Park (Mrs. Hammond), that the resolution be amended by deleting all the words

after the word "had" in the first paragraph and substituting the following THEREFORE:

Had a system of day care which was inflexible and was not meeting the needs of all Manitobans; and

WHEREAS Manitoba had an inequitable system and a structure of subsidies that did not respect the right of parents to choose the most appropriate child care; and

WHEREAS Manitoba taxpayers want a sensible balance of workplace, private and public day care; and

WHEREAS the federal Government has committed \$6.4 billion to double the number of child care spaces in Canada; and

WHEREAS under the federal program, there is flexibility to provide parents with a range of child care alternatives; and

WHEREAS this Government has committed to quality child care that is affordable and accessible.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this Government work in consultation with child care providers, parent users and the federal Government to provide a quality day care system that is affordable and accessible and meets the needs of all Manitobans in urban, rural and remote areas.

Ms. Judy Wasylcicia-Leis (St. Johns): With all due respect, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I challenge your ruling.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour, please say yea; all those opposed, please say nay.

In my opinion, the yeas have it and the ruling of the Chair is sustained.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): May we have a copy of the amended resolution?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Would the Honourable Members prefer to wait a few minutes until we have a copy of the amended resolution before continuing debate in this matter?

Order, please. I believe that a copy of the amendment as proposed by the Honourable Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) has been distributed.

Ms. Gray: It is with, I am not sure the word is pleasure, but it is with necessity that certainly I stand here today to speak to this amended resolution.

Before I get into the meat of this amended resolution, I do want to say that in the area of child care, in general, I think it is very important that all Members in this House, that we recognize what a long way our society

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has come in terms of dealing with the child care system. We know very, very traditionally that in fact with our nuclear families in Canada, that years ago the mother was deemed to be the main provider of care for children and that paid help or care of children by someone other than the mother was reserved for wealthy people who could afford to hire nannies. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am having difficulty speaking with all the noise in the background.

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

* (1710)

Ms. Gray: More than ever before, we are aware of the need for a quality child care program. That need is ever present today and certainly will be in the future.

Families need access to affordable, flexible and quality day care. Those words certainly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have been used oftentimes in this House, but I do wonder if the Government side of the House really has an appreciation and an understanding of exactly what affordable, flexible and quality day care does mean. We know that the child care system must adapt to the needs of the population, and this particular amended resolution talks about, from the Government side of the House, a commitment to the child care system.

Before I talk about a commitment to the child care system, I think it is important to indicate that we as Liberals on this side of the House, we do not have difficulty in complimenting a former administration where we feel that they have developed programs which are worthy of compliment. I think certainly in the case of the child care system in Manitoba, we certainly do recognize and have stated publicly in this House that they should be given credit for developing a child care system which is certainly considered to be one of the better systems in Canada.

The regulations and the standards that have been developed and enforced under the direction of the day care office with the previous administration are a very good example of child care, of what it should be in Canada and is in Manitoba. We believe, on this side of the House, that these standards and regulations must be maintained at a minimum and must be improved where necessary so that we can create the highest quality of day care in this province.

What this resolution speaks to, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the commitment of the Tory Government to child care. I suppose when I think of commitment and I think of the comments made by the Government side of the House, I must go back to my earlier comments again as I stand up here, and that relates to does the Government really understand what child care is and what it means to our society today. We hear in the Estimates process that we are now going through in Health, we hear a Minister of Health who constantly refers to the "mother" and child, who constantly refers to "her" child, as if mothers are the only parents and there are not fathers. I am sure that Members on this side of the House would resent that implication, that fathers are not to be considered as worthy as mothers,

and that in an appropriate child care system, an appropriate social service system, or an appropriate health care system we are dealing with families, not just mothers or not just fathers.

I think those words from the Government side of the House chooses really gives us an indication of the real lack of knowledge and insight into what programs should be in this province in regard to making programs better for families. We must get away from traditional stereotyping. It is time to recognize that we have two-parent families out there who are working who need child care. It is time to recognize there are a lot of single parents who do very well, single parents who are fathers, single parents who are mothers, single parents who are professionals, lawyers, doctors, whatever their profession is, who also require a quality child care service. I think that is the first step that this Government must take in order to recognize what it means to develop a flexible, affordable and a quality child care system.

What this resolution fails to address, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the area of day care in rural areas. I noted with interest the other day when the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), in response to a question in the House, spoke about his Department of Agriculture, who was going to be looking at the area of rural day care issues. I commend the Minister of Agriculture for his comments and for that initiative, but I do have grave concerns because our own Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson), who is responsible for the child care and the day care system, has failed to really have an appreciation and an understanding of some of those specific day care issues.

We spent many, many hours in Estimates in Community Services trying to get information from the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) about her plans and about what she planned to do about the day care system. Unfortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it was somewhat of a fruitless effort. We were unable to determine from this Minister a sense of what the policy direction was of her Government, what she actually meant by the new spaces that she planned to implement for day care.

The Minister talks about a task force on day care, a task force which is going to be reviewing a number of important policy areas, a number of directions that day care should go, yet this Government already has gone ahead and made the decision what the direction should be. When we asked this Minister, what if the task force comes up with some suggestions and recommendations that are totally against the already direction as stated by this Government and this Minister, then what happens? We did not receive an answer. We were told that was a premature comment and a premature statement, but it could very well occur that the information that the task force does come up with may well vary in some cases with the direction, as vague as it is, that this Government has taken.

We are concerned about a child care system and what really concerns me in this resolution, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is again the implication that this Government has some sense of commitment to the child care system. I have a lot of difficulty with the fact that they feel that

they have a commitment, because I am not really sure if this Government can translate commitment into implementation and into action.

We have seen it in other instances in the area of Community Services and I think it is as evident in the day care system as well. We have a Minister who has decided there were be two advisory groups who will work with the main task force, and what is the role of these advisory groups? We do not know. That would be up to the task force to decide.

Then why would a Government come up with an idea of four words, task force and advisory group, and have no concept or idea of what those advisory groups are going to do, other than to -(Interjection)- The Minister for Community Services (Mrs. Oleson), who loves to use the same words over and over again, talks about that the advisory groups are going to advise. Unfortunately, the Minister of Community Services cannot get beyond using single words because she cannot explain what "advisory" means.

We asked the questions: Do they have the power to veto the recommendations of the main task force? What type of influence do they have? Are they going to be part of subcommittees? Are they going to be specifically working on specific areas as identified by the main task force? There are no answers to these questions. To simply say that a group advises is totally unacceptable from a Minister of this Government who cannot explain in detail what exactly "advisory" means.

* (1720)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we do have concerns. We also have concerns that as well as not addressing the rural issues of day care that when we are talking about affordable, a quality child care system, we must not forget the child care workers who are working in the day cares. Again, we have talked to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), we have talked to the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson). We have said do you realize that we are not training enough people at the community colleges in the child care worker? Do you realize there are specific and special circumstances for rural day care workers, who are not teachers who live out in rural Manitoba who receive \$50,000 a year and they can hop in their car at 3:30 and go to Brandon for a training course. There are child care workers who often may be sole support parents who receive a very low salary and who work till past six o'clock at night, so they do not have those opportunities available to them to get into their car and go to Brandon to the community college for night courses. There has to be some consideration.

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education):
Teachers only work till 3:30 p.m.

Ms. Gray: The Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) said teachers only work till 3:30. I know a number of teachers from rural Manitoba. I am not saying they do not work. I am saying they are out of school and they have the opportunity to go to Brandon in rural Manitoba and take the necessary courses and take the education, and child care workers do not have that opportunity.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Gray: Mr. Deputy Speaker, what the Government fails to recognize is that there are special needs of rural and northern child care workers, and there are special needs of day care workers, and of day cares in rural Manitoba and to date that issue and that particular problem has not been addressed. We have expressed concerns in this House. The Minister has said that for the commercial day care centres or the private day care centres that the subsidy will travel with the child. This is now left wide open.

We are concerned that there will be an erosion of the non-profit day care system, that there may be a move towards more minimum standards. We are concerned, Mr. Deputy Speaker, when we ask the question, how is there going to be monitoring in the private day cares? What kind of monitoring will be done to ensure that the dollars that are flowing into those centres are in fact used appropriately and are used for the care of that child and not for profit? Those questions have not been answered to our satisfaction.

We are concerned at what appears to be a policy direction that really has been developed in a vacuum. We are concerned of a Minister and a Government who talk about commitment to a child care system, but yet never bothers to consult with any of the people who are in the child care system, does not bother to consult with the Family Day Care Association, does not bother to consult with the Manitoba Child Care Association. It takes questioning from us in the House and in Estimates to get assurances that the Manitoba Child Care Association and the Day Care Office will continue to have regular dialogue and regular meetings. Certainly this is our role as Opposition, but it is unfortunate that we have to continually ask those questions in order to get some response from the Ministers.

The one area that has not been mentioned by this Government is the whole area of family day care. There are a lot of individuals, fathers and mothers, parents in the community, who would like to have their child in family day care settings as opposed to in the larger day cares. What opportunities or special creative measures have been created by this Government to actually assist family day cares and actually to increase the family day cares in our province and in our society?

I have had many, many comments from parents in the community who say I need day care, but I would really like that day care in a small family setting. We have not seen the family day care numbers increase very much over the last few years. I think that we certainly need to look at that area, family day care, and see what can we be doing, what can the Government be doing, to ensure that there are some family day cares that will stay open, will feel that they are viable and in fact that there will be increases in the family day care system.

Again, as a final comment, our main concern, we certainly agree with the idea of a flexible, affordable, a quality day care system, but we have very grave concerns as to the ability of this Government to follow through on that promise.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I can indicate that I am—I suppose I am not surprised at the amendment. I have had the privilege the last number of years of introducing a resolution in this Legislature on child care, pointing to the need for a comprehensive national strategy, and I have heard the comments from the Conservatives in the past. I know their vision of a child care strategy for Canada is not one that I certainly share. It is not one that child care groups share. I would suggest it is not one that many people in this country share.

So I am not surprised with this resolution and I hope that we can debate the amendment, the Conservative amendment, and I hope we can defeat it because, in my opinion, it is not in keeping with the intent, the spirit of the original resolution whatsoever. In fact, I would commend the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcias-Leis) for putting forward I think what has to be said and that is that we do not have a comprehensive child care strategy in this country.

What I think we have, what was introduced by the federal Conservatives was part of their election package. I would note that it has not been part of the election package they particularly highlighted and with good reason, because it has been condemned outright by every child care group, every lobby group, every women's group that has made representations. It has been condemned out of hand.

In fact one of the most interesting exchanges from the debate that took place between the three federal Leaders, I thought, was when Prime Minister Mulroney said well, yes, but I consulted with the women in my Cabinet and referenced a couple of the Cabinet Ministers. I think it was perhaps interesting, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that two of the women he referenced in the Cabinet, his supposed experts on child care, do not have children themselves. Now, I am not saying they do not have the right to express their views because it is certainly something that affects all of us, but since when is the Prime Minister, since when is the Conservative Party, taking its direction from people who have so little background in the area of child care.

Well, I guess they had taken that direction whether we like it or not and they have come up with a child care strategy which is totally and absolutely inadequate. I know it was designed, not to address the needs in this country, that is clear. It was designed to be packaged and in fact some of the terms that are in this amendment come right out of Tory election brochures, their marketing strategy. As I said though, even in this election campaign, we have seen that even the Conservatives are not trying to sell their child care policies. They are not trying to sell their child care policies, because they will not sell to the people of this country. People can see through what is a rather flimsy attempt on the part of the Conservatives to address a very real issue.

We certainly know, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that it is an issue that is having greater and greater impact on the public as a whole. In fact, I feel that family issues generally, and family issues in a less traditional sense than people might normally think, family issues that include very specifically this kind of issues, are increasingly of concern.

* (1730)

I mean when the Republicans in the United States talk about a child care policy, I think we know that in that country that people are concerned about child care. It is the same thing with the Conservatives. When the Conservatives attempt to come up with a child care strategy, however faulty it is, and faulty it most definitely is, we know that they are finding the people are out there are beginning to raise this as a concern. I am sure it is similar to the attempts to all of a sudden jump on the right side of environmental issues. I am sure that Decima Research has polls somewhere that show that people are concerned about child care and that is why we have this particular policy.

But policies should not be based on trying just strictly to appeal during an election based on the findings of Decima or any other polling firm. They should be based on the fundamental principles that you want in a system. I think that is what is so fundamentally wrong with the Conservatives' national policy on child care, and that is their lack of principles. It is a grab bag of various different items which I think were well-documented by the Member for St. Johns in her speech. She pointed out that one, for example, of the worst features of the Conservatives child care strategy was the use of tax dollars for tax breaks, many of which will go to middle- and upper-income Canadians who do not need the break, when they should be going in fact to those middle- and lower-income Canadians who do need the direct child care spaces.

I note that has been one of the most serious criticisms that has been put forth by child care groups in this country. It is not only that, Mr. Deputy Speaker. I think the best example, if you want to look at child care is to compare Alberta and Manitoba, because here I think you can see the difference in the underlying philosophies and the underlying principles of child care.

Alberta, of course, has had a Conservative Government for nearly 20 years. It has one of the highest levels of funding for child care in the country because of the historic oil revenues that they have in that province. Manitoba has either led or been second in terms of funding in terms of child care. Despite the fact our financial resources have obviously been less than in Alberta, if you look at any analysis between Alberta and between Manitoba, absolutely everybody agrees that the Manitoba system has been far superior. It is not because of the differences in funding. It is because in the Manitoba system, particularly following the introduction of the child care regulations approximately five years ago by the previous New Democratic Party Government, we have emphasized the standard of child care in this province as compared to Alberta where they do have similar levels of funding but where there are not the controls, there are not the standards. In fact, there are many horror stories that have been evident in that province of how unlicensed child care facilities and in some cases even licensed child care facilities have provided very inferior care to the children in that province.

One of the principles on which we based our approach to child care, going back to the Schreyer period when it was pioneered in this province and under the previous

New Democratic Party Government when their major priority was given to child care, was the concept of providing public funding to public facilities rather than private facilities; in other words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of not using taxpayers' dollars to support profit-making child care centres. I think that is important because I think, as a fundamental principle of the child care system, we should not be supporting the kind of franchise operations that are springing up all over the United States, that are in place in many Canadian jurisdictions, including here in this province, that we should be giving money to the many community and cooperative ventures where parents themselves have gotten together or other social and community organizations have gotten together and promoted child care.

I do not believe that we should be having people making profit from the care of children. I do not believe that has any place in the public school system. I do not believe it has any place in the child care system. That, once again, has been one of the fundamental differences between this province and Alberta where they have allowed funding for private day care centres. Despite the fact they have high levels of support for child care, the result has not been the kind of care that the parents in Manitoba have come to expect for their children.

So these are the kinds of underlying principles we should be looking for. There is no reference in this amendment to any of those basic principles. As I said, there is a rework of some of the same types of rhetoric that we have heard. Some of it I can support. Certainly, we need workplace day cares. I said I do not believe we need private day care. We certainly do not need public support for private day care in this province.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it just talks in terms of the buzzwords that the federal Conservatives have been trying to sell to Canadians unsuccessfully. What I would like to ask the Conservative Government to do, and particularly their Minister responsible for Community Services or Minister responsible for the Status of Women, is to sit down with the child care advocacy groups, the national groups and the provincial groups, as did the previous New Democratic Party Ministers, and talk to them about what they feel about the national strategy. As I said, they have condemned it out of hand as being poorly focused, as being a waste of money in a number of areas, as being totally insignificant and inadequate in terms of the creation of the number of spaces that are in need in this country.

I think that the result of what is happening, because the Conservative Government has turned a blind eye to the points that have been raised by child care advocacy groups and women's groups, what we are going to see is a wasted opportunity unless we get a new national child care approach. I believe there is every opportunity for that because we are likely to end up with a change of Government, perhaps a minority Government situation in Ottawa.

I hope that the Liberals, if the Conservatives will not listen, will at least listen to the message that has been loud and clear from the New Democratic Party in Ottawa in terms of the need for a complete scrapping of the

existing child care package that was brought in by the Conservatives and the bringing in of one which will live up to the needs in this country.

Let us not forget what we are talking about. I know the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) touched on I think what are the basic points. That is, we are talking about the family, we are talking about the changing family, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the increased pressure for and the desire, on the part of both parents and two-parent families, to be working in the workplace. The provision of adequate child care is fundamental to that. It also applies, I know, in the case of parents wishing to further their education.

I know one of the key elements in a number of the programs that have been put in place in northern Manitoba has been the provision of child care support. It is also key in the case of single parents because, in the case of single parents, it often can make the difference between being able to work or having to be on social assistance. Many single parents do want that opportunity to be able to participate in the work force, and yet at the same time have adequate care for their children.

As I said, I am hopeful that something will happen following the next federal election. I think it is very clear that we are headed for a minority Government. I think the NDP in the position it will hold, certainly the bare minimum being in holding the balance of power, I think we will see the opportunity to see pressure to avoid the kind of problems that we are having with the Conservative child care policy.

In that spirit, I am quite hopeful in this Legislature that the two Opposition Parties can cooperate on this amendment and defeat this amendment, and support the very excellent initial resolution that was put forward by the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcica-Leis). I know it is in keeping with some of the previous resolutions I had the honour to introduce myself. The bottom line has to be to defeat this kind of approach put forward by the Conservatives, and move forward with a genuine, comprehensive child care strategy in this country that meets the needs of the changing family, and particularly of women in this country, and really deals with the underlying principles for the need for a publicly funded, comprehensive child care package in this country, something that we are not getting from the Conservatives. Thank you.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): It is indeed a privilege to speak to the amendment proposed. I think this Government has a commitment to day care, a reasonable commitment, and we are committed to quality child care that is affordable and accessible. When we look at the figures for our 1988 budget, we are going to spend \$36 million on child care. This is a 23 percent increase. This means that our Government is committed to child care and also to increase the day care spaces.

We are also committed to providing options to the different segments of the economy, such as the urban areas, the rural areas and that also includes the farm wives. I think it is important that we can provide a

reasonable and affordable child care to these three major segments of our economy.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

* (1740)

Mr. Helwer: I think if we look at an editorial that was in the Winnipeg Free Press here a while ago, I think the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) last year was talking about having a similar approach to child care as the Conservatives, as the Opposition at that time, and this was both where a private and a public day care could work together and serve the community well in any sense of the word.

I just want to give you an example, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of what can happen when a community works together. Last Saturday at Stonewall, I had the privilege of turning the sod for a new child care centre. This is a 3,400 square foot child care building that is going to be used strictly for child care.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I would ask all Honourable Members to extend the Member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) the courtesy of listening to his remarks.

Mr. Helwer: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Like I was saying, I had the pleasure of attending the sod turning in Stonewall last Saturday for a new building that is going to house the child care that is being built by a public group there at Stonewall. This is a group that is made up of community citizens whereby this will be funded with a Community Places grant of \$56,000 plus the federal Government, under Section 38, has approved a \$104,00 grant, for a total of \$160,000, plus they have \$60,000 of their own money.

They will be building this 3,400 square foot building for child care and equipping it and they will have no mortgage. This will be built with the funds that they have raised in the community plus the Government grants that they have received from the province and from the feds. So this is how a community can work together to supply the necessary child care for a community such as Stonewall.

There are also a number of private day cares in the community or in the Interlake area or in my constituency that provide excellent care. As an example, in the Teulon area we have a public day care system that is run by the community. This is run mostly by volunteer help and with the help of mothers, and there are also a number of private homes that offer services that are necessary to supply all the needs of the community.

I think with the extra load of child care being put on our society with the working mothers or single-parent families where they are working or, in some cases, single-parent families where they have to go back to school so they can better their education whereby they can provide a better standard of living for their families, I think these are important, this is important to all communities, in any segment.

Also, just today as a matter of fact, I received an invitation from the Kinsmen Club of Gimli whereby some

years ago they built a building for the Child Care Centre and a week from this coming Saturday they are going to have a mortgage-burning ceremony whereby this building will be completely paid for by the Kinsmen and it will be turned over to the community and strictly used for child care there. That is another example of how a community working together can serve the needs of the child care.

Certainly I am sure there are many examples throughout Manitoba that we can talk about whereby both public and private day care spaces are required for a community and whereby they are provided, sometimes by a service club or by a service club helps out or an organization such as in Stonewall here where it is strictly a public incorporated or non-profit incorporated company.

When we talk about a day care system such as where the private and the public can work together, this Government has a commitment to the people of Manitoba to provide such services. Again, I think the amendment certainly speaks for itself when we say we want to provide—the Government works in consultation with child care providers and parents and users and the federal Government provide a quality day care system that is affordable and accessible and meets the needs of all Manitobans and urban, rural and remote communities. Certainly when we look around the communities such as in the rural areas, we can see that there are many areas where this is needed.

Another segment of the child care system that is required and I believe we are committed to is where private industry has a child care or a day care, whatever, right on the premises, such as I believe some of the large clothing manufacturers here in the City of Winnipeg whereby they employ large numbers of women. I think it is certainly of benefit to provide private day care on a basis such as that to the workers, or make it available to the workers there. These are things that I think we have to look at and certainly make available to the communities.

One of the things I noticed is that the Honourable Member from the Liberals on the other side talked about the standards and the salaries. Certainly, the salaries maybe are not the highest for the people who work in this system, but I believe the study that we have going on now, looking at the day care system, I think this will provide us some answers as to what can be done. I do not think we can really pay day care workers the same as our school teachers maybe, as was suggested by the Honourable Member from the other side, but certainly I believe they deserve to be paid a decent salary whereby they can enjoy a standard of living that is equitable.

As far as the standards are concerned, I think we have to have some standards to go by and these things are being studied. Certainly, we all want to send our children to the best possible child care centres whereby the standards are the highest. We have a standard here in Manitoba that certainly is excellent, I think, and certainly provides proper day care for all of us or for wherever it is necessary.

I think, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a commitment and we agree with the amendment. I think it is excellent.

We have a commitment to the people of Manitoba regarding child care and we certainly support the amendment. Thank you.

* (1750)

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am amazed that you would accept an amendment that virtually negates the original resolution but, notwithstanding that, I wish to place some remarks on the record dealing with child care and the whole concept that is being espoused by the policy changes made by the present administration.

Listening to the Member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), representing a rural part of the province, I as well wonder how he rationalizes this change in policy that it will somehow benefit his constituents. I believe that rural Manitobans, over the history of my involvement in public office and long before me, have really delivered public health care and other services to our citizens in rural Manitoba in a very effective and cost-efficient way. We have basically used the community-based model or the cooperative-based model.

Look around rural Manitoba, the hospitals, the personal care homes, and even the structure that we use in our elderly persons' housing, the boards of directors on all those are citizens who sit on them in a non-profit way. They sit there as their responsibility to the community that they live in. The boards of directors on the community hospitals, they are all representatives either put on by municipal councils, elected by the citizens, or in the case of elderly persons' housing, appointed by the Minister, by the tenants in those units, and the same in day care.

I think rural Manitobans, and I speak in the general sense, want a service for their children that is there, that is available. They have historically rejected the question of profit in the care of their children or their elderly or their sick.

Just from a purely economic point of view, we are spending—what are we spending?—\$30 million on day care, in that neighbourhood, in the neighbourhood of \$30 million. Even if you said that 10 percent of that money, say \$3 million, went to profit day care, and you look at \$3 million and you say the rate of return of, let us say, 5 percent on \$3 million, there is \$150,000 annually on an ongoing basis that could be used to fund how many rural day care centres in the constituency of Gimli or my constituency of Interlake? We have communities like Hodgson, Manitoba who are on the waiting list and I am hopeful that they will be approved. That kind of money is not being used and will not be used to provide services for families who require day care.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I hear the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) speaking about productivity and the like. I hope that he is not reflecting on the integrity of those who are involved in child care in this province.-(Interjection)- He says no. He may want to rise and explain himself to what he is speaking about because clearly that would be the inference that one can take from his comments from his seat.

I believe those who are involved in child care are not adequately paid, and those of us who are have been in office share some of that responsibility that we did not do enough and I, for one, who was a Member of Government, that we should have done more. But we did have and continue to have the best regulation and the best system in the country.

By moving in the way that they are moving in terms of changing the policy and these amendments to pat their own colleagues, their federal colleagues, on the head that they are doing a good job really is probably the height of political posturing that one can have in terms of a Private Member's Resolution in this House. Here we have the provincial Tories saying, oh yes, it is okay to have a national program that dilutes standards, that will not provide the kind of spaces for the dollars involved and the dollars put on the table to provide child care will lessen the availability of spaces.-(Interjection)- The Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Ernst) just said, "Prove it."

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I gave him the example, just the minute example of the Manitoba experience. A 3 percent or 4 percent rate of return in investment can provide between \$100,000 and \$200,000 a year on the current budget for spaces. Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member shakes his head. Is he now suggesting that those in the business for profit are going to be there for the good of society, that they do not expect to make a dollar on the care of the children? Is that what he is suggesting? Surely, that is not the case.

He should read a few of the reports both in Canada and the United States where nursing homes are in existence for profit and the type of care or the lack of care provided for the elderly and infirm in those homes and the shoddy kind of treatment that has been provided where the owners cut corners because there has to be a rate of return for those investors. It is the public who ultimately pay.

So if the public is ultimately going to pay, why should we not attempt to use the most efficient system possible, and that is the community-based system where the volunteers, those thousands of volunteers who are prepared to spend more hours in the community kind of day cares whether it be through our schools, in our communities, who will devote the time because they believe that if they are involved in the care of their children as boards of directors in a cooperative-based system or a community-based system, that is what one could say is the most parental hands-on system.

Hon. Harold Neufeld (Minister responsible for Seniors): So why fear competition?

Mr. Uruski: The Minister of Seniors (Mr. Neufeld), he says why should they fear competition? It is not a matter of fearing any competition. It is a matter of philosophical approach to the care of the children, because they know -(Interjection)- It is. If it is my neighbours and my friends from the community who look after our kids, we are part of the same family. It is not a matter of someone outside the community saying we will provide the service.

It is really not a matter of options that the Tories have provided. No, it is not. It is really the philosophical

approach of the Conservative Party, whether it be in health care, whether it be in personal care, whether it be in child care, that it is okay to make a profit in that area. That is where we stand apart as a Party that philosophically we oppose making profit from our children. We do oppose that philosophical approach. We have the best kind of system in Manitoba and predominantly, for sure very clearly in rural Manitoba, the community-based system is the best system available and certainly these amendments that are being proposed and the system in terms of policy change

will produce less spaces and really ultimately less care for our children.

* (1800)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. When next this matter is before the House for debate, the Honourable Member (Mr. Uruski) will have four minutes remaining.

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