



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

40 Elizabeth II

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

LIB - Liberal; ND - New Democrat; PC - Progressive Conservative

NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY
ALCOCK, Reg	Osborne	LIB
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	ND
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	ND
CARR, James	Crescentwood	LIB
CARSTAIRS, Sharon	River Heights	LIB
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	ND
CHEEMA, Gulzar	The Maples	LIB
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	ND
CONNERY, Edward	Portage la Prairie	PC
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	PC
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	PC
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	PC
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	ND
DOER, Gary	Concordia	ND
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	PC
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	PC
DUCHARME, Gerry, Hon.	Riel	PC
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	LIB
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	PC
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	PC
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	ND
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	ND
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	PC
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	PC
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	ND
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	LIB
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
HARPER, Elijah	Rupertsland	ND
HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	ND
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	LIB
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	ND
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	PC
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	ND
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	ND
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	PC
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	PC
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	PC
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	PC
NEUFELD, Harold, Hon.	Rossmere	PC
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	PC
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	ND
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	ND
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	PC
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	PC
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	ND
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	PC
STORIE, Jerry	Flin Flon	ND
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	PC
VODREY, Rosemary	Fort Garry	PC
WASYLYCIA-LEIS, Judy	St. Johns	ND
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	ND

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, June 3, 1991

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry), I have reviewed the petition and it conforms with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): To the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Manitoba, the petition of the undersigned residents of the province of Manitoba, humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the provincial government has removed the indexing provision from the seniors 55-Plus program; and

WHEREAS 55-Plus is an income support program aimed at seniors suffering the greatest economic hardships; and

WHEREAS the Filmon government is unfairly placing the burden of economic hard times upon seniors below or near the poverty line by deindexing 55-Plus;

WHEREFORE these petitioners request that the government of Manitoba consider reinstating the indexing of the 55-Plus program.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Supplementary Estimates of the Department of Agriculture, '91-92.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Supplementary Estimates for '91-92, Department of Environment.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 69—The Manitoba Medical Association Fees Repeal Act

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, with leave, I would like to introduce Bill 69.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Health have leave to introduce Bill 69? Leave? Is that agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson), that Bill 69, The Manitoba Medical Association Fees Repeal Act; Loi abrogeant la Loi sur les droits de l'Association médicale du Manitoba, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

* (1335)

Bill 65—The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1991

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): On behalf of the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Bill 65, The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1991; Loi de 1991 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 70—The Public Sector Compensation Management Act

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): With the leave of the House, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Bill 70, The Public Sector Compensation Management Act; Loi sur la gestion des salaires du secteur public, be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable Minister of Finance have leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Motion agreed to.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Immigration Consultants Investigation

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, over the last couple of weeks there have been a number of public revelations dealing with the TV documentary on immigration consultants and their impact and effect on the public of Manitoba, new immigrants to Manitoba and the provincial government.

We know the RCMP is investigating the criminal matters, as they should; we know the Civil Service Commission is investigating the direct personnel matters related to the public service, as they should; and we know that the Security Commission is also investigating certain other aspects of this case.

Mr. Speaker, the question really remains, given the number of public allegations—again two more allegations over the weekend in the media—on the potential influence of the provincial government, the provincial Premier (Mr. Filmon) and a number of these people who are under investigation, my question to the Deputy Premier is: Who in the government is investigating the political influence and the allegations of political influence that are being made in the public of Manitoba? Who is investigating that in terms of the Province of Manitoba?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, let me first of all say that the member is well aware that the RCMP is doing a full investigation as to any wrongdoing as it relates to the immigration matter which has been brought before them. The Civil Service Commission, as it relates to activities of civil servants who are employed by government in any way, shape or form of conflict of interest with their job, is also under investigation by the Civil Service Commission.

Mr. Speaker, further to that, all there have been have been unfounded allegations, inferences made without substance, and I put them down as surely that—unfounded, unfactual allegations out of which there is a lot of political mileage that is trying to be made by members opposite. It is absolutely unfounded, all these allegations that are being brought forward.

* (1340)

Seech Gajadharsingh Investigation

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, when we first raised questions about Mr. Gajadharsingh, the government said it was unfounded. The next day, because they investigated the situation, then there were potentially founded allegations. The question remains, how can we find, in terms of results of investigations, unless we investigate?

My question still remains to the Deputy Premier. We have allegations now of political influence, both in the public arena and in the public service. The question has never been answered. What kind of influence did Mr. Gajadharsingh have in the direct public service, and more importantly, what influence did that same individual have in the political and public arena based on his connections with this government, this Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the public of Manitoba?

My question to the Deputy Premier is: Who is investigating those allegations? How can we know whether they are going to be investigated when nobody has been instructed to investigate those issues on behalf of the people of Manitoba?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of any other allegations than what he is referring to from a headline in a newspaper.

What is he referring to? He is referring to unfounded allegations which have no substance, Mr. Speaker, unfounded as far as the political activities.

Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the RCMP is doing a full investigation as to any wrongdoing on the immigration activities of individuals, the Civil Service Commission—as far as the conflict of interest, are being carried out. Further to that, there is absolutely no substance to the allegations that are being brought to this Chamber. In fact, I am somewhat disgusted that a man of integrity, our Premier (Mr. Filmon), who was in opposition, who had no ability in any way to influence any situation as a Leader in opposition—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Downey: —in any connection politically than connections to the New Democratic Party or any connections that were held to the Liberal Party.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, in case the Deputy Premier does not realize, he is in fact the Premier, and in case the Deputy Premier does not realize, the Premier does have a fair degree of power in the province of Manitoba and a fair degree of influence on decisions that are made in this province.

Mr. Speaker, there is nobody investigating the public allegations of the influence that this individual had, an individual who was tied very directly to the Premier, an individual who has been involved in a department where two people coincidentally have been hired who are part of the allegations that have been made in the TV documentary. There is nobody this government has instructed to investigate and open up the windows on alleged political influence.

If, as the Deputy Premier said, there is nothing to worry about, fine, let us have that investigation. I am sure if the Deputy Premier is correct, that will come out. Why will the government not have an independent investigation, so that all the facts can be on the table for the people of Manitoba?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, there is an independent investigation being carried out by the RCMP. That is as independent as you can get. Number 2, there is, as related to the employees of the government of Manitoba, a Civil Service investigation.

The third point that he raises is innuendo, unfounded fact of which he is making allegations of some connection to the Premier when he was Leader of the Opposition. There is not one scrap of evidence. All he is trying to do, Mr. Speaker, is to, in some way, reflect on the credibility of the Premier who is doing what the people of this province gave him a mandate to do, get this province under control fiscally and give it a positive direction so that we can all be better off. He is trying to play political games on unfounded, unfactual information. I would think he would be well advised to bring fact to this Legislature if he is going to get into this kind of activity.

* (1345)

Fort Whyte Centre Youth Corps

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radlsson): Mr. Speaker, young people in this province are being betrayed by this government. At a time when there is record youth unemployment, this government has slashed all of the youth employment programs. I would think over 4,000 jobs have been lost to youth in this

province with cuts to the CareerStart Program, the elimination of the Northern Youth program and the STEP program. Today, there is another 200 jobs cut and another election promise broken.

My question is for the Minister of Environment. What happened to the 2,000 jobs that were promised in the Youth Corps program at the Fort Whyte Centre?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, the member obviously would like to put a negative slant on what has been a very positive announcement this morning. Just this morning—and I did not notice that she was in attendance, but I believe some of her associates were—we announced the Environmental Youth Corps for this province—\$1 million to help the young people of this province who want to become involved with environmental activity, who want to become more educated environmentally, who want to become involved with their schools and through their community groups in environmental projects.

We announced that program to get it kicked off today, answering the election promise that we made. She would much rather have a job creation program and not worry about the environment.

Ms. Cerilli: Mr. Speaker, young people in this province want to be involved in environment protection. They also need jobs.

Two hundred jobs were promised during the election under this program. Mr. Speaker, I ask the minister: How many young people in this province are being employed by the \$160,000 being spent this year on this program?

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, the program is set up so that the youth of this province become involved in protection, enhancement of the environment, conservation. The fact is that there are probably far in excess of 200 people working in this program to protect the environment in this province. We can build on the enthusiasm and the interest of the young people in this province. If the members of the opposition choose to ignore the positive aspects of that, then let them deal with the public.

Youth Employment Programs Reductions

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radlsson): Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is for the Minister of Family Services.

Was this minister aware of the cuts to this Environmental Youth program when the cuts were made to the CareerStart Program, the northern job corps program and the STEP program?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): We were very pleased to be able to go ahead with the CareerStart Program, and the intake for CareerStart has led us to the point where we are going to employ some 3,000 young people through the CareerStart Program this year.

The Northern Youth Corps, the member is well aware, is one that the federal government withdrew their funding on. We were not able to go ahead with that program this year.

The STEP program is underway where many young people across Manitoba will be involved with the temporary youth employment through the provincial government.

Seech Gajadharsingh Appointment Recommendations

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I find that it is unbelievable that this Filmon government has come across saying that all of the information is completely unfounded, and there is no substance at all to any of the concerns that have been brought up in the last couple of weeks regarding the immigration credentials and the political appointments that have been made by this government. Public are coming forward who are saying that they were promised political jobs. They were promised grants from this government, and this government says that there is absolutely no substance.

My question to the Deputy Premier is: Will the Deputy Premier table the appointments that were made that were recommended either by Seech Gajadharsingh or Claro Paqueo?

* (1350)

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, what I have said is, as it relates to the allegations and any irregularities in the immigration activities of individuals, it is being fully investigated by the RCMP. I said, as well, as it relates to the immigration activities or any activities as it relates to individuals who are employed by the Civil Service, that they are under review by the Civil Service Commission.

What I have said, as far as any lacking of fact, is any recent accusations of involvement by the

Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province without fact—all these allegations, most recent allegations have been followed rather fully. If the members have something of substance and fact, then I challenge them to bring it forward, rather than the innuendo that they continue to lay before this Assembly, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier should have been here on Thursday when I went into some of the facts and some of the background details. Maybe then he would be able to have a better understanding in terms of what is actually going on.

Immigration Consultants Premier's Involvement

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, has he, the Premier (Mr. Filmon), or his principal secretary ever met with Claro Paqueo and Seech Gajadharsingh in the Premier's Office or any other government office for the purpose of discussing immigration or any political appointments?

Hon. James Downey (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the Premier should want to show the public of Manitoba that these charges are untrue. Therefore, an independent inquiry is essential. The Civil Service investigation and the RCMP investigation will not answer all the concerns—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I have been listening in great detail to the questions being put forward by the member for Inkster today and other days. I have also listened very carefully to his comments on Thursday last when he alleges that he laid before the House certain facts.

I only say that this type of line of questioning must adhere to the proprieties of this House in terms of inferences, imputing motives or casting aspersions upon people. As I listen to the questions from the member coming forward, I do not hear any statements of hard fact. All I hear again is inferences and imputations of motives. I ask the member, if he has a specific, definitive question to ask, that he put that question—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable government House leader does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Inkster, kindly put your question now, please.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, my question is again, because of the interruption, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) should want to show the public of Manitoba that these charges—

Mr. Speaker: Kindly put your question now, please.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, will the Deputy Premier agree with us today that a full independent inquiry is needed in order to clear up all of the allegations and statements that are in fact being made, given that neither the Civil Service Commission or the RCMP investigation is broad enough to take into account the political influence—

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

Point of Order

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, on a new point of order, that question is against the rules of the House as laid out in Beauchesne. It is repetitive. That question has been asked now at least on three occasions today. It was asked similarly on at least a half dozen occasions on sittings previous. I refer to Beauchesne 410.(9) "Questions should not repeat questions already asked . . ."

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, the honourable member for Inkster's question is seeking an opinion and therefore is out of order, so I would ask the honourable member for Inkster to kindly rephrase your question, please.

* * *

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I can understand that this is a very sensitive issue for the government, and it is time that they started dealing with the issue.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Inkster, kindly put your question now, please.

Mr. Lamoureux: Put quite simply, Mr. Speaker, why is this government afraid of a public inquiry? What do they have to hide?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, again, I want to make it very clear. If the Liberal Party or the NDP party are

challenging the independence and the thoroughness of the RCMP, let them stand and say so. If they are challenging the review being done by the Civil Service Commission as it relates to the conflict of interest and the activities of a civil servant, let them say so. If they have further factual information, then let them bring it forward so that it can be dealt with. At this point, it has all been unfounded, unfactual innuendo that does not wash anywhere.

* (1355)

Child Care System Restructuring

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, two weeks ago I asked the Minister of Family Services to delay implementation of the restructuring of the child care system. Last week the Manitoba Child Care Association requested the same thing. Parents in daycare centres have written and called the Premier (Mr. Filmon), the Minister of Family Services and MLAs from all three parties urging a re-evaluation of the impact that this major restructuring will have on all parts of the child care system.

Will the Minister of Family Services now agree to delay the implementation of the restructuring elements so that these questions can be addressed before something of this enormous magnitude goes into effect?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): We did announce some restructuring in the daycare system back in April, and that restructuring is going to put more emphasis on the cost of daycare in this province.

I would remind the member that we have had tremendous increases in daycare funding across this province in the last three and four years. We spend more per capita on daycare than any other province save Ontario. We have a lot of provincial funding that goes into a daycare. We did announce that restructuring in April, and we will be proceeding with that.

Minister's Meeting

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, on May 23, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) told a constituent at a meeting in St. Vital that he would arrange a meeting between parents in that area and the Minister of Family Services regarding his restructuring. I would like to ask the Minister of

Family Services if several weeks later he has had a chance to meet with these parents, and if he has not, why not?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I want to assure the critic from the NDP party that I have met with many, many people across the province on many issues, and certainly I have discussed daycare with a number of parents and groups who have had meetings with me in my office. I am not strictly familiar which people she is referring to here, but certainly we have met with a number of service providers and people who serve on boards of daycares across this province.

Restructuring

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): If the Minister of Family Services is not willing to delay the implementation and even after having met with parents and other concerned groups who have shared their concerns about the impact of these implementations, how does he plan to address the issues that these parents have raised—by ignoring them, by hoping they will go away? I am here to say that if he hopes that will happen, he is sorely mistaken and the people of Manitoba will not allow this issue to go away.

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

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): I would remind the member that over the course of the last 18 months, a working group representing daycare providers across this province worked with government and brought forth recommendations. Those recommendations, the short-term recommendations, were implemented in their entirety. The long-term recommendations, a majority of those were implemented.

I did read the press releases that came forward after the announcement from the various groups. There were some very supportive things in a couple of them, and I noted that one had some mixed feelings on it. We have indicated that we will monitor the implementation as it takes place over the next year and be very aware of the changes and how they are impacting on people.

CFB Shilo All-Party Committee

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

In answer to a question I put to the minister on Tuesday, May 28, regarding the threatened closure of Shilo, the minister said that the government was, and I am quoting: currently in the process of arranging a meeting with the federal ministers at the earliest possible date.

There was no reference to an all-party approach, although we are having an all-party approach this afternoon in meeting with the Associate Deputy Minister of Defence.

Will the minister now commit to a full, nonpartisan approach until we resolve this matter, and specifically, will the government agree to an all-party delegation to meet the Prime Minister as soon as possible?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, as the honourable member has outlined for the benefit of the House, we are meeting this afternoon with the Associate Minister of Defence, Mary Collins, with representation from all three political parties in this House. As a result of that meeting, we will make further decisions that will affect the kinds of questions that the honourable member has put this afternoon.

* (1400)

Marcel Masse Winnipeg Meetings

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, has the minister any knowledge of Marcel Masse, the Minister of National Defence, coming to Winnipeg this week to meet with senior military officials in this city?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Honourable Marcel Masse, at the time that the honourable member for Brandon East raised this matter in the House, at that time, we had written the honourable Minister of Defence requesting both a meeting with him, additional information and, of course, expressing our strong opposition to the rumours of closing of the Shilo base. I have not received a reply to that letter as yet. I think, as we all know, he was out of the country last week. I am not aware of his coming to Winnipeg this week but will certainly undertake to confirm whether, in fact, there is any substance in that suggestion.

Mr. Leonard Evans: A couple of points, Mr. Speaker—while it is fine to meet with the Associate

Deputy Minister of Defence, that was not too helpful in the Portage closure.

I wonder if the minister could arrange to table or request the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to table a copy of his letter to the Prime Minister regarding this matter regarding the threat to the Shilo base's continuation. Also, would the minister undertake to check out whether indeed Marcel Masse is coming to Winnipeg, as I understand it from one union official, to meet with the military people in Winnipeg this week?

Mr. Stefanson: I did indicate that I will undertake to confirm whether or not the Honourable Marcel Masse is in fact coming to Winnipeg this week.

In terms of the question relative to the letter from the Premier, I will check with the Premier's Office as to the availability of that letter. I am certainly prepared to provide a copy to the honourable member of the letter that I sent to the Honourable Marcel Masse on the issue.

GED Program Responsibility

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education and Training.

Again, today, tragically, we see the lengths that the Minister of Education and Training is prepared to go in order to curtail the educational experience of adults in our community. Not only has this government cut high school bursaries, adult bursaries and social allowance benefits to those attending school, and he has cut the English as a Second Language program, but today he has also decided he wants out of the GED diploma as well.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Education and Training explain to the House why, when the provincial Civil Service accepts GED entry, this government wants to offload the program costs to the school divisions in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): May I indicate firstly that there is no intent of the government of this province to offload onto the school divisions the costs of the GED program. As a matter of fact, at the present time we are discussing the matter with school divisions, and there are school divisions in this province that are anxious to take the responsibility of delivering the GED test throughout the province.

I might also indicate that the GED test is still going to be available in the province, and it will be done in such a way that school divisions will be able to either administer the test, or there will be one school division that might administer the test for the whole province.

Mr. Speaker, might I indicate the Liberal Party's position during the Estimates last year and the year before is that they questioned the value of the GED test, and when the member was the Leader of the Opposition, her Education critic at that time indicated that there was some concern about the GED test as seen by the Liberal Party and perhaps it should not even be offered in the province.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, there is indeed concern because of the quality of the programming, a quality for which the minister is responsible.

Can the minister tell the House today why he is prepared to watch school divisions increase the costs by 43 percent, while he is not prepared to take responsibility for those cost increases?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, it shows how little the Leader of the third party knows about the GED test, because the GED test is not a Manitoba test. It is a test that is an American test, administered by the department and by the province for those who may want to seek Grade 12 equivalency as seen by some.

There are institutions in this province that do not accept the GED test as an equivalent of Grade 12. There are industries in this province that do not accept it as an equivalent to Grade 12. However, there is recognition by some private sector vocational schools, and indeed it is taken into consideration when we admit students into our post-secondary institutions such as Red River and our colleges.

Mr. Speaker, it is a measuring tool that we use, and indeed it will be continued in this province in the next year.

Mrs. Carstairs: It will only be continued if the school divisions are prepared to take up his responsibility.

Literacy Office Justification

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell the House this afternoon what is the purpose of his Literacy Office when he has abandoned ESL, he is

abandoning GED, he has abandoned high school bursaries? How does he intend to make citizens of this province more literate when the programs that are doing that at the present time have been cut by his government?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I guess the facts do not matter to the Leader of the third party. She will just continue to put false information on the record, regardless of how the facts are presented to her. Again, she does it in her preamble. The purpose of the Literacy Office is to co-ordinate the literacy programs throughout the province.

Mr. Speaker, this government has increased the level of funding to ESL programs by something like \$200,000 over the last two years. Also, we have increased the funding to our literacy programs, and our literacy programs this year are generating something like \$1 million in this province. So indeed this is not simply offloading onto the school divisions. We have entered into discussions with school divisions so they can administer the test. There is some willingness from school divisions to do just that.

High School Bursary Program Reinstatement

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Education and Training.

In the last four years, 504 high school students have graduated from the Winnipeg Adult Education Centre. This is an extremely high percentage. An extremely high percentage also go on to post-secondary education. We all know that in this House.

If any members of the government had attended the 25th anniversary last week, they would have had an opportunity to see the need some of these students have with respect to attending school and how difficult it is for all of these adult students.

Will the minister seriously reconsider his decision to cut the High School Bursary program which serves in many cases as a lifeblood and assists many of those students in getting their degrees?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, there are many programs that the Province of Manitoba, the Department of Education and Training provide to assist students to gain their Grade 12 or Grade 12 equivalency in this province.

Adults in this province are able to apply for student financial assistance through the programs in order to be able to achieve their Grade 12 standing. Those students who are on social assistance in this province can access social assistance programs and funding through that process to ensure that they can get assistance while they are attending adult classes. Adult students in this province can access student financial assistance if they need it in order to be able to complete their Grade 12 equivalency.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister.

This minister has cut off totally, completely, 3,800 needy and adult students, and his colleague the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) has reduced their benefits. Will this minister consider at least keeping the program in effect one more year until his new funding model is in place and until he has an opportunity to discuss the effect of the cut of the High School Bursary program on 3,800 needy and adult students?

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, once again the member has his figures incorrect in terms of the adult students who are attending Grade 12. Unfortunately his research is not up to date.

Point of Order

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, I will table the minister's figures indicating that which he gave to me last week during the Estimates process—his own figures.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, the member confuses two bursary programs, the adult bursary program and the student bursary program.

The adult students who are attending the high school programs can access the student financial assistance and get their educational costs paid for through the adult education program, through the financial assistance program. Indeed, there are students who are accessing the student financial assistance program who are not adults and who can gain their support through Family Services.

*(1410)

GED Program Costs

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary is to the minister.

The minister has indicated he is not offloading the costs of the equivalency test to the school divisions. Can he table in this House the figures that indicate what the cost was to the Department of Education and Training to administer these tests and how much it will cost the school divisions to administer these tests?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, the cost of a GED test is about \$40 per student. It is important that indeed the students who wish to take the test are able to pay the \$40 for the test. It is simply a cost recovery for the test that is written. Forty dollars is not a huge amount of money. Indeed, to get your Grade 12 equivalency, it is not something that should not be expected in terms of a student paying.

Mr. Speaker, if the family is on social assistance, indeed, money can be accessed through that avenue to be able to write the test.

Inner City Foundation Financial Commitment

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Urban Affairs.

The Inner City Foundation Program 7 of the Core Area Agreement would have provided some longer-term support for the people of the inner city for whom \$40 is indeed a fortune. The minister has said in Question Period that the original \$1 million is still there, but the minister has also said that alternatives are being examined and that the Inner City Foundation is, and I quote, in a deferral mode.

Will the minister clarify for the House: Is there still \$1 million committed to a program which will offer continuing support to inner-city people and programs at the end of the second Core Area Agreement?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the member for Wolseley during the Estimates process, notional allocations were made at the start of the Core Area Agreement dealing with a wide variety of topics, Inner City Foundation being one of them.

At the present time, all funds that have not yet been fully allocated are deferred pending final

reallocation of funds to take place some time over the next period of time. When that is under consideration and has been completed, I will advise the member.

Alternative Support

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, this month the minister will again meet with his federal and provincial colleagues on the Core Area Agreement.

Will the minister tell the House what specific alternatives for continuing support that is implied in Program 7 will he be placing before that meeting?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as I have indicated also on a number of occasions and to my honourable friend, the question of priorities associated with that balance of the funds that are yet to be expended have to meet, firstly, the liabilities incurred by successful governments over the course of two Core Area Initiative programs. That is the first priority. Those liabilities have to be met.

Previous governments have made commitments on the basis of fully anticipating that succeeding governments would meet the liabilities that were incurred by prior governments. That is the first priority.

Following that, Mr. Speaker, we will see what is available for expenditure and what the balance of the priorities will be.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, we are three weeks away from the meeting. There is no commitment, and there are no alternatives.

Will the minister undertake to meet with the City of Winnipeg, the implementing authority for the Inner City Foundation, to ensure that the \$1 million continuing commitment to the inner city does not end up in a disappearing mode?

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, there are three partners to the agreement, not two. Those three partners will meet soon to discuss the balance of the funding available under the Core Area Initiative to discuss what liabilities exist from prior commitments made under both the previous and the current Core Area Agreement.

Mr. Speaker, once we have had those opportunities to review what the liabilities are and what the availability of the balance of the funding is, appropriate decisions by all three partners in the agreement will be made.

Children's Hospital Child Life Program

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I am sure all members in the House today want to recognize and pay tribute to Manitobans who gave so generously this past weekend, setting a new record of fundraising at the Children's Miracle Telethon.

Having just spent the past week, Mr. Speaker, at the Children's Hospital with my son, I certainly have a personal appreciation for Manitobans' generosity and also a better sense of the kind of expertise we have here in Manitoba when it comes to children's health. However, I also had a chance to hear about and see first-hand the impact of this government's \$19-million cutback on our urban hospitals.

I want to ask the Minister of Health how he can justify a hospital budget reduction directive that has led to such cutbacks as the elimination of a child life therapy position at the Children's Hospital, a program which helps families and children in stress adjust to life in the hospital and deal with their very serious illnesses?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate my honourable friend's question, but let me correct my honourable friend that this government did not make a cutback of \$19 million as she is often alleging falsely in questions in this House.

Mr. Speaker, if my honourable friend looks at the hospital budget, she will find them not being \$19 million less, but over 5 percent more in budget. You cannot give more and make the false statement of cutback. It is nonexistent.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Children's Telethon on the weekend did raise substantial amounts of money which shows the generosity of Manitobans towards Children's Hospital and the Research Foundation. That hospital provides care to some 130,000 children per year not only from Manitoba, but from the Territories, from Northwest Ontario and occasionally from Saskatchewan.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot give an answer to my honourable friend's specific question, because those are decisions made within the budget process of the hospital. I will seek to ascertain the validity of her question.

Urban Hospital Council Budgetary Recommendations

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Manitobans are willing to do their part, but they expect government to do the same. The fact of the matter is that this minister issued a directive that has meant, for the Health Sciences Centre and hence the Children's Hospital, a need to find savings to the tune of \$8 million. That has led, in the case of the child life program, to the reduction of a very valuable position.

I would like to know if the minister would go out and ascertain the impact of his directive to urban hospitals and report back to this House with a complete list of cutbacks underway or being considered by urban hospitals?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, every year in the budgeting process, the managements of our respective hospitals make decisions around patient care based on the amount of budget available. That process has been in place, including when my honourable friend, the now New Democratic Party critic, sat around the cabinet table and ordered the forced closing of 120 hospital beds in the city of Winnipeg at the Health Sciences Centre, the first time government ever directed, for budgetary reasons, the forced closure of acute-care beds in the province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, we have chosen not to take that route. We have provided a 5 percent plus increase in funding to the hospitals, despite the fact that today we spend \$500 million more in interest on the Howard Pawley debt.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, this is the first time urban hospitals have been asked to cut significantly from their base.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health if he will issue a new directive to urban hospitals, putting on hold the \$19-million reduction directive until the results are in from his urban hospital review?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, again my honourable friend persists in talking about a \$19-million cut. There was a multimillion-dollar increase, and when we get to Estimates, I will explain to my honourable friend what 5 percent on \$900 million, approximately, of hospital spending means. That is a \$45-million, in rough terminology, increase, not a \$19-million cut. The base line funding has increased to the hospitals of Manitoba, not decreased as my honourable friend alleges.

In the course of providing health care, the Urban Hospital Council is considering a whole diversity of issues, not in isolation, as was the habit under the NDP, but in a planned system-wide approach involving the urban hospitals, the chief executive officers of all Winnipeg hospitals plus Brandon General Hospital to bring some reasoned approach to health care planning for one million Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Nonpolitical Statements

Mrs. Rosemary Vodrey (Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, may I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Fort Garry, does she have leave? Leave.

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, the dictionary defines "bravery" as the quality of being brave, having or showing courage, valour or heroism. Each year countries, provinces and cities recognize individuals who perform acts of bravery.

Last week, Constable Grant Bannatyne, a police officer in my constituency in Fort Garry, received the Award of Merit in recognition of his act of heroism, together with his partner Constable Phil Siatecki, who will receive the same award at a later date. They saved the life of an elderly woman in Fort Garry this past winter.

On February 6 of this year, a woman was reported missing from a personal care home. Two constables were searching for the woman when they saw fresh footprints in the snow leading to the river. As they approached, they could hear a faint call for help.

During the dramatic rescue that followed, both officers put themselves at considerable risk, one on the thin river ice with the other entering the frigid waters. At one point, Constable Bannatyne, a nonswimmer, slid from the ice into the water to grasp hold of the woman. His efforts allowed fellow officers to pull them both to safety.

Mr. Speaker, to quote Winnipeg Police Chief Herb Stephen, "Both officers displayed admirable courage and risked their lives in an attempt to reach this person." The woman was treated for hypothermia and released from hospital six days later.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to salute the bravery of Constables Bannatyne and Phil Siatecki and offer

them our thanks for their unselfish efforts in saving the life of another.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member for Gimli, are you seeking leave for a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Yes.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for Gimli have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

* (1420)

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. Agreed.

Mr. Helwer: Mr. Speaker, this year marks the 100th Anniversary of Ukrainian immigration to Canada. This past weekend, I had the pleasure of attending the Veselka's Ukrainian Festival in Teulon. This year the third annual festival of Ukrainian dancing, culture and tradition took on an even greater significance as a result of that anniversary.

Ukrainians play a significant role in the cultural mosaic which makes up our province, and we have long been proud of the impact they have made. When they first arrived in Canada, they arrived with little more than the clothes on their backs and a sense of determination. In spite of the challenges of a new language and customs, they were determined to make a better life for themselves and their families. Many of these pioneers settled in the Interlake area of Manitoba. Through hard work they succeeded and in the process helped improve and enrich the quality of life for all Manitobans.

The Veselka's Ukrainian Festival helps our young people appreciate the heritage, values and principles of Canada's Ukrainian people. It encourages our youth to be proud Canadians and also to recognize and share their cultural background.

I rise today to salute the efforts of the Veselka's Ukrainian Festival in promoting the Ukrainian heritage and culture in Manitoba. I congratulate Ukrainian Manitobans on the centennial of Ukrainian immigration to Canada.

* * *

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Might I have leave to make a nonpolitical statement?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member for St. Johns have leave to make a nonpolitical statement? Leave? Agreed.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, I am sure all members in this House regardless of political stripe would want to stand today and pay tribute to all those who had a part in making the 6th Annual Children's Miracle Telethon such a success and for contributing to new breakthroughs in terms of funds raised to the tune of \$902,154.

We all want to say a special thank you to the Children's Hospital and the Children's Hospital Research Foundation who co-sponsored this event.

We want to say a special thank you to Manitoba CBC and its affiliate CKX TV Brandon for broadcasting this telethon for 23 hours straight.

We want to say thank you to the over 350 Manitoba performers who shared their talents and encouraged Manitobans to contribute.

We want to thank the thousands and thousands of Manitobans and northwestern Ontarians who contributed so generously with their dollars and did a great deal to contribute to research in the area of children's diseases and to help improve health care for children in this part of our world.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I stand on a matter of urgent public importance. I move, seconded by the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), that under Rule 27, the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the links between immigration irregularities and this government.

Mr. Speaker: Before determining whether the motion meets requirements of our Rule 27, the honourable member for Inkster will have five minutes to state his case for urgency of debate on this matter. A spokesperson for each of the other parties will also have five minutes to address the position of their party respecting the urgency of the matter.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, Beauchesne says that there are two reasons for a matter of urgent public importance, the first being that the public interest would be best served by debating it today, the second is that there is no ordinary opportunity which will allow the matter to be brought forward early enough.

In addressing the latter, Mr. Speaker, I can say that the Throne Speech Debate has come to an end, Budget Debate has ended, I have already used my opportunity to grieve—in terms of Executive Council in the Estimates has already been passed, which would be Culture, Heritage and Citizenship is in fact passed—and there are no relevant bills before us this afternoon that we are aware of that are on the Order Paper that would allow us to carry on this debate.

So, Mr. Speaker, in terms of the public interest, we feel that it is important and in the best interest of the public that, in fact, this be given the opportunity to be debated for the following reasons: Over the weekend we have found allegations that have once again surfaced which were printed today in one of our two daily newspapers which suggests that the government, through different individuals, had agreed to, if in a government situation, give jobs, give multicultural grants. This is why, in most part, we feel it is essential that this debate has to occur and it has to occur today.

Mr. Speaker, we believe that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) should want to show the public that he has nothing to hide. The Premier can do that by agreeing to an independent inquiry which we believe is essential. Every day, more and more allegations are being made. The public interest will suffer unless the truth is, in fact, known. We feel so strongly about this issue because we have talked to the people who are on the other end, the people who have been exploited and—

To the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) they will have an opportunity to speak. I am explaining the urgency of the debate, I suggest to him that he listen.

We have talked to the people at the other end, the people who, in fact, have been exploited; we have heard from individuals who have leveled allegations at this government, who have passed on allegations to the RCMP. The RCMP are, in fact, investigating. There is a good chance that criminal charges will be laid. The public service commission is also looking into what has been going on, but that, we argue, is not enough. That does not cover all the things that need to be covered.

We need to cover the whole question of the ethics, in terms of what has been going on for the last year, year and a half. The government has an obligation to come straightforward and give us the facts. The questions that we have been putting forward, we

have received, not only today but in previous days, as notice. The government, for whatever reasons, has not been straightforward with the opposition so we need this debate in order that the government would have the opportunity to, in fact, put the facts that they have on the record so that the opposition parties, and in fact the public, are aware of what is going on.

Mr. Speaker, we have seen or heard allegations that include, as I have pointed out already, the promise or commitment to grants, the commitment to political jobs. We have seen the principal secretary of the Premier's Office go out to independent campaigns, and the deputy minister says that it is on his own time. Well, the Deputy Premier or this government can say what it would like, but many people believe that it is too much of a coincidence and I believe that. I believe that the Premier and other government ministers should be given the opportunity in an emergency debate to defend the government's actions regarding what we have before us, and the only way that will be allowed is if we had this debate because there is nothing else that is before us that will allow that debate to occur.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I think the House leader of the Liberal Party has failed miserably to establish urgency. Citation 390, Beauschêne, Mr. Speaker, urgency within this rule does not apply to the matter itself but means urgency of debate. When the ordinary opportunity is provided to the House, rules of the House do not permit the subject to be brought on early enough and the public interest demands that discussion take place immediately—public interest demands that discussion take place immediately.

Mr. Speaker, I do not know how long the member has been conjuring up this motion but I would bet, although I am not a betting man, I would bet a few dollars that the member maybe withheld this emergency debate resolution because he wanted to get out of way his grievance, so I could not use as one of the reasons. -(interjection)- No, no, I am on to something. I am not saying he did it; I am saying it is my belief that the member might do that.

* (1430)

These are the points that the member uses as to why we should debate this issue, set aside the ordinary business of the House under our rules and

debate the issue. He says that there are printed allegations in a newspaper. If that ever became the criteria for setting aside the ordinary business of the House to debate issues, we would never consider any other business in this House. Every allegation, most stories—and maybe that is what the members want—they want to debate allegations and try to deflect the business to the reason that they were put here to represent the constituents to debate the issues before government, the bills put forward and the spending Estimates. He says an independent inquiry should be sought. Mr. Speaker, facts—a criminal investigation is going to be conducted by two authorities, the RCMP and by the Civil Service Commission of government as indicated by the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey).

Mr. Speaker, the member talks about exploitation. Why does the member not state his case when he uses that strong, strong terminology? Why does he not come forward and lay before the House, facts, or failing that lay before one of the independent inquiries, either the RCMP or, indeed, the Civil Service Commission investigation, his strong allegations—a fact, using his words?

The member though, in my view, drops to an all-time low when he says they are listening to the people, to use his words, at the other end. To suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the government is at the other end, that the government—and tying him to his former point—is responsible for the exploitation. I say to the member that is shameful on his part. I say to the member that has absolutely nothing to do with the issue and the urgency sought by him.

Finally, he asks the government to give the facts. Mr. Speaker, what is he trying to say, that the government is hiding facts? Well, now we are getting to the point of the order, and the member is somehow saying that the facts that the member obviously feels that he has that are in disagreement with the government, should be the point of order of setting aside the business of the House. I say to him that is a point of a dispute over the facts and has nothing to do for the granting of setting aside the business of the House to debate the motion put forward by the member. Thank you.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, having had the opportunity to listen to both other House leaders and their comments, I want to indicate that while our preference is, and will continue to be, to have this matter dealt with in the form of an independent inquiry, we will be

supporting this resolution today. It may be the only way that we can deal with what I would consider at any time as an urgent matter—the question of the ethics of this government, the way it handles the public business of this province.

Mr. Speaker, if the government House leader has any questions, any questions whatsoever, about what we are dealing with here and why it should be urgent, he should reflect on the fact that the RCMP will be conducting a criminal investigation. The Civil Service Commission can conduct investigations in regard to matters within the realm of the Civil Service. Without an independent investigation, there is no way to deal with some of the questions that have been raised by members of the public of Manitoba about the way in which this government does business, going back to 1983, when there have been allegations about promises of employment and contracts made, serious allegations, that need to be dealt with right away.

We have seen with this government, which came in under a rather cloudy way in 1988, to say the least, but since it has come into government, Mr. Speaker, there have been repeated allegations of favouritism and political influence, most recently in terms of the Rotary Pines. This is but the latest in a series of evidence that shows this government is rewarding its political friends at the expense of the public of Manitoba. That indeed is an urgent matter because without debating this matter, without persuading, through the debate, this government to conduct an independent inquiry, there will be questions asked about the integrity of this government and the way it conducts the public business.

We heard again today, this time the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey), using rhetoric that might just as well come out of Watergate, talking about making things perfectly clear and talking about unfounded allegations, Mr. Speaker. The only way to find out if they are founded or unfounded allegations is to have the inquiry, which is what—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, I ask you to call the member to order. If he believes that his privileges as a member, and indeed all the privileges of the members of this House, are being affected by some alleged statement of facts from his

point of view as to wrongdoing, then he should bring that forward by way of a matter of privilege, not by arguing it at the urgency of a debate on this motion.

Mr. Speaker: The honourable government House leader does not have a point of order. It was a dispute over the facts. The honourable member for Thompson has the floor.

* * *

Mr. Ashton: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. To continue, what can be more urgent than pressing, than giving, this government the opportunity either to declare whether those allegations are founded or unfounded and, by the process, clean up what is becoming the smell of political interference that we see on a daily basis from this government? The smell of political favouritism and patronage, a smell that cannot be dismissed by rhetoric made by the Deputy Premier or the government House leader that can only be dispelled by a public inquiry.

That is why we will be supporting this matter of urgent public importance, because if we cannot—and repeatedly in Question Period—put the pressure on the government to do it, perhaps through this debate and the opportunity for them to stand and defend their sorry record in this area, we might even be able to persuade them to do the right thing, Mr. Speaker, which is to immediately call an independent public inquiry into this matter.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank all honourable members for the advice provided as to whether or not the motion proposed by the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) satisfies the conditions to be met if a matter is to proceed as a matter of urgent public importance.

I did receive the notice required under our subrule 27.(1). Beauchesne's Citations 389 and 390 set out the conditions required if a motion is to be debated as a matter of urgent public importance. The first condition is that the subject must be so pressing that the ordinary opportunities for debate will not allow it to be brought on early enough. The second condition is that it must be shown that the public interest will suffer if the matter is not given immediate attention.

* (1440)

Although I understand that this is a serious question about which the member is genuinely concerned, I am not satisfied that the public interest will suffer if it is not debated today. I must, therefore,

rule the motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) out of order as a matter of urgent public importance, because I do not believe it warrants setting aside the regularly scheduled business of the House.

* (1520)

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, with respect, I have to challenge the Chair.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged. The question before the House is shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, Yeas and Nays.

Mr. Speaker: Call in the members.

The question before the House is shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained?

A STANDING VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Downey, Driedger, Ducharme, Enns, Ernst, Filmon, Findlay, Gillieshammer, Helwer, Laurendeau, Manness, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Neufeld, Orchard, Reimer, Rønder, Rose, Stefanson, Sveinson, Vodrey.

Nays

Ashton, Barrett, Carr, Carstairs, Cerilli, Cheema, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Edwards, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Gaudry, Harper, Hickes, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Maloway, Martindale, Plohman, Reid, Santos, Storie, Wasylcia-Leis, Wowchuk.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 26, Nays 26.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The vote having been tied, I am voting in support of the question in conformity with parliamentary tradition.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to petition

the House to determine whether or not there is a will to waive private members' hour.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to waive private members' hour? No? Not agreed.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that before I move the motion, moving into Supply, that there is an understanding tonight to sit until midnight in the two sections of Supply.

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

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings), that Mr. Speaker do now leave the Chair and the House resolve itself into a Committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty.

Motion agreed to, and the House resolved itself into a committee to consider of the Supply to be granted to Her Majesty with the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) in the Chair for Seniors Directorate; and the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) in the Chair for Department of Northern Affairs, and Decentralization.

* (1640)

CONCURRENT COMMITTEES OF SUPPLY

SUPPLY—SENIORS DIRECTORATE

Mr. Deputy Chairman (Marcel Laurendeau): Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This afternoon this section of the Committee of Supply, meeting in Room 255, will resume consideration of the Estimates for the Seniors Directorate.

When the committee last sat, it had been considering 1. Seniors Directorate (a) Salaries \$118,000 on page 149 of the Estimates book and on pages 14 and 15 of Supplementary Information book.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): I just have one quick question on elder abuse, where we finished off the last time. I had asked when the elder abuse discussion paper would be ready, and there was no indication confirmed.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister responsible for Seniors): First of all, would you be more explicit in what you mean by the elder abuse? If you are wondering about our program that we announced when I was first made Minister responsible for Seniors, we felt that we will have everything finished

by about the end of June. That includes the video, and that includes all our handouts. As I explained to the member for St. Boniface, it will be in both French and English.

Mr. Gaudry: That is the package that the Seniors Directorate—when we called and asked when will the package be ready. This is the report.

Mr. Ducharme: That is correct. You have to remember that, in case something happens, June, as you know, is a very busy month for my staff and myself as minister. We hope to have it out. It was planned to have it out during the month of Seniors Month, but it could go into the early part of July. Everything is ready now. The literature is ready. However, the video is not ready. That could be the delay.

We are just going through the process now of having someone give us prices on doing the actual video. The wording of the video and the way we are presenting the video is almost completed. The material that we want in the video is almost completed. Now we are looking at people to give us a price on the video.

Mr. Gaudry: I thank the minister for his answer.

In November of 1990, the former Minister responsible for Seniors recognized that transportation, and I quote: has been identified as a major area of concern, and we are working aggressively to try and resolve some of the difficulties that are there.

If this government recognizes that transportation for our seniors is a major area of concern, what has been done to alleviate these concerns?

Mr. Ducharme: To the member for St. Boniface, first of all, we have our transportation committee that we have several people sitting on. We have a committee, government reps. We have from the Department of Health, Bev Kyle. We have another person from the Department of Health, Services to Seniors, Irene Muzyka; and then Highways and Transportation, a Wes Graham, who just retired I am informed; Family Services, Gordon Clarke; Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, Ellen Kelley; then we have Urban Affairs, Vernon DePape. From the City of Winnipeg, we have a member. We have senior organizations. We have MSOS, Age and Opportunity, Council on Aging, and Ethos will be involved in that committee. We also have a transportation service for seniors in Winnipeg, a

project that is in three phases at the University of Manitoba.

The particular grant in the phase was estimated in the amount of \$72,000, and it is in different phases. We are working with them. We are trying to gather all the information on what is available for seniors in Winnipeg.

As the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) knows when we first came into government in 1988, there was one principal senior transportation system; however, that was a three- or four- or five-year project funded by the three levels of government. The City of Winnipeg and the federal government discontinued their financing, so we followed along with that simply because the city had asked us to extend the Handi-Transit system, so that we could probably deal with more seniors and more handicapped people with the funding that was set aside. This is to replace that a little specifically so that we look after more seniors. However, as a result of this transportation committee, maybe there will be more ideas that will come up as a result of it.

Mr. Gaudry: Has the Seniors Transport Service Inc. been contacted to see if they had specific concerns that needed to be addressed?

Mr. Ducharme: I just received a letter in the last couple of weeks from that group, and I have sent it on to that committee to go over that. Remember, if you can see by the list of the people sitting on this committee, a lot of them will be aware of the system that was offered by them, and especially the City of Winnipeg and our own Urban Affairs rep, those people knew what the costs were—they knew. They had been in correspondence with that group, oh, for probably over a year, a year and a half, I know while I was Minister of Urban Affairs. The only thing is now they have some new specifics in that letter that I noticed, and we will have that committee address those and use some of their information.

Mr. Gaudry: When can we expect to have a copy of the report as to the transportation committee?

Mr. Ducharme: I have no time frame. All I know is we have gathered the information and hoped that we should see something, but I do not have a time frame on it. I have not had an up-to-date report on that committee, and I am sure I will get maybe a first report of it; but a final report, they will probably work along with our University of Manitoba, and that works right through to '92-93, the University of Manitoba resource that we hired.

Mr. Gaudry: What specific grants are being provided to seniors groups to enhance the lives of seniors in Manitoba?

Mr. Ducharme: Right now, we have our out-of-town van service that is provided for seniors. Also, we noticed that when we did provide the new extended Handi-Transit system, those seniors who cannot take a regular bus system are the ones who really have a problem because they cannot use that regular bus service. We make sure they are on the extended Handi-Transit system.

By the way, I think when it first came into place and when the program was accepted so well, we moved it from a four-year—Urban Affairs, that is who funds it along with the City of Winnipeg—to a three-year, and the membership increased by about 70 percent. I do not have those numbers and maybe you could ask Urban Affairs when they come forward. They would have the numbers, but I know 70 percent of them are seniors. The people who use it in the city—it really went up.

However, you have to remember that the whole idea was that the regular transit system is for seniors, and then you have this for people who are not eligible, who cannot ride. We felt that if we are going to use the money, we want to make sure that everybody in the city of Winnipeg should be able to use it, not just one small amount. That is the problem that I had with the other STS transit system. It was great, it was a Cadillac system, however not everybody could use it in the city of Winnipeg.

Highways and Transportation provided \$325,000, approximately, in operating grants and \$24,000 in start-up grants during '89 and '90. Then there was probably the balance of operating costs were paid by user fees, municipal grants, donations, fundraising activities, totalling \$606,000. You have to remember that, along with this, the province does pick up at the box, you know, as a fare box; 50 percent of every person who operates a transit is now being picked up, approximately, by the province. There is quite a bit of money being put into transit to provide that for seniors or whomever it is in Winnipeg, and I just read out some numbers in Manitoba.

Mr. Gaudry: When will the seniors in this province be able to use a safe house promised to them by this government in the last election?

Mr. Ducharme: As you know, there is a group now working with housing. In Halifax some, I guess it is

almost two and a half to three years ago, the federal government met with all the seniors on housing projects. As a result of this, this government about a year and a half, two years ago provided a housing conference for seniors, and through that, a committee has been formed. This is one of the conditions that was brought up in regard to seniors, especially the abused seniors, in the areas of that maybe there is a system that we could use some of the vacant bachelor suites. That is recommended.

* (1650)

We are working with that committee, and that committee will continue to work with housing. I hope to come up with something because there are vacant bachelor suites. However, it does cloak some problems, you know, we are not ignoring, because you have to remember that Osborne House is also geared for the older women, so they are being assisted. Also the Westman Shelter in Brandon and the Selkirk shelter have special rooms for the older, so they are not being ignored. However, there could be a system adapted for seniors.

In the rural areas, I think we are probably—you have also the new one in Portage, and then you have the one in Dauphin that we have been trying to start, so they are not getting ignored except that we could probably be providing a system for the bachelor suites.

Mr. Gaudry: The Seniors Directorate in conjunction with the Women's Directorate has established outreach offices in Portage la Prairie and The Pas. Does this not serve the same purpose as the information line would? What results or how many seniors have communicated with these outreach offices?

Mr. Ducharme: While we are waiting for this information, you asked about the transit. There are 39 communities in the rural area now receiving handivan services. I have a list if the member would like that list. I will file it with the Clerk. You have that list?

An Honourable Member: No, I would appreciate it.

Mr. Ducharme: The Portage outreach deals with approximately six groups in regional councils, so that is the purpose of the Portage one. Also, the one in The Pas deals with the aboriginals. Really, the Portage one works quite well that way. They are more on a personal, one-to-one type of area with

these groups. I asked the question, I think, and we are finding that there are more and more coming to visit Mrs. Hill at that office. They walk in. They really feel comfortable coming into that. I would say it is serving them very well, giving that little more personal touch as you know than the line would do. Of course, if we do get line calls from here, we will direct them on to Mrs. Hill, and Mrs. Hill will see them personally in that area.

Mr. Gaudry: You have good staff. I compliment them.

One final question, of course, it will be my pet project, to the minister, 55-Plus. My last question would not be complete if I did not ask.

Again, on November 13, 1990, the former Minister responsible for Seniors stated, and I quote: that the seniors of our province are part of the leadership of our province. It is important that we fully ensure that their lives are enhanced and their contributions be fully realized and appreciated.

If this is so, then why did this government deindex the 55-Plus program, and why did this government not take into consideration MSOS 1991 position paper recommendation No. 13, which asks the government to seek ways to direct additional funds into 55-Plus?

Mr. Ducharme: Yes, we have been through this quite a bit in the Estimates, and I can appreciate the member for St. Boniface in regard to the 55-Plus program. I have gone through the difficult decisions that are probably to be made. I did explain earlier that, when you sit down with the other departments and they say, listen, we can hold together your programs if you do not ask for any drastic increases, if I was to weigh that something was to be reduced, then I would say that would have been an even more difficult position. In this particular case, when I was assured that 55-Plus would not be reduced, I looked at it not very complimentary. However, those are the type of decisions that everyone has had to live with around the Treasury Board and around the cabinet table.

All I can say is that I think our commitment is there. We are going to continue our expenditure of the over \$9 million a year in the 55-Plus program. Remember that we have, for instance, 22,000 people participating in that program, and everyone we know, I think, of that 15,000 in the over 65 component, and then we have another 7,000 in the junior. The program is there, and I am not going to

get involved with that with you because you understand my feelings in regard to what the previous administration had done.

The previous administration had said that they had picked up by an increase what they brought in in one year. However, they forgot that the program really has been going since 1974, and there were no increases from those dates either. I am saying that it is something that, I guess, depends on which side you are arguing from. I will argue that I will do my utmost at the cabinet table to work with the 55-Plus program to make sure that it is not disappearing, and that those 22,000 Manitobans will continue to benefit on that \$9 million that we do give out to that particular program.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I, too, would like to return to 55-Plus and also to correct the records. Since before May 1986, there was no 55-Plus. It was called the Manitoba Supplement for Pensioners. In May of 1986, major changes were made to the program. Manitobans aged 55 and over at certain income levels qualified for benefits whether or not they had any pension income. Previously, they had to receive at least 50 percent of their income from pension sources to qualify.

Secondly, maximum quarterly benefits paid by the program were doubled to \$94 for a single person and \$101 for a married person.

Thirdly, benefits became indexed annually, and the name was changed to 55-Plus, a Manitoba income supplement. The changes not only resulted in greatly improved benefits for Manitobans enrolled in the program, but 5,600 more Manitobans qualified for full and partial benefits from the age 65 and over in the program and 3,700 more people qualified for the age 55 and over component. This major expansion, particularly for age 55 and over component, more than quadrupled the number of persons benefiting, and the program's annual budget increased to about \$9 million from \$3.3 million. I think it is important to put on the record what those major changes were in 1986.

Mr. Ducharme: Yes, I guess if you want to consider a program when you change the name—if you want to consider it a new program. I call it a name change. I guess I could have done the same thing as the new Minister responsible for Seniors this year. I will keep going back that you had an increase of seniors on the age bracket. We know the population is increasing, your benefits are going

to increase and your amounts are going to increase. Your amounts are going to increase as you go along, and we are very, very aware of that. Go back to '74; the member has admitted that the program was here in '74, whether he wants to call it another name or not. Maybe he could tell me what the benefits were from '74 to '77, what amount it increased then.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Mr. Deputy Chairperson, if there is any great concern among senior citizens, the area which much concerns them will be the area of health care. As everybody knows, we have already indicated that, as the population gets older in age distribution, they need more and more health care. On the other hand, there has been a problem in the cost of pharmaceuticals. Right here in Manitoba, for example, Manitoba has decreased a number of pharmacies here by approximately 25 over the past two and a half years. Therefore, accessibility to the pharmaceutical has been restricted. Seniors have to travel a little bit farther. They have to rely on family members and wait longer for their prescriptions.

If the member will recall, there is federal legislation that affected also the distribution of pharmaceuticals all across the nation. The federal government, in 1987 amendment act to the Patent Act, gave the multinational drug companies a 10-year monopoly on the new products. This is now due for cabinet review in 1992. Either they eliminate the 10-year monopolies for the big drug companies, or they can change the rule and stop it if it is for the public interest.

* (1700)

If they eliminate, the federal government eliminated, the 10-year monopoly by the pharmacists, there will be an increased use generic drugs, and this will result in approximately 30 percent or 40 percent less than the brand names in the drug.

Can the honourable minister state whether they have any plan, how they can help the senior in the pharmaceuticals?

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Is there a will of the committee to pass this now, or do you want to come back at eight o'clock? I mean, it is that close to five o'clock. I am going to have to call it five o'clock any second now, so is there a will to pass this?

Mr. Ducharme: Maybe I could help some now. Maybe I could give the member for Broadway my information in regard to what we are working on, what we are increasing and what we are doing. There are committees meeting. Maybe what I could do—

Mr. Santos: On this commitment, we can pass.

Mr. Ducharme: I will give you that information.

Mr. Deputy Chairman: Item 1. Seniors Directorate (a) Salaries \$118,000—pass; (b) Other Expenditures \$163,500—pass.

Resolution 131: RESOLVED that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding \$281,500 for the Seniors Directorate for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1992—pass.

This completes the Estimates of the Seniors Directorate. The next set of Estimates that will be considered by this section of the Committee of Supply are the Estimates of the Department of Housing. We shall recess until eight o'clock. At such time we will be considering that department.

SUPPLY—NORTHERN AFFAIRS

Madam Chairman (Louise Dacquay): Order, please. Will the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with the Department of Northern Affairs. We are on page 140, 1.(a) Minister's Salary.

The motion before the House is: It has been moved by the honourable member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), seconded by the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper), that item 1.(a) Minister's Salary in the Estimates of the Department of Northern Affairs be reduced by 25 percent to \$7,725.

* (1530)

All those in favour, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Chairman: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Chairman: In my opinion, the Nays have it.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Yeas and Nays, Madam Chairperson—recorded vote.

Madam Chairman: Call in the members.

Order, please. Would the Committee of Supply please come to order.

The motion before the House is that it has been moved by the honourable member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), seconded by the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Harper), that item 1.(a) Minister's Salary in the Estimates of the Department of Northern Affairs be reduced by 25 percent to \$7,725.

A COUNTED VOTE was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas 23, Nays 23.

Madam Chairman: The principle guiding a Chairperson when called upon to exercise a casting vote is the concept that a Chairperson should vote in such a manner as to retain the status quo. Therefore, I must vote against the motion.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Chair, I was paired with the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) to enable him to attend the all-party meeting regarding Shilo. Had I been able to vote, I would have supported the motion in reducing the minister's salary for many reasons but largely because of his actions or inactions—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

* (1630)

Madam Chairman: Order, please. We are dealing with the Estimates of the Department of Northern Affairs, page 140, item 1.(a) Minister's Salary \$10,300. Shall the item pass?

Some Honourable Members: Pass.

Some Honourable Members: No.

Madam Chairman: Same division in reverse. All those in favour of the Minister's Salary \$10,300.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Chairman: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Madam Chairman: In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Same division, the vote is tied, and the principle guiding a Chairperson when called upon to exercise a casting vote is the concept that a Chairperson should vote in such a manner as to retain the status quo. Therefore, I must vote in support of the motion. The item is accordingly carried.

Resolution 116: **RESOLVED** that there be granted to Her Majesty a sum not exceeding

\$1,898,800 for Northern Affairs, Administration and Finance, for the fiscal year ending the 31st day of March, 1992—pass.

That concludes this section of the Estimates for the Department of Northern Affairs.

There will be a two-minute recess before we commence. The next section of Supply in this House is Decentralization, and the Committee of Supply will resume in two minutes outside the Chamber.

SUPPLY—DECENTRALIZATION

Madam Chairman: Order, please. Would the Committee of Supply please come to order. This section of the Committee of Supply is dealing with Decentralization, page 160.

Does the minister responsible wish to make an opening statement?

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Decentralization): Madam Chairman, let me just make a few brief comments as I know that the members opposite are expecting it, and I hate to disappoint them.

I probably should have a 20-minute—Madam Chairman, let me start off by saying that the initiative—

An Honourable Member: So why do you need the big glasses?

Mr. Downey: That is so I can see my notes. I have to look a long ways away to see them, too.

Madam Chairman, let me first of all say that the decentralization initiative, as the members are aware, was announced approximately two years ago. At that particular time, the provincial financial circumstances were in the situation where the revenues for the province were not as they currently are—being basically flat. We had not foreseen at that particular time some of the budgetary decisions that would have to be made that are currently made. In that initial announcement, we did not see where in fact there would be some overall monetary and budgetary changes that would have to be introduced as we were part way through the system.

* (1640)

I do want to say to the House and to the people who have worked on decentralization that I appreciate their work. I appreciate the communities that have shown some concern when there were in fact some delays and decisions being made. They

did in fact speak out on behalf of their community, wondering what was happening.

Following the budgetary decisions, we have now seen some additional announcements made, in fact several. We have seen in the last short while the communities of Brandon, Minnedosa, Neepawa and Winkler as being contracts awarded to those communities and moves being taken. I think it is important again to note, Madam Chairman, that in this initiative there was a time frame that was established, which in fact with budgetary decisions and the impact of budget decisions coming forward, caused, in fact created a delay in decisions and, in some cases, that will take longer than what was initially thought.

In other situations, we are now moving ahead with the decentralization decisions and I am pleased that we are. I guess what I am hearing from the communities, and the media are now starting to report it, that decentralization is in fact moving again. I guess if one would have had the process of doing it, had it been able to be changed, it would have been an easier process to have gone through the tough budgetary decisions first and then to have made the decentralization program to follow that.

While we did not have the particular opportunity, Madam Chairman—and so we have worked through the system. I again compliment the people who have worked on decentralization. I compliment the community leaders who have been, I say, very patient, and I particularly want to compliment the staff who have, I think, shown over the last few months their co-operation in the decentralization initiative. I know the members may have some specific questions as it relates to certain communities, and as soon as we are through the critic's comments, we can get on with bringing the staff in and get the kind of detailed information.

I think the key to it all is, Madam Chairman, the committee who has been working on decentralization, the different department components that have been working with the decentralization committee. The staff who have been involved in decentralization and the work that we have done has gone considerably better than a lot of people who want to give it credit. I am quite prepared to stand up and accept comments and criticisms because I believe in the initiative. I believe very strongly in the initiative that it is the responsibility of government to provide services outside of the city of Winnipeg where it is in fact able

to be done in bringing government closer to people and assist with some of the economic development with some of the communities by giving them some government offices.

I compliment the co-operation of my colleagues. I know that there have been some difficult times and some questions to be answered. I say that, as we keep our line of communication open with the communities, as decisions are made, they are advanced to the communities, and I am pleased the initiative is back on stream again and the initial commitment is being able to be lived up to.

When I say the initial commitment is being lived up to, the numbers have changed, have been reduced because of budgetary decisions, but I believe with some of the activities that are taking place, we will in fact try to accommodate some of those commitments in a different way. There is no getting around it, and it is on the record that there was an impact as budget decisions were made. Budget decisions had to be paramount. When you are going through a budgetary exercise, you have to make the decisions as it relates to cost-effectiveness, program delivery, and those decisions were made.

I would be interested to hear the members opposite and their comments. I think that they will, I guess, try to—I will wait and see what they have to say. If they follow some of the editorial writings that have taken place over the past few months, then I would warn them right off the bat, because there are a lot of inaccuracies in what have been spelled out in some of the editorial writings. I invite the members to, not only negative in their criticism—I would hope that they do not turn their back on rural Manitoba and criticize the initiative for the sake of criticism. If they have some constructive comments, I am more than prepared to get into debate with them; but if it is a matter of playing sheer politics, then I can also get into that kind of a debate as well.

I want to say overall, Madam Chair, in my opening comments that I am not dissatisfied with the manner in which decentralization is being carried out at this particular time. I think that the communities that I have talked to, even those that are put in a position of being in a hold pattern, are still understanding the decisions that have to be made by government and are not overly critical. Somewhat anxious, but not overly critical in having to wait and work through this difficult economic time which the province faces.

Madam Chairman, I will conclude my remarks with that, and look forward to the comments of the opposition members.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Chairman, the minister, before I open, would like to pay compliments to the staff for the job they had done on decentralization and how well that is going. I have to say that I am quite disappointed in those comments, that he would even begin to say that it has gone well. We know, as we look around the province, and the promises that were made and what has been delivered, it is a complete farce.

Madam Chairman, I believe that people in rural Manitoba, and those particular areas of the rural, have been led down the garden path by this government and also by the Minister for Decentralization (Mr. Downey).

They announced decentralization, as the minister said, two years ago, and what has happened in two years? Not very much. Not very much at all. When you look at the number of jobs that have been out there, and the amount of publicity that this government got from those announcements, not very much has happened.

Before the election, they promised that there was going to be hundreds of jobs going out to rural Manitoba. In fact, during the election they talked about it. The government was well aware of the situation in Manitoba before the election, yet they chose to mislead the people. Then, when they had a majority in government, what did they do? All of a sudden they announced that decentralization was too expensive and could not proceed.

* (1650)

My goodness! Did you not know how expensive it was going to be before you started it? The minister chose not to let the people of rural Manitoba know that they really had no intentions of carrying on very quickly with this plan. I want to say, Madam Chairman, I would like to get on the record that I am very much in favour of decentralization. I would like to see it proceed. I would like to see it proceed in a more orderly fashion than it has.

I would also like to see, Madam Chairman, that there be consideration given to all areas of the province. This government chose to, for some reason, decentralize into southern Manitoba, where they must believe that is where all the services are needed. There are many parts of the province that have very high unemployment rates. The minister

talks about Dauphin. If I was him, I would be ashamed to talk about what he has done for Dauphin.

The process of decentralization, in my opinion, was handled very badly. There was no consultation with departments. People were left hanging for months, not sure whether they were going to be moving, whether they were going to be staying, whether a husband was going in one direction or a wife was going in another direction. There was very poor communication with staff people and the people that were going to be affected by this. There was also very poor communication with the public, with the towns that were expecting these jobs, because they thought -(interjection)- You will have your opportunity as well.

They built up expectations in many communities. People thought jobs were coming. Of course, it sounded very good during an election, that we would have this boost for rural southern Manitoba. People invested money in particular communities like Rivers, invested money in what was anticipated as jobs coming into their community.

Now they have been let down and nobody has even communicated with them as to what is going to be happening. Madam Chairman, I do not feel that is the way the public should be treated, nor the employees. Rural Manitoba has been let down, as I said, by this decentralization process.

The government should realize that there are tough economic times, but instead of trying to do some job creation, some stimulating of the economy, this government has instead chosen to offload onto municipalities and have them pick up extra costs. If you do not have jobs out there, it is pretty difficult to pay those bills that the municipalities are having to pick up.

There has also been a reduction of service. How do you expect these people to move out to—how can we attract them? If we do not have the services in rural Manitoba, it is not going to be very easy to attract these people and encourage them to stay in the rural area.

The most disappointing part of this whole decentralization process is that we thought that there were jobs coming and instead the very jobs that were supposed to be coming to rural Manitoba were many of the ones that were cut in the budget process—jobs in Highways, jobs in Natural Resources.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): We have to get jobs shooting cormorants.

Ms. Wowchuk: Yes. The Minister of Health seems to think that the cormorant is not a serious problem. He has raised it about a hundred times. If he had any interest in rural Manitoba and if he cared at all about people making a living off the lake, he might even go visit those communities and see how devastating the problem is. Instead, he chooses to make jokes about this serious matter here.

If he wants to take a shotgun out there, he is quite prepared to do it, because I understand his government has chosen a more foolish way to look after the matter. The Minister of Health should maybe come out and visit Duck Bay and Camperville and some of those people who have very serious health problems as well and need some decentralized services out there, but he chooses to make fun of these people, these people who have the highest unemployment rate in Manitoba.

They are in need of mental health service, and we need decentralization of mental health services. Again, he chooses to centralize services in Winnipeg and not even think about the people in some of our poorest communities.

Madam Chairman, we talk about decentralization and improving services for rural Manitobans. One of the areas that we need services improved in is in agriculture. We have agriculture going through very diverse times, changes. We need support staff there, but instead many jobs have been cut from the Agriculture department. Our farm children, our rural children have made tremendous use of the 4-H Program, and that has been a real benefit.

I can tell you a true example. My children have taken part in it, and it has been very good for them. Instead, this government has cut those jobs. Now, in my opinion, that is not decentralization. That is taking away from what the people of rural Manitoba need.

Cuts to Natural Resources, the government had announced many decentralized jobs to Natural Resources. Then what did they do? There has been many cuts. Services have been cut. We, in rural Manitoba, want to promote and this government says they are interested in promoting tourism. How do you expect us to have people come to our parks to enjoy rural Manitoba if the services are not there? How does this government expect people to make a living from our natural

resources, from our fishery, from our lakes, from our forests if the staff are not there to promote these services and provide the support that the people who are living off those natural resources need? We have to have those supports. We have to promote tourism.

I can almost be assured that if a few people come out to our parks and we do not have the supports there, the parks are not kept in any kind of condition, people are not going to come back to the rural part of Manitoba, and they are not going to come to the North.

In that sense, I do not believe that the government has not done a good job, and the minister is saying that decentralization is working. I do not think that he has taken properly the consideration of the parts of the province where we have high unemployment. He has not taken into consideration economic development in the rural area; another area that we have had cuts is to the rural economic development.

How can you on one hand say that you are in support of development in the rural area and on the other hand cut the funding to the very people who are promoting economic development? I do not think that is a positive move, and it does not tie into this government's plan of decentralization. If on one hand you say you are supporting rural Manitoba, you want to bring the services closer to the people, how can you be serious at all if on the other hand you cut the very jobs that are there to support, the very jobs that are supplementing farm incomes right now? Many farmers are the ones who are filling these jobs. Many farmers are the people who had hoped that they might fill some of these decentralization jobs.

I feel, Madam Chairman, that this government has completely failed on their decentralization plan. As much as I am in support of decentralization, I think that they must go back to the drawing board, think more carefully about what they are doing and get some of those jobs out to rural Manitoba that are needed to stimulate our economy. You know, for a government that has many rural caucus members, they must think more seriously about what it is that they want. Do they want people to stay in rural Manitoba, or is it their wish that rural Manitoba shut down and everybody will move into Winnipeg, or to which city?

The other comment that I wanted to make, Madam Chairman, on the decentralization plan is

that I do not believe that this government, this minister has consulted enough with the people. There are people in Brandon who had different ideas about where the decentralization offices should go. The government chose not to listen to them. I would hope that the minister would reconsider some of his plans. I hope that he would look at those communities because I think, as I said before, decentralization is a good plan, but you have to move at it more carefully.

I hope that the minister would proceed and not mislead the people as he did before the last election. This government was very misleading. They chose not to tell the people before they went to the polls that they were going to put decentralization on hold. I ask him—

* (1700)

Madam Chairman: Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m., I am interrupting the proceedings for private members' hour. The committee will resume at 8 p.m. this evening. At that time the honourable member for Swan River will have 18 minutes remaining if she so desires.

Call in the Speaker.

IN SESSION

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., time for private members' hour.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 21—Appointments to Boards Commissions and Agencies

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I move, seconded by the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs),

WHEREAS appointments to boards, commissions and agencies are made on the basis of past service, loyalty or financial assistance by individuals to the governing party, rather than on skill or knowledge; and

WHEREAS public boards, commissions and agencies fulfill an important function in Manitoba, and should make informed and competent decisions; and

WHEREAS the ideological commitments or inability of politically appointed members may

hamper the quality of decision making by boards, commissions and agencies; and

WHEREAS these patronage appointments have reflected negatively on the credibility of boards, commissions and agencies.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba recommend to the government that a method be devised to ensure politically neutral appointments to boards, commissions and agencies following the next election, to be based on standards and criteria developed through consultations between the parties of this Assembly and agreeable to a majority of the members; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that these standards and criteria be applied by a proposed committee of the House to approve government nominees to boards, commissions and agencies; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that existing legislation and policies respecting appointments to boards, commissions and agencies be amended to reflect these new appointment arrangements; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly recommend that appointments to boards, commissions and agencies be clearly identified and known, perhaps in a manner similar to the American federal government's "Blue Book"; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this approach be evaluated after four years.

Motion presented.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I believe that this is an opportune time to debate this particular resolution because of the things that have been going on in the past number of weeks.

Mr. Speaker, public perception is very, very important and when it comes to political appointments and patronage, the public is very disappointed in all three political parties. I know and I did read over the remarks. This is not the first time that this resolution has been introduced to the Chamber, that in fact it has been introduced in the first two sessions.

I read over some of the remarks that were put on the record by the Leader of the Government to the Premier, the First Minister—the Leader of the New Democratic Party—and we are very disappointed with the remarks they had put on the record because

we feel that this is such a very important issue to bring to the attention of the public at large.

We have found today, during Question Period, when I brought to attention, and I am sure everyone had read what was printed in one of our daily newspapers where some individuals felt that in order to be able to receive a job, a political job, that in fact you had to do something for that political party.

Mr. Speaker, there are many people out there that believe that is the case, that many of the appointments that are rewarded to different individuals are based on their contribution to a political party. We have seen that has been the case, and again, it is not something that has just happened with this particular government. It has happened with the previous NDP administration; some would say it happened with the Trudeau administration and it has happened in all three political parties, but that does not necessarily make it right.

The member for River Heights, the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs), has brought to the attention of this Chamber a method in which we can try to depoliticize it, to try and get rid of some of that negative input that we see from the public that is continuously expressed when they hear about appointments.

Mr. Speaker, it frustrates a great number of individuals, myself included. You know, I have talked on many occasions about what has been going on in the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. This government has really disappointed a large number of people who would have liked to have seen in particular multiculturalism acted upon, instead of just words or lip service given to it.

What we can do is we can look at the appointments and who has been given appointments and what was the criteria that was used. I know that the government defends its appointments by trying to personalize it, by trying to say that, are you, as a member of the opposition, trying to say that the person we appointed does not have the credentials, that is incompetent, not worthy of the appointment?

Mr. Speaker, this is not what we are saying. In fact, what we are saying is that far too often the primary reason that an individual is given an

appointment is because of their party affiliation or work that they have done.

What I would like to use for an example is something that I am very familiar with because we have been dealing with it for the last seven months, eight months, and that is in the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship. -(interjection)- The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) is trying to get some message across. I am sorry, I am not catching all of his words. I hope he will maybe pass me a note and I will be more than happy to comment on whatever it is he is trying to say or perhaps he will speak on the resolution and share his concerns with us. Where was I? I believe I was talking about the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, and I was going to talk about the disappointment from many, many of the different communities, ethnic communities, that feel that, for example, the Multicultural Directorate that has been established is good. Then in fact the province, the different communities, can use the office.

What many people oppose is the manner in which the office has been filled. Mr. Speaker, we have an executive director who was hired, never went to any type of tendering process, it was never advertised. This individual happened to be a candidate for the Conservative Party in the last provincial election. In fact his campaign manager, who is appointed as a policy analyst, the other individual who came up through the Civil Service.

Again, I am not trying to say that these individuals are incompetent. What I am saying is that the government made a mistake by appointing these positions, as opposed to advertising them or putting them into the tendering process. The reason why, all we need to do is look at one other part of the department. If you take a look at the Outreach Office, when they put forward an application or I should say an ad in the newspaper, we had over 800 individuals who applied for that position.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): How many?

Mr. Lamoureux: To the Minister of Health, over 800 people applied for the Outreach Office position which is something that would be dealing with different multicultural groups.

Mr. Speaker, had the appointments to the Multicultural Secretariat's office been open to the public I would argue, I would say legitimately or suggest to you legitimately so that we would have

had a great deal more people to choose to select from. What surprised me most is that if you look at it in that sense and you ask the New Democratic Party what their position is on this issue is that they support the government.

* (1710)

To the member of Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), when we had brought forward this particular resolution, the New Democratic Party at the time, the Leader of the New Democratic Party said that he disagrees with the resolution, that this resolution does not deserve the support of this Chamber.

I had somewhat expected that from the government but I did not expect it from the New Democratic Party. That does not surprise me when we see them moving closure and things of that nature. One has to come to grips that the New Democratic Party does not necessarily caucus the issues that are before this Chamber.

Hundreds of appointments are made from governments when there is a change in government and one has to ask the question as to why it is the government would oppose any type of creation of a body, a body that would take the politics or more of the politics. You are not going to be able to get it out exclusively, but you will be able to limit it to a certain degree if you did in fact allow the opportunity for different individuals to be able to apply for whatever positions might be available.

This resolution makes reference to different things, such as what we have in the United States with the Blue Book. I believe that is something that has to be at least looked at, that the Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party should open their eyes and be more receptive to what the public wants. What the public wants is a more apolitical system of filling jobs and this government has moved in the opposite direction. They have not been fair to the public by the appointments that have been made. What they are doing in fact is that they are reinforcing. The member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) says, what did Trudeau do? Well, the former Prime Minister Trudeau made, no doubt, a number of political appointments, but I can assure the member for Gimli that in eight short years the current Prime Minister has made more political appointments than Mr. Trudeau did.

Mr. Speaker, when it comes to the New Democratic Party, they made more political patronage appointments than any other provincial

government with a population base of a million. So, as the other parties might try to draw into debate that the Liberal Party too was bad and that we too made some political appointments, that in fact is something that I had already made reference to. That we have to agree that we do not have to base appointments on tradition, that patronage should not be the primary concern when filling vacant appointments whether it is appointments to boards, to commissions, or whatever type of a job appointment it might be.

What we need is set criteria. There should be some form of criteria for jobs that come available or that are being branded as being political appointments such as the Multicultural Secretariat's office so that a committee as the resolution has suggested, a committee of the Chamber in which all three political parties would be able to participate in, is a step in the right direction. The member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) says it is naive. He agrees with at least the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) in his remarks, in a sense that the New Democratic Party believes that it is naive.

It is not naive. It is the responsible thing today. I believe that if you canvass what the people want, the people will tell you that if we can depoliticize to a certain degree appointments that are made by politicians that in fact we would benefit. Each individual politician, whether it is provincial, federal, municipal, in fact would benefit from it, Mr. Speaker, because the public perception on the whole question of patronage, of jobs that are given out based on the past performance by the individual recipient of it is wrong.

Mr. Speaker, the political appointments are something that this resolution deals with specifically. It sets out specific recommendations for this Chamber to look at. It puts up a real alternative. I believe that it deserves the debate and has had the debate twice. What it really needs is to be allowed to come to a vote. I am going to hope that the government and the New Democratic Party will at least allow this particular resolution to come to a vote so that we will clearly and most definitely know where they lie on the issue and that an amendment is not in this resolution's best interest. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

An Honourable Member: Six o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock? Agreed? No.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to be able to rise and speak on the private member's resolution as put forward by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

There is a wide range of areas that I could deal with in this regard, but I will attempt to focus my remarks on several of the pertinent points. Number 1, it appears to me very clear from the resolution that the Liberals, at least provincially, have not been in a position where they have had the opportunity to make appointments to boards and commissions for a long time. The resolution as well—I mean the process—and I will speak to each of the WHEREASes and the conclusions, as well.

Generally, the resolution as a whole shows very little knowledge of the process by which board and commission appointments are being made, nor does it understand the depth and the breadth of the number of board and commission appointments that are required to be made by governments.

In my notes to myself, I was going to ask for examples. The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) did provide an example, but it was a single example. I would suggest that a resolution that deals with a process for making board and commission appointments throughout government should have, by its mover, a little broader range of examples of the negative process than he was able to put forward.

The resolution as well, in general terms, classifies all boards and commission appointments in the same category. It says that all board and commission appointments are made to political hacks. They are made to people for partisan reasons only, and it says that it is only people who support the government in power and it is feeding at the public trough.

In reality, Mr. Speaker, there are over 160 boards and commissions that the provincial government makes at least one appointment to. The range of these boards is enormous. Every single department has some boards to which government appointments are made and many departments, such as Health, Education, Family Services and Labour have a large number of boards to which appointments are made.

Some of the examples of boards that I would like to read into the record are boards such as Child and Family Services agencies, the Film Classification Board, the Manitoba Intercultural Council which the

member for Inkster referenced—the only one he referenced—a large number of agriculture boards, Crown corporation boards, university boards of governors, health boards—there are a very large number of boards in the Department of Health—the Licence Suspension Appeal Board, the Taxicab Board, the Horse Racing Commission and a range of professional boards throughout the various departments, particularly Labour and Health again, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, elevator board, professional engineers. There is a range of boards, boards that deal with licensing of members, boards that deal with a range of services, and I should not forget the Manitoba Securities Commission.

* (1720)

The point that the member makes in his resolution that there should be accountability, and the appointments of boards and commissions should reflect the people of Manitoba—I think it is made sort of an underlying theme—is a valid one.

I would like to say that, when the Manitoba NDP became government in November of 1981, the situation was not a good one when it came to boards and commissions, as far as reflecting the mix of the people of this province. In one area only, I will give an example. There were four boards that the government could appoint the chair and the vice-chair to, and there are some boards where that is not the prerequisite of the government. There were no women chairs of government-appointed boards, not a single woman.

In 1988, when the NDP government left office, 40 percent of the vice-chairs and almost 40 percent of the chairs of government boards and commissions were women. We had, as a guideline for our boards and commissions appointments, not only an attempt to come to gender equality on chairs and vice-chairs, but membership at large. As well, we were very concerned about geographical representation. I think, if anybody took a look at where our boards and commissions appointments came from, particularly in the field of agriculture, they would discover that the board appointments to agriculture boards, to boards that dealt with issues outside the city of Winnipeg were very representative. We did not take representatives only from political appointees.

As well, we looked at the areas of expertise of areas of interest and areas of knowledge that

potential board members had. We tried to put together all of those three things. For example, when we looked at the Child and Family Service boards of directors, we were dealing with a brand-new concept. We took people who had an area of expertise and/or an area of interest in child and family services.

I would like to go through some of the WHEREASes, too, if I may, Mr. Speaker. Again, the first WHEREAS is an incorrect assumption that all appointments are patronage appointments. As I stated earlier, many of the appointments to boards and commissions are required by law that they must be from a certain category, from a certain profession, et cetera. There are a number of boards and commissions appointments that can be made from the general public, and I believe that this is generally the area that the resolution should be referring to, even though it does not state that.

The second WHEREAS, that the boards, commissions and agencies fulfil an important function in Manitoba, we on this side have absolutely no quarrel with.

The third WHEREAS is correct if, and only if, you make the assumption that board appointments are made only on political grounds. You must also assume that all individuals with an ideology similar to that of the government are incompetent. Now, we may disagree as to the individuals who go onto government-appointed boards and commissions and, as an opposition, we would be silly if we did not—the members opposite had some concerns about some of our appointments to boards and commissions, but they were largely not based on a competency basis. They were based on the fact that we have a different view of the world than the government benches, soon to be the opposition benches.

That is the political process. It would be absurd if we all in this House had exactly the same viewpoint. We would have a government such as the government in New Brunswick, which has absolutely no opposition, and I do not think any of us here think that is a democratic process.

I was very interested in what the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) was going to say about the patronage appointments, having reflected negatively on the credibility of boards, commissions and agencies. To my chagrin, the member only talked about one particular instance of the

multicultural community, the Intercultural Council. There have been concerns raised about that commission. I am not going to get into the details of that discussion at this point, but there are another 160-plus boards that the member did not talk about. He cited absolutely not one additional example where these appointments reflect negatively on the process as a whole, nor did he share with us any research or any information as to where he gets his ideas that the public at large is terribly upset by the way the process has been undertaken.

I would like to get on to the RESOLVEDs. The first RESOLVED, politically neutral appointments based on standards and criteria developed through consultation between the parties and agreeable to the majority of the members—political neutrality—I am sorry I have difficulty with that concept. It smacks heavily of the thought police to me. Who defines political neutrality? What are the definitions of that? I think that this RESOLVED is a classic case of the cure being worse than the bite. This assumes a problem exists where it has not been, by any of the member's comments, shown to be a problem. It also says, agreeable to the majority of the members.

Well, in virtually all cases in Manitoba, historically, the House has a government majority. There are very few cases where we have been in a minority situation. Therefore, the government automatically can have control of whatever it wants to as far as boards and commissions appointments are concerned. The idea that you can come up with, in a political arena, which this Legislative Assembly is, politically neutral standards and criteria is on its—by definition, idiotic and not to be believed.

Again on the standards and criteria, as I had stated earlier, the boards and commissions cross the entire spectrum of every government department. The idea that you could come up with standards and criteria that No. 1 would reflect the requirements of this broad range of boards and commissions, and No. 2 would be acceptable to the Legislative Assembly is ridiculous. As well, many boards and commissions already have regulations written into their by-laws and their definitions that require a certain kind of person or a person with a certain expertise to be appointed to them.

Also, again, and I think it is very important, this is a political process. There is nothing wrong with a political process. There is nothing inherently wrong with appointments made to boards and

commissions by the political process. This resolution assumes that the political process is by definition tainted, that it is by definition not to be trusted. There are, of course, instances where that is the case. We have all seen some of those and could mention many of those in this House, but to assume that all political appointments are inherently bad or patronage or incompetent is to denigrate very seriously the quality and the caliber of the people who have been appointed and continue to be appointed to these boards and commissions, most of them without recompense, many of them requiring a lot of time and energy and effort on their part. I find the whole underlying theme of this resolution very uncomfortable to me.

The implementation is a logistical nightmare, and I will let others talk to that regard. I would just like to end my remarks by saying that the boards and commissions process is only as good as the government that makes the appointments. You can quibble and quarrel with appointments to particular boards and/or the process that a particular government goes through, but this resolution makes assumptions and innuendos to the process itself and to the people who are appointed that I think has no business being in this House. We certainly will not support this resolution. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1730)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, this resolution by the House leader for the third opposition party probably is yet another initiative by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) that has never been caucused by his counterparts, because as I look over and watch the sponsorship of yet another Liberal resolution—and I know I fly in the face of the rules of the House if I were to say what I am going to say—but were anyone sitting in the galleries, they would notice that there are not any Liberals supporting a Liberal member bringing in a resolution—if anyone were sitting in the galleries. Does that not strike you as very strange?

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, the member for Inkster, says I just insulted the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry). When the resolution was introduced, my honourable friend, the member for Inkster, was all by himself. There was no other Liberal in this House, but of course that does not matter because we do not suspect that this resolution has the support of the Liberal Party. It has not been caucused.

Mr. Speaker, this resolution is another one of these holier-than-thou Liberal resolutions that come from opposition; this group that, in opposition, can be so righteous and so critical of what government does, because (a) they have not been there in this province for nigh onto 30 years, and given that they lost their one chance of ever getting there, they may not be here for another 30 years. It is pretty easy to be holier-than-thou.

When you bring in the kind of resolution and you introduce it with the comments that the member for Inkster used, of saying that appointments to boards made by this government are not but political patronage appointments, you insult those people who are carrying on in many, many dedicated ways, unpaid, volunteer service towards the contribution of public service in this province.

What kind of an insult have you thrown at all—with very few exceptions—the people who have been appointed by myself as minister to serve on the many health care boards voluntarily, Mr. Speaker, throughout the length and breadth of this province?

You have insulted with this resolution every single person who has put in untold hours, volunteered, dedicated to improving the board and the profession that they are dealing with by appointment of this government by merely writing them off with the broad Liberal brush, saying they are not but political appointees, and they therefore have nothing to contribute. They have been valueless in their service to the people of Manitoba and ought not to be there except through some process by which the Liberal Party, who is apolitical at all it does, might confer the grace of their blessing of that appointment of that individual to a government board, because only then would it have the purity of being nonpolitical. Well, give me a break, Mr. Speaker.

What self-serving tripe is that from the Liberal Party? This is the same Liberal Party that day in and day out—until they got their comeuppance in this House from members of the New Democratic Party plus the odd one from this side of the House—every time they mentioned political patronage, members in the New Democratic Party would ask whether they knew Pierre Elliott Trudeau. Remember Pierre Elliott, himself, who conferred upon John Turner, the new Prime Minister of Canada, a list of patronage appointments a mile long. This self-righteous group in opposition say, ho, the Liberal Party is pure, Mr. Speaker.

You know, that same group that the NDP asked if they knew Pierre Elliott himself used to brag, oh, I love Pierre Elliott. Now they never mention him, because the ultimate in political patronage and blindsiding and undercutting of a Prime Minister of Canada through the smelliest rankest appointments to boards and commissions and judges and every other conceivable appointment was done by Pierre Elliott himself in direct blindsiding of John—who could have been Prime Minister forever—Turner. Shame.

Now we have this self-righteous group in the provincial Liberal Party saying, well, all we need is our input and everything will be all right. We would not do anything political. I mean, we have Ernie Gilroy who ran our provincial campaign. Ernie Gilroy would not do anything political, Mr. Speaker, because he—it was just sort of a little oversight, this immigration issue the Liberals bring up from time to time, that one of the persons mentioned in that just so happened to deliver to Mr. Gilroy some memberships, not for the Conservative Party, not for the New Democratic Party, but for the Liberal Party, and they did not happen to have real people attached to the memberships.

One would never say that is just a mere coincidence. Those are the kinds of people who represent the Liberal Party throughout the length and breadth of this province, when this group of seven in here say, oh, we would be purer, purer than the driven snow should we be government, and our appointments would be beyond reproach because they would have the blessing of some all-party committee to make them all right. I say balderdash, Mr. Speaker.

In the real political environment of this government, governments before and future governments, there will always be a role for political appointments to boards and commissions. To roll those in is pure patronage, and to disregard the value that those individuals, those men and women, put toward the boards to which they have been appointed by government is to do those individuals a disservice. That is exactly what this ill-considered Liberal resolution is doing.

I want to deal with a couple of boards under my purview. I have the Manitoba Health Services Commission board. Chairing that board is Mr. Bill Ziprick, who was the retired Provincial Auditor, province of Manitoba; Mr. Bob Vandewater, who was a candidate for the Progressive Conservative

Party in the 1988 election, but also former vice-chairman of the board of the Health Sciences Centre.

I had a number of other people, Gail Roth, a practising nurse, administrator, Bachelor of Nursing, a person representing rural Manitoba. I have a lawyer in the person of an individual from Brandon, a chartered accountant, a doctor—all on that board. Now, every one of those people, including Mr. Bill Ziprick, the chairman of the board, automatically is a political patronage appointment of this government. Shame on him. Does he not know the position of the Provincial Auditor? The Provincial Auditor is a neutral officer of this Legislature reporting to you, Mr. Speaker.

By rolling this resolution in, the member for Inkster has said that all Mr. Bill Ziprick, a man with a distinguished reputation in this House through successive governments, including the previous government of none other than Mr. Campbell, as Premier of this province, Liberal Premier of this province, my friend the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) has rolled Mr. Ziprick into nothing but an old Tory, one of the old boys that got appointed to a commission and a board. Shame on him. He needs to have a little more respect for those people who are putting in time, effort and service on behalf of Manitobans, including retired Provincial Auditors, before he rolls everybody and paints them with that patronage brush, the old Tory club brush. I mean that is just naivete and stupidity that we have heard from the member for Inkster.

Let me deal with another area, the Health Advisory Network, chaired by Dr. Arnold Naimark, President of the University of Manitoba. I appointed him there. Is the member for Inkster calling Dr. Naimark another one of our old Tory friends? Give me a break. How about the honourable Larry Desjardins, the former Minister of Health for the New Democratic government? Is that another one of our Tory cronies who we have put on a board?

My honourable friend ought to wake up and smell the coffee, because we have put people on those boards who have something to contribute, to serve the people of Manitoba, to give their ideas, their experience focus for this government. and to call them all political cronies of the Tory party is pure naivete and stupidity. That is why I suggested earlier on, Mr. Speaker, that this is yet another effort of the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) that has never been caucused by the members of the Liberal

Party and the Leader of the Liberal Party, because if they were, they have all showed a great deal of naivete, stupidity and disgraceful representation to the people of Manitoba, because they have broad brushed those people who have served and served very, very, very well.

I ask my honourable friend the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) while he is there, would you like to believe that Sister St. Yves, the head of the Grey Nuns in Manitoba, is yet another one of these Tory cronies, because Sister St. Yves has served with distinction on the Health Advisory Network, appointed by me, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and this government?

* (1740)

An Honourable Member: I am sorry I brought it in.

Mr. Orchard: Are you saying that—you sit beside the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux)—she is yet another Tory crony? I do not blame you for leaving him high and dry and not sitting beside him any more, because that, sir, is what you are supporting as a Liberal member of caucus when your House leader brings in a resolution like this. You are broad brushing Sister Ste. Yves as yet another Tory crony. Well, that is balderdash, Mr. Speaker. Sister Ste. Yves is there because of her knowledge and her commitment to health care that she can provide to the citizens of this province in yet another capacity.

I want to tell my honourable friend the member for Inkster, the Health Advisory Network we appointed—and I could go through the whole membership of that so my honourable friend would have yet more examples of how foolish his resolution is, but I shall spare him the embarrassment. We set up a number of task forces; they were set up by the Health Advisory Network, and you know, every one of those task forces has a number of members from all disciplines in health care, all walks of life, rural and urban Manitoba north and south.

Now, one would think that those would be Tory cronies, as indicated by the member for Inkster in this resolution. I want to tell you, Mr. Speaker, I, as Minister of Health in this government, did not appoint one single individual to any of those task forces. That was done by the Health Advisory Network where we trusted the striking of task force committees to that Health Advisory Network, composed of such individuals as the former Minister of Health for the New Democratic Party, the

President of the University of Manitoba, and other distinguished Manitobans, but those are the Tory cronies that my honourable friend, the member for Inkster, talks about in this resolution.

What an insult to those individuals who have put up to literally hundreds of hours in the last year and a half to two years developing formulation of policy for government, guidelines for government, to write off numerous meetings and hours of work as Tory cronyism—this resolution is absolutely incredible to witness in this House.

I want to share with my honourable friend another group that are serving health care in Manitoba, and that being those Regional Mental Health Council Advisory Committee members. Now, those are throughout every region of the province of Manitoba; they are part of our reform of the mental health system. This resolution calls every single individual who was appointed and serving on those regional mental health advisory councils as a Tory patronage appointment, a Tory crony, an old friend of the Tory party.

Mr. Speaker, again as Minister of Health, I did not appoint one single individual to any of those regional mental health councils. Every single one of them has been chosen because either they are a professional in the care delivery of mental health, they have family involvement, they have friends, they are consumers of mental health services. Those are the kind of people who are trying to help this government in the reform of the mental health system that my honourable friend, the Liberal Party House leader, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) now calls patronage Tory appointments.

Well, let me tell you, I am sending this speech out to every member of those councils so they know what the Liberal Party thinks of their service to the mental health reform in the province of Manitoba, that he is willing to write them off. He and his Leader and his other five members in the Liberal Party are willing to write those people off as patronage Tory appointees, and not worthy of consideration for the service that they have provided the province of Manitoba.

I could go on, I could name a number of other boards in which there have been people who have given service to the province of Manitoba in an apolitical way bringing their expertise, their talent, their dedication and volunteering without pay to

serve the people of Manitoba. I could give all sorts of examples more, but this resolution paints them all as cronies of the Tory party.

Mr. Speaker, that is not right. What we have attempted to do in all of our boards, commissions, and appointments to government boards is to balance men and women, professional expertise, geographic location, to bring people together who can provide to us the kind of advice and direction that we need in government. To write those off as Tory cronies is an insult to those dedicated individuals, men and women, throughout Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member's time has expired.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the opportunity to speak on a resolution that has been brought in by the Liberals once again in this House. I have never seen a resolution which has been brought forward with such naivete as this one by this member.

I believe actually that I, on this occasion, have to agree with the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and I do not very often—on one aspect, that is. Perhaps this member did not caucus with his colleagues on this resolution, that he dug it up. His Leader said, okay, class, we all have to bring in resolutions, and you get them in by next week and that is it. She said, bring them all in, and I believe that is what happened here. The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) brought in a resolution and it was not reviewed by anyone.

He just brought it forward, and it did not keep even with any Liberal principles that they could enunciate or reflect upon. As a matter of fact, I do not believe that the Liberal Party has any principles; but if they did, they would have to reflect at least on the historical implications of actions that they have taken in government. He would have to reflect on the Trudeau government and Liberal governments throughout history in this country, who have been the worst offenders—save perhaps for the Mulroney government at present—the worst offenders of patronage appointments in this country, in the history of this country. Then to come forward and say this holier than thou statement and reflection on this resolution is just unbelievable.

Mr. Speaker, I think what we have to do with this resolution is put some degree of realism into the discussion and debate. Clearly, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) introduced it in a very naive

form. The member for Pembina, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), I believe, spoke from a point of view of purity which did not reflect the true actions of this government either. I think we have to deal with the issue from a more neutral point of view, down the middle, which would recognize that, yes, there is a great deal of patronage appointments in place by this government. The Minister of Health knows that. He was giving his speech in such a way that, if one was taking it at face value, they would think that there was never a patronage appointment made by this government. They never even thought of that. They would never consider that. The member for Inkster, of course, would take the position that there should not be as long as he is in opposition. I would think that position would change very quickly, and I find it rather strange that he would mention the American blue book as the guiding principles for appointments, as if the Americans never make political appointments and patronage does not exist in the American system.

Let us remember that, while in government, the New Democratic Party in this province attempted to ensure gender equality on boards, greater representation from women, from visible minorities, certainly from physically handicapped, various groups reflecting the geographic representation, as well, throughout the province. I strongly disagree to the Liberal position that, somehow, because a person may be of a political persuasion that they cannot make informed and confident decisions on behalf of the government and the people of Manitoba.

Certainly, they should be chosen with a great deal of care to sit on these boards and commissions, but indeed they have to carry out the political agenda which is obviously there for every government, the political agenda that must be there, the policies of the government of the day. You have to have some confidence as a minister that the people that have been appointed to these boards and commissions are, indeed, going to reflect the policies that you wish to carry out.

In many cases, it is obviously more sensitive in terms of a reflection of the policies of the day than in other situations, but certainly the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) chose a very bad example when he talked about the Intercultural Council and the multiculturalism. He did not reflect on the other 160 boards, and there is the broad picture that one has to look at here, everything from the Manitoba

Agricultural Credit Corporation to the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation, Licence Suspension Appeal Board, Motor Transport Board, Farm Mediation. There are many of them in agriculture and, in many cases, it is very important to have people that you can certainly trust to reflect the policies and the emphasis you wish to portray as a government.

* (1750)

I think in large part we were able to do that in government. However, there are some areas where governments, I think, overlook that particular aspect. It is through tradition and history. For example, the member for Inkster may be reflecting on all appointments when he made his comments earlier on. I think he was wrong to do that because we have, for example, the Motor Transport Board chairman—a very important position which was appointed by the previous government. That person has remained in his position over the last three years. In doing that, I believe, he has reflected a Manitoba position.

When we became government in 1981, we also left the Motor Transport Board chairman—in that case it was chairman—in place because, in fact, he was a person who had a great deal of experience in very complicated matters. I believe that is what motivated this government to do that in that particular area.

There are many other areas, I believe, where the government has, in fact, put in place very political people for political reasons. Let us not leave the impression, as the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) did, that these are all volunteers. Many of these appointments receive an honourarium or a per diem allowance. They receive, of course, compensation for their expenses but, in addition to that, rather substantial remuneration. In some cases, the chairperson of various committees, boards, commissions, as well the members, receive a rather substantial amount of money; although in many cases they are doing it as volunteers. I have to say that is the case.

The problem that I find with the Tories in government is that they do seem to be completely different in government than they were in opposition. There is an about-face here. We were criticized in government for making political appointments all the time. When we changed board members, as the Conservatives in opposition saw many of their

supporters being taken from boards and replaced with new people, they objected very strenuously. They have not heard that same kind of objection from this opposition to the extent that they did when they were in opposition.

We have not raised every time the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation or Mediation Board or Licence Suspension Appeal Board members have been changed, we have not raised that in this House and said, oh, you put in place here, you know, you gave a position to one of your hacks or one of your cronies. What we have done is, in certain instances we have pointed out when we felt there was a difficulty in terms of the appointment such as, for example, the appointment of the Manitoba Telephone System, the chief executive officer and the difficulties that person was involved with previously in MTX, for example. We have not raised these points day by day about patronage appointments by this government, because we do not believe that you can have any credibility in doing that. In fact, that is universally done throughout this country and it is accepted. As long as the expertise is there, that a person who has been appointed does have some background and expertise in particular areas that will be needed in that appointment, that is the ultimate importance here.

Of course, gender equality, as I said earlier, and representation of minorities, a broad representation of the community is necessary, but I do not believe that a government has to search for those kinds of appointments from other political persuasions in order to get competent people. I think that is the kind of reflection that this member has put in place.

I want to say that I think the Tories in government, perhaps once in opposition again will not be as critical of that as they have been in the past, because they will have recognized, many of them new members, that in fact they did put in place supporters from various constituency associations, from people who have worked in their campaigns, contrary to what the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has said in his incredulous defence of what has been done by this government.

The fact is that they will recognize, when in opposition in the future, that in fact the government has that right to change those board members and in fact to put in place people who reflect their philosophy and the kinds of programming and policies and carry out those policies.

There will be some variations to this, and I mentioned this. The Minister of Health was not listening earlier on, but I did mention, for example, the transport board chairperson who was put in place by the previous government and continued on now for some three years. Previous to that there was also -(interjection)- well, you will find out that person, as the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger) will tell you, is very competent and well respected across this country for the kind of work that he has done on behalf of Manitoba with regard to many transportation issues over the last number of years. Similarly, there was a person in that position prior to our coming into government who also had expertise, who actually passed away while in that office, and that was when we made that change.

I think that there are exceptions. There are examples where we have representation from a broader political spectrum in many different areas. In some areas, the minister does not even have, or the government does not even have, the prerogative to choose. Outside groups make the selections and the nominations for the individuals. That, of course, means that the government of the day has a little more difficult time saying, well, you have to choose people that come from the Conservative Party or whatever.

The fact is that there are exceptions. I want to say to the Liberal representatives here that the position that they are putting forward reflects a political agenda. Unfortunately, a political agenda. They are saying politics should not enter these appointments. That is precisely what they are doing with this resolution. It is a political agenda that they are putting forward. They are bringing politics into the appointment because they want to come across to the public of Manitoba as somehow being clean and pure and not tainted by any political interference.

Of course, we know, that, in fact, if they were to be in government, which probably will not happen for many, many years in this province, but we have seen it in other provinces. We will see that they would act quite differently than they are talking now. They are trying to get votes from this resolution, but it will not work. I tell the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) it will not work if people will not believe him, just like they did not believe him in the last election campaign. They know that they say one thing while in opposition and in this Legislature, and they do another thing when they are in government. They will not have that chance to govern and make those same mistakes.

Let me tell you that that is found in this government as well, Mr. Speaker. The Tories talked about political appointments with every board member who was appointed when we were in government. Now they are doing exactly the same thing.

I can tell you that I am proud of our caucus and the New Democratic opposition who are not reflecting on every single appointment and bringing it forward into this House, somehow calling it a political patronage appointment. We know that they are doing that. We know that that is the way it operates in government, and we know that will happen in the future as it has in the past. I think we should all be a little bit more straightforward in speaking to these kinds of resolutions, a little more honest in dealing with each other here because we are not going to convince anyone that we are going to be holier-than-thou as the Liberals have attempted to do with this resolution.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) will have one minute remaining.

I am leaving the Chair with the understanding that the House will reconvene at 8 p.m. in Committee of Supply.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

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