

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 14, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Gerrie Hammond (Minister of Labour): I would like to table the Supplementary Information for Legislative Review, 1989-1990, for the Manitoba Status of Women and the Manitoba Civil Service Commission.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct Honourable Members' attention to the loge to my left where we have with us this afternoon Mr. Andy Anstett, the former Member for Springfield.

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

Also with us this afternoon from the Transcona Collegiate Institute, we have forty-five Grade 9 students. They are under the direction of Mr. Heindle. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Quarterly Financial Report Health Care Underspending

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the quarterly report, which was tabled yesterday by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), he talks about the major expenditure variance related to cost decreases to be found in a hospital and the personal care home and medical program funded through the Manitoba Health Services Commission. Yet, Mr. Speaker, when you examine the actual figures by department, Health has underspent some \$14.5 million.

Will the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) please tell us how there can be additional costs in hospital, personal care home and medical programs, and yet an underexpenditure of \$14.5 million? Where is the cost cutting being found in the Health Department budget?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, if my honourable friend, the Liberal Leader of the Opposition, might analyze quarterly reports, she will find that a fairly consistent trend in a number of departments inclusive of Health is that they are not spending as projected according to the quarterly averages and are often below.

Mr. Speaker, I want to tell my honourable friend that I will not follow the advice that she gave to the people

of Minnedosa to reduce health care costs on the backs of those individuals who are in personal care homes, wherein she said 40 percent of them should be turned out on the streets.

* (1335)

An Honourable Member: Shame on you!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition, on a point of order.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, that is a deliberate misquote providing misinformation into this House. This Minister knows full well that his own Government department estimates that 40 percent of the people in nursing homes, if they had proper community care, would not have to be there.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On the point of order raised by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition, it is a dispute over the facts. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I am only—and I am prepared to quote to the House what my honourable—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Chair has said there was not a point of order.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition, put her question, please?

Mrs. Carstairs: The answer that the Minister gave in terms of underexpenditure was exactly the same answer he gave last year when at the end of the year he had underspent the health care budget by \$19 million. Will he inform the citizens who are now waiting for elective surgery, who are now waiting in halls of emergency rooms, when he will spend the dollars necessary in order to provide appropriate care for them?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of satisfaction that I will answer this question again to my honourable friend. During the 49 hours of Estimate debate not one single question was posed on the issue of the underspending of health care last year.

My honourable friend knows the answers are good for the health care system. Namely, last year, Mr. Speaker, not only did the hospitals that she has just referred to spend their budgets, but they spent \$10 million more than what was in the defeated budget in the hospital system. Those hospital budgets were

completely spent, and spent to the benefit of Manitobans last year, but she did not ask that question in Estimates.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Health Care Facilities Employee Safety

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this caucus has consistently raised the inequities in the health care system that is attempting to be delivered by this Minister. Some hospitals have cut back on security, thereby placing hospital employees in danger. Now we learn from the MONA report that some hospitals are asking nursing staff to use defective gloves, therefore exposing themselves to disease because of cutbacks to hospitals.

Can the Minister explain why hospitals are not provided with adequate revenues to ensure that nursing staff and other staff are protected?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I want to deal seriously with this issue with my honourable friend, even though she did not take the time with health as the major issue of the Liberal Party, the Government-in-waiting, you might be reminded of, Mr. Speaker, when the Leader of the Opposition never took the time even to show up once in Health Estimates to pose these questions, not once.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me tell my honourable friend that in the hospital system there was an increase last year of over 8 percent to their budget. In addition to that there was \$10 million more placed in the hospital budgets of the Province of Manitoba than was in the defeated budget that led to the election of this Government.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, unlike the Premier I have confidence in my critics.- (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, the Premier knows full well that the Leader of the Opposition has critics, and the Premier has Ministers that he bounces up and down to answer questions for.

Mr. Speaker: -(interjection)- The Honourable Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Nursing Profession Immunization Costs

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Can the Minister responsible for Health explain to this House why nurses in this province are being discouraged from proper and appropriate immunization from disease ostensibly because the hospitals do not want to bear the cost?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I do agree that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province has no confidence in the Liberal critics, as stated by my honourable friend the Liberal Leader (Mrs. Carstairs), but then neither does the Liberal Leader when she referred to her caucus as an adult day care centre prior to the start of this Session. She demonstrated the confidence she has in all her Members when she called them an adult day care centre.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I should remind the Honourable Minister that he should not provoke debate and should deal with the matter raised. The Honourable Minister of Health.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I absolutely concur that I should not provoke debate by repeating the words of the Liberal Leader (Mrs. Carstairs) where she called her caucus like looking after an adult day care centre.

Mr. Speaker: Is that an answer? The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

Health Advisory Network MONA Membership

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the brief presented by MONA lists a litany of examples where nurses believe they are not given input into the delivery of the health care system. The Minister has excluded MONA from the Health Advisory Network. Will he now agree to placing MONA officially on the Health Advisory Network so their views, problems and concerns can be appropriately aired?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Let not my honourable friend the Liberal Leader attempt to provide incorrect information. There are nurses that are serving on the Health Advisory Network and on many of the subcommittees where nursing professional input is a necessity to the decision-making there.

Let me assure my honourable friend and the nurses of Manitoba that this Government takes their concerns very seriously. That is why I met with them this morning. That is why, at a meeting I held with representatives of the MONA this summer, I asked them to pursue some of the non-bargaining issues that were irritants between management and their membership so we could get on with the job of resolving problems.

From that came the report which I discussed this morning with the MONA and board chairman and Member of the Manitoba Health Services Commission to get on with the job of building a better health care system in the Province of Manitoba.

Health Care Profession Pay Equity

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the employees of hospitals want pay equity.

The employers at the hospitals want pay equity. He has underspent last year. He is underspending this year. Why will he not implement immediately pay equity within the health care system and not at a minus 25 percent?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): As I have indicated to my honourable friend, who obviously does not want to listen to the answer, last year's budget contained a set-aside to meet our obligations under pay equity.

That money is in place in last year's budget despite her allegations of underspending. That is why I try to tell my honourable friend the Liberal Leader that the hospital budgets, which she is talking about consistently and completely, have not only been spent in their entirety but \$10 million more than was in the defeated budget, including a set-aside for last year's implementation of pay equity.

In this year's budget is funding for pay equity. Mr. Speaker, we are fully prepared as Government to meet the obligations to the 22 health care facilities named in the legislation. We are fully willing. We have the money set aside, and we are prepared to flow that money.

Solvit Resources Inc. Fire Commissioner Report

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Almost six months to the day there was a massive explosion in the City of Winnipeg that lit up the whole sky and shattered windows in many parts of our urban community of Winnipeg. Since that explosion we have had no official response from the Government on the reasons for that explosion, the causes, the ways of preventing a possible explosion in the future and the kind of tragedies that could occur with that kind of incident.

* (1345)

We have asked before for the Fire Commissioner's report, which has been in the hands of Government since August or September of this year. We have been denied and the public has been denied access to that report. I would ask the Minister of Workplace Safety and Health and the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond), responsible for the Fire Commissioner's Department, why she is denying access of that report not only to the public but to her own independent Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health chaired by Wally Fox-Decent, which is recorded in the minutes of their last meeting.

Hon. Gerrie Hammond (Minister of Labour responsible for Workplace Safety and Health): That report is being printed now and it will be released very shortly.

Independent Investigation

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the explosion took place in such a way that we believed certain conditions and issues of that explosion warranted an independent inquiry, a public

inquiry under 39(1) of the Act, so that the public, the suppliers and the users of toxic waste plus the people that were responsible for disposing of those toxic wastes could all be involved in a very public way in this explosion and why it happened.

Will the Minister now confirm to the House whether her department is going to proceed with an independent public inquiry, given the department itself was involved in issuing the permits and enforcing the permits and could hardly therefore be involved in doing the total review and investigation on behalf of Manitobans?

Hon. Gerrie Hammond (Minister of Labour responsible for Workplace Safety and Health): That has been looked at by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) with myself and that decision will be made once the report is released.

Hazardous Goods Storage Record

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): The Minister's own Advisory Council on Workplace Safety and Health has received almost 30 responses of people that are sending materials and toxic waste to the place that blew up, Solvit enterprise.

There is a tremendous discrepancy between the amount of information in the records that the corporation that exploded had and discrepancies of the material that was sent to that corporation. Is the Minister satisfied with the keeping of those records under Workplace Safety and Health and will those discrepancies in records lead us to what we are entitled to, I believe an independent public inquiry as to the causes of that explosion?

Hon. Gerrie Hammond (Minister of Labour responsible for Workplace, Safety and Health): Mr. Speaker, when the report is released then we will be making some recommendations from that report.

Workplace Safety and Health Regulation Amendments

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): The Government rolled back the cancer-causing regulations at the workplace and labelling that also affects the environment, rolled back the conditions under which workers and people dealing with disposal of goods in the environment would deal with based not on the advice of the Workplace Safety and Health Committee but on the advice of a representative of the Mining Association and another business representative from the Manufacturers' Association.

Will the Minister now inform Manitobans, will she return Manitoba to its leadership position in prevention of cancer-causing goods at the workplace, or do we still remain with the Tory regulations, which are a rollback in the conditions of workplace conditions for the environment with cancer-causing goods.

Hon. Gerrie Hammond (Minister of Labour responsible for Workplace Safety and Health): Mr. Speaker, we sent the report, the regulations, back to

the Workplace Safety and Health Advisory Committee. They came up with a unanimous decision this time. The Government will be making recommendations. We will be bringing in regulations, but we are waiting for the rest of their report on labelling before we put it all through.

Farming Industry Manitoba Financial Statistics

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I think there is some urgency to this issue. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) has just returned from a conference in Ottawa where among other things they discussed the policy paper "Growing Together," which I am sure he finds to be a rather strange title.

The only issue that seems to have caught much attention is the Statistics Canada report that indicates there could be as much as an 87 percent reduction in realized net incomes in farms here in Manitoba in 1990. I am sure the Minister would like to have an opportunity to clarify this situation.

Can the Minister tell us how many farm units there are in Manitoba, and how many of those farm units are in such serious financial situation that they will be out of business within a year based on these Statistics Canada projections?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, certainly the figures put out by Stats Canada are going to cause a lot of farmers and a lot of people that do business in the farm community a tremendous amount of concern.

* (1350)

Every province in Canada is not too bad off except the three prairie provinces where the great prediction of reduced income is on the books. Certainly the farm community has been struggling under low commodity prices and on-again, off-again droughts for a number of years. Certainly these kinds of figures being presented now are going to do nothing but cause greater concern. I find them very surprising given the fact that about six weeks ago the bankers' conference here in Winnipeg, the national conference indicated a lot of optimism for the farm community with regard to the debt side as not as bad as one may want to make it.

These predictions that we see I think are overdramatizing the situation. There is no question that we are going to have some difficulty in terms of the income side, but grain prices have to increase. Everybody says that the supply and demand situation is such that it should take off any time. The only reason that anybody can put forward that grain prices will not improve is the subsidies in Europe and the United States. Through the GATT process, once that is resolved, some light can be seen at the end of the tunnel.

Net Income Decline

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): I would like to be able to concur with the Minister's comments, but I have always been taught the best thing to do is to prepare for the worst and pray for the best. In that light, I would like to ask the Minister what new, and I underscore the word "new," initiatives his Government taking to try and alleviate this severe decline and realize net income that is projected for 1990?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, given the massive impact of what we have in front of us in terms of the figures, I guess it is fair to say no amount of money we could put into the system will resolve it. Alberta has put a lot of money into agriculture over the last three or four years and you see their net income position is not much different than ours, unfortunately.

I have talked many times to the rural community. I have tried to share a light of optimism so that we do not get into this doom and gloom situation. The best I can say to the farm community is that we must realize the incomes are going to be under pressure for a period of time yet. We must control our expenses to the greatest of our ability, and we must deal with the fact that the droughts of '88 and '89 are not over. We must deal with trying to get a crop in, in the concept of moisture conservation for 1989. The crop insurance program is there with significant improvements in terms of coverage and use that as a vehicle as your first line of defence against the drought.

Safety Net Programs

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): One item that did appear to be encouraging from the reports that have come out is the statement by Don Mazankowski that he will have a super income stabilization program in place for late 1990. Can the Minister elaborate on what that is going to be, and is it not going to be too late to have any effect on farmers in 1990?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): I had the welcome opportunity of being able to chair that session all day Tuesday, where we heard 14 different presentations from farmers and non-Government people really who were looking at ways and means of putting in place a better safety net program. The sense of urgency is there that the programs of the past, whether they be Western Grain Stabilization or tripartite, seem to have had some weaknesses or some gaps in them. There is a strong emphasis on putting together a better safety net program.

I think that the time frame of having something in place by December is achievable. Ministers' meetings are set for January, March, May and August to move along on the decision process of this and a number of other issue areas. I do not want to say that it will be the panacea of being able to save all farmers, but it will be a better risk protection mechanism. The Grains 2000 proposal as put together by Bob Hopley and Sid Gordon in Manitoba here seems to be the favourite way to proceed.

Economic Growth Retail Sales Tax Revenues

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): For more than a year we have been warning the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) about economic conditions in this province. The actions of the federal Government have been driving this province in decline ever since the Mulroney Government got into office, and now the statements released yesterday simply prove what we have been saying all along.

Can the Minister of Finance tell us why, when inflation in this province is running at about 5 percent, his sales tax revenues are running at less than 4 percent?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I do not really know what it is that the Member is referring to when he talks about the statements sort of proving or disproving certain facts. I find it interesting that Members opposite are claiming or seem to be claiming that we are underspending in some areas. I am wondering how they want us to balance this spending versus revenue.

I say for the Member, before he draws too much into the statements of income, that he realizes whether he is looking, whether his Leader is going to look at the Department of Health or any of the other departments. We are talking about expenditures of \$4.6 billion. We forecasted there would be certain expenditures and we missed the mark by under 1 percent. That is not such a bad record. I think the Member should take that into account before he reads too much into the estimates as provided yesterday.

* (1355)

Mr. Alcock: Mr. Speaker -(interjection)- Yes, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is an expert on decorum in the Chamber and I appreciate his advice.

I am not talking about expenditure, I am talking about revenue. A buoyant economy produces revenues for the province. Yet mining tax revenues are in decline; the Minister does not dispute that. Sales tax revenues—the increase year to year is not anywhere near as great as the Minister claimed last week in this Chamber. Having made the point—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Osborne has the floor.

Mr. Alcock: Having pointed the Minister's attention to the part of the statement we are talking about, perhaps he could explain to me, and explain to this side of the House, why it is, given his suggestions that the economy is growing at such a wonderful rate, his retail sales tax revenues are lower than the rate of growth that he suggests or the rate of inflation today?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, the Member knows fully well, and I hope you will give me half a minute to explain the situation to him, because I know that he knows

fully well that there is not a direct relationship between the growth in the economy and spending, there is a lag.

We have the second quickest growing economy in Canada by all forecasts. That is in investment and indeed in all the measures of the economy. When I laid the budget before the people of Manitoba last June I said that we expected sales tax revenues to come in roughly around \$624 million.

As I presented the forecast for the remainder of the fiscal year, by way of the Second Quarterly Report yesterday, that forecast, \$624 million, is still on course. Today as I stand here there is no reason to believe the \$624 million will not be obtained, and I say to you the economy is performing well.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Osborne, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Alcock: As incomplete as this report is, and as difficult as this report is year over year, the fact is that retail sales tax is not meeting the rate of growth that the Minister said.- (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Alcock: How does he continue to stand here and insist that this province is meeting his expectations? It is coming far below.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, we do not devise the forecast as to how the economy is doing. They are not made within the Department of Finance in the Province of Manitoba. There are outside agencies that do those forecasts. The federal Government looks at all the provinces and comes out with forecasts.

When Statistics Canada says that the economy in Manitoba is to grow at a certain factor, taking into account that there has been some recovery within agriculture, thank goodness, that there has been some recovery in prices in some of our commodity areas, that all works into the formula and shows that our economy is going to increase by forecasts between 5 percent and 6 percent for this fiscal year. We expect that to be reflected in increased sales tax revenue next year. There is necessarily a lag. There always has been and there always will be.

Health Care Crisis MONA Report

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, the truth of the Government's agenda in the health care field has become increasingly obvious the last several weeks. We have seen the Government embark on a course of confrontation with health care workers and physicians. We have seen, once again, the fact that while the Minister of Finance tries to say the economy is doing well, they are using the truth about the economy, that it is declining, to justify capping billings in the medicare system. Just today we have seen further evidence, if I might just complete my—

Mr. Speaker: Will the Honourable Member kindly put his question, please? -(interjection)-

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, there are some people who want to be Speaker here. I would suggest that if they were to be quiet I would place my question.

I just want to state that today the nurses have confirmed that there is a crisis in the system.

My question to the Minister of Health is, when is he going to recognize what the nurses and what other people are saying in this province, that there is a crisis in the system, that our system is deteriorating, and respond to their very legitimate suggestion in terms of improved funding and improved access to the decision—

* (1400)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put. The Honourable Minister of Health.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend said two things, namely, increased funding and increased access to the decision-making process. The second one is exactly the process we are on with professional organizations including nurses throughout the Province of Manitoba.

I simply remind my honourable friend, the New Democrat, that last year's hospital budget, wherein most of our nursing profession works, the budget that we tabled and spent entirely last year, was an increase for hospital funding over the defeated budget of the Government he was a Member of.

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

Mr. Ashton: How can the Minister talk about this Government's priorities in health care when last year it underspent by \$28 million, and has underspent by \$14 million—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. The Honourable Member for Thompson, kindly put his question now, please.

Mr. Ashton: How can the Minister say that there is not a crisis in the health care system when the facts are clear? The nurses are saying it, your own people and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) are saying it, you are not the health care system with the—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Minister of Health.

Mr. Orchard: Those statements by my honourable friend are absolute balderdash. My honourable friend, the New Democratic Health Critic, could have asked questions about the \$28 million underfunding and he would have found out that one of the major items in \$28 million of unspent monies last year was \$8 million saved on facility costs because the NDP had frozen the construction budget for the last seven months that they were in power. There were no new facilities to serve the people of Manitoba coming on line with associated costs of operation. That was \$8 million of saving stemming directly from the capital budget freeze of the Government he sat in.

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

Mr. Ashton: I raised the issue of underspending in the health care Estimates and the Minister knows that.

Health Care Profession Pay Equity

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): My final question to the Minister is one of the other increasingly obvious concerns in Manitoba in regard to the situation facing nurses in terms of remuneration. Why has the Minister not come to a negotiated settlement in terms of pay equity when it is becoming increasingly clear that if we do not get it resolved—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The question has been put.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I might point out that my honourable friend's generosity from Opposition to the nurses of Manitoba was not reflected in the contract that is currently ongoing that was signed by the Government that he was a Member of. Now if that has caused tremendous difficulties for nurses in terms of competitive salaries, then I simply ask him, why in Government did he not offer them more money?

The Forks Development Government Priorities

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): My question is for the Minister of Urban Affairs. Mr. Speaker, there is growing anxiety that the Forks Renewal Corporation has lost its moorings and is adrift. It was originally there as an objective to enhance the historic and cultural uniqueness of this birthplace of western Canada. This was to be done without any competition with other downtown redevelopment projects.

The Minister now refuses to rule out the construction of an arena on adjacent lands. The mayor is now in Europe talking about a recreation complex, and there could be a hotel built there which will compete in a hotel industry which is already suffering.

My question to the Minister of Urban Affairs is this: what are his Government's priorities for the redevelopment of this unique and historic site?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): First of all, for the record that I gave the Member earlier, we do not support the arena on the Forks site, so we might as well get that clear.

I have already explained to the Member, I explained to him during the Estimate procedure, that if he talks about a hotel, the hotel that they are talking about is a refurbishing of an existing building, and we are in favour of that.

The other position that we have right now is that we just approved the walkway from the Osborne site to the Forks. We believe in that type of site. We cannot do anything if the mayor of the City of Winnipeg wants

to look at leisure centres. He must have the approval of the complete Forks committee, and at this particular time he does not have that approval.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Carr: Mr. Speaker, we are looking for some leadership from the Minister of Urban Affairs. My question is this: what is the priority of this Government to make sure that unique site is enhanced and preserved and is not lost to developers as is the threat now?

Mr. Ducharme: Mr. Speaker, unlike the gloom of the other Member, this particular Minister and this particular Government is watching the development of The Forks. We are the ones initially in 1984 that went down to Ottawa to get The Forks development going. We will make sure that Forks program, that Forks, will be the historic site that it should be.

Development Moratorium

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Mr. Speaker, The Forks is moving too quickly and the result of this speed is that it is losing its attention and its focus. Will the Minister of Urban Affairs advocate now for a moratorium and a halt of all development at The Forks until there is another round of public consultation?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, if the Member across the way—for his information, The Forks has their annual meetings that people can make representation to.

I do not see The Forks at this time moving too far ahead. We are calling for tenders on a boat basin; that certainly is not a development sprawl. We have done the riverbank development. We have done The Forks development. We have done the parks at The Forks. Mr. Speaker, maybe he should go out there and look at The Forks.

Farming Industry Safety Net Programs

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay). Following his return from Ottawa, and I am pleased to note that he chaired the meeting dealing with farm income, and what one can only say—maybe the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) wants to be Minister of Agriculture, he has had his chance in the past.

An Honourable Member: So did you, and I am closer than you are right now.

An Honourable Member: Touché.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for the Interlake.

Mr. Uruski: Mr. Speaker, given what is generally recognized in the farm community that the safety net programs of commodities, specific income support

programs, are not working, can the Minister indicate whether he is now prepared to take the lead in this province and show the rest of the country that what we said approximately four years ago, that our income stabilization programs should move from commodity-specific programs to aggregate farm income programs?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, clearly there has been demonstrated some gaps, as I said earlier, in the income programs that are presently in place, whether it is Western Grain Stabilization or tripartite, and the countervail that has come against the tripartite programs, things that we have to avoid in any future program that is devised.

First off it has to be GATT legal. It has to be GATT legal. It has to meet the income needs of the farm community in terms of a stop-loss kind of protection at the individual income-based situation, individual farm base. That was strongly recognized at the conference, but I continually want to remind people that there is no magic wand in this process, no magic wand to offset receiving fair return from the marketplace.

Drought Assistance

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, several weeks ago the Minister told western Manitoba farmers that they would have to develop a strong case for drought payments, and the Minister of grains and oilseeds today said that the province would have to take the lead in this issue.

* (1410)

Can the Minister indicate whether he is prepared today to indicate to the federal Government to use the situation in western Manitoba of drought and implement an aggregate farm income for those producers, giving them some hope through this crisis, which the regular programming will not be able to assist?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Well, certainly there was a fair bit of discussion around the drought situation in southwestern, south central Manitoba and all of southern Saskatchewan with regard to ability to be able to put a crop in next year with some hope of survival. Certainly we are as a province putting together some information through crop insurance, through the crop loss information that we have at this point to put a case in front of the federal Government for consideration of some special support to that area of western Canada.

Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corp. Buy-Back Program

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for the Interlake, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): I would like to know what the province's share will be of that program. Is the Minister now prepared to instruct his Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation to end its policy of selling farm land from under farmers who are under

the Land Lease Program and likely will not be able to exercise their option of buy back because of the impending and the now guaranteed farm crisis in the western part of this province?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Certainly, there has been no discussion at this point about any share between the province and the federal Government with regard to any drought program.

With regard to ability of clients in MACC to meet their payment commitments, I can tell the Member that for the Young Farmer Rebate Program 80 percent of the young farmers met their commitments at the beginning of November this year; 70 percent was the average prior to this year. In terms of the general clientele of MACC, the ability to meet their payments was equal to previous years, surprising, but equal to payment situations of previous years.

Seniors Housing Building Safety

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): In answer to a question on Tuesday from the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) in regard to doorbells as a safety measure and a previous question by the Member for Burrows (Mr. Chornopyski)—just to give an update, and I will supply the information to the two Members—just to give a couple of points, and I will give them the information. On December 6—

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Inkster, on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) did not take this question as notice.

I am sure if the Minister of Housing wanted to make a ministerial statement we would have granted leave to accommodate him. I would suggest that he is out of order here. I would ask that he request during Ministerial Statements to make such a reply.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Housing, on the same point of order.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing): On the same point of order, if the Member will look at the statements I made I told him I would bring additional information back to the House. That is exactly what I said.

Mr. Ducharme: Mr. Speaker, on December 6, 1988, a letter was sent by the Manitoba Housing Property Management to all the 90 housing authorities, and briefly we asked the housing authorities to respond. Nine of the 90 did respond. We told them to install the bells. Vita advised us they did not want the bells I will explain, and I will give the information so next time when the Member says we did not bring it up he will have that information.

Educational Facilities Child Care Spaces

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): The policy of building child care spaces within a school setting when new construction takes place has been ongoing for some years. It is a positive program adding to the continuity of children's lives and easing the transportation burden on working parents.

My question is to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach). Would he please tell the House if his Government has changed this policy?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): No, Mr. Speaker.

Robert H. Smith School Child Care Spaces

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): Can the same Minister explain why the capital costs of Robert H. Smith, an elementary school, does not include any spaces for child care, contrary to the policy for all other schools in the Winnipeg No. 1 School Division?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): The spaces for child care at schools is one where school divisions make that choice with regard to whether or not they would see fit building a child care facility on with the school. At that point in time there has to be an assurance by the school that the facility will in fact be utilized for that purpose. Then those requests are put through the Public Schools' Finance Board and are assessed by the Public Schools' Finance Board, not by myself as Minister.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

POINT OF ORDER (Cont'd)

An Honourable Member: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Inkster, on a point of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I would ask that you review Hansard from Tuesday and see where the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) gave the impression that he had taken the question as notice and come back with the ruling on it.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs, on the same point of order.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): On a new point of order—

Mr. Speaker: On the same point of order.

Mr. Ducharme: I did not say I took it as notice. I told—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Ducharme: —I did not say that. I bring the information back, I did not—take a look at the Hansard again, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On that point of order raised—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised by the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and the advice of the Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme), the Chair will take the matter under advisement, will peruse Hansard and will come back to the House with a ruling.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, after discussions with the House Leaders of the other two Parties it is my wish today to call Bills in this order: Bills Nos. 67, 79, 31, 83 and 84.

Furthermore, I believe there is a willingness to waive Private Members' Hour today. It is my intention that the debate on Bills might continue roughly until around 5:30 p.m., at which time I will move that the Speaker do now leave the Chair so we might begin some of the procedures around bringing forward Interim Supply (2). I believe that will take roughly 10 or 15 minutes, Mr. Speaker, at which time I believe the House would like to adjourn early, sometime around quarter to six.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to waive Private Members' Hour? (Agreed)

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I will repeat those Bill numbers, Bills 67, 79, 31, 83 and 84, at this point in time.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 67—THE SOCIAL ALLOWANCES AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson), Bill No. 67, The Social Allowances Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie). (Stand) Is there leave that this matter remain standing? (Agreed)

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I rise to say a few words about Bill No. 67. I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words about The Social Allowances Amendment Act, Bill No. 67. It is a measure that I do not think anyone in the House will have any problem in supporting, because it is a move that is going to make it much easier for single parents, hopefully both men and women who are single parents, to obtain access to the provincial social assistance

program rather than spending 90 days on the municipal programs as they have had to do up until now.

I think it would be interesting to learn the reasons that the Minister has brought this in. What is the reason for the Government moving in this direction? I think we will be told it is because of the recommendation of the task force on women in this province. The recommendation of the task force was, and I do not have the details, I do not have the report in front of me, but that women were having a difficult time in accessing the social assistance system. If I am wrong maybe the Minister can correct me later, if and when she closes debate.

It does demonstrate, in my view, Mr. Speaker, some of the demeaning features of the municipal welfare system that we have in the province. If the system was adequate—and I do not think it is adequate whatsoever—not only in level of remuneration, level of assistance but also in administration and assistance to people who are in need then there would be no need for this amendment.

If the municipal welfare system in Manitoba was as great as some Members on the other side seem to think it is we would not have to make this amendment, because as it is the women and the men who are parents, who are mothers and fathers, who have children depending on them, who have no other source of income, are entitled by law in this province to go onto the welfare system. It is a matter of accommodating them more quickly on the provincial system that we are discussing in this particular amendment. Instead of waiting three months they will automatically go onto the provincial system.

Mr. Speaker, I have long advocated a one-tier system for the Province of Manitoba. As a matter of fact, I have not only advocated, but as Minister I indeed brought in a program, and it was announced on February 26, 1988, that we would assume the responsibility for social assistance—

An Honourable Member: That was pretty close to the end, was it not?

Mr. Leonard Evans: —it was. I am reminded by the interjection of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) that this matter was under serious consideration for well over a year. It was debated and discussed at Treasury Board on many occasions, and finally the program was developed. It required a lot of work on the part of the departmental staff. We did come to the point where we were about to embark on a major reform of social assistance in the province intended to remove the inequities of the fragmented municipal assistance system that we have now.

* (1420)

The fact is that we do continue to have nearly 200 individual municipal Governments in this province, each running their own welfare system. There is no set of regulations under which they work except that they have an indication as to the cost sharing with the province. There are absolutely no regulations

whatsoever of the individual municipalities, and they can therefore proceed as they may wish in how they administer the program.

Mr. Speaker, I know there are a lot of well meaning people in the municipal level of Government, but nevertheless the system is such that it is not working, that it is unfair to many, many people, to thousands of people in this province.

We are now dealing with only a small portion of it. We are dealing with 8,000 or 9,000 single parents who will—or maybe it is 10,000 now, I am not sure what the monthly caseload is—automatically go into the provincial system.

We are only dealing with a problem that appears to exist for three months with the municipalities. I am saying there are a number of other people out there—probably between 2,000 and 3,000, I cannot tell for sure, nobody can tell for sure—that are outside of the City of Winnipeg who are deemed to be unemployed employables, who are forced to go to the municipality for assistance.

This system should be abolished. As I was indicating a minute ago, on February 26, 1988, I announced that we would be moving into this fear that we would bring in a one-tier system, that is, a system whereby you would have provincial Government Department of Family Services, as it is called now, solely responsible for administering the social assistance program.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, in detail I can tell you that as of April 1, 1989, rural municipalities were to be brought in according to the legislation; October 1, 1989, all towns and villages would have been absorbed; and as of January 1, 1990, in other words a few weeks from now, all the cities of this province outside of Winnipeg would have been brought in. We were not prepared to bring in Winnipeg at this time, because we felt the administration was excellent and its rates were very comparable to those at the provincial level.

We did have many problems, and I continue to have many concerns about the municipal welfare system that we have in this province. I have argued as Minister and was successful in getting agreement from my colleagues to bring in the one-tier system outside of Winnipeg. I would continue to argue and urge this Government to move in that direction.

The former Leader of the Opposition, and now a Premier (Mr. Filmon), stated during the last election that, yes, we should have a one-tier system, or at least this is the understanding I got from his statement, but not by means of a provincial involvement. His argument was we should better regulate the municipalities, continue to leave the municipalities in the front line, having responsibility, but simply regulate them.

Mr. Speaker, in my opinion regulation of municipalities is not the way to go. It is a very poor way to go. You end up having to make all kinds of regulations for them, and you have to spend a lot of money in policing these regulations to oversee, to ensure that the municipal officials are abiding by the regulations that are paying the adequate rates, that they are administering the program adequately. It is simply not the best way to

go. It is far better in my opinion to absorb it completely by the province.

There are a number of reasons why we should go further than this particular legislation. As I said, this legislation only deals with a very small problem. It is an important problem. I welcome the Minister bringing in this legislation. I support the legislation. I just want her to go further. I would like her to go further, and she has heard me mention this before, but I want to take the opportunity to encourage her to move further. I would hope that she would be discussing with the Union of Manitoba Municipalities and the urban municipalities, the various responsible officials, on the ways and means of bringing in a one-tier system.

There are a number of reasons why I am unhappy with the one-tier system that we have now in the province. First of all, it is inequitable, Mr. Speaker, because we have rates that are paid that will vary from one municipality to another. We have terms and conditions of assistance that vary both between the municipalities and between the municipal level and the provincial Government, and therefore people in similar circumstances, people with no other means of support, are treated differently depending on where they live and the reason for being in need. I say there is something wrong in this.

They are all citizens of Canada. They are all citizens of Manitoba. Essentially the money is provided by the federal-provincial Governments. The municipalities pay a share. They do not pay that much. They do pay a share. I say that there is a responsibility on us to ensure that people in Manitoba are treated adequately and properly, and it should not matter that you live in one R.M. versus another, or one town versus another town.

The other reason I consider the present system inadequate, Mr. Speaker, is that the municipal rates generally are much lower than that of the province, and certainly much lower than that of the City of Winnipeg. When the Ryant Task Force reported and brought down its major report on social welfare reform in Manitoba, they pointed out that on average the municipalities in this province paid only 60 percent of the provincial rate.

I would say, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that it is very clear that the municipal rates are not adequate. They are simply not adequate. There may be the odd exception, but they are simply not adequate to help people who are in dire need.

Another difficulty I have with the municipal involvement in the welfare system is that it tends to be rather inaccessible for some people. It tends to be a demeaning experience for some people, and I believe that message was brought out strong and clear to the task force on women's issues.—(interjection)— Yes, I realize that. I say if it is demeaning for those women who are mothers, it is also demeaning for older people, for older men, for older women or for anyone who has to go through the process of explaining to the local town council or the municipal council why they need some kind of assistance. Often what happens in some areas, they have to go before the entire council. They do not deal with a social worker. They do not deal with

one official. It becomes public knowledge that they are seeking welfare. There is no privacy at all, it would seem, involved. Often they get only partial payments. They do not get the full payment.

I would dare say if some of these people went to court over this, they could make a case for being discriminated against and that we were therefore not abiding by the terms of CAP, by the Canada Assistance program, for assistance for social allowance persons. It is inaccessible and it is a demeaning experience.

Another reason—it has, and we have some information on this, forced migration in this province, forced migration from the rural parts of the province into the cities, into the City of Winnipeg, into the City of Brandon and into some other regional cities. I do not think that is good. If we want to encourage the growth of population in rural Manitoba, surely we should not have a system that encourages depopulation of rural areas. It encourages depopulation of rural areas on the one hand, and it adds to the social problems in the cities on the other. Surely that is a good enough reason in itself to eliminate the two-tier system that we have.

I might add, Mr. Speaker, that the two-tier system is in a minority in this country of ours. Seven provinces do have a one-tier system where the province only is involved, and that is true of all the western provinces, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia. They have but one system run by the provincial Government. This is true, as I said, for seven out of 10 provinces. Manitoba is in a minority with Ontario and Nova Scotia.

The other problem—and I have sort of suggested this a bit earlier, but I would like to spend another minute or two on it—is it could be subject to court challenge. The Canada Assistance Plan requires provinces to provide assistance in an equitable manner, and the facts simply are that in this province the rates and rules do vary between the two tiers and within the municipal tier itself. This could be challenged as discriminatory under the Charter of Rights. That is something else the Minister and the Government should take into consideration.

Another reason that we should get the municipalities out of the welfare business is that we are talking about a service. We are talking about a service to people, a social service, just as we are talking about health care, we are talking about child and family services. We do not expect anymore that the municipalities of this province should be engaged in shouldering the financial burden of health care, or child and family services and other kinds of services.

* (1430)

When it comes to welfare, which is a form of social service, suddenly we expect the property taxpayer to share part of the burden. I just do not think that is correct. As a general rule, we should use provincial and federal revenue sources rather than municipal property taxes. It is a burden on those local taxpayers and it should not have to be. I am saying, therefore, you could argue that we should remove the burden from municipal taxpayers. Certainly I know it has to

be paid for. We all pay taxes, but I think good management and good fiscal policy would dictate that you remove social programs off of the property taxes, off of municipal ratepayers, and put them on the shoulders of the provincial and federal taxpayers.

Those two levels, the provincial and federal, of course, have a far more lucrative source of income. As we all know, there are various kinds of income tax, retail sales tax and so forth. What I am pleading for, Mr. Speaker, is to alleviate the burden on the property taxpayer at the municipal level, and that could happen, as I said, if we simply absorbed it as a province.

(Mr. William Chornopyski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

A last point I would make, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this argument for going further than what this particular amendment suggests, is to realize that we are talking about unemployed employables essentially at the municipal level. At the present time, those who are handled by the municipal welfare system are deemed to be employable. They are not long-term disability cases, they are not mothers or fathers with children depending on them with no other source of income. They are also unemployed, but there is a thought that at some point they can get a job and become self-sufficient and get off of welfare.

That, Mr. Deputy Speaker, means that we have a challenge of assisting these people to get a job. The reason we had Employment Services and Economic Security set up as a department was to have all the training programs and the various kinds of support services geared towards helping people get into the work force in the same department as the social security system, the economic security system. Hopefully, there would be more co-ordination and so on.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, even though there has been an administrative change at the provincial level, there is still an argument to be made that the province, with its various training programs, could and would take on a more direct involvement in training the welfare recipients of this province, to help them become self-sufficient, to get them off of the welfare rolls.

Indeed, there are many training programs that I can think of that the province could engage in and tie them very well into these people who have problems. I know there are some that exist, there are various programs that now exist. What I am saying is we have to do more, and we can do more at the provincial level, far more than a small municipality which may only have a few hundred people in it and simply does not have the resources to train the unemployed employables.

Probably this is one of the most serious areas of social injustice in this province. It is an area of great inequity, and there is need for fairer treatment of these people. There is need for a more aggressive approach on the part of the province to link them and to bring them into the work force by training them, by encouraging them, giving them all kinds of supports so they will become self-sufficient.

It is a matter of job creation as well, and that is why I make no apologies for having various kinds of job

creation programs, particularly if you tie them into the small business sector and non-profit organizations that have the jobs there waiting to be done if there is a bit of money available. Far better to have a person employed in some kind of a non-profit set-up, a non-profit organization, let us say, helping seniors in the community or whatever, than sitting at home watching TV, drawing welfare and not being able to work, far better to provide some meaningful work for those people. As I said earlier, I wanted to take this occasion to remind the Government of this broader responsibility.

They have moved. I certainly support what the Minister is doing in this respect. I welcomed this; I think it is a good move; I have no problem with it whatsoever. I simply take this opportunity to urge her to really get serious about this other group that really are deprived. I know it takes money and that we had estimates of what it would cost. It is costly but it is not an impossible cost. It is not an amount of money that we could not afford. As I said, there are so very many benefits that would accrue if we went along with what seven out of 10 provinces are already engaged in.

I do not know whether anyone else wishes to speak. I think maybe one or two others in our caucus may have one or two words to say on this, not to hold it up but to take the opportunity to say, yes, we welcome this legislation. On the other hand, we want to urge the Minister and her colleagues to get on with this other important area of social injustice, namely, this two-tier system involving municipalities in this province.

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Paa): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to say a few words in support of Bill 67, The Social Allowances Amendment Act. I know that there are, especially at this time of the year, many instances where we are getting calls from constituents who feel that the social allowance system is not being administered in a proper way. I guess it is especially true in some of the remote communities where people are relying on the traditional means of employment, people who are involved in the fishing industry. From time to time they do require social assistance in order that they can make sure their children are coated in a proper manner and they have the support that is necessary for them to attend school.

I know at this time of the year that many people are cut off social assistance because of the fact that there has been a large final payment delivered dealing with the final payment for fisheries. The unfortunate part of that is the way the fishing industry has been carried on in the last couple of years, as those people are faced with the same difficulties of surviving as the agricultural community is, and it requires many thousands of dollars to keep their equipment in the condition where they can fish.

I know there is a requirement for sleds and snowmobiles and fish nets and sinkers and all the other requirements the fishermen require, and it takes a lot of money to operate. The prices of fish have dropped in the last year, and the final payment has been nowhere near as large as it was the year before, but there is still a requirement—when the final payments do come in there is quite a large amount of money coming to

those people, but the people do not get that cheque because it is going to the people who supplied the necessary staple goods for those fishermen to operate.

It is always a very difficult time at this time of the year. I was in the community of Easterville when the Minister for Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) was in that community, and it is difficult to deal with some of those people who are really suffering to a great degree because of the high cost of operating. In most of those cases the people have large families, so they have a great difficulty in making ends meet. I think that there is—at a time like that the people have to use some common sense to make sure the people do get the supports that are necessary so they will not starve or freeze at this time of the year when conditions are really very harsh.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, moving to a one-tier system is something we have discussed over the last couple of years that we were in Government. I know the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) was at the forefront and leading that fight to bring those people under a one-tier system because there is no consistency throughout the province on how municipalities administer their social assistance. Many of them want to tie the social assistance to some form of work, and they feel that they should be picking up cans or cutting grass or doing anything in order to earn their social assistance. I think in Canada our system does not go in that direction. I do not think that we should be moving to try and make people, to degrade people, to be moving in that direction.

There are some municipalities who over the last couple of years have tried to force people to do some forms of work in order to get support, but I think over most of the cases they have not required the people to do work. I guess the difficulty is when you have different administrators with different rules being applied at each municipal level, then there is no consistency from one to the other as to the amount of support they will give. I know there are examples of where the people who were in charge of social assistance in some of the communities in the North have provided a person with a bus ticket to get out of town and give him money for a few meals. They would sooner have them leave the community rather than stay in it.

I was just talking to some people the other day, and when these cold weather conditions are on, they say the one thing about it, we will not have the vagrant population stopping in Winnipeg because it is going to be too cold for them to survive for any length of time, so they will keep going to the warmer parts of the country, so they will not be bothered with that.

* (1440)

One of the things that I was pleased with what the Minister did was to allow some of the people who are on social assistance, the families of the people who are on social assistance, the ability to make some money without having deductions made. I think that is a move in the right direction. It is one I have always supported, because I think there needs to be some incentive for

the children whose parents happen to be on social assistance at this time, through no fault of their own. In previous years whatever funding they did make, either having a paper route or having a part-time job, their social assistance was reduced. There was no incentive for those people to get off social assistance or to get out there and take some initiative and work. That is a move in the right direction, and I am pleased that the Minister has taken the steps to put that in place.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that there are many examples of where the social assistance needs correcting, and to move to a one-tier system right across the province is one of the areas in which we should be moving. I know it would take quite some time to get the necessary people in place to deal with this. I know it would be expensive in the first instance to have this put in place, but anyone who is on social assistance deserves the same rate as the Province of Manitoba pays. The sooner we move to a one-tier social allowance system, the better off we are going to be. That is just a few comments that I want to put on the record. We certainly will be supporting this Bill to go to third reading. Thank you.

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I would like to make a few comments on Bill No. 67. I am not sure why the Government is in fact moving on this matter in a kind of a piecemeal fashion. Maybe the Minister will want to rise and admit that their reaction several years ago was in fact too loud about something to raise the ire of municipal councillors in their areas and throughout rural Manitoba to dispute this provision.—(interjection)— Well, the Minister says she was just about shouted off the platform.—(interjection)—

Mr. Deputy Speaker, just because someone opposes you and may want to shout you off the platform does not mean that the process is wrong. On the contrary, we are here as elected representatives to be leaders in our community, knowing that the situation is unfair, and demeaning to those people who require assistance.

I know that I have spoken to members of council from time to time over the years, and there were some, I am pleased that there were only a few, who were actually proud to say that they had no one on welfare. When you asked them: how could this be? They basically admitted that they were playing the proverbial conductor. They were railroading everybody out of town. They basically said, you either do this or we do not want you around.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I know that most people who require to be on public assistance find it very, very difficult, because most people would want to work, would want to do things for themselves so they could earn the self-respect of their neighbours, their friends, and themselves the most for their own self-worth. To say, I am a contributing member of this society, I want to work, I want to earn a decent income, and I want to pay my way.

So, Mr. Deputy Speaker, if anything, I want to urge this Minister to reconsider her position on this Bill and expand it and move on with it and deal with everyone in an even-handed way. Not have to deal with our social

allowance system as if you are backed into a corner and you are going to do it little by little. No one is going to push her off the cliff. In fact if anything, the rest of the Members of this House are going to be there standing up, propping her up. Maybe she needs some propping.

We are urging her to deal with people in a humane way. Let us make the system—no one has said that the amendments here. We are not knocking them; we are agreeing with the amendments. We are agreeing. What we are saying is, you are only doing a little bit. If you are going to make the system more humane, get on with the job. What is your difficulty? I would like to hear the Minister's explanation of what her difficulty is in transforming the system into a more humane system.

I know my colleague, the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) has tried and he has worked for the revamping, the modernizing, of the social allowance system in a way that every human being, whether they be parents, whether they be unemployables, regardless of who they are, if they are in need of assistance, that they do not have to go through the kind of hoops and measures that can only and has in many instances caused them to leave a community which they have settled in.

You hear all kinds of cases if you talk to people who have been on social allowance of how they have been mistreated by leaders in the community. That is the irony, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Citizens who are good people—but yet when it comes to social assistance it seems that the worst comes out of people who are administering public funds and are charged with the responsibility of assisting people in need, the worst comes out of them. They are then prepared to almost take the wrath of all their frustrations in public office and heap it onto welfare recipients. We should not as a society continue this kind of a system.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) from his seat just mentioned briefly to me that their own Minister, your Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), in this province who looked at abuse and did the audit, did not in fact find any substantive abuse in the system. The Minister agrees with that. So if she does agree with that, she certainly should be able to defend her position and Members of her Government to move the system into making it more humane.

I ask the Minister to rethink and ask her officials for the appropriate amendments. When this Bill moves to committee, she will be seen as not only supporting those people in need, she will be seen as doing the right thing. Thank you.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I have a number of comments. I would just like to indicate that we are faced with a situation where the Bill I believe is standing in the name of the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie). We would certainly not see any difficulty in having it passed through to second reading once I have finished my remarks and any closing comments the Minister responsible has. The Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) naturally has already contributed somewhat on this debate.

Thursday, December 14, 1989

What I want to say in terms of this Bill is that we need a reform of social allowances in this province. I believe the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), spoke very well earlier today, and the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak), and the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski), in terms of the need for an overhaul of the way in which we deal with social allowances in this province.

I believe that should start with a single-tiered system, fundamentally delivered by the Province of Manitoba equally across the province to social allowance recipients of all ages, of all genders, equality throughout the province, no matter where one lives or what category of social assistance one finds oneself in. I think that is a statement that has to be said fundamentally because my experience with the social allowance system is that there are, as the Member of Interlake (Mr. Uruski) pointed out, many examples of where people are not given their just deserves in terms of fair treatment. There have been many cases unfortunately of people who quite literally have been refused assistance, have been given nothing more than a bus ticket out of town in some communities because of the stigma that is often attached to people receiving welfare.

I think the important thing to note for the record, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the vast majority of people who are receiving social assistance in this province are people who are unable to work for whatever reason, whether it be through disability or other circumstances. These are individuals in many cases who would like to work.

I think our system could be reformed to even improve the training that is available, and the incentives that are available, to allow people the opportunity to work, those who can work. I think that is something we often ignore. There is the assumption that somehow this system has to be there on a permanent basis in the form that it is in, and that is not true.

I want to give you just a brief example of how we run into difficulties with the current system. I received a call just last week from a constituent of mine, she called on behalf of her sister who is 17 years old, a single mother, and is working, but because of the current system in this province has been unable to get any assistance from social allowance. She has been told that the only way she can get assistance from the province, over and above the wage that she is receiving, is for her to move into a foster home.

This is a 17-year-old single mother who I would say deserves complete and absolute support and congratulations for the fact that she is really making a go of it. She is working, she is raising her child, and yet she has run into a system that is insensitive to her situation and I intend on raising that. In fact I have raised it through correspondence with the Deputy Minister. Perhaps if the Minister could look into that particular situation as well, because here is an example of somebody who is trying to get ahead, who is trying to work, trying to raise a child and is running into brick walls. She told me that it is very frustrating; that at times she feels like giving up. As I said, her case was raised to me actually through the intervention of her sister, she did not want to raise it.

* (1450)

I think that is indicative of the kinds of situations that are out there. In fact the bottom line, in terms of society, is that people who perhaps need the help the greatest, who need to be fighting for the rights the greatest, are often the most unwilling to raise their concerns. That has been my experience in my own constituency. I can recall going through certain apartment buildings where you will get out of 12 suites, 10 will complain about the awful conditions in those suites, many people are receiving income security.

I remember in one particular case I went through a block, and out of that block 10 people had complained. I believe about two of the people in that block eventually pursued it further. They raised it with me, but they were afraid later on when it got into the Office of the Rentalsman to pursue the matter any further because they were afraid of the consequences, of retaliation from the landlord, in that particular case.

That is the same situation I believe in terms of social allowance. There is an appeal mechanism in place, but I do not believe that everyone who should be appealing, who should be fighting for their rights, is doing it in many cases because people just do not have that sense of empowerment. They do not believe that they can make the difference. They believe that they have to really accept the decision the way it is, and I think that is unfortunate.

I think that people should be aware of their rights and they should be willing to fight for their rights and know that when they do fight for their rights there will not be adverse consequences. That is the kind of spirit I think we need to reform the system with. We need to give a much greater sense of rights to the individuals who are receiving support from the system. I think we have to state it very clearly to society as a whole that we are dealing with people who in many cases if they could work would like to be able to work. We have to apply the absolute best efforts we can to provide better incentives than the currently existing incentives, which do very little to encourage people to work and to provide the training programs that are necessary.

We cannot even begin to reform the system unless we bring in a single-tiered welfare system, social allowance system, in this province. We cannot change a system of the type that exists currently, a patchwork system. The previous Government had committed itself to a provincially delivered single-tiered system. I for the life of me have given the recommendations for example of the report on women's issues that was developed by the Member for Kirkfield Park (Mrs. Hammond), the current Minister of Labour, which recommended that we deal with this particular issue because it affects women in particular. The biggest concerns -(interjection)-

The Minister says this is a result of that report, but I would suggest that we need to see far more and that is a single-tiered system, no ifs, ands or buts. It should be delivered by the province in each and every area of this province in the way that across the country we have—most provinces, and I believe the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) has raised this, do

have a single-tiered system and have had it for a considerable period of time.

The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), a rural Member of this House, I think should talk to some of the people who have had the unfortunate experience—and I am not trying to say that it is the case in all municipalities, but some areas in particular where there has been nothing short of harassment in terms of what has taken place.

An Honourable Member: Why did you not change it?

Mr. Ashton: The Minister says: why did we not change it? We had changed it. The process was put in place. It was the Conservative Government that put a hold to the changes in the single-tiered welfare system, and that I think is something the Minister for Northern Affairs, who likes to speak from his seat, might wish to explain. That is why now he is saying, well, why did the previous Government not do something? Well, the fact is they did. It is the Conservative Party, the Conservative Government, that has put that process on hold. In fact I know the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) referred to this specifically.

The announcement of February 26, 1988: social assistance to undergo reform. A schedule was laid out: April 1, 1989, rural municipalities; October 1, 1989, towns and villages; January 1, 1989, cities except Winnipeg, and then the next step being the implementation in the City of Winnipeg. This was announced by the previous Government on February 26, 1988. The staff was in place. There was a schedule in place to bring in this—foresee this process.

I can tell you that we received a considerable amount of flak on this, some of it I think well intentioned, some of it not well intentioned at all. I mean some of the people who had been denying assistance in their communities were some of the biggest opponents to us bringing in the single-tiered system. Some of the people who I would say had been harassing welfare recipients were the biggest critics of this and I say, not all. I say there was some well-intentioned criticism, but there are some individual areas of this province where social assistance recipients I would say have received nothing short of abuse in terms of the treatment they have received and harassment.

I think that is absolutely unacceptable as we head into the 1990s. The days when a stigma was attached to the receipt of social assistance surely should be well behind us. The days when the myths about welfare abuse were rampant that somehow these were all able-bodied people who could just go out and get a job. Each and every study that has taken place of our system has shown that to be patently untrue. I think what is the saddest about this is the people who are most affected are the people who have probably the least say in our society.

When I talk to people about their frustrations, they often do not really have anybody who represents them in an organizational sense. They often feel concerned that if they raise something, or a concern, that they are going to be penalized. Whether it would be the

case or not, how can you blame them when in some cases in some areas of the province under the current system, there have been people who have been penalized for asking for social assistance when they had no other alternative available to them? How can you blame people?

I would say that the one thing we need to be doing, as Members of the Legislature, is speaking up for them. I do not believe this Government is doing that. As much as they are bringing in this allowance -(interjection)- Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think the poor of this province know that the Conservative Government does not speak for them when they see the inaction on this particular issue. This, in itself, speaks to the fact that the Conservative Party, historically it is part of their background as a Party, does not speak for the poor and certainly does not speak for individuals receiving social assistance in this province.

I think that has been the clear message by the fact that we are dealing with an amendment today that is not bringing in a single-tiered system. It essentially is a change—I am not saying it is not a necessary change—but I would say this Bill, despite whatever merits it may have, is in many ways a slap in the face to the people who have been fighting for a single-tiered system in this province. A single-tiered system that has already been put in place by the previous Government, a single-tiered system that the Conservative Party has turned its back on.

I want to say that all of us, I think, have to be aware and conscious of the fact that poverty exists in our society. It exists in my own community of Thompson. We probably have some of the highest average incomes in Canada. In some cases, there are statistics I think showing that Thompson is certainly well above average in terms of incomes, but in my own community there are many people who do not have the benefit of that. They face the same high costs of living as do the rest of us, but they do not receive anything more than the standard social assistance rates, which is nowhere near adequate in a northern community to support a family, let alone a single individual.

When one looks at that, the continued existence of poverty amidst plenty, I think one really has to ask questions about why the concerns of many of the people in our society who are poor, and are stuck in a poverty trap, are often ignored. I think that part of the problem, as I said, is there is not an organization. There are some anti-poverty organizations, I give the Manitoba Anti-Poverty Organization credit for having raised many of these concerns in terms of social assistance recipients, but there is not an immediate tie-in. Many people do not feel connected at all in terms of any particular organization. They do not feel their concerns are being addressed. As I said, there are people out there, Mr. Deputy Speaker, many people who have a real sense that their lives are being wasted because of this trap, this poverty trap that they are in, and it is something that is duplicating itself generation after generation after generation.

* (1500)

This is why I cannot believe that the Conservative Government today will not even take the most minimal

step, the first step that has already been plotted out for them. The agenda is here, the program was in place. I cannot see why they have not moved because if they were to introduce the single-tiered system, that would dramatically reform the situation facing people in rural and northern communities. It would bring in a system and in fact as the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) points out, we probably would not even need this Bill, this amendment, if we had a single-tiered welfare system that was established across the province to provide equivalent benefits no matter where one is a citizen or resident of.

In fact, I have really wondered if perhaps there was an organization that had the resources, whether the actions of this Government could perhaps be challenged under the Charter of Rights. I really question whether it is legal under the Charter of Rights to have a system in place that does not treat one resident of this province the same as another resident.

You know what I find the most saddening about it is this is a federal- and provincial-funded program. It does receive some amount of money from the municipalities; but in all of the cases, the municipalities that have been harassing welfare recipients have not been—(interjection)— Well, for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), if he is not aware that is taking place, then I would suggest that he talk to people. I said before there are many areas that does not take place, but there have been clearly documented cases of where people have been harassed and given a one-way ticket out of town, instead of receiving what is justified for their dues.

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus), on a point of order.

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): I am sure that the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) was unintentional in his maligning and indicating motive to professional administrators and municipal authorities when he suggested that they were purposely harassing and going out of their way to make life difficult. I do not think he meant to impede that motive and I would like him to be given an opportunity to correct the record, withdraw those comments.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): I do not believe the Member had a point of order. If he was listening to my comments, he would have heard quite clearly that I said there are clear cases of situations where people have been harassed. I said that it was not something that applied to all municipalities, but there are clear evidences of where that has taken place. If the Member is not aware of that—I realize he represents the City of Winnipeg riding—if he perhaps get out to the rural and northern areas of this province and talk to people, he would realize that is an accurate statement. I am not talking about the City of Winnipeg.

I am talking about areas of this province which are suffering; people are receiving lower rates simply because of their area of residence in this province, and

that is unacceptable. I do not believe that it should make any difference, whether you live in a rural community or northern community or in Winnipeg, as to the kind of standard of living you have in this society.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Order. I will take the point of order under advisement and come back with a ruling.

The Honourable Member for Thompson can continue his remarks on the Bill.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) says he will make sure they get the Hansards. I hope he will make every effort to make sure that my speech is distributed to each and every rural and northern resident because I think they all support a fair system that is equal across the province. You know, this Minister of Northern Affairs should be the first one to be demanding a system that has equality for all Manitobans. Whether he is a rural MLA or supposedly as Minister of Northern Affairs, he should be out there demanding publicly that the Minister responsible for Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) implements a single-tiered system. Why should it make any difference? Why should a resident of the City of Winnipeg have an improved situation than a resident of a rural community or a northern community? Why should they be discriminated against simply because they live outside of the City of Winnipeg?

I am ashamed of the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) for not having stated that publicly. I wish he would send out his speech, Mr. Deputy Speaker, as well, if he cares to make one. If he cares to indicate why this Government does not stand for equality for rural and northern residents along with residents of the City of Winnipeg, why they were quite willing to put this on hold and stop a program that was put in place, Mr. Deputy Speaker. If the Minister wants to send out my speech and explain to his constituents and people across northern Manitoba why he is silent on this issue, I am most glad for him to do that because that I think is something they would like to hear.

As I was saying before I was interrupted by the Liberal Member, who I hope will take the time to check into what is happening across this province in terms of social assistance, to perhaps talk to a social assistance critic who I believe will be able to educate the Member on what is happening in this province in terms of social assistance. I do believe the Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) has raised a number of concerns and what is happening in this province. I think that perhaps the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) should be talking to the Member for St. Vital because if the Member wants to put his head in the sand and ignore the problem, I think that is unfortunate, but it is certainly not doing a service to this province.

As I was saying, we need a reform in this province, we need a reform that will bring in a single-tiered system. I have not heard the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) saying, "you've got it" in response to that because we do not. What we need, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is an improved system in terms of providing improved work incentives and training programs. We do have

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programs that are in place, a number of very good ones. The Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) introduced a number of significant programs, I know, when he was the Minister.

We need a number of comprehensive programs in place across the province, and I think what we have to do is we have to put our hand out to people in our communities and say -(interjection)- Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), once again, with his tremendous ability to add light to very serious matters, not to take seriously the fact. What I am saying is, as Members of this Legislature, we should be—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), on a point of order.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am just rising on a point of order. It is not parliamentary procedure and/or proper to impute motives. I was very serious about what I had said when I said that the NDP had their hand in the taxpayers' pocket right up to their shoulders and they took out everything they had. He was imputing motives that I was taking that lightly and I did not, nor did the people of Manitoba take it lightly, when they turfed him and his colleagues out of office.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Minister does not have a point of order. The Honourable Member for Thompson has the floor.

Mr. Ashton: I think it also should be noted for the record he does not have a point either, as is the normal case with the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey).

Mr. Ashton: I just want to say that we had indicated they were willing to be co-operative in this matter in trying to get this matter dealt with. If the Minister of Northern Affairs wants to use the occasion of my speech to get up and make comments on the record that he could make in a speech to this Legislature of his own giving, I think what we could do is we could extend this debate. I thought there was an intention on the part of all Parties to deal with the concerns, Mr. Deputy Speaker, very legitimate concerns, about income security, that is why we have indicated our willingness to be co-operative.

This is not our Bill, this is not what we want for social assistance in this province. We want a real reform, not a cosmetic reform that was put in place, in this particular case, as a result of a number of recommendations that had been placed.

This is not real reform at all. This is a smoke screen to hide the fact, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the Government is not moving on single-tiered welfare reform. I am not trying to say that this particular Bill is not a valid Bill in and as of itself, but I think that the average person in this province, with any sense of

what is happening, of the reality of poverty and social injustice in this province, if I was to send them a copy—yes, of my speech, if the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) has not done it already; I hope he will—but if they were to look at the debates in this Legislature, they would really wonder, I think, where the Government is.

This is not the thing that people are saying in rural and northern communities, or in the City of Winnipeg. They are saying that we need real reform, and that is not what this Government is doing. This Government is doing very little, if anything, for the poor of this province, and I know why. It is like with the Minister of Northern Affairs; he wants to send out my speech. I can imagine exactly what he would like to be able to say—that I have somehow suggested that all municipalities were harassing welfare recipients, when I stated, very clearly, that was not the case.

* (1510)

The Minister of Northern Affairs heard that. He will read it in Hansard. He can send out my speech to each and every municipality, because I will say to the Minister of Northern Affairs, and I will say to the Minister responsible for this Bill, that I will congratulate each and every municipality that has been treating its social allowance recipients fairly in this province—and many have—but I will also be the first one to state publicly, and I will be the first one to criticize any municipality that has not been treating social assistance recipients fairly.

I will do that because this is not a political game of sending out speeches to only certain select groups which the Minister of Northern Affairs would like to do, or misquoting what is happening, or getting involved, as the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus), in issues he knows nothing about, quite obviously. What we are really talking about is fairness, and, fundamentally, fairness for all Manitobans. That means that if there is harassment that is taking place, that it has to be identified. If there is harassment because of the system that is in place, the system has to be changed. What is unreasonable about that? What is unreasonable to ask for fairness in each and every area of the province? I do not believe it is unreasonable at all.

I think the real thing that this Conservative Government has to do, as it takes this Bill, is not try and attempt to say that they are really doing anything for the social assistance recipients of this province. They are not doing anything in terms of fairness or social justice so long as they refuse to implement a single-tiered welfare system and move into the real social allowance reform that we need. I can say that, yes, we will pass this Bill through and deal with it so it is put in place. We have indicated to the Acting House Leader that we will do that. I indicated even earlier it is standing in the name of a Member of the Legislature, and while we could perhaps leave it standing in that Member's name to allow for further debate, we feel that social assistance reform is an important issue. That is why we are willing to accommodate and co-operate in having this Bill go through the committee.

But I can tell you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I want to put it on the record, that if this Government is willing

to bring in a Bill that would bring in the real welfare reform we are talking about, the single-tiered welfare system and other reforms, I will state publicly now, we will co-operate on that Bill as well. We will expedite it. We will expedite it through this Legislature as soon as is physically possible, because for the New Democratic Party the correction of real social injustices and inequality in this province is a priority.

We want a reform, we want a single-tiered welfare system. We want the Government to bring in that Bill. We are going to be sitting here for many months to come. The Minister has a chance to go back, Mr. Deputy Speaker, to a department and try and get it through, once again, that insensitive Cabinet led by the frontbenchers such as the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), who clearly is insensitive to the needs of the poor in rural and northern areas in this province—clearly insensitive.

She has the chance to go back one more time and plead for equality in this province through the implementation of a single-tiered welfare system. We have the time. We are going to be here for some time yet, so let us perhaps hope that in passing this Bill today, this particular Bill, The Social Allowances Amendment Act (2), that we can look forward perhaps in January, or February, or even in March, to the introduction of The Social Allowances Amendment Act (2) that will bring in the real welfare reform that we need in this province, and not the kind of minor, if positive, reforms that we are seeing. Let us see that second Bill as we continue this Session.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order, it is my expectation that the Member now will close debate on second reading, but I understand that the House had granted leave to let the Bill stand in the name of the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie). I am wondering whether or not you may ask the House Leader of the third Party (Mr. Ashton) whether indeed that leave now be denied, so that the Bill legitimately can come forward for the call of a vote on second reading. So I wonder if you may ask the Leader of the New Democratic Party whether or not we can now move along even though the Bill should be left standing in the name of the Member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: As indicated by the Honourable Minister, the House has already granted leave to have this Bill stand in the name of the Honourable Member for Flin Flon. I understand that this is the desire now to have Bill 67 proceed to committee. Therefore, I would suggest that the House now formally withdraw that leave, given previously, denying the opportunity for the debate to stand in the name of the Honourable Member for Flin Flon, and thus proceed to passing this Bill to committee. Does the House concur with the suggestion of the Acting Government House Leader (Mr. Manness) to withdraw the Bill, given leave earlier today to have the debate stand—the Honourable Member for Thompson.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think I had indicated in my remarks that we were ready and willing to have

this matter go to committee. I am not sure if the mechanism really should be in terms of denying leave. I think, by leave, we could proceed to committee with the understanding that the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) did not wish to speak any further. With that, we would certainly be willing to accommodate the House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The Minister of Family Services.

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I just wanted to put a few remarks on the record. I do appreciate the speeches given by the Members opposite, and their spoken support for the Bill that is before us now, Bill 67. The Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) and his colleagues have again raised, of course, the one-tier system. Some of his colleagues seem to have a new-found interest in it, which they did not have for quite a number of years while they were in Government. It tempts me to give a lengthy speech on that subject, but I do want this to go on to committee.

I would like, before I sit down, to remind the Members that there is a committee in place made up of members from the UMM and MAUM, City of Winnipeg, and the administrators association, who, in conjunction with members of my department, have been working on the subject of reform of the welfare system. That was announced some time ago. They may have forgotten that, but anyway, that will be the subject of, I am sure, other discussions at other times, so I will not dwell on that today.

In the interest of time, my department is quite anxious because of the deadlines, which the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) will appreciate having been the Minister. There are certain things which have to be done in preparation for a move of this sort and, of course, the department wishes to get on with them.

Having said that, I will encourage Members to support this Bill and thank them for the time they have taken in the House to debate it. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

BILL NO. 79—THE MUNICIPAL ASSESSMENT AND CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS ACT

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner), Bill No. 79, The Municipal Assessment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur l'évaluation municipale et modifications corrélatives, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch), the Honourable Member for Inkster.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, we would like to deny leave for the Member of Springfield. Due to circumstances beyond his control, unfortunately he will not be able to speak on it today. But in speaking with the Government Deputy House Leader (Mr. Downey), I am under the impression that

he will be given the opportunity when it is in committee to give some type of remarks to it in order that we can facilitate the passage today.

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): May I speak to the Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

Mr. Carr: Thank you very much. I am glad to put a few remarks on the record and it is a very important Bill, Bill No. 79. I have a little bit of a history with the issue because as a journalist I can remember once doing a feature story on the whole issue of assessment. I was amazed at the complexity of the issue and it was incredible to me how few people in the Province of Manitoba actually understood the intricacies of assessment.

The irony is that there are very few issues which touch people more directly than this one does because the contents of this Bill and the way it is implemented deal with the family finances of virtually everyone in the Province of Manitoba who owns any property at all, whether in rural Manitoba or in the City of Winnipeg. So it is a Bill which will be watched very carefully by the people of Manitoba because it affects the bottom line. It affects their bottom line as property owners.

It has been a long time since there has been any major reform of the assessment process in Manitoba. What is more, municipalities, and I think the City of Winnipeg is probably the worst offender, had defied the Act which required the City of Winnipeg to reassess property every three years.

I am not sure precisely how long it was in between assessments, but I am safe to say that it was something over 15 years. The result of that, of course, was to perpetuate and embed inequities in the tax system. Rather than trying to take inequities and correct them every three years, they were allowed to be sustained by inactions of municipalities and the City of Winnipeg, as I say, was principal among the offenders.

* (1520)

We were meeting with some executive members of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities this morning and we were told that at least in some 15 years—12 years between assessments, which had the effect of, as I say, sustaining and perpetuating inequities, which is not a good idea.

We note that this Bill requires there be reassessment every three years. We also know The City of Winnipeg Act required reassessment every three years and it was ignored for many, many years by succeeding councils of the City of Winnipeg. So, we hope this Bill will provide some guidance and some direction for municipalities.

The most important principle of course in this Bill, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is the principle of equity. Everybody wants to believe they are paying a fair property tax, and that unfortunately has not been the case in Manitoba over these many, many years since there was any municipal tax reform.

The Minister said, I believe, in some of his printed material which was distributed to Members of the Legislature when this Bill was introduced, that it had in fact been generations since there had been any important changes to municipal tax reform in Manitoba. So it is long overdue.

(Mr. Bob Rose, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

We are a little surprised I might add, that this Bill was introduced in early November—so late in the Session, and now we are told by Members on the Government side that there is a big rush to send this to committee, to hear from the people of Manitoba, and then it has to be passed.

This Bill could just as easily have been introduced at the beginning of the Session so people in Manitoba, and as I said in the beginning of my remarks, who will be affected personally by the contents of this Bill would have had a chance to bring their concerns to committee in an organized and maybe even a co-ordinated way, so the Government would know what is on the minds of citizens, but they did not do that.

They chose rather to compress time. They are forcing individuals to hurry it up, not only Members on this side of the House who want to put some remarks on the record, but also the people of Manitoba who have intelligent and important things to say about the effect of this Bill on themselves. We are a little annoyed, Mr. Acting Speaker, and surprised that the Government would have taken this kind of approach to a Bill which it, itself, considers to be a priority.

If the Bill is the priority the Government says it is, why was it not introduced in June? Why were people not given a chance to co-ordinate and prepare the kinds of representations they want to make to the committee?

Having said that, we as responsible Members of the Opposition are not holding up this Bill. We realize it is important. We realize there are time constraints, so we are not going to play the Government's game. We are going to be responsible as Members of the Opposition and expedite the movement of this Bill onto committee, so the people of Manitoba can have their say.

There are some problems in the Bill. One problem is the use of the words, "assessed value." The problem with using the words assessed value is that there are very divergent and different ways of interpreting what that value is. I may have one sense of value, the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) may have another. The courts, yet again, could have a different way of evaluating what value means. So it makes sense that the definition of assessed value refer explicitly and specifically to market value.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Weir Report—and I know many of the recommendations of the Weir Report have been followed by the Government and are contained within the Bill. The Weir Report says and I quote on the subject of the valuation of real property, "that all valuation should be at the assessor's opinion of the fair value of the property. That is to say, the price at which the assessors believe the property would most likely have sold in an open market

transaction involving a buyer and seller, both of whom desire to come to terms, but were under no undue constraints to do so."

It goes on to say that, "The prime consideration in the establishment of the valuation of real property should be sales data from the 24-month period immediately preceding the year in which the valuation of the property is being established."

It is a solid recommendation. It is sensible, and it is practical and we wonder if the Minister will consider the consequences, or the effects of using the words "assessed value" when it makes no reference at all to market value and the importance of the distinction between the two. I am sure that when the Minister receives delegation to the committee stage, there will be many who will bring up that problem and who will reinforce the sense of ambiguity that the Bill now engenders in the minds of those who read it.

The other interesting part of the Bill is the one of portioning. The legislation gives the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council, in other words the Cabinet, the power to determine portions. That is to say, how much of the total tax roll of the Province of Manitoba will be derived from the various classes of property? How much will come from residential class? How much will come from farms? How much will come from industrial and commercial? And so it goes.

The power then, for the Government of Manitoba to determine through Cabinet fiat or through Order-in-Council of what proportion of the entire assessment role is paid by any one category or one class of property, is a political decision. We would like to know how those political decisions will be made? What will the criteria be that lead up to that political decision?

Because these, after all, are the most important decisions of all when it comes to evaluating what is fair on the tax rolls. As long as the decision is kept in Cabinet to determine the portioning or the relative tax that each classification of property will pay, then the Government has at its disposal all of the power to determine how much tax I pay, how much tax the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) pays, how much tax all Manitobans pay relative to the other classes of property.

We would be very interested in knowing what system the Government intends to operate under and implement to determine how portioning is going to work. It is a critical question.

We were pleased to see in the Bill, Mr. Acting Speaker, that heritage buildings will be protected, will be exempted from property tax, as will farm buildings over 60 years old. This is a recognition on the part of the Government, we share it, we admire it, and we applaud it, that we are now growing older as a community and as a society, and as we grow older it is going to be more and more important for us to preserve those elements of our past that we cherish; that we wish to save; that we wish to enshrine; that we wish to pass on to our children, and we know that in the case of rural Manitoba very often buildings were simply bulldozed because there was no point on paying tax

on these buildings. Well, the provisions within Bill No. 79 will now make that unlikely if not impossible. So the possibility now of taking some of this precious Manitoba history and preserving it is more likely, and to the extent that it is we believe that is a very positive element of this Bill.

* (1530)

The whole question of exemptions is a very tricky one. It is not unlike the goods and services tax. When you start exempting classes of items from the goods and services tax and all of a sudden those who are not exempt say me too, I want a part of it. Why is it that this person was exempt from the tax but I am not, or this class of people, or this piece of merchandise?

That gives rise to division, to controversy, and it is very difficult to achieve a consensus once you have admitted as a part of public policy that you are going to allow exemptions, then there will always be those who will argue that they ought to be exempt. That is a fact of life. Once that premise is established, once that leap of public policy is made that there are going to be exemptions then you are going to have trouble.

Let me just point out an example. The Centennial Projects and Tax Status Act lists a number of institutions which are exempt from property taxes: Artspace, the Centennial Concert Hall, the Manitoba Theatre Centre, the Franco-Manitobain Cultural Centre, the Ukrainian Cultural and Ethnic Education Centre, the Royal Winnipeg Ballet building, the Winnipeg Art Gallery and the Prairie Theatre Exchange.

If you were an executive member of an ethnic organization which wished to build a cultural centre in Dauphin or in Winnipeg or anywhere throughout the Province of Manitoba why would you not say, "me too." Why could you not make an argument that if two ethnic minorities in Manitoba were given property tax exemption in order to make it easier for them, in the long term, to sustain the costs of a cultural centre how can you say "no" to the others? This is maybe the most graphic example that I can come up with, Mr. Acting Speaker, to show how dangerous it is to say "yes" to some and to say "no" to others.

I realize, even in the 19 or 20 months that I have had the privilege and the pleasure of being a Member of this Assembly, that is what politics is all about. It is about making choices. There are very few choices which are easy. There is a political downside to almost every choice you make. There is always a balancing act between what you think is in the public interest and what is not. The consequences, often, for politicians is to act on what it believes to be in the public interest but to lose some political support in the process.

This example that I raise about fairness of exemptions leads to yet another question. The province can unilaterally determine that there will be exemptions in classes or categories of property, and the consequential loss of revenue to the municipality is of no concern to the provincial Government. There is no grant that goes from the Province of Manitoba to the municipality when the province says that, unilaterally, that land is exempt from property taxes.

You have to ask the question, Mr. Acting Speaker, in the context of the first principle that we announced on this Bill, that is the principle of fairness and equity. Is it fair to the municipalities for the province to say you must forgo this revenue and there will be no compensation from the province?

I ask it now in the context of second reading debate as a rhetorical question. I am sure when delegations are heard by the Minister those questions will be asked, and the Minister may want to review his own sense of fairness as it relates to this issue, the issue of the province saying to the municipalities these lands, these properties are exempt from taxation, you, therefore, will lose the revenue that would otherwise flow to your municipalities, and the province has no responsibility to compensate you. I ask the Minister to deal with that rhetorical question today when he has the opportunity during the second reading.

Another element of this Bill is to institute province-wide standards for municipal assessment. That is good. That is a progressive step, and we support that. It has been very important to determine, as a principle, that all Manitobans, regardless of where they live, are subject to the same standards and the same implementation of assessment. The Bill does that, and we congratulate the Minister for moving there.

The issue of phasing in is an interesting one. The Bill says that where there are inequities, where through reassessment there are some property owners who will be forced to pay much more tax than they had under the old system, municipalities are given the legislative mandate to phase in those increases over a three-year period.

That is probably a good idea, because in some cases I am sure the increases are going to be jarring. If they happened all at the same time in one year there could be irate property taxpayers in the Province of Manitoba who realize that from one year to the next they are paying extraordinarily more than they have. The phase-in period allows for property taxpayers to ease in to the new structure.

Also, as I said before, to look at reassessments every three years will hopefully correct the injustices of the past where inequities were allowed to be sustained over a long period of time, over 10 or sometimes 15 years.

In conclusion, let me say that this is a comprehensive Bill, it is a complex Bill, it does not lend itself through the language of the legislation or even the simple ways in which the Minister tries to explain it to the people for quick understanding. It is not what you would call thrilling or exciting language. It is a lot like watching paint dry, some would say, but it is very important.

Not every issue we debate in this House affects the net income, the spending power, the ability of Manitobans to have disposable income. This one does. It affects literally everyone in this province, every family in this province.

The Bill has come a long way to consolidate all of the issues into one piece of legislation. We think it goes a fair distance to establish the principle of equity and

fairness. We are unhappy with the process that has led us to this rushed, hurry-up way of dealing with such an important piece of legislation. We are expediting the process, because we realize there are deadlines and we anxiously await delegations that we expect to hear in committee. I thank Members for their attention.

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak to Bill No. 79, The Municipal Assessment and Consequential Amendments Act.

This Bill is, I guess one could say, the culmination of work that has been undertaken since 1978. I recall in 1978 with the—he was still Deputy—or just in the process of retiring, Jack McNair, discussing a process that we could move forward to take a very serious look at revamping and trying to bring about a greater equity in the property assessment system in this province.

* (1540)

Although I did not have an opportunity to move that process forward, our Government having lost the election in 1978, the new Government of the Day did appoint the Weir Commission. The Weir Commission held hearings around this province and there was a legislative review committee. As well, once former Premier Walter Weir made his recommendations to this House—went forward and got further public input.

There were, if I recall correctly, about 150 or 160 recommendations made by the Weir Commission and close to a hundred of those recommendations have already been implemented. While those recommendations have been implemented, what I would consider the most far-reaching and consequential of those recommendations will flow from this legislation. They will be what I would consider the most politically sensitive and will have the greatest impact on residents of this province. That being, the bringing into being the new assessment data which has been carried on across this province over the last number of years. I guess it was last year when it was completed.

The new data base, all property now in the Province of Manitoba, has been reassessed on an evaluation basis of, I guess, what would be known as a reference year or reference base of 1985. Although I do not believe the City of Winnipeg is yet at that reference point in terms of their assessment, they will be moving forward to bring about equality across this province.

But Mr. Chairman, what is going to be changing in this legislation, of course the fundamental one for rural Manitoba, is the removal of the exemption of farm residences and outbuildings. That essentially is the major feature of this Bill.

The Keystone Agricultural Producers, the Union of Manitoba Municipalities, have in fact lobbied for these—I should not say “these” changes, but at least the changes to treat homes.

An Honourable Member: Did the Farmers Union?

Mr. Uruski: I think the Farmers Union probably have supported it as well. I am not sure of their position on this one, but they have. These comments—advice came from the Minister and I accept his advice.

The placing of rural residences as any other property, or in comparison to any other home anywhere in the province, I believe is generally accepted throughout the province. Although I must say, Mr. Chairman, that when the tax bills come out, I venture to say that will be a different story. As much as we here can talk about principles and fairness, the assessment system is not understood generally throughout this province, whether you are an urbanite or a rural person the system is not understood.

To try and explain the relationship between assessment and the bill you pay requires the amount of mill rate which a given municipality or school division will impose. For those of us who have been involved in municipal or provincial politics it may seem like a relatively simple equation. However, because most people cannot relate to those numbers on the assessment roll they have a very difficult time of making that, I guess what I would call, transition to really understand the impact.

We are all hoping the updating of the assessment roll, to as close to current values as we can, will bring about a greater understanding of the system and may be easier for all of us to explain the process to our constituents.

Mr. Chairman, this Bill will create a number of difficulties which I see from my quick study of this Bill and that is, for example, the question or at least the issue of farm land. On farm land, basically current market value or at least the 1985 value will be the base for assessment. However, if the land—and here we have enough examples of the difficulty right within the boundaries of the perimeter of the City of Winnipeg; the assessment of farm land in the boundaries of the City of Winnipeg is assessed at a far higher rate than the agricultural productivity of that land.

So this Bill and the Minister, and I say to the Minister, should be looking at even providing a two-tier system of evaluation on farm land. We in the—I guess it would be the middle '70s proposed, in fact, such amendments. As Government we were deluged with complaints from residents along what would be known as the horticulture row, the Henderson Highway-Lockport area, where farmers had small chunks of land. The land, being under pressure for housing development and other development, they said, hey, the new value is putting us out of business.

It was proposed that a two-tier system be implemented. If the land stayed in agriculture one rate would be paid, but if that land at any time in the future was sold for higher development then there would have to be a retroactive higher rate assessment and higher rate taxation paid on that land.

An Honourable Member: Why did you not go ahead with it?

Mr. Uruski: Well, Mr. Chairman, we brought that legislation in and when the public hearings were held in committee, I want to tell you, a large number of market gardeners came to that committee and opposed it. They wanted the best of both worlds. I have to admit

that. They came to committee and said, no, we do not want to go this way, but you are taxing us too high. So the Bill, in fact, was withdrawn. The Bill was withdrawn in the mid-'70s.

I want to say to the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner), and even through him to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns)—and I am sure he would want to see this—that having a dual system may, as well, encourage the assessment of other lands in rural Manitoba, which should not be put into agriculture, to be assessed at a lower rate and keep those lands in their natural state for wildlife habitat.

For his—I just do not recall, or remember the name of the conservation program they have had, the alternate habitat or whatever. In the Minister of Agriculture's (Mr. Findlay) constituency there is a program—(interjection)—Habitat Enhancement Land Use Program. If you had a two-tier system, you would be able to really do something fundamental to enhance that kind of movement on farm land. Farmers would not be pressured to put that land into agricultural use. They in fact could make the decision to leave that land in its natural state. As a result, as a consequence of that, the assessment on that land would not be at the agricultural or productivity basis. It would be assessed at a lower base to take into account its natural uses for keeping lands in their natural state and in fact lessening the assessment on them, because they would not be pushed to be put into a higher evaluation and could in fact then be encouraged to be kept off the market.

The difficulty that I guess we will have, that I have, and I am sure many farm people will have with this legislation, will be now trying to reconcile the move now to in fact exempt all farm land. Effectively for some large landholders, I guess with the 35 percent rebate on school taxes, the provincial school tax program has probably been eliminated from very large landholdings.

What will be difficult will be the transition, especially for those farm operators and I guess that you could say livestock, poultry producers, hog producers, dairy farmers who have very expensive capital investments into agriculture production, but may not have a very large land base. That transition for those will be very difficult and we really need to know I think a bit more in terms of the data that the Minister has provided to my colleague, the Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohma), on the impacts. We need to know much more on how those changes will impact on farmers.

The one area I would, and I do not know my data, and I am just basically raising concerns, because I believe we have to be very careful and that is the whole area of the Hutterite colony, the Hutterian brethren. They have massive buildings, primarily most of them for hogs and for grain storage, and those in some of whom are in supply management in terms of eggs and some poultry, but do not have a very large land base based on the number of families they have in their unit. You see, while they may have 3,000 or 4,000 acres, it may seem like a lot of land to most of us, but when you start putting into, as a comparison, 15 or 20 families in a colony and start dividing those families into the number of acres, you will find that many of those

colonies may have a land base of anywhere from 200 to say 400 or 500 acres at maximum. It would not even be that, it would probably be 200 to maybe 350 acres per family, which by Manitoba farm standards would be very small. So we do not know what the impact will be on the residents of Hutterite colonies.

* (1550)

We ask for the Minister to try and get greater clarification on that data with respect to this Bill because they have put in—I must say that the Government has put in a cushioning factor or a cushioning tool in this legislation to prevent massive increases in municipal taxation from occurring. That tool is totally in the hands of municipal councils. There is no appeal to their decisions. If there is a municipal council which is not very sympathetic to a certain segment of ratepayers in their municipality, those ratepayers are in trouble. They could face a huge increase by virtue of the realignment of the assessment and not have a sympathetic council to go to.

I say to the Government, while in spirit it sounds like a good move allowing local councils to make their own decisions, I venture to say that it would be my druthers that there be an appeal provision for those citizens of rural municipalities who would not be heard to their satisfaction by municipal councils. I have had situations just this past year in which I have defended ratepayers against their councils and with no appeal mechanism in the process. I mean, we embarrass the council, we have got the media after them, we have citizens who are in the same boat as these people were petitioning the council. In the end council did as they saw fit and they were not sympathetic to the case that was put forward.

I ask the Minister to look at amendments that in fact would allow for an appeal to councils' decisions, if there is no sympathy. I give you one example. In the community of Arborg, one apartment block, and I do not know how it will be treated by this, but one apartment block in one community may have, by virtue of the assessment, inordinate increase in their municipal taxation by the new Bill. Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister says that cannot happen. He may be right, but in the event that something does happen and council is not sympathetic to that one property owner, where does he or she go?

He can come to the Minister, and the Minister will be very sympathetic, and the Government will be very sympathetic but he will say, I am sorry. The law says the rights of changing and apportioning and phasing-in is up to council. I really sympathize with you, but really it is up to council to make that decision. That is shirking responsibility. That is shirking responsibility in a case where councils are not very sympathetic. If the Minister says that he is giving them the right to make their decisions, then I would say to the Minister he should have a provision in The Municipal Act saying that all ratepayers of municipal councils, No. 1, have the right to go to the Ombudsman. That municipal councils will be subjected to the same provisions of The Ombudsman Act as all Government departments, that is one.

Number two, that an appeal to the Municipal Board should be allowed—at least the Municipal Board can oversee whether that council took into account factors that may have arrived at their decision. If there is information that they did not take into account, that the Municipal Board could be empowered to hear those appeals, or some other process, but it should in fact be there.

I also believe that there has to be more data provided on the citizens of Winnipeg. We do not know what the impacts will be for citizens in the City of Winnipeg, we really do not. I ask the Minister to get his department to provide that information.

Those are some of my concerns that deal with the farm situation because farmers will be affected, and in some areas negatively impacted, especially those in the livestock or poultry sectors where they have extensive building investment, while they may be small in proportion to the number of ratepayers in a municipality. I say to the Minister, rethink your position on the whole question of allowing the total decision to be made by municipal councils.

I know, Mr. Acting Speaker, that the Minister will get up and say, well, you guys allowed the City of Winnipeg to make their own decisions in that whole area. I, for one, would be prepared to have that discretion.

An Honourable Member: Now you say that.

Mr. Uruski: I do say that, but I am not an urban Member, so my influence in terms of legislation—I believe there should be a mechanism right across the board, a mechanism of appeal from those decisions of councils.

The Government and Mr. Weir recommended doing away with exemptions. I see that political reality and common sense have come into play, but once you have provided an exemption, it is high impossible to take it away. It should not, unless there is something totally wrong with the kind of exemptions that have been provided, or some offsetting compensatory mechanisms put into place. Those exemptions make as much sense today as they did when they were brought in.

I want to say to the Minister that his list is not complete, and I do not know whether in the Bill they left it out deliberately or inadvertently. In the Bill they talk about providing exemptions for Crown corporations, but in the Bill they list them. They list Hydro, they list the Manitoba Water Services Board, they list a whole host of Crown agencies. Yet those Crown agencies pay grants in lieu of taxes. That is common. Why would they have left off the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation? I do not know.

I raise that to the Minister to let him take that under advisement. Why would they let that Crown agency—they pay full taxes, but grants in lieu of taxes. I know the O/Cs are submitted annually. Just like the Liquor Commission, like all the others, they come through Cabinet, and they put in their payments. The Crown is exempt, but by virtue of Order-in-Council those taxes and those levies are paid through an Order-in-Council. I do not know why they would have left one Crown agency of this province and excluded the others.

As well, Mr. Acting Speaker, there is another issue. Maybe it is covered, maybe I did not read the legislation properly. In many communities, especially with our Welcome Home Program over the last number of years, there have been a number of community residences that are operated as non-profit agencies of the community, that are in fact hostels for our handicapped. Those residences, those boards, are totally non-profit entities, and whether or not they are—I do not believe they are exempt today. I know those boards operate within arm's length from the Government. I know the difficulty that those boards have in trying to not only stay within their budget, but trying to raise funding to supplement those budgets which are not adequate for them to provide a standard of support and assistance to those citizens in our midst who are handicapped with the kind of quality of care that they deserve.

* (1600)

I ask the Minister to look at those situations. You have, as well, the crisis shelters for women that are coming up throughout rural and northern Manitoba. Those shelters operate totally, or—I should not say totally—virtually on a volunteer basis. The assistance that those centres receive are on per diems, but they are there as shelters to spouses who have been victimized. They are there as no different from a hospital. They are no different in terms of their care from any other community institution. I look at this whole question of exemptions for these areas that should be considered.

Mr Acting Speaker, I said earlier the impact data that is there is still lacking. I would hope that the Minister will provide additional impacts. Maybe I will give him a suggestion, that when they print the tax notices, that they provide the old assessment, the old mill rate and its impact, and the new assessment and the new mill rate, so that taxpayers will at least be able to say, here is what it was, and here is what it is.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Many, of course, can go to their records and pull last year's and this year's. Maybe some explanation on the tax bill would be good, so the citizens, when they see some of those shifts, quite frankly, some of them, I venture to say, will fall over. I say that in the kindest terms. They will fall over from the shock, to say, oh, last year my assessment was \$5,000, and this year it is \$55,000, or some higher figure. It will be a shock enough to cause a number of seizures throughout this province. I hope not, Mr. Speaker. I say to the Minister, one possible way for consideration would be to provide a comparison on the tax bill for the citizens of this province.

I hope this Government will not rush this legislation through, that they will allow all citizens an opportunity to make their presentations felt and heard by committee. I know this Minister was certainly pressuring us to get on with this Bill, and we have not had this Bill here very long. He knows, and I am not sure whether he tried to tell people that some of this slow-up is part of the problems caused by the NDP. He did not, he says he did not. I am pleased that he did not try to

point fingers at the previous administration because, quite frankly, the data were not complete until last year, and the Bill is moving along in its normal course.

If anything, if the Minister could have had it here, say a couple of months sooner, we may have not been in the time line that he says we are under, but I believe the Minister may even want to if necessary provide a dual tax Bill. As I stated, look at the new system, here is how it would impact you on the old system, here is the new system. Have a dual tax Bill. That would give citizens of this province at least an opportunity to get a better understanding of how the new system will work and how it impacts on them.

We need more analysis on the impacts, I say that to the Minister. I say for him, I ask him, to get his officials working on two scenarios for us: here is what it will be like under the present, and here is what it will be like under the new system. I know we have had some examples. What is it, another month, month and a half, the new budgets will be in? Clearly that could be provided. I think the Minister should consider providing as much up-to-date information to Members of this House as possible.

I know that change is inevitable but the Government will have to take full responsibility for this legislation in terms of how it is presented, how it is understood by the citizens of this province so that assessment does not continue to be the ogre and the misunderstood area that it is by what I would say at least the vast majority of people in this province. There are going to be many concerns about how this legislation will be impacted. I have raised just a brief number, and I am sure that there are many other instances that will come forward in committee that I am not aware of and that we will have to be sensitive to. We are prepared to have this Bill move along to committee with the caveats that my colleague for Dauphin had raised, some of which I may have repeated but I have also raised. We will await to hear comments from the people of this province.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I also have a few brief comments to make on this Bill, and I want to echo some of the comments that have been made by the Members of our caucus.

I had the fortune to sit on the Municipal Affairs Standing Committee that travelled throughout the province, in many rural communities, northern communities in 1983 and looked at the reports, the Weir Report, that had been commissioned in 1979. It gave me a great deal of insight into the complexities of assessment of property taxation. I must say that the mere mention of property taxes seemed to stir up a major reaction in most communities that we went into.

Many of the presentations that were made to the committee were in fact critical not really of assessment issues but of the very concept of property taxation itself. Many people felt that property taxes were unfair in the sense that they were not geared toward the ability to pay, and we heard many presentations from individuals from that basis. There were many very good presentations on the Weir Report and assessment issues

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themselves, particularly from municipal officials who had first-hand experience of dealing in their own communities with some of the concerns about assessment and concerns about the impact that had on individual taxpayers in this province.

I also gained an appreciation of the Weir Report itself. I think that credit should be given to the former Premier of the province, he did a tremendous job on the report. It was a difficult issue. The report that was brought out was certainly a very clear report. I note with the Bill today some element of the Weir Report, some of the basic tenets are being adopted. Although I think even the Minister himself would admit that some of the other proposals that were introduced, or suggested to be introduced by the Weir Report, have not been implemented, particularly as the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) pointed out, in terms of minimizing exemptions.

The Weir Report was very clear in terms of minimizing, to the point of eliminating, many existing exemptions. In effect, I believe the Minister has followed the course that the Member for Interlake had outlined, and that is there is a great deal of difficulty when exemptions have been granted to then shift direction and deny groups and organizations who have received those exemptions, that kind of exemption, on a continued basis when their very existence, their budgeting, their whole financial situation is dependent upon the existence of those exemptions.

Given the fact the Minister has gone that route, I think the Member for Interlake (Mr. Uruski) made a very good point, that is, that the Minister should also be willing to look at similar exemptions. One I know, and it is certainly a major concern in my area, would be crisis centres. It is an area of major social concern, abuse against women and children. We have facilities that are put in place to deal with that. I think the argument can and probably will be made to the Minister that if we are going to be, for example, accepting the importance in terms of social policy and adopting an exemption for child care centres that a similar exemption should be considered for crisis centres.

* (1610)

I know the Minister is aware of the dilemmas that he has to deal with. I hope he will be openminded in terms of possible amendments, particularly at committee stage, that may be brought forward to deal with some of these exemptions. As I said, I think there are some groups that have a similar focus and the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) identified some as well. I would like to give credit to all the Members of the House who have pointed to this particular concern, the fact that you have some exemptions.

I note also that one of the implications of this Bill is that the Minister is attempting in a different way to deal with the current dispute in terms of taxation between municipalities and tribal organizations following the recent court decision involving the City of Thompson and KTC. I addressed this matter quite extensively in Estimates. I would say to the Minister, and I think the Minister would be the first one to agree, that I believe

this is going to end up back in the courts given the course of action that has been taken. It is unfortunate in one sense. I would have perhaps ideally hoped that the matter could have been resolved out of court, but I think we are well beyond that stage now. I think the Minister would be the first one to accept that it is going to end up in the court situation.

I outlined my own concerns in terms of the implications of the decision in Estimates and would certainly direct Members to my comments in Estimates. At that time, of course, we were dealing with a different proposal from the Minister which the Minister subsequently did not follow through on. We have ended up with the interesting situation of the Minister proposing something, the Liberal Municipal Affairs Critic bringing in the section, and then the Government itself going in another direction. It has been an interesting process, perhaps somewhat confusing to the municipalities involved, many of whom were out actively lobbying for this section that the Minister was going to bring in but did not, and the Member for the Liberal Caucus sort of criticized and then brought in himself. I got rather confused as to where certainly the Liberal Member was coming from on that particular issue and I think -(interjection)-

I am advised it is Christmas. It will be Christmas in 11 days, I will probably get into the Christmas mood probably next Friday, on the 22nd, around 12:30 p.m. I was not saying this out of any meanness of spirit to the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch), in fact I wish him well. I realize I cannot exactly indicate to the House the situation the Member is in, other than to indicate that we all wish him well, a speedy recovery. I know he has been injured, I guess—in the interest of the Christmas spirit so people could pass on my best wishes on a personal note.

I still do have that confusion about what exactly the Liberal Critic was trying to do on the particular issues. I said, I have stated my views in Estimates quite clearly. I had hoped a long-term resolution could be reached to the dispute that was fair and reasonable and recognized the situation which has arisen out of the court situation.

I suspect this Act will only bring about a short-term situation and it will end up in the courts. As I said, I am sure the Minister is aware of that. In fact, the Minister in his comments on second reading may wish to outline to the Members of this Legislature what he anticipates will happen in that particular area. I think, it will be an issue which we will be dealing with in the future, whether it be the Estimates level or at some future time in terms of the Municipal Assessment Act itself.

I did want to, as I said, talk very generally about the Bill, and really I think the point has been well made by Members. There are some basic principles that have been adopted in the Bill which I think are acceptable. I would say the response to the Weir Report—I would call this to a certain extent a Bill that is, shall we say, a watered-down Weir Report. I think even Members of the Government would acknowledge that. It attempts to take some of the spirit of the Weir Report, weigh-in some of the political considerations—you know, there are some of the moves which came out of the Weir

Report that would have been very politically unpopular and I think the Members opposite were quite aware of that. This is something which reflects that.

I think this is also a valid criticism, which has been made by Members, about the timing of the Bill. I recognize that this Bill was probably not ready. I take the Minister at his word, but I do not believe it was ready until a couple of months ago.

It has to be noted for the record, this is the type of Bill which ideally we should have been dealing with back in June, for example. That would have given us a far greater period of time to analyze the implications of the report and also come up with proposed improvements. That is what we will be doing, even given the fact we have had it, I believe, for about a month and a half, two months, which is not the time frame I would say would really be ideal for a Bill of this magnitude.

Still beside that, Mr. Speaker, we will be bringing up amendments, realistic amendments to the Minister, perhaps aimed at improving certain sections, perhaps aimed at a number of cases which have been suggested about having a more consistent approach, particularly in terms of exemptions. We will be dealing with some of the implementation questions as well. I think that has to be considered.

We are quite willing, in fact, we have indicated today that we will be passing this Bill through to committee because I think the committee stage on this Bill is going to be the most important stage. I want to make it clear that we wish to help accommodate with this Bill, recognizing the time frames that are in place for municipalities or school boards. We wish to do that, even with some reluctance, given the fact that we would have preferred to have this Bill much earlier in this particular Session. Nonetheless, we are willing to accommodate it.

* (1620)

On the other hand, we have to make amply sure there is every opportunity for public presentation on this Bill. I believe, and I have indicated this to the Minister, there will be a number of people who will be wishing to make presentations, both organizations and individuals as well. By the mere fact of passing this through second reading, the number of people who are going to make appearances, who perhaps have not indicated it yet to the Clerk of the Legislature they will be doing so, will add to an already growing list of people.

It is important that we deal with those concerns. I do not think we should in any way, shape or form have any sense that somehow the committee stage is a formality. I think, on a Bill of this magnitude and of this importance, the committee stage is absolutely vital. We have identified that, Mr. Speaker. We have gone through the Bill, and we will have a number of possible amendments. We have indicated that. We certainly are encouraging the Minister to look at a number of our concerns. Perhaps the Minister himself can bring in amendments.

The bottom line, Mr. Speaker, is the committee stage—which I assume we will be into next week, which

I assume we will answer in our committee hearings—is important.

With those remarks, Mr. Speaker, what I want to do is indicate that we will allow this Bill to go to committee. I have raised a number of concerns. Our Members have raised a number of concerns. We would appreciate the response through the Minister and his second reading comments. We look forward to being able to go to committee next week and complete the Bill in an orderly way which will accommodate the needs, not only of the school boards and municipalities, but also the taxpayers of this province who have every right and every reason to expect that they will have a clear indication of what impact this package of changes—which will lead to an increased tax for some and a lowered amount for others and the same for others.

The question that Manitobans are asking today is, how will this affect me? This will only become clear as we do proceed through the Bill and attempt to put it in place for the upcoming fiscal year.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Penner) will be closing debate—the Honourable Minister.

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure for me to be able to rise today in the House and accept with thanks the support both the Opposition Parties have indicated to the assessment reform legislation and The Consequential Amendments Act. It is, as has been described by numerous speakers to the Bill in the last couple of days, certainly a complex Bill. It is probably also one of the largest and most comprehensive pieces of legislation which has been before this House for a number of years.

I want to recognize all the work which has been done throughout the years on this Bill by not only our Party but by the previous Government and Members before, when the Honourable Sterling Lyon, former Conservative Premier, had the foresight to put in place the Weir Committee, recognizing the need to take a look at how we assess properties and whether in fact properties are assessed in a fair way.

I also want to recognize the work which was done by the former Minister of Municipal Affairs when he chaired the committee that toured Manitoba and asked Manitobans to reflect on assessment and what their views were on assessment and assessment reforms. I believe that exercise proved the need that had been identified during the Weir Committee's exercise and their many hours which they spent on identifying the areas in assessment that need to be changed.

I want to also at this time recognize the many hours my Cabinet colleagues on the Assessment Reform Committee of Cabinet spent on trying to put together a Bill which would suit the needs, of not only today's Manitobans, but also the Manitobans of the 21st Century. I want to express my appreciation to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) who co-chaired that committee, and also spent many hours analyzing information which had been presented by the

department, and trying to put together a Bill that would suit the needs.

Also, at this time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to recognize the work the department has done on an ongoing basis through, I suppose, almost 12 years to bring this legislation to the stage we have here today. I thank, especially, my Deputy Minister and his staff for the amount of work and the many hours they have spent burning the midnight oil when we have discussed the various aspects of this important piece of legislation.

I listened with interest to some of the comments which were made during the past two days on some of the parts of the Bill. Reflecting on some of the comments which have been made, I have to agree with some of the speakers that there are parts of the legislation which could have probably been written in a different manner to suit the needs of some people.

But when you reflect on the total province, including all the residents and businesses within our province, including the City of Winnipeg and all the other urban centres and the rural parts of Manitoba, and then assessing the totality of the legislation, I believe this Bill represents virtually in all aspects a complete move towards fairness in a total sense.

We all recognize that when you write a piece of legislation as comprehensive as this, there will be some winners and there will be some losers when municipalities start applying taxes on the new formula. It is our belief there will in the long term be many, many more winners than there will be people hurt by this legislation. Therefore I believe that in all aspects, this Bill is probably as good a Bill as could have been put together in another 12 years of deliberations.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I would suspect that there will be numerous presentations made because when you, as I said before, consider the many, many aspects of the Bill, there are going to be individuals and organizations who are going to want to voice their consideration on certain parts of this Bill, and maybe make recommendations as to what their views are and how we should have written the Bill, or how we could still make adjustments to the Bill which would suit the needs.

I would say there are even some amendments which I am going to put forward during committee, recognizing there are some typographical errors and others, some wording changes that need to be made. In those areas I intend to make those corrections during committee and you will see them being brought forward.

There is one area which I have listened to, and there appears to be some unanimity when I listen to the Opposition Parties. That is, of course, the area which reflects on lands in areas that are shadowed by urban centres. There are I believe, ways to deal with this. However—again in other ways than what has been addressed in this Bill.

Again, I want to say to the Opposition Parties especially in that area, that when you make changes, I reflect on the term used by the Honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer), and you change one portion you are virtually dealing with a Rubik's

Cube. When you draw down one area and cause less taxation to be created in an area, you create impacts of a positive nature in other areas. I think all of those things must be reflected upon when we talk about amending portions of this Bill.

* (1630)

I would also say there is the area of value, and I have heard both Parties reflect on a portion of the Bill which deals with value and how to establish values. I think the decision which was brought down when the City of Winnipeg was before the courts a few years ago is probably as fair a term of value that I have seen. It basically states that a current value, on an average basis, over a period of time designates market value.

Therefore, again when we deal with this Bill in committee and when considerations are made of some of those sections I think we need to be very careful that we consider the impact of tying too tightly some sections of this Bill and not allowing some flexibility at times.

I would also like to indicate to you, Mr. Speaker, that there are numerous other considerations which enter into when assessments are done, and that we do not tie ourselves too tightly on wording specific which would not allow some flexibility in areas if and when they are needed to be made.

Market has, whether current or over a period of average time, as will be used is something which needs to be considered. Replacement costs, I think, are another consideration assessors use when they determine values for assessment purposes. Incomes generated out of certain buildings, again, are a determining factor when assessing certain properties, and should be. If we become too specific in our wording of some portions of this Bill I believe we would take away some of that flexibility.

I believe we have met, in most areas, the ability for—and have listened to many people, have recognized the heritage of our province in the Bill. I believe we have tried to incorporate in the Bill the exemptions which were currently in legislation. I also want to indicate that there are parts of the Bill which might lead some organizations to say, well we too, we should also be included in this Bill.

Also, we need to recognize when those specific pieces of legislation were drafted periodically to exempt those organizations that are now exempted, and which are identified under the consequential amendments part of the Bill now, that it has not been the province which has taken unilateral action to implement or put forward legislation causing hardships to municipalities.

It has always been done by recognition and recommendation of the municipality involved, whether it be the City of Winnipeg or others. I think that needs to be recognized. Therefore the exemptions that were currently there, are brought into this new Act identifying them clearly and adding some conformity, uniformity to this Bill. If presentations should be made in some parts of these Bills, I think those kinds of things must be recognized.

With that I would like to again thank all Members of the Legislature. I would like to thank my colleagues especially, who have spent many hours on this Bill. Also thank you, Mr. Speaker, for having the generosity and the patience to listen to all of us in debating this Bill, and I would therefore recommend that this Bill now proceed to committee.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

BILL NO. 31—THE LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond), Bill No. 31, The Labour Relations Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les relations du travail, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis). Stand.

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Agreed.

BILL NO. 83—THE OZONE DEPLETING SUBSTANCES ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), Bill No. 83, The Ozone Depleting Substances Act; Loi sur les substances appauvrissant la couche d'ozone, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor). Stand.

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Agreed.

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, for your information and for the information of everyone else in the House, I am pleased to speak about the ozone. While my remarks may waiver a little bit in relation to the environment, when it comes to the environment and it comes to the effect of the environment there is no soul that cannot be touched. There is no child who cannot be recognized. There is no part of the ecology, the economy, or the continuance of the world system -(interjection)- that we know of, other than the importance of recognizing that the environment must be protected.

Mr. Speaker, years, hundreds of years ago, when we did not have an industrialized society, when we did not have a world that was as aggressively trying to improve itself with technological advancements, with mechanical advancements; when people did not have refrigerators, when they did not have automobiles, the world was a lot safer in terms of the environment. People did not succumb to pollution. The world was a lot simpler place, as far as the environment was concerned, because you did not have the same concerns about the destruction. You did not have pollutants, you did not have industrial pollution, and you did not have the problems with the ozone layer that is obviously becoming a difficulty.

* (1640)

There were different problems in those days. There were problems of diseases such as the Black Plague,

and there were different problems that were brought about for different reasons. There was only the ingenuity of mankind and the aggression of mankind to challenge these issues, to improve the quality of life, to try and address the disease and the poor people, and to try and make life a little better for them.

Mr. Speaker, the Industrial Revolution made it an awful lot easier to harvest crops and pick cotton out of fields and to weave it into product, but it brought with it a penalty of sorts, a penalty that was not immediately apparent. It brought about an encroachment on the quality of life that we have come to appreciate.

(Mr. Neil Gaudry, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

It is only recently that we have really become cognizant of the seriousness of the damage that can be done if we are not continually vigilant about upsetting the delicate balance that Mother Nature has created for us. If we do not pay attention to the greenhouse effect, if we do not pay attention to the difficulty that is being created by attacking the environment through all sorts of chemicals, through all sorts of non-biodegradable products, through all sorts of lack of visionary aspects, then we run a very, very serious danger of not having a future, not having a future for our children or, indeed, for ourselves. That is why this Ozone Layer Protection Act is so important.

The original concept of protecting the ozone, which was brought in by the MLA for, I believe, The Pas (Mr. Harapiak) area as a Private Members' Bill— and then subsequently the Government brought in a Bill that advances the concerns and takes a bit stronger initiative—is very important. It is not without its required amendments. It is not that it cannot be adjusted and/or improved, and/or corrected. It can be, as all things can be.

But by far the very first and most important step is the recognition that we, as human beings, are creating problems in the effort to create the conveniences. While it is convenient to be able to have a car to drive to work, as opposed to having to come to work on a horse, the penalty is in the emissions and the emission controls, and the requirements for controlling the emissions. It was not that long ago that we did not recognize the difficulties of leaded gasoline.

Through scientific technology and through the advancement of learning, we have become more and more aware of the danger of plastic cups, of plastic bags, of the landfill sites. We are becoming increasingly aware of the fluorocarbons and the hole that they are creating in the universe. I do not try to pretend, Mr. Acting Speaker, that I am scientifically knowledgeable as to the cause and effect. I do know that the—

An Honourable Member: You are not a rocket scientist.

Mr. Angus: I am not a rocket scientist, no, and I am not a doctor, but I have trust and I have faith. I have faith in those people who have an expertise in those areas. I really believe that if we do not start paying attention to what they are saying, if we do not make ourselves familiar with what the problems are and what

the cause and effect is, and if we, as elected representatives, do not take and seize the opportunity to introduce legislation—protective legislation—we are going to find one day that there is very little left to protect.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there is an old adage in politics as to whether, when you get elected, you are elected to represent what the people want you to represent and what they actually want, or are you there to make decisions, based on all of the information that you have, in the best interest of all the people. The majority of the times, I think that it is important that elected representatives go with what the people want.

There are occasions when individuals that are elected are charged with the responsibility of recognizing the total seriousness of the issue, and they must, at that time, take the bull by the horns and grip the issue as solidly as they can, and make decisions that are in the best interest of all of the people. The protection of the ozone layer is one of those issues. Thank you.

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): Mr. Acting Speaker, it is with pleasure that I rise today to speak about the protection of our environment through the introduction of this new Bill. I would have to say, though, that I do have some concerns about this piece of legislation.

One is the tardiness with which it was introduced, when it was some year and a half ago that this matter was raised by the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) in a matter to the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness). We raised it because we felt that our Minister of Finance, who is with us in the Chamber today, would have been able to offer some protection to Manitoba's contribution to the protection of the ozone layer by the introduction—(interjection)—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Neil Gaudry): Order, please.

Mr. Taylor: Thank you very much, Mr. Acting Speaker. We seem to have an—(interjection)— Thank you very much. I will continue now.

The fact of the matter is that it is possible to purchase products in Manitoba that give off free CFCs and I promise, Mr. Acting Speaker, not to give the Health Minister (Mr. Manness) any sample of a product of that nature because it might be quite detrimental to his health. We know how important he is to the welfare of our province.

The potential was, through tax measures, to be able to discourage the supplying of these products to the stores and the selling of these products to citizens in this province, unaware as they probably would be as to the potential impact that chlorofluorocarbons have on the deterioration of the ozone layer so important to offer us protection against the incoming ultraviolet rays from our sun.

The point of the matter is that one can go into Canadian Tire, or other hardware supply stores of that nature, and buy, to this day, cans of products that are there to provide the gas to sound an air horn on a

vehicle, on a boat, and the CFCs contained in that are totally unnecessary. There are other propellants available that will do the same piece of work safely without any deterioration to the environment, and yet these products are still available.

I feel that it is unfortunate that we had to wait this year and a half for the introduction of the Bill through the Environment Department. One, I think they should have been able to move faster on the matter; the second thing is we could have, through a tax measure, a sales tax measure, put a punitive tax on them so that these products, until they can be formally banned by the federal Government, whose jurisdiction it is, because they are totally produced outside of the country, largely in the U.S. and brought into Canada, can be prohibited from this jurisdiction.

I recall only too well the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) raising these questions in a very serious fashion, and at the time our Honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) said to act in that fashion would be imprudent. I would suggest, on the contrary, not to act was imprudent, and it is with reservation that I embrace and welcome this piece of legislation today, The Ozone Depleting Substances Act.

I think this is a move in the right direction. However, given our past track record of not moving on it, of being worried about being imprudent, the former Environment Minister saying that Ontario was wrong to go further than the federal Government and the Montreal convention on CFCs in the industrialized world; well, I would say back to the other side of the House, it is time that we showed leadership on issues of this nature, and that we do not wait for the other jurisdiction to get on board and then we will get on board with them.

* (1650)

Let us show some leadership. If there is something we can do in this jurisdiction let us do it; if there is something somebody else is doing in another jurisdiction, let us applaud them, let us not criticize them.—(interjection)— My goodness, I hear, Mr. Acting Speaker, an echo from the dim, dark, archaic past of our environmental leadership in this province which we formerly had. I would suggest that Honourable Member busy himself with the consumption of another frozen vegetable.

In any case, the matter before us deals with the prohibition of CFCs 11, 12, 113, 114, 115, and Halon-1211, and 1301 and 2402. I am very pleased to see the addition of the Halon products in this Act, because there was more than a little concern on our part, and on the part of environmental groups in this province, that the Halon products would not be included in this piece of legislation. The Halon products today are often more the offending products than many of the CFCs, because there is starting to be a prohibition in the use of CFCs in industrial production.

For example, the white styrofoam cup that is on my desk here, originally was produced with a propellant that had CFCs in it. That is not the case today and has not been for the last couple of years. I really wish

-(interjection)- Because this particular brand did not do that. However, there are and have been other brands available in Canada, which were imported into Canada, which did use CFCs in their production, and the problem was that when these cups are thrown away and they are left in the dumps, they do deteriorate, and some of the CFCs that remained in them would then go off into the atmosphere.

Now it takes up to 10 years for that sort of a product to migrate up beyond the stratosphere and into the ozone layer. The unfortunate part is that many of the things that we are consuming today will take up to 30 years before they are up there. What happens is, they will be used, then they will be thrown out and become the refuse of our society, our industrialized world, and it will take awhile for them to deteriorate. So that which is produced today will take up to 30 years to migrate into the atmosphere. What we have is, if you will, a bit of a time bomb, a time bomb because of this large delay factor. The deterioration is such that there is nothing known at this time that can stop the process, aside from the collection of any of these products, and putting them into a context which would render them inert, such as containers, that sort of thing. But that which is out there will eventually reach the upper atmosphere, and unfortunately lead to this deterioration.

I was sitting in the gallery, Tuesday past, when our Honourable Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings) rose to address this very piece of legislation. While it was not my point to be in the public gallery just to hear that, in fact I was touring with my daughter, looking at the Christmas decorations in the building, and thought we would slip into the Chamber for a moment. It was my luck to just catch the Member for St. Rose (Mr. Cummings) as he spoke on this matter. He made the point, Mr. Acting Speaker, that we do not have to worry quite as much, because, for example, one of the holes in the ozone layer, which is at the South Pole, is not as much of a problem as it was. Both the holes we have are in the polar caps of the ozone layer, if you will. We know what the situation is over the Canadian Arctic, the North Pole, because we have Canadian satellites and other research projects determining what is going on, and it is the smaller of the two holes, thank goodness. Now the one at the South Pole is quite extensive.

One of the problems is that we do not know why the hole is enlarging at both poles, and particularly the South Pole. We do not know why the rate of growth of the hole is at an accelerating rate. For the Minister to say, that because there was a slight decrease in the size of the hole at the South Pole, therefore we have cause for joy—I would suggest, what we are looking at is a normal variation in the size of that hole related to climate, because historically that hole will get a little smaller in this season for them, which is the start of their summer, and the decrease was a tiny percent or two. For a hole to diminish that amount, and for people to be very pleased, I would suggest is indicating a lack of understanding of the seriousness of the matter. The fact of the matter is, we should be extremely worried at any form of deterioration of our ozone filter layer.

The knowledge level that the Minister displayed in his discourse in the House on this piece of legislation

was, I have to say, rather disappointing, because the Minister has not just assumed his duties. I think we on this side have been very understanding of the fact that he came in from a portfolio very, very different, the Municipal Affairs portfolio, and obviously had quite a bit of learning to do. But it was with interest that I noted the lack of in-depth understanding of either the Act or the purpose of the Act. That really gives me cause for concern.

The Minister, after all, has a staff under him, a staff that is responsible for keeping him and themselves informed, a staff that is in contact with provincial counterparts across the country and, of course, with their federal counterparts in Environment Canada located both here and in Ottawa. So why is it that we saw a situation where the Minister was not very well-informed on this piece of legislation? I have said to the Minister before, in private conversation and, more recently, in the just past Environment Department Estimates—where is the leadership of Manitoba in the matter of protecting the ozone from the deleterious effects of Halon and CFC products? I did not get an answer at all, other than, we have the new piece of legislation.

We are one of the 10 provinces of this country. We have the ability, our provincial Government has the ability to make its voice heard at the Association of Environmental and Natural Resource Ministers, of which in the past this province has played an interesting and important role. We do not hear the voice of Manitoba in that forum, Mr. Acting Speaker, nor do we hear the leadership of Manitoba coming forward to our federal environment Minister and saying, we do not think the Montreal convention on CFCs went far enough, we do not think the time lines are what they should be.

I, for one, say that Ontario has shown more leadership. This is a province that has more of a problem, quite frankly, with CFCs, but why is it that they have said the time-lines should be brought forward when we see the effective cutting of all CFCs escaping into the atmosphere? I will tell you why, Mr. Acting Speaker—because it is a Liberal Government there, and it is not a reactionary Conservative Government. That is the difference. That Government has set a level of expectation for its industry and its consumers. Why are we not doing the same thing? We are not doing it because we are dealing with a Government that has all the right buzzwords. In fact, I am a little concerned about the overheating of their buzzword generator, because they have got all the environmental buzzwords. They have got little of the environmental action. I have given to calling this a—this Government must be a statutory member of NATO. That stands for no action, talk only. We see this time and time again as these lip-service environmentalists muddle through our environment and do little drips and drabs of corrective action.

The ozone problem is one that is going to be with us for generations. The problem that we are seeing in the upper atmosphere in our polar regions, and which could spread over the atmosphere of our more populated areas, is one that one must treat with deadly seriousness. The impact is, if the ozone layer continues

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to deteriorate, there is going to be very, very serious problems caused on this earth by overheating, and by animals and people and plant life becoming overly sensitized to greater and greater exposures to ultraviolet rays, and, eventually, to burning from ultraviolet rays and to more and more skin cancers. Those are the implications we are talking about, and the fact of the matter is we have no way, Mr. Acting Speaker, of easily correcting that, not once the CFCs have been released.

The important thing in my mind is, therefore, to say, how can we stop further release? How can we stop further release of chlorofluorocarbons? I think we have to look at the different uses. What are the CFCs being used for? In what sort of fashion are they? Are they in Freon, are they in gas containers that blow boat horns on pleasure boats, are they in your and my freezer units at home, and our refrigerators? I would say yes, they are. In most cases, you will find CFCs in those products.

As well, you will, of course, find it in the commercial freezers and coolers in grocery stores, in restaurants, and in the industrial freezers and coolers, as well, that industry employs for all sorts of cooling and freezing of whatever product it is they are handling. The interesting thing is, some of the oldest equipment can be amongst the worst in the sense of leaking CFC-containing chilling material, but at least they have recycling equipment on there which will allow that product, usually Freon, to condense and then be put back into the cooling and chilling equipment.

Unfortunately, some of the smaller equipment that we see of the mini fridges, apartment-size fridges, bar fridges, et cetera, and some of the smallest of the freezers—there is no recycling aspect of the Freon gas within that equipment. That is very unfortunate. What we do have is, that should you have an overheat of any sort, you will actually have a venting into the room where this piece of equipment is, and a dissipation in the atmosphere, Mr. Acting Speaker, of the gas containing the CFCs.

* (1700)

I would suggest it should be a base position taken by this Government, to the effect that there would be a banning as soon as practically possible, which would mean the next model year, of all freezers and refrigerating equipment that does not have a recycling aspect to it. That would talk about, for example, home air conditioning equipment, particularly the window models, and we have not got that ability at this time. So either the equipment must be modified, the existing equipment—and the other aspect is, there should be a prohibition on the fabrication and manufacture of any equipment that does not have a recycling capacity.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

An Honourable Member: Is there a doctor in the House?

Mr. Taylor: It must be Dr. Confrontation.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gaudry): Order, please.

Mr. Taylor: The position that should be taken to the federal Government concerning standards for the manufacture of what is called white goods, the appliances such as air conditioners, freezers, refrigerators, anything of this nature, is it should be a standard in Canada that it will not be manufactured and sold unless it has a recycling capacity for the chilling gas contained in the system. That is the first one.

Secondly, the position from this province should be, to the federal Government and the other provinces, that we wish to see the Montreal accord on CFCs updated, in other words, the time lines brought forward when we would see the practical prohibition of the manufacture of CFCs in the industrialized world; and the practical number is 80 percent reduction. The other thing we should hear is leadership from Manitoba, to the other provinces and the federal Government, talking about the situation in the Third World.

What is happening is that, while the industrialized world is cutting back on the production of these same CFCs, the companies that are manufacturing it in the industrial world are setting up plants in the Third World to do the manufacture there. What is that going to do? That means the Montreal convention does not mean anything. That means the same level of production will go on in other parts of this planet, and we will see the same proliferation of CFCs and CFC-containing products, which means we will see release of this disastrous material into the atmosphere, and the continuing deterioration of our ozone layer to wreak what havoc on future generations.

I hate to think of what our children and our grandchildren are going to face if we do not put a lid on this thing immediately. That means we have basically the next decade to work with. That is all. Everybody seems to be very blasé about this and, oh well, it is just those tree-hugging environmentalists getting worked up again. Well, it is about time that those tree-hugging environmentalists were listened to, and it is about time we saw some leadership from this Conservative administration, because we have here a step in the right direction. Yes, just like the previous administration, I think, brought in an environment Act which was also a step in the right direction, but one that had loopholes you could drive a D9 Cat through. That is ditto the case for Bill 83.

The Ozone Depleting Substances Act is a Bill that starts to go in the right direction. It does not go far enough, and it is not accompanied by any other statements of principle of this administration of what I would like to see on the limitation and the production of CFCs, prohibition on the production of equipment that have CFCs that can vent, and prohibition on the production of new equipment that requires CFCs as products in them as opposed to new products which would not contain CFCs.

So it is with some trepidation that I speak in favour of this Bill going to the committee stage, Mr. Acting Speaker. I think we should consider whether this Act should be amended and strengthened so it does more of the right things. It is a start in the right direction and I do not say it is not, but let us go a little further. Let us not be so timid when dealing with the matter

of the ozone depleting substances that we have. Let us not be as timid as the Honourable Finance Minister was back a year and a half ago when we asked him to consider substantive sales taxes or other financial or fiscal measures that could prohibit or discourage the sale of products in Manitoba which have CFCs within them.

I look with interest to the debate that we will have in committee on this matter, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I hope we will see a meeting of the minds of all three Parties on this, because it is a matter that goes well beyond any one political philosophy. It deals with, quite frankly, and I do not think this is alarmist, the survival of our and other species on this planet in the not too distant future unless very serious corrective action is taken.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): I am pleased to stand and speak on Bill No. 83, The Ozone Depleting Substances Act. In looking at the Bill, Mr. Speaker, it has many similarities to the Bill that we introduced in the House last year in The Ozone Layer Protection Act.

I commend the Minister for coming forward with this Act, because I think the ozone layer is an item that we should all be concerned about because it affects each one of us. There is not one person who lives that is not affected in some way by depletion of the ozone layer. As we learn more and more about depletion of the ozone layer, we know that there is going to be an increase in cancer-causing substances. It is therefore going to be affecting each one of us to a much greater degree, that dreaded disease that we all would like to eliminate. I give the Manitoba Government credit for moving with the Act which will begin banning products which are using CFCs and Halons in 1990 as part of the global effort that is being taken to eliminate the use of CFCs.

Mr. Speaker, this is a subject that we cannot be looking at at only a provincial level. I think we have to address it on a national and international level. When I had the opportunity to attend the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference last September, it was one of the issues that was being raised, because the developing countries are deeply concerned with effects that the ozone depletion is having on their countries. They know that they have not been a part of the problem that caused the ozone depletion, so they feel it is up to the developed parts of the planet to come forward with many research dollars that are needed to come up with a substance that will replace the ozone depleting substances of CFCs.

We know that we all use CFCs. We use CFCs when we air-condition our homes and apartments, the office buildings, hospitals and manufacturing plants. We use them for temperature and air quality controls. Many Members who sit in this Chamber would wish there would be an air conditioner in this Legislative Building that would make it much more comfortable during the summer months, but I guess that is something that - (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker, the previous Minister of Environment continues to speak out on this subject. It is unfortunate

if he has something to say that he would not stand here and put his thoughts on the record, rather than always sitting in the background and distracting people. It is unfortunate that the previous Minister of Environment was a disaster as a Minister of Environment. I have mentioned on previous occasions that I have to give the Premier (Mr. Filmon) credit for having the foresight to remove that disaster from his Cabinet and from that position. It is unfortunate that he would not have removed him completely, rather than leaving him in Consumer Affairs, because I am sure that eventually he is going to be leading to problems there, and the Premier is going to have to move him out of that position as well.

* (1710)

Mr. Speaker, as I was speaking before I was interrupted by the former Minister of Environment, we all use CFCs. We use them in energy conservation, air conditioning, insulation and refrigeration. We use them in telephones, televisions, radios, VCRs, and computers. We use them to sterilize surgical instruments, to cool X-ray equipment, and to refrigerate blood plasma and drugs.

Seventy-five percent of the food that we eat depends on refrigeration for our use at some time, either in the production or the distribution of that food when it goes through the chain. They serve as refrigerants and as blowing agents that are used to make the insulation in the walls of our refrigerators, and there are refrigerated trucks and boxcars that we use to transport that food to many locations.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Speaker, that is one of the areas that there is a lot of research money being put into right now, because the Manitoba beef industry or the Canadian beef industry feels that there is a much larger part of the Japanese market that we can capture with our beef production. We need to make some improvements in some of the refrigeration that we have, so we can transport those products to Japan in a refrigerated state and a fresh state, rather than having to freeze it the way we do now. I know that there is a lot of research going into that, and I think that there is energy efficient insulation that is in place now which would make it possible for us to do that. There is also a lot of insulation that is used which contains CFCs, or CFCs were used in the production for the efficient insulation of our homes.

Many of the people who travel today by air—and one of the unfortunate parts of this job is that you have to travel that much just to get to your constituency—but as we travel we know that we also have received benefits from some of the CFCs. They use it to regulate the temperature of air, and also CFCs are used in the refrigeration of the food that is used to feed the passengers as they travel. CFCs are also used when the food products are warmed up in the microwave systems, and I think there are many CFCs that are used in the instrument panels of the pilots when they are flying their aircrafts.

We cannot live the way we live right now if we were to eliminate CFCs. I think that we have to find some

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alternative product that can be used, because we have become accustomed to a lifestyle which would be very difficult to change if we were to eliminate the use of CFCs.

In the past three years, scientists from all over the world have been working on the size of the hole in the ozone layer. I think that they have analyzed with very reliable data the theories that there is a deterioration of the hole. I think it is no longer a question that it may be deteriorating. With the instruments they have nowadays to measure, they have measured very accurately there is a depletion of that layer of filter which filters out the sun's ultraviolet rays.

When we think about it, with the ultraviolet rays filtering through, there is going to be much more frequency of the cancer-causing environments of the sun coming through. I think it is very critical that we do all that we can to eliminate, to slow down the use of CFCs. The previous Minister of Environment was mentioning earlier, he was claiming that we could eliminate the use of CFCs within a year. I want to tell the former Minister of Environment that Dupont has now researched and come up with a new substance that can be used in refrigeration. There are millions and millions of dollars that are being used.- (interjection)-

There is another Member in this House who has the answers for every question that comes up, and it is the Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose). I guess he said that ice scoops can be used to replace that. It is unfortunate that he has all the answers, I guess, but sometimes we have to surprise him and show him that he has not got all the answers.

In reading some of the information about CFCs, Dupont has come up with a material called hydrochlorofluorocarbons, it is a long word. They offer a safe option for ozone depletion and global warming concerns which are caused by CFCs. They say the new compound can meet the basic scientific needs currently provided by CFCs for goods and services related to food, shelter, health care, energy efficiency, communications and transportation. HCFCs average 98 percent less ozone depletion potential than CFCs because they do not contain chlorine and have zero potential to affect the stratospheric ozone layer. Maybe I will send this over to the Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) and he can read it later. Then he will know that you do not have to use ice scoops to replace the refrigeration.

Mr. Speaker, as I was speaking earlier, the Bill—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for The Pas.

Mr. Harapiak: Mr. Speaker, I know that some people do not like to recognize that there is progress being made in this field, but there are responsible corporations that are doing research in this field, and they show that they are making progress. I think we have to give credit where credit is due. Dupont has certainly been a leader

in carrying on some of the research that has been going on and coming up with materials that will deal with the refrigeration that is so necessary to our way of life.

Mr. Speaker, the Montreal Protocol was mentioned earlier, which calls for the reduction in the use of CFCs. I know that when we asked for some information, we know that the Province of Ontario is moving very aggressively in this whole field and is moving at a pace that is exceeding what the Montreal Protocol called for. I think you have to give them credit because they were the first province to move in that direction. I know the Minister of Environment at that time said it cannot be done. Again it is fortunate that we have a Minister now who feels it can be done.

He is moving in that direction, so it is good that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) removed the previous Environment Minister because he would still be sitting back there and saying it cannot be done. He would not be trying to make any progress in that direction.

There is a lot of information that is available out there that shows that the ozone layer, the hole is increasing. I think that it is very important that we move in this direction to deplete the use of CFCs, and I give the Minister credit for bringing this Bill forward. I think some of the fines that they will be levying will certainly be a deterrent for people to abuse the Act. I think the penalties for corporations that fail to comply with Section 2 of that Act—I guess in the previous Bill that we had brought forward it was \$100,000, but now it is \$1 million. So I think you have to give credit to the Minister of Environment for having the courage to come forward.

I just want to touch on some of the other areas where they are going to be dealing with the purchasers.- (interjection)- Mr. Speaker, there seems to be some concern that we were supposed to break at 5:30 for some reason. I just want to say that we support this Bill, and I give—

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): I plan on bringing in Interim Supply at 5:30. I am wondering if we might have leave to allow this matter to remain standing in the name of the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak).

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for The Pas? (Agreed)

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing the Honourable Acting Government House Leader (Mr. Manness), I would like to draw the attention of all the Members to the gallery where we have with us today a number of members of the Hansard staff who are in attendance to observe the House proceedings.

I am sure I speak for all Honourable Members, expressing our appreciation for their efforts, and in bidding them welcome.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Minister

for Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), that Mr. Speaker now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

MOTION presented and carried and the House resolved itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Chornopyski) in the Chair.

* (1720)

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY SUPPLY—INTERIM SUPPLY

Mr. Chairman (William Chornopyski): The committee will come to order and consider the following resolution:

RESOLVED that the sum not exceeding \$4,171,492,560, being 95 percent of the total amount to be voted as set out in the Main Estimates and Supplementary Estimates, be granted to Her Majesty for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1990.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. William Chornopyski (Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again. I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a committee to consider Ways and Means for raising of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

MOTION presented and carried and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider Ways and Means for raising of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the Honourable Member for Burrows (Mr. Chornopyski) in the Chair.

COMMITTEE OF WAYS AND MEANS SUPPLY—INTERIM SUPPLY

Mr. Chairman (William Chornopyski): The committee will come to order to consider certain resolutions:

BE IT RESOLVED that towards making good the Supply granted to Her Majesty on account of certain expenditures of the Public Service to the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1990, the sum of \$4,171,492,560, being 95 percent of the total amount to be voted as set out in the Main Estimates and the

Supplementary Estimates for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1990 be laid before the House at the present Session of the Legislature be granted out of the Consolidated Fund—pass.

The committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. William Chornopyski (Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted a certain resolution, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak), that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS BILL NO. 90—THE INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 1989 (2)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance) introduced, by leave, Bill No. 90, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1989 (2); Loi no 2 de 1989 portant affectation anticipée de crédits, to be ordered for second reading immediately.

SECOND READINGS BILL NO. 90—THE INTERIM APPROPRIATION ACT, 1989 (2)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance) presented, by leave, Bill No. 90, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1989 (2); Loi no 2 de 1989 portant affectation anticipée de crédits, for second reading, to be referred to a committee of this House.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I propose to read basically a page and a half of introduction to Bill No. 90. I promise it will take no more than three minutes, as long as I am not interrupted by Members opposite or heckled by my colleagues.

Let me begin by saying we are bringing forward a Bill that is precedent setting in the Province of Manitoba. Never before, by Interim Supply, has 95 percent of the requirements of expenditure of the Province been sought through the Legislative Interim Supply form.

Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 90, The Interim Appropriation Act, 1989 (2) is required to provide additional interim spending and commitment authority for the '89-90 fiscal year, pending approval of The Appropriation Act, 1989.

Bill No. 90 will essentially replace The Interim Appropriation Act, 1989. Expenditure authority provided under that Act is cancelled and replaced by authority put in place by this Act. Two sections of the first Interim

Appropriation Act are not replaced: Section 4, which provided authority to pay accrued unpaid liabilities as of March 31, 1989 of \$2,272,000; and Section 13, which provided the Government with authority to borrow up to \$400 million to make any required payments out of the Consolidated Fund.

The authority provided in these clauses does not lapse and is not required to be replaced.

The amount of spending authority requested is \$4,171,492,560, being 95 percent of the total amount to be voted, excluding Statutory items, as set forth in the Main Estimates of Expenditure and the Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure as follows:

Total Main Estimates of Expenditure, \$4,816,060,500 less General Statutory appropriations of \$494,265,700, leaving a subtotal of Main Estimates, the sums to be voted of \$4,321,794,800.00.

Supplementary Estimates of Expenditure sums to be voted. These are the Supplementary Estimates that I tabled the other day, totalling \$69,250,000.00. Therefore, the total sum to be voted is \$4,391,440,800.00.

The Interim Supply calculation is 95 percent of this total, and that number comes to \$4,171,492,560.00. This will provide for projected requirements to mid-March. The first Interim Appropriation Act provided only 75 percent of the authority in the Main Estimates and is projected to last until the end of December.

* (1730)

Mr. Speaker, since The Interim Appropriation Act, 1989 (2) has not yet been passed, it becomes necessary to secure additional spending and commitment authority by way of a second Interim Supply Bill to provide for the ongoing requirements of Government. Mr. Speaker, in this second Interim Supply Bill the

amount of future commitment authority has been increased by \$100 million to \$400 million which is equivalent to the total 1989-90 forward commitment authority to be included in the Main Supply Bill.

At this point in the fiscal year, it is considered necessary to provide the full authority to allow for the orderly conduct of the business of Government.

Mr. Speaker, two more paragraphs, short.

Mr. Speaker, also as a result the timing in the fiscal year, it has been necessary to include sections in this Bill to provide for the transfer of Canada-Manitoba Northern Development Agreement and Canada-Manitoba Winnipeg Renewed Core Area Agreement funds to delivering departments. These clauses are normally provided in the main appropriation Act, but are not usually provided in the interim Act.

Mr. Speaker, Bill 90 is required to provide additional interim spending and commitment authority to assure the continued operation of Government. I would like to request the co-operation of the Opposition in expediting the passing of Bill 90 through all stages of consideration, debate and approval, including Royal Assent. When Bill 90 reaches committee stage, I can provide Members with a section-by-section explanation.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): I move, seconded by the Member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs), that debate be now adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

Mr. Manness: I move, seconded by the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), that the House adjourn.

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

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).