



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

STANDING COMMITTEE

on

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS

40 Elizabeth II

Chairman
Mr. Marcel Laurendeau
Constituency of St. Norbert



VOL. XL No. 5 - 7 p.m., THURSDAY, JULY 11, 1991



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
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GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	PC
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HELWER, Edward R.	Gimli	PC
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LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	ND
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MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	PC
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PENNER, Jack	Emerson	PC
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PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	PC
REID, Daryl	Transcona	ND
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	PC
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	PC
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WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	ND

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA
THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS
Thursday, July 11, 1991

TIME — 7 p.m.

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LOCATION — Winnipeg, Manitoba

CHAIRMAN — Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert)

ATTENDANCE - 11 — QUORUM - 6

Members of the Committee present:

Hon. Messrs. Cummings, Driedger, Praznik

Messrs. Ashton, Cheema, Mrs. Dacquay,
 Messrs. Dewar, Laurendeau, McAlpine, Reid,
 Sveinson

Substitution:

Ms. Wowchuk for Mr. Dewar (0040)

APPEARING:

George Hickes, MLA for Point Douglas

WITNESSES:

John Doyle, Private Citizen

Larry Brown, National Union of Provincial
 Government Employees

Rick Park, Private Citizen

Lisa Bukoski, Private Citizen

Jean Altemeyer, Private Citizen

Lesley Brooks, Private Citizen

Jim Pringle, Private Citizen

Alan De Jardin, Private Citizen

Mike Gidora, Private Citizen

Don V. Sullivan, Private Citizen

Bob Clague, Private Citizen

Ken Emberley, Private Citizen

Rob Altemeyer, Private Citizen

Val Kellberg, Private Citizen

Bernice Bryan, Private Citizen

Sheila Gordon, Private Citizen

MATTERS UNDER DISCUSSION:

Bill 70—The Public Sector Compensation
 Management Act

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. Will the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations please come to order. This evening the committee will resume consideration of Bill 70, The Public Sector Compensation Management Act (Loi sur la gestion des salaires du secteur public).

I would like to indicate that this committee will also be meeting tomorrow, Friday, July 12 at 1 p.m. and Saturday, July 13 at 10 a.m. and continuing all day.

Just prior to resuming hearing public presentations on the bill, I would like to remind the public that the process that will be followed by this committee is that out-of-town presenters will be asked to identify themselves to the committee clerk, and the committee will endeavour to hear from these persons first. Once the out-of-town presenters have been heard from, the names will be called from the presenters list in numerical order.

If a presenter is not here the first time his or her name is called, that name will be dropped to the bottom of the list. If that presenter is not here on the second time his or her name is called, that name will be dropped from the list. However, it should be noted that the committee will attempt to accommodate those persons, especially those from out of town who are unable to present on a certain day but can attend on others.

This morning, the committee has agreed to hear from Mr. John Doyle first. We will now call on Mr. Doyle to come forward if he is in attendance. Mr. Doyle. While Mr. Doyle is making his presentation, the committee clerk will go out in the audience and identify if there are any out-of-town presenters. Mr. Doyle, do you have a written presentation? I believe I asked you that this morning.

Mr. John Doyle (Private Citizen): Yes, and I am happy to report that the copies that I made for the committee made it from my office to the back seat of my car. Unfortunately, my car is on its way to Portage Avenue with the brief in the back seat. So I will be able to supply you with it eventually.

Mr. Chairman: Okay, that will be fine. You can just—

Mr. Doyle: If you can bear with me.

Mr. Chairman: No problem. We will just carry on. Just one moment, Mr. Doyle.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): On a point of order, I would suggest that, in terms of checking with the out-of-town presenters, et cetera, we do that at eight, because we had discussed in the House earlier the fact that a lot of people had assumed it was eight o'clock. So I suggest we do it at that time. The other agreement in the House, too, was that if there was a gap before eight, we would adjourn and come back.

Mr. Chairman: That is correct, Mr. Ashton, and we will be going with that. At this time, I would still like the clerk to go and see if there is anybody from out of town present. We will do it again at eight o'clock.

* (1905)

* * *

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Doyle, carry on.

Mr. Doyle: I would like to really thank the members of this committee for affording me this opportunity to share some of my views with you on Bill 70, The Public Sector Compensation Management Act. Others who have already spoken before this committee have already discussed at length many of the concerns I have about Bill 70, particularly the unfairness of isolating 48,000 workers in a wage freeze that, in my view, cannot be justified.

I would like to direct my remarks to those aspects of the bill which strike at the very base of workers' rights, the right to bargain with their employer collectively. However, before I begin those remarks, I would like to draw to the committee's attention that I find the behaviour of government members of this committee—in using the rules, I believe, in an undemocratic manner, the application of these rules has so far limited participation as opposed to the—

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. Mr. Doyle, I would ask you to deal with Bill 70. At this time, we are not here to review the rules of the House or the rules on how this committee is running. We are here to deal with Bill 70, Mr. Doyle.

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Chairperson, on a point of order. I have been here 10 years, and I have seen many a committee hearing where people have commented on both the legislation and the process itself. I have never seen so many points of order raised on presenters. I think we have raised more in the last two, three days, trying to say what presenters should say and what they should not say, than we have in the previous 10 years.

I think we should allow the presenter to make his comments as we have for the last 10 years, and if the presenter has concerns about the process, that is totally in order. That is the purpose for having committee hearings, to hear members of the public. Certainly the process is as much a part of the bill as the clause is, and the subsections.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. Ashton, as you are aware, the matter under consideration is Bill 70, The Public Sector Compensation Management Act. That is what we are dealing with, and that is what we will hear presentation on.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Chairperson, just to clarify my point of order, I am saying that comments on the process of this committee are indeed part of Bill 70, The Public Sector Compensation Management Act, and have always been in order in terms of discussion in committees of this Legislature. I would suggest we allow members of the public to speak as much as possible without being impeded by points of order, et cetera. I suggest we allow Mr. Doyle to continue with his comments.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Chairperson, the subject of this discussion, of this hearing, is Bill 70. The rules of this committee are established by the committee and by the Legislature. They have been voted on; a majority has established those rules. In fact, there has been a great deal of flexibility in accommodating presenters. The normal procedure that is followed is one goes through the list until one is found, and we have been straying from that somewhat.

So I think it is appropriate to hear presenters on Bill 70, and I would ask the Chair to ensure that is what the committee does.

* * *

Mr. Chairman: Go ahead, Mr. Doyle.

Mr. Doyle: As I was saying, I would like to base my remarks this evening on those aspects of Bill 70 which strike at the very base of workers' rights, not only in Manitoba, but in Canada and in the industrialized world, where most unionization has taken place over the past decades. That base that I am referring to is the fundamental right of workers to associate and enter into a collective bargaining process with their employers, which most often leads to a collective agreement that both parties are able to live with, find fair and indeed facilitate the process of economic generation within a community or within a larger scope, such as the province of Manitoba.

By suspending collective bargaining rights for workers, even for a limited time period, Gary Filmon has displayed a contempt of staggering proportions, in my view, for generations of workers. The right to bargain collectively was won at great cost to workers in Canada. Over the years, thousands of brothers and sisters have paid for that right with sweat, their personal security, their short- and long-term financial security, and their very blood. Unfortunately, in too many cases, they also paid with their lives.

* (1910)

With a casual flick of the pen, Mr. Filmon and his Conservative colleagues have stripped that right away from 48,000 working men and women in Manitoba—just a casual flick of the pen. As usual, the suspension of workers' rights by the state has come about for the good of the public. I say that in a sarcastic fashion. No one consulted the public about this. Certainly, no one consulted workers or their unions about it. Conservative and Liberal provincial governments, even as we speak, elsewhere in Canada have also chosen confrontation over consultation.

They have consciously decided to mount this twin assault on workers, imposing a wage freeze that does nothing more than visit privation on workers and their families, and stripping away their right to collective bargaining. That this right-wing attack on workers' rights is so pervasive in Canada at this time, is to our country's discredit. That it appears so readily in Manitoba, which has a lengthy history of progressive legislation, is to this government's shame.

Time and time again I have heard Gary Filmon and Clayton Manness defend their attack on

collective bargaining by claiming unions have abandoned it by relying on legislative alternatives to immediate strike action. As speakers before me have pointed out, the union movement certainly does not like some of the rules imposed on us, but we stay within the rule of law and we utilize those rules.

This government, along with Conservative and Liberal governments elsewhere in the country do not feel the same obligation to act within the law. When it does not suit you, you hit the back rooms and change the rules—hardly the mark of a government that is remotely interested in fostering a healthy labour relations climate and interested in setting an example to encourage harmonious relations in the private sector.

It is more the mark of back-room bullies who happen to be in the position of forming a government. This assault on the rights of working people will not pass quietly without notice. If it has not already taken place, I am sure that the appropriate complaints will be filed with the International Labour Organization and the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, so that the plight of working people in Manitoba and six other provinces will become known by the international community.

In the days ahead, I am sure the Filmon government will be tempted to mount more assaults on working people, as it lays the legislative groundwork to finish off the free trade sellout of the Manitoba economy. We have already had the pleasure of looking through a wish list put together by the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. In the chamber's April 8, 1991 issue, the Communique, the chamber spells out quite clearly what the Filmon government will have to come up with as the price tag for business support in the next election, and it is quite a list.

The headings of their proposed amendments, and I have brought the entire wording of the proposed amendments with me, but the headings by themselves are quite informative: the definition of employee; the supervision of employees; interference in union activities; deemed interference in the formation or selection of a union; lists of arbitrators for expedited arbitrations; mandatory first contract legislation; certification; the power of arbitrator. Clearly, there is a move afoot to redraw the Manitoba Labour Relations Act to make it more difficult for workers to exercise their constitutional

right to associate with one another, and make it easier for employers to interfere in union organizing, among other things.

I would like to make it crystal clear to the Filmon government, and to any other MLA who would like to support it in an anti-worker attack through either these proposed amendments or anything remotely resembling them, there will be a price to pay, both during that amendment process and during the next election.

In conclusion, I urge the government members of this committee to stop your attack on workers. Enough is enough. Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Doyle. I believe there might be some questions, Mr. Doyle, if you do not mind.

Mr. Ashton: I appreciate the opportunity to ask questions, whether it be at seven o'clock in the evening or at five o'clock in the morning, as we did yesterday. I know that you had been around yesterday, and I appreciate your patience in coming back today and, in fact, that this committee was able to accommodate you.

* (1915)

I want to ask you a specific question, because I know you have had a unique opportunity in the last number of years, in various different involvements, including as a news reporter a few years ago, to assess the pulse in Manitoba. I believe you were also quite involved at the time in terms of reporting on labour issues. One of the concerns that has been expressed to this committee by other presenters is that this bill is going to significantly damage the very positive record we have in terms of labour relations in this province: in particular, the fact we have had the second lowest strike rate, historically, with only Prince Edward Island, which really does not have that much in the way of union organization, having the lowest.

I want to ask you, based on your current knowledge, but also on your previous opportunity as an objective observer, to observe labour relations in Manitoba, what will happen, if Bill 70 is passed, to the labour relations climate, in your opinion?

Mr. Doyle: Rightly or wrongly, I think any provincial government of any political stripe, anywhere in Canada, is in the position, perhaps unwillingly in some cases, but they are in the position, of setting an example for the other employers in the province about what it is we believe in as a community and

as a society about the fundamental parts of our lives; one of which, and I believe it is very fundamental, is what sort of relations should exist between employees and their employers.

I think that when you see the kinds of anti-worker legislation and policies, such as layoffs, wage freezes, the suspension of collective bargaining rights—which I cannot underscore enough is fundamental to workers' rights in any jurisdiction; but, in my view, and I guess because this is home, but also here in Manitoba; it is fundamental to the whole process—when private sector employers, who happen to be unionized, but even those who are not unionized and are not dealing with the unionized work force, when they see a government mounting these kinds of assaults on the people that work for them directly, and through agencies indirectly, I think the clear message is that it is open season on your work force.

If you are unionized, go at it. We will back you up; we have the law; we have the clout. We will make the law, if necessary. That is what Bill 70 is. We are making law to satisfy an objective. Now, when it is open season by employers and their workers, the inescapable result is a souring of the labour relations climate as it is today, headed downhill as the impact of Bill 70 and other pieces of legislation like it are felt and used as an example for behaviour by other employers in the province.

When that occurs, I think the number of opportunities that we cannot afford to lose in the future—thanks to other Conservative policies, such as free trade and now the expansion of free trade to Mexico; those policies have placed us in a position of not having any elbow room, not having any margin of safety—as opportunities present themselves, for us to take advantage of them and turn them into economic activity and jobs for everyone—they will be lost.

I think those opportunities are in danger of being lost, simply because of the terrible impact that Bill 70 and pieces of legislation like it will have on the labour relations climate here in Manitoba. Companies will not want to locate here. Companies that are here will not be able to exploit opportunities as they present themselves. Other countries with a far more enlightened attitude about relations between employers and employees will reap the benefits of those opportunities, those lost opportunities for us.

In other countries it has occurred. Ill-advised government policy has led to some terrible, terrible things. Take Mexico, for example. The real income of workers in Mexico is far lower today than it was as short as 10 years ago, simply because of government policy that was not designed to reflect the needs and the aspirations of the people of Mexico. That is the kind of risk I fear this government runs the risk of by adopting this kind of policy. It sets an example that will not do anybody any good.

*(1920)

Mr. Ashton: I find it interesting you referenced a referral of this particular bill to the ILO, because we had an interesting perspective yesterday. A presenter, who came here about 3:30 in the morning, who was from Czechoslovakia, and left Czechoslovakia in 1968, had indicated that he felt this was the type of legislation that would have been introduced by the hard line Communist government in Czechoslovakia prior to the Dubcek period, which of course was crushed by Soviet tanks in 1968.

We discussed with that presenter what had happened in Eastern Europe: the first country in 1979 really to lead the way towards democratization, being Poland, and the leading force behind that, being Solidarity, and Solidarity being a trade union which was fighting for free collective bargaining rights as much as democracy.

I want to ask you, because you reference that referral to the ILO, in what ways do you feel that this would violate any of the provisions of the charter of the ILO? Is it in terms of its impact on collective bargaining? Are there other sections in this bill that you feel may lead this government—it would not be the first, by the way. I note that other Conservative governments have been cited rather embarrassingly by the ILO for contravening the ILO charter. But, I would like to ask you specifically what you were referring to in this bill that might violate the ILO principles and the charter.

Mr. Doyle: There are a number of international-scale bodies that concern themselves about the rights of workers, the rules that apply to the exercising of those rights, and the relationships between workers and their employers. One is the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions, which is—I can liken it to the Canadian Labour Congress, only on an international scale as opposed to a Canada-wide scale. It, as you might

well imagine, has rather specific language in its constitution, and its protocols and charters, as to how it believes workers in a free collective bargaining environment should be treated by government and their employers.

As you point out, there are other organizations such as the International Labour Organization. Many of you will recall that the International Labour Organization is comprised of business representatives; it is comprised of government representatives; and it is comprised of central labour organizations from member countries. In this context, the representatives that come from Canada are nominated by, in part, the Canadian Labour Congress.

Now, I cannot quote you chapter and verse, or name specific clauses or protocols that the International Labour Organization may have set down over the years, insofar as the treatment of workers and their rights are concerned. However, I am absolutely certain, having read them myself, that they do make specific reference to the right of workers to unfettered and free collective bargaining environments; that they indeed will view Bill 70 and the provisions it contains, from the context of the suspension of free collective bargaining for a group of people, but also in the context of the larger impact on the welfare of workers.

So, the implications of these kinds of reviews and these kinds of assessments by international bodies such as the ICFTU or the ILO, the implications are profound. These organizations issue regular report cards on member countries, particularly on those countries that generate the kind of legislation that raises concern in their minds.

Certainly the international business community is a regular reader of these protocols and updates and newsmagazines. The international political community tracks them very closely. In fact, any organization that has a right, or rather has an interest in human rights in general and workers' rights in particular, will read these publications and be brought up to date rather quickly, I would imagine, on the goings on in a member country like Canada, or its provinces.

I think that in these times the last thing Manitoba needs is another barrier to the location of investment capital to Manitoba.

Mr. Ashton: It is interesting in terms of referencing international capital, because one of the things that

has also been suggested by a number of presenters is the fact that they feel this fits in very much with the free trade agenda. I assume they were talking about the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement, but there has also, of course, been discussions in terms of free trade with Mexico.

* (1925)

I would like to ask you on that, are you of that view? You made some reference, a rather general reference to free trade. Do you feel that this is a part of a free trade agenda here in Manitoba?

Mr. Doyle: A great deal of legislation and a great deal of government policy and programs, both at the federal level and the provincial levels across Canada, in my view have been directly related to the laying of the groundwork of the Free Trade Agreement, or the economic conditions that the Free Trade Agreement will bring about, certainly not the least of which is the Free Trade Agreement itself.

However, you just cannot pass a Free Trade Agreement and expect it to do what its supporters believe it will do by itself. It requires a substantial number of legislative changes to the labour relations field, as a main area that requires substantial change in order for the Free Trade Agreement to do what its supporters say it will do. Other changes are necessary, particularly in the areas of social policy, social spending, enabling legislation that deals with things like regional economic development. A lot of these things have been identified as not being on the table. The only people that do not agree with that assessment are the Americans. I do not think we are in an excellent bargaining position when we are dealing with a government and a country and an economy of that scale.

In order for the Free Trade Agreement in its current form—and this will only become more urgent as it is expanded to include countries like Mexico, Central American countries, and further south into South America. The urgency for legislative amendments such as Bill 70 becomes more apparent, because when all the dust is settled, the Free Trade Agreement really means that we are prepared to take on low wage economies. That is what it means we have decided to do; that either, and I hope this is not true, the government is ceding to low wage economies a substantial number of our manufacturing jobs and not hoping to maintain much of a manufacturing sector; or they have gotten into the equally unlikely situation, in my view, as

believing that Canada can go head to head with an economy that pays its work force at one-tenth the level that the Canadian work force is paid at.

I do not believe that either of those circumstances will pay off in economic gain for Canada, Canadian workers, or our families. Bill 70 certainly has all the earmarks of the kind of legislation that would be required to be put in place to make our circumstances more like the right-to-work states, such as Georgia, such as Alabama, such as some of the other states in the southern portion of the United States.

Bill 70, of course, is of a limited duration; but the remarkable thing about Bill 70 is that it is the kind of legislation that would be required, only on a longer term basis, to either facilitate the entrenchment of the Free Trade Agreement, or, indeed, to attempt to limit workers' rights in a longer term, perhaps even on a permanent basis. So, yes, in answer to your question, Mr. Ashton, I think Bill 70 fits that profile very well. The only thing that is absent from it is the word "permanent."

Mr. Ashton: I appreciate your thoughts on that because, indeed, whatever we deal with, whether it is part of a broader policy agenda, whether it is part of an obsessional strategy by a government, or part of an ideological perspective—whatever the source is, obviously, that plays into it.

I just wanted to ask one more question, and it is a question I have asked many other presenters. I think one of the advantages of this set of committee hearings is that it gives people the opportunity, probably as close as you will get in a lot of cases, to speak, not necessarily one on one, but speak directly to some of the people on this committee.

Some of us, obviously, know how we are going to vote on Bill 70. I mean, I know the NDP—we have opposed this from day one. I know the Liberals have said they oppose it, but -(interjection)- I am not playing games. I know the Liberals have said they would oppose this, certainly in Manitoba. I know in other provinces, in New Brunswick and Newfoundland, Liberals have supported some of the legislation, but I am not trying to get into a partisan debate. I am assuming the Liberals will vote against this.

* (1930)

Assuming that perhaps there are some Conservatives—and it would only take one or two, to vote with their conscience, to stop this bill. One

or two members, one or two abstentions could do that because we have had some pretty close votes in this session. We have had tied votes.

I want to give you the opportunity, since you might not have the opportunity on a personal basis to talk to some of the MLAs—I noticed the other day that someone put our Chair on the spot, and I apologize. At that time I had asked the question to one of his constituents. I do not know if you are one of the Chair's constituents this time; I do not believe you live in the constituency represented by the Chairperson. So I am not asking this, Mr. Chairperson, directly at yourself—

An Honourable Member: You may be surprised.

Mr. Ashton: I might be surprised, yes, but I have no idea where the presenter lives, so I am approaching this in terms of the general perspective—(interjection)—Well, to the Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), there were some of his constituents here the other day who said they were definitely opposed to this bill.

It is unfortunate he did not have the opportunity to listen to their comments, but I am asking this presenter, if you have the chance to talk to anyone who might be voting with their conscience on this bill on the Conservative side, what would you say to them to persuade them to either abstain from the vote on this bill, or preferably to vote against it, recognizing you have made a number of comments already?

What would you say, one on one, to somebody who might still in their heart of hearts have an open mind, might treat this process seriously, might actually be listening to the more than 500 to 600 presenters listed before the committee? What would you say to them?

Mr. Doyle: I think there are a number of comments to be made in connection with your observations, Mr. Ashton, and your question. I might point out at this point that I share your ambivalence about hastily predicting what the Liberal Party will do in this situation, since I had the pleasure of listening to Mrs. Carstairs on the steps of the Legislature on June 27 in which she promised to support any motion that would defeat this bill. On the other hand, I also read the Winnipeg Sun recently, in which several quotes from Mr. Edwards were contained, in which he claims the Liberal policy supports wage freezes.

At one point, I thought I knew what the Liberal Party was going to do. Now I am not so sure. I do

not know. I suppose I could call Mr. Wells and ask for his opinion, but perhaps not. Perhaps Mr. McKenna could give me some guidance on wage freezes and the suspension of collective bargaining rights. I think I probably already know them.

The role of this committee is, as we all know, rather unique in the Canadian parliamentary system. I had occasion not long ago to spend some time in Alberta. Some people involved in the government process in Alberta were quite astounded to hear that each bill is reviewed by a committee in which public participation in that process is automatic. They were quite astounded that Manitoba had chosen to go this route. I was quite astounded at their astonishment. It seemed to me a natural thing.

Before moving to Alberta, my political experience was based solely in Manitoba. What I took to be the normal course of events to my surprise was certainly not the normal course of events elsewhere within our own country. I really was quite taken aback by that, how there could be such a differing view on participative democracy within a single country.

I guess in a way—and I hope a bolt of lightning does not strike me when I say this—our committee process is like the Senate. It is an opportunity for sober second thought. It is an opportunity to review and put a human face on the impact of proposed government legislation. Over the years, I have seen some profound changes made to bills as they have been presented at committee and as committee members have listened to the views of Manitobans who are affected by these laws.

It is not without hope that I appeared here tonight, because I have seen what looked to be fairly set positions go to committee and indeed come out either fundamentally changed or, in some cases, even tabled or hoisted. It is my hope that will happen to Bill 70.

If I could speak to each individual government MLA and attempt to convince them on a one-on-one basis about the merits of seeing this bill die an ugly death, I suppose I would show them the impact of freezing the wages of a single mother who has a family of three children at home, how the existing collective agreements that are being frozen by Bill 70 are freezing her below the poverty line. I can show them these faces, see the real impact of a wage freeze, an unfair wage freeze, an unnecessary wage freeze, a wage freeze that will

not accomplish what the government hopes to accomplish with it.

The payment of wages, particularly when those wages have had a history of 10 years, 20 years perhaps, in some cases, of being behind the rate of inflation, for the better part of a lot of people's working lives their wages have steadily—their earning power, their spending power, their discretionary spending power has eroded over the years to a tragically low level. In some cases, I believe—and I admit this is only a feeling on my part, but I think that some regular wage earners are below the point of having any disposable income, that they must devote almost entirely their entire earning power to providing their family with the fundamentals of life.

I think in a country like Canada and in a province like Manitoba that has gone through, in the same 20-year period, a remarkable increase in GNP, a remarkable increase in profit margin for corporations, that is—well, it goes beyond the word wrong. It gets into that area where you use words like tragic, and how can this happen, and what will we ever do about it? I think one of the things we can do about it is to withdraw bills like Bill 70.

I think the other thing I would show these government MLAs is the archival evidence that we have built up over the years. Indeed, I could even introduce to them some survivors of the bad years, before workers' rights were readily acknowledged by government or corporations. I think I would show them, through archival process—and I would sincerely wish a face-to-face discussion with a survivor—the staggering level of commitment that the brothers and sisters who have gone before us brought to the struggle for the recognition of the right to form a union, the right to join their co-workers and attempt to persuade their employer—and in some cases that employer was government at any of the three senior levels—that they deserved a fair share of what they produced, that they deserved a modest, a fair level, an equitable level of the economic good fortune of Canada.

In the scheme of things, Canada has been very fortunate over the decades compared to a lot of other countries in the world. Unfortunately, the product of that good fortune has not been spread evenly amongst Canadians. The collective bargaining process, the labour relations community has emerged to try to bring some level of fairness to that relationship.

Through that archival process, I think I would show government MLAs the absolute and profound level of commitment that it took to bring today's structure to reality. I think I would show to them the gravestones of the people who have been run down on picket lines, who have been shot by company-hired thugs. I think I would show them the stumps that used to be hands that led to the fight for worker health and safety measures in our workplaces. These are all part and parcel of the thing I am talking about, that labour relations community.

I think that any reasonable person, and I count amongst the people here at this table reasonable but perhaps not fully informed people. I would hope through this information and the exposure to the evidence that exists that one or two or three or perhaps even all of them would agree that Bill 70 should be withdrawn and should disappear.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Chairperson, indeed these committee hearings, if they are to have a purpose, should, I believe, have the purpose of informing members of the committee. Most of the time we spend debating back and forth, we are essentially informing ourselves. Perhaps at times we could use these opportunities to get that direct contact. I really believe there is a bunker mentality sets in in this building a lot of times. I really make an effort, myself, to get out.

* (1940)

I believe comments such as yours directly put to members of this committee are perhaps the next best thing, and I really appreciate you coming back again today and making your presentation.

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Chairperson, I think it will be unfair if we do not correct the record.

First of all, I heard Mr. Doyle and I think we had the opportunity to hear you during the FOS hearings also. You will recall that it was a very lengthy process. We came to the meetings with an open mind to hear, and I think we learned from that experience.

You are asking us to be fair and reasonable, but at the same time you are being unreasonable and commenting something and drawing your own conclusions and saying that the Liberal Party is going to support this bill. I think it is not fair and it is not true. If you would take some time to read the speeches of all my six other colleagues—we have

all spoken on this bill—it will become very clear to you that we have a serious problem with this bill, with the process in many respects of this bill.

I think this is a good place to hear your—we have to hear your concerns, but if you have a preference to a specific party, that is up to you. You can promote the specific party, but to label another party without any conclusive evidence, I think is unfair. Certainly, from a person of your status who has a lot of experience, who has worked very hard, I respect your work and your opinion, but I think you should be fair with what you say, because what are you saying? We seven or eight of us are listening and we want to pay attention. We want to hear your concerns, but at the same time you must be correct in whatever you are going to put on the record.

This is just my comment. Certainly, I would like it if you want to reply to that. I think if you want all of us to do the same thing, respect the process and be reasonable, I think we as human beings should demand from each other the same respect and not put on the record something which is not true.

Mr. Doyle: I can understand the member's sensitivity on this particular question.

At one time I worked in this building. I had the great pleasure, on most occasions, and sometimes the dubious honour of being able to track very, very closely what was being said in the House by all members of the Legislature. I must say that I became the fan of many an MLA, be they Conservative, Liberal or New Democrat. I admired many of their attributes.

Events having overtaken me, I have since found other ways to occupy my time. I can no longer bring the dedication and the commitment of time to what, I am sure, is still a very enjoyable exercise of tracking who says what on what particular day. So now I am in the awkward position, I must say, of having to rely on second and sometimes even third-hand reports of what goes on in the Legislature.

You can understand why I would prefer that I would have direct access on a virtual 24-hour basis, but not having that, I must rely on the news media. To their credit, I find them quite accurate on most occasions.

It was the apparent position of Mr. Edwards that led to my confusion, since they seemed to be so directly at odds with his Leader's about wage

freezes and such. Understanding that, I hope you understand my level of confusion about that topic.

Mr. Chalman: Thank you very much.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Manitoba has or had the second-best labour relations climate in Canada. How do you feel that this bill will affect those relations?

Mr. Doyle: Without counting Bill 70, I think the record that Manitoba enjoys in terms of days lost to work stoppages, be they strikes or lockouts, has slipped. I think the number of strikes that have occurred in Manitoba and the number of lockouts that have occurred in Manitoba since the New Year alone, going back to the month of November for the Moffatt lockout of its employees and the members of NABET 816, these were lengthy strikes and lockouts. In the month of January alone, boy, the number of lost days must have hit close to 300,000 lost days. I would say that having 10,000 nurses deprived of their livelihood because of what they felt was a fundamental fight for fairness put a serious dent in Manitoba's claim to having the second lowest. Now yet, on top of that, the effects of Bill 70, the effects of layoffs, the effects of wage freezes, the effects of a suspension of collective bargaining rights—the message this sends to the private sector, the message this sends to the nonunionized private sector is a green light. Go for it.

If you do not like the way things are, give them a run. We are doing it. So I think in the short term we have got a problem already saying that we are second lowest in the country. I think in the long term the possibilities are quite serious. I think that the traditional, relative harmonious labour relations climate in Manitoba is eroding, and it is going down. How long that were to turn around, I think is—well personally speaking, I do not know, I do not care, I do not think I would want to even hazard a guess, because a good positive productive labour relations climate is not something you accomplish by undoing an unfair piece of legislation. You do not do it by tinkering. It takes a long, lengthy process to build up where workers and their employers feel that they have some mutual objectives and have some mutual goals that they can both work towards without compromising their responsibilities to their respective constituencies.

Mr. Dewar: Of course, 48,000 workers are 48,000 consumers. How do you feel this freeze will affect the general provincial economy?

Mr. Doyle: Ten years ago, one of the realities I was not aware of at that point in time was the affinity that should exist, and in some cases does exist, between workers and small business people. I think individuals in our country carry an unfair share of the tax burden, both federal and provincial and so on. I think small businesses carry an equally unfair share of that. When you look at the statistics of all the small businesses incorporated today in Canada, in less than five years close to 80 percent of them will no longer exist for a variety of reasons. I think the lot of a small business operator in Manitoba, which is also the largest employer in our economy, is quite frankly shameful. I think that the potential for closer alliances between labour and small business organizations is something that both are interested in exploring and perhaps exploiting at some point in the future, perhaps in the near future—I hope.

By imposing a wage freeze on 48,000 wage earners in the province of Manitoba, while we are in the depths of a serious recession—that I hope there are some hopeful signs of us pulling out of in the foreseeable future—but the impact on small business in addition to the impact on the families and the workers themselves mystifies me. How this can be contemplated at a time when we are trying to break out of a recession, to breathe some life into our economy so that jobs are created, so that Manitoba regains its rightful share of the national wealth, is totally beyond me. I cannot understand why any government, let alone the government of Manitoba, would contemplate that at this time. It simply does not make any sense at the best of times. Our economy is vulnerable. In the worst of times it is critical that each step, each policy is carefully thought out, and I do not think this has been carefully thought out at all.

* (1950)

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Chairperson, I have listened to your comments with interest here today, Mr. Doyle. I find them very interesting when you talk about free trade and the sell-out and how this bill could be an extension or possibly is an extension of the Free Trade Agreement.

I do not want to dwell on that issue itself, but I want to ask you a question concerning another presenter who was here earlier today. That presenter was a woman who indicated that she had four children and that her family income was \$28,000 a year, and I have indicated that it was, in my opinion, a very meagre amount to support a family of that number.

How do you see that this wage freeze—and what type of impact do you see this having on people who are on the low end of the wage scale, and what type of impact do you see it having on these particular families?

Mr. Doyle: The 1991 poverty line for a family of four, and this is total family income, is in the neighbourhood of \$29,400. So the woman—I believe you said she had four children—so that would be a family of five, and at her level of \$28,000 before taxes, before an unreasonable number of taxes, at \$28,000 she is already below the poverty line for a smaller family. Having a family of five and that level of income, I would say would put her in that position of having to carefully count each of her pennies in order to provide the basics of what we expect to be an acceptable level of quality of life for that woman and her children. So assuming that this person is affected by Bill 70 in the short term, hopefully not the long term, I would say that a wage freeze would be of extremely serious proportions for her.

I must admire the government strategy of profiling Bill 70 as a wage freeze when it is something quite more than that. I think the contents of Bill 70 taken as a whole not only puts this woman even more at risk and her children more at risk, because of the monetary nature of Bill 70, I think Bill 70, if she is directly affected by it, takes away probably her only effective tool that she can use to remedy her problems. Her collective bargaining rights have been stripped away. They have been taken. They are gone until you give them back. That in a worker-employer relationship is her only tool for seeking fairness. That, I think, is the true insidious nature of Bill 70. It certainly is a wage freeze, but more than that it is a stealer of rights.

I think in this century we have seen too many examples of governments stealing rights from identifiable groups or from entire populations. It makes me shake my head that we have not been able to learn a valuable lesson by observing what happens in these countries. It is really quite an astounding thing to see that happening not only in your own country, but in Manitoba.

This is Manitoba. We have a proud tradition of progressive legislation. On more than one front we have set the standards for the country. We have brought Canadians along with us. We have not sat in the background and we have not said, well, let us see what happens somewhere else first. We have

a history of saying, this is not right or this is right. Because of its rightness, let us go with it, or because of its wrongness, let us make sure it never happens here in Manitoba. So to see Bill 70 occurring in Manitoba is extremely disturbing for me because of our proud tradition and our history. Manitobans do not deserve this treatment. They should have a right to some kind of protection against it, if only because this is Manitoba, and I say that very, very proudly.

Insofar as Bill 70 being the forerunner of more aggressive legislation that would relate to free trade, I think the correct analogy would be when a swimmer dips a toe in the water to test it to see what is going to happen when they dive in. It makes the diving in a lot easier. Of course, in some cases it heads off the diving in because it is simply unacceptable. I see Bill 70 as that toe dipping. Let us just test out what it is going to take to get this kind of legislation through. Bill 70 in itself would not lay the necessary groundwork for the full implementation of the Free Trade Agreement, but with a couple of word changes it is there. That is what it takes. I do not like to see toe dipping going on when it comes to workers' rights or the economic security of Manitoba.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Chairperson, the presenter talked about collective bargaining rights being stripped away from individuals. We had a process that was taken away from the negotiating parties in the province of Manitoba, and that particular policy was the final offer selection. That was supposed to have ended in March, but it was by extension allowed to go through with ongoing negotiations to, I believe, the end of June. In that sense, there were parties that are now going to be falling under this Bill 70, that are going to have their wages that were agreed to either by negotiations or had come to a conclusion as a result of FOS now being rolled back.

How do you see this impacting upon the employees in these different organizations who had thought they had an agreement, that their salaries were going to move forward, now facing a wage freeze? How do you see that impacting upon these organizations and these employees?

Mr. Doyle: I am afraid I do not have the level of statistics in my awareness, let alone with me, in order to truly give a full answer to that. However, there are groups of workers that I have a passing familiarity with, one group in particular. It is not paid out of the public treasury. These people earn from

the revenue that is generated by their efforts and by the efforts that they facilitate. Going into their final offer selection process they were low paid, many of them in the \$7 range, \$7 per hour, \$8 per hour, which is not a handsome pay cheque in 1991. Many of them had gone several years without any kind of increase in their real or disposable income.

Through the final offer selection process—which I might remind the committee is not a replacement for collective bargaining. It is an encouragement for collective bargaining and a remedy when collective bargaining does not occur. It cannot be cast as a replacement for collective bargaining or something that would stop collective bargaining—quite the opposite. However, I digress. The 5 percent that these employees were awarded through the final offer selection process was really the first raise they had seen for a number of years, and 5 percent of a low wage is a low increase.

* (2000)

So when the employees of the Crystal Casino had their final offer selection award wiped out, I found that particularly cruel because of their circumstances and because of the lengthy time that they spent on the picket line before the final offer selection process took over and moved events along to a fair wage relationship between them and their employer. Then to have Bill 70 appear on the horizon like a vulture and snatch that away from them, I think is contemptible. I cannot see any justification for Bill 70 under any circumstances, but the particularly cruel impact it is having on specific workers I think is especially objectionable.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Chairperson, considering that the salaries and the wages for these employees, these 48,000 employees who are going to be impacted by this Bill 70, and that their cost of living is obviously going to increase as it does elsewhere in the country, and looking at the rate that has been taking place in the range of nearly 6 percent historically; how do you see negotiations for these groups of employees that are affected taking place? Do you think that they will be striving for catch-up in the future and that there will be strong pressures brought in that direction upon their organizations to strive for that?

Mr. Doyle: As I said earlier, I think the labour relations climate that is established in any community or country or jurisdiction is something that comes about through many years of developing

it, of fostering it, of working on it to make it a productive entity.

In a remarkably short period of time, the labour relations climate in Manitoba has deteriorated substantially. Now I have never bargained in the public sector. I have never had that pleasure or honour but, based on my experience in other realms, I cannot imagine how Bill 70 would be of an assistance to the future of a good and healthy labour relations climate between the government, its agencies and their employees. I think we have been taken back in time and it will take a long period of time to bring about improvement to the labour relations climate, specifically between the government and its employees and, more generally, to the labour relations climate as a whole in Manitoba. So it is not a short-term remedy to a short-term problem. It is an act that is going to have echoes in Manitoba for years to come.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Doyle. Is that it for the questions? Thank you very much Mr. Doyle.

Mr. Doyle: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: We have at this time one out-of-town presenter. Are there any other out-of-town presenters who have come in? I will be asking every once in a while during the evening. Mr. Larry Brown, 269, is that correct? Mr. Larry Brown. Do you have a written presentation? If you could wait until it has been distributed, Mr. Brown, and then we will get started. Go ahead Mr. Brown.

Mr. Larry Brown (National Union of Provincial Government Employees): Thank you. I must say, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I appreciate the committee's courtesy in putting me on before 4:30 in the morning, which I gather is when other presenters have had the distinct pleasure of appearing. With time zone changes, I am not sure what I would be like at 4:30 in the morning. It might be an interesting experiment for both of us.

I am not sure if I am pleased or disappointed that Mr. Manness is not here in person tonight. The last time I met with Mr. Manness in Winnipeg, it was just prior to the federal-provincial Finance ministers meeting where I made an impassioned and, I thought, brilliant presentation to him about why he should not support the kind of right-wing policies that we saw coming down the pipe. As a result of our brilliant intervention at that point, we now have wage controls in five provinces in Canada. So if Mr.

Manness was here tonight to listen to our presentation, it might mean the end of the labour movement altogether, I am not sure, based on our track record.

I also noticed as I was landing today that the Hell's Angels are having their convention in town as well. I was wondering if they were going to be here to learn some lessons from the Manitoba government in how to approach collective bargaining.

We are the second largest union in Canada, and we are here today to voice our strong opposition to Bill 70. That may come as a surprise to the members of the committee that we would be in opposition, so I want to underline that to begin with.

I want to tell you a little bit about the National Union so that the rest of our presentation fits into some context. The National Union is the second largest union in Canada representing over 300,000 working people, and included in our membership is the Manitoba Government Employees' Association. We have 13 components across the country in all kinds of different occupations.

At this point, about 59 percent of our members work directly for provincial governments. It used to be considerably higher when our name was chosen. We now represent employees in all different kinds of fields: a number of indirect public sector fields, hospitals, schools, correctional institutions and so on, a number of Crown corporations. Also going into the private sector, we now represent employees in the tourism industry, breweries and so on. A broad occupational spectrum is included within our membership: clerks, engineers, nurses, the janitors and so on. I say all that not only to brag, although I am rather proud of it, but also to point out that the perspective that we bring to this hearing is not the perspective narrowly of only public sector employees, but also the perspective of a number of working people in other fields as well.

We also have a perspective that we would like to claim extends beyond the boundaries of Canada, because we are one of the major unions in an organization internationally called the Public Services International which is a worldwide assembly of unions, about 10 million public sector workers in 70 countries. So we consult with and obtain their views on a number of subjects, including consulting with them on things like privatization and wage controls.

I was in Geneva not very long ago at a conference where we talked about the impact on public sector unions these days of various government strategies, and it was pointed out at that point by a number of speakers that the World Bank had played a role in influencing a number of world governments to take the same kind of direction, cutting back on the wages of public sector employees, privatization, cutting back on services.

I would draw the attention of this committee that the World Bank itself, most recently, about a week ago, has themselves drawn attention to the fact that they were in error in putting forward those policies. What this government in Manitoba is doing is not unique. I wish it was, it might make us a little bit less busy. What the government in Manitoba is doing is part of a pattern that governments, not only in this country, but around the world, a select number of right-wing governments, have chosen to impose on their public. The World Bank—that was one of the philosophical originators of that set of policies—has recently issued a study saying that they were wrong, that they carry those policies too far, that there was pain being caused to the people of the countries who pursued those policies, and that public services and governments are in fact needed by the populations that they were put in place to serve.

So while this government contemplates whether it should be pursuing the path laid down so thoroughly by the World Bank, it might be instructive for this committee to read that report of the World Bank where they, in fact, acknowledged that that set of policies went far too far and was in some ways in error.

We would like to talk to you today about a theme that has dominated a number of provincial budgets and the federal budget in this calendar year, and that theme is "tough choices." It has become the modern-day cliché, I guess, the governments made up of Clint Eastwoods who think that making tough choices somehow validates the positions that they come up with. The idea that we are asked to agree to it is that particular governments who are faced with admittedly difficult economic circumstances have had no choice whatsoever but to clamp down on public programs and services and wages and jobs.

It is a theme that the Finance minister of this province used very—and I use the term advisedly—liberally in his own budget when, after he blamed federal policies specifically, and we

agree with him in this, those relating to high interest rates and severely reduced transfer payments for Manitoba's problems. Being a major cause of the recession, he then, instead of solving those problems, proceeded to clamp down on the public sector in this province.

* (2010)

The question we would like to put in front of this committee to consider is how real is this allegation that these are legitimate responses to tough choices. Did your Mr. Manness and your government have no other choice but to target the public sector? Does Manitoba's economic prosperity hinge, in fact, on the type of actions that Bill 70 would mandate? We do not think so, and we would quote not only union representatives and people's representatives in that argument, but also no less an authority than John Kenneth Galbraith, who is internationally respected as an economist who, in a May 1991 Globe and Mail article, warned governments, including this government here, to reverse their economic direction or risk making the recession worse.

I would quote James Frank, who is a vice-president of the Conference Board of Canada. The Conference Board of Canada, I would remind this committee, is not exactly a trade union organization. It is an economic think tank in Ottawa financed by major corporations and by government departments, I believe. There is certainly no trade union money going into it. Mr. James Frank, who is the senior economic adviser for the Conference Board of Canada was critical of governments like Manitoba's whose intense focus on their deficits aggravated unemployment, increased bankruptcies and resulted in lost output.

A few hundred years ago doctors used to treat diseases by applying leeches to people. They used to bleed them. Even if the disease was a blood disease like anemia, they used to apply leeches and take more blood. We kind of laugh at that now as a medical theory, but for some reason it is still an acceptable economic theory. In the middle of a serious recession we apply more leeches to the problem to drain more blood, more money and more purchasing power out of the economy. We are repeating the classic mistakes that were made in the late 1920s leading into the 1930s. It does not seem to us to make much sense.

The provincial budget here was put into the context of the federal economic scene, and your Finance minister spent some time explaining his provincial budget based on what had happened at the federal level. So I want to talk just briefly about the federal scene. Both economically and politically, he seems to have provided the framework for your government.

Since the Mulroney government came into power in Ottawa, this country has taken a radically different economic direction than it used to. Things are now in this country a lot easier for large corporations and the well-to-do than they were in the past. There are reams of statistics, and at the risk of keeping you here until five in the morning, I will not repeat all of them, but I do want to cite some of them in support of those allegations, because there has been study after study that has demonstrated that there has been a turn for the people of Canada for the worse.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

The November 1989 issue of the Canadian Economic Observer, which is a Statistics Canada publication published by the Government of Canada, said: From the early '40s to the late 1950s corporate taxes averaged over 25 percent of total federal revenue. Personal taxes were only slightly higher at about 30 percent. By 1988, personal taxes accounted for 55.5 percent and corporate taxes for only 10.5 percent, an incredible drop in the corporate tax contribution to this country and an incredible increase in the personal tax increase. The reasons were increased tax breaks accorded to corporations and the removal of tax credits benefiting individuals.

In April 1991, Statistics Canada issued another study, and they extended this to all levels of government including the provincial level. Their study showed that from 1985 to 1991, corporate taxes which accounted for 7.4 percent of combined federal-provincial and local government revenues in the '85-86 fiscal year accounted for only 7.1 percent in '90-91.

So combined across the country, corporate taxes and the contribution of corporate taxes has been dropping, and personal income tax has increased as a percentage of combined federal-provincial and municipal income from 31.5 to 35.8 percent of combined government revenues.

Then we add on top of that consumption taxes from 19.4 percent to 20.8 percent before the GST. With the GST in effect, of course, consumption taxes are going to be an even greater money machine for governments.

Now the GST may be a federal tax but the employees of the government of Manitoba, who are going to have their wages frozen according to this bill, are not going to have their GST contributions frozen according to any copy of the bill that I have seen. The GST Consumer Information office has estimated that the GST will cost the average middle-income family an extra \$570 a year, 50 percent higher than the figure included in government studies backing the need for the GST.

Now, again at the risk of oversimplifying this, let me point out that your employees who are facing a wage freeze are going to be facing that increase the same as other Canadians who are not facing that freeze. It seems to me that governments are causing part of the problem and then visiting the blame for those problems on their own employees.

The Consumer Association of Canada's Manitoba office showed that prices on 36 items in a basket of 52 rose more or fell less than the federal government had projected. Attempts were made to discredit that study, as you will be aware, but a follow-up study covering six provinces discovered exactly similar trends.

Now zeroing in for a moment on personal income taxes, the tax burden for the personal income taxpayer in this country had changed markedly since the federal Tories took power. According to Patrick Grady, a famous study that got all kinds of coverage a couple of months ago of Global Economics, the average federal marginal tax rate has increased by 2.5 percentage points since the Tories took power in '84. The average family now pays—and that is a little hard to get your mind around; I do not know what a marginal tax rate amounts to, but I do know this figure—an additional \$1,530 per year in personal income taxes, not the average marginal income earner earning more than \$100,000, mind you. That is for the middle-income brackets.

That confirms the findings of the 1989 study by Professor Allan Maslove of Carleton University, who showed that only the very rich and the very poor have benefited from tax reform. The biggest relative losers are those earning between \$29,990

and \$36,310. It would be interesting to do a study of how many government employees in this province fall within that magic bracket who have been hardest hit, had most of their incomes taken away by the tax reform that we have been told is supposed to be benefiting all of us.

Your Mr. Manness in his budget speech said that his options were either to have wage controls or to raise taxes. I want to put that kind of a claim by your Finance minister back into this context, because the question is raise taxes on whom? If Mr. Manness is saying that his only option was to raise taxes on the already overburdened middle-income taxpayer, then he has missed the obvious point that there are people out there who are not paying their fair share.

More and more of the Canadian public is realizing that to say raise taxes does not begin to answer the question, because they are realizing that the tax system has become progressively more unfair. Ninety-five percent of the people in the last poll I saw indicated that they wanted greater fairness in the Canadian income tax system.

Taxes are only one part, of course, although they are an important part of the actions taken by the federal government in Ottawa over the last seven years. In general, federal economic policies over that time frame have been based on a very strongly held philosophy with a number of key points in it.

First of all, the reason for our economic problems according to this philosophy is that government is too large. Secondly, this philosophy holds that government involvement in the economy is automatically a burden to the corporate actions—and I suppose, as a result, corporate actions would be more conducive to economic growth and prosperity if they were just left alone and if government got off their backs. Given free rein and appropriate tax breaks, low-interest loans, subsidies and so on, the corporate sector according to this philosophy will automatically act in the public interest and spur the economy on to bigger and better things.

Finally, and this may ring a small bell, the federal government themselves are confronted with some tough choices, and must take drastic steps to address the deficit problem, a deficit problem which they themselves created through high-interest rates, tax breaks, corporate subsidies and other initiatives. Their addressing of the deficit sounds all too familiar; it is through program and service cuts.

This philosophy was first trotted out by Adam Smith a couple of hundred years ago and has been discredited on regular intervals ever since, but it is like a phoenix. It keeps on rising again, and it has risen again temporarily and is now being pushed at considerable damage to the people of the governments who are suffering under that philosophy.

* (2020)

The federal government has established priorities. Deficit reduction has been its No. 1 priority, but not deficit reduction through increasing corporate taxes or the taxes of the well-to-do, despite the fact that they have not been paying their fair share. Now the main mechanisms have been lower tax rates for the well-to-do; a free trade deal with the United States which not only cost us 315,000 jobs so far and we are still counting, but cost us \$2 billion in tax revenue for foregone tariffs at the border, and it is costing the provincial governments as well; the GST, a tax which has fueled inflation and increased the tax burden on the poor and the middle class; changing unemployment insurance so that those people who suffer as a result of those policies have less protection for the unemployment that comes with them; privatizing well-run government corporations such as Air Canada and gutting others such as VIA and the CBC; deregulation, which among other things has been blamed for the death of several people in the Dryden air disaster not long ago, specifically pinned by a commission of inquiry on the government policy of deregulation.

Another tactic has been to attack the public sector, programs, services, jobs and wages, and to encourage the provincial governments and the private sector to follow the example. What an example to have to follow.

One result of all these changes has been a tremendous increase in the amount of unemployed Canadian workers. Some 1.5 million Canadians, 10.5 percent of the work force, are now admittedly unemployed. Statistics Canada only keeps figures on those who are actively looking for work. So that those poor sods who have gotten so discouraged because there are no jobs to do that have gone home do not even get counted as unemployed. That is an increase from 7.2 percent just over a year ago. Surely when we look at that kind of figure, we do not need much more proof that the set of policies that has been imposed on us is not working.

One additional mechanism used by the federal government needs to be canvassed briefly, and that is one that your government is faced with, the offloading of many of the financial problems that it has created onto provincial governments through rejections in committed transfer payments. Of course, the provinces then turn around and pass that on to hospitals and school boards and municipalities, and the hospitals and school boards and municipalities pass that on to the end user through a process called hot potato budgeting.

Your air conditioning system is not all that powerful, is it?

An Honourable Member: We do not have one.

Mr. Brown: Yes, I am beginning to suspect that. It is much more comfortable down there reading the paper than -(interjection)- Pardon me? So those things flying in front of my eyes were not just spots? They are real animals, are they?

What have provincial governments done in response to these federal actions? Well, during 1991, provincial government actions have been so remarkably similar to each other and the federal actions, that we are sure governments have been putting their speech writers in the same room at First Ministers and Finance ministers conferences to develop model budget speeches and press releases.

The Manitoba government's budget speech said that the actions that they were taking against their employees were, in fact, legitimized because a few other governments had already done it. Based on that logic, I sincerely hope that the government of Manitoba does not read the recent report of Amnesty International, because what that report says is that a number of governments around the world have been guilty of serious abuses of the rights of their citizens and, according to the logic of Mr. Manness, that would make it okay for the government here to do. In fact, I am taking it as my authority from the Manitoba government budget speech that it is okay for me to go out and rob banks, because several other people have done it first and, according to that logic, that makes it legitimate.

The preamble of most of the provincial budgets including Manitoba's that have been introduced during 1991 are remarkably similar, and far be it for me to suggest conspiracy theories, but see if these phrases sound familiar to you:

There has been a recognition of how the federal government has contributed to provincial financial problems, particularly through its policies on interest rates and transfer payments.

There have been statements about how provincial citizens must pull together, and we are all in this together and we all have to deal with our difficulties. Thank God the belt-tightening analogy has been dropped. If I heard that one more time, I think I was going to throw up. That was the one that was famous for years.

There have been assurances that the provincial government has or will engage in a broadly based consultative process.

Having said that, however, provincial budgets have noted that the provincial government has had to make some tough choices, and there have been statements about how the only realistic option that provincial governments have found is to come down hard on public programs, public services, and public sector workers.

What then have those provincial governments done as a result? Again, the actions have been remarkably similar:

Program, service and job cuts, public sector wage freezes, some of which have contravened already signed collective agreements which I am going to speak more about later.

There have been promises that there will be more of the same in the future—so the reward for taking our bitter medicine now is more bitter medicine to come, and despite the complaints about federal offloading to provincial governments, provincial governments have in turn offloaded their problems to local governments. In Manitoba, for example, the recent budget took some \$20.2 million away from Manitoba cities and an additional \$63.3 million away from rural and northwestern communities.

Well, the question we would like to consider with this committee is whether this province's government was really constrained in its choices? Were there other choices that could have been made? Obviously, we think so.

The governments of Ontario and Prince Edward Island not only did not make cuts in all of their programs, not only did not savage the public sector worker force in those provinces, but engaged in free collective bargaining and reached satisfactory collective agreements with their employees.

Indeed, our national perspective shows us that provincial governments across the country, including those that alleged that they had no choice, did have other fairer choices, despite federal actions in the areas of interest rates and transfer payments.

For example, in your sister province of Newfoundland the government cut some 2,600 provincial jobs and 360 hospital beds, froze grants made to school boards and so on, but still found \$165 million to pay out in grants and subsidies to Newfoundland companies. In that budget speech, the government of Newfoundland reported as a matter of some interest that in fact corporate taxes had declined in Newfoundland, as well, and that the corporate sector in Newfoundland was not paying its fair share of taxes, but proceeded not to do anything about it.

Nova Scotia's government felt the need to go back on the agreement it had already signed with public sector workers in order to save \$31 million. It could have raised \$74 million if it had increased corporate taxes by the same proportion as personal income taxes it increased in that province. It could have raised another \$74 million by instituting a very modest 1 percent payroll tax.

New Brunswick—a wage freeze on public sector workers in that province as well, contrary to a signed collective agreement. It could have raised \$16 million through fairer personal income taxes and \$100 million through fairer corporate taxes.

I would suggest that the lessons learned from our study of these other budgets can be applied in this province as well. There are a number of things that your government could have chosen to do besides visiting all of its concerns, allegedly concerned, about their financial situation on the backs of their employees.

In this province, fairer corporate taxes would have raised \$7.5 million in provincial revenues. A provincial surtax on those earning \$50,000 or more would have raised \$45 million in provincial revenues. A capital gains levy, another \$15 million in provincial revenues.

There are a whole series of options that I am sure you have heard about that are going to be presented to this committee. To claim that somehow the economic situation faced by this province validated an attack on a group of people who happened by the luck of the draw to be working for the provincial government, to claim that is validated is nonsense.

There were, of course, a whole raft of choices that this government could have made that were options for it.

Bill 70, despite what the government is saying and despite what the assurances are publicly about it, is not based on economics. The choices that were made by your government had less to do with economic problems than they had to do with political philosophies. The political philosophies like those of their federal Tory cousins whom they consult at Finance ministers meetings and other forums are based on that same set of false premises that we talked about earlier.

* (2030)

Manitoba has economic problems because your government is too large. Does that sound familiar? Government involvement in this economy is a burden to the corporate sector. Given free rein, the corporate sector in Manitoba would automatically act in the public interest and spur the Manitoba economy on to bigger and better things. The provincial government is confronted with tough choices and had no real option but to go after its own employees.

Those are not economic statements, members of the committee, those are political statements of philosophical choice. They have very little to do with economics and everything to do with politics.

Now we have recently had a new angle added to all of the old arguments that have been trotted out. The new angle is making the economies more competitive. Competitive is the new buzzword. This is the new penicillin which is going to cure all of our economic ills, no matter what their original cause was. Competitiveness is being used by all levels of government to justify any and all of their economic actions. Mr. Manness, I note echoing one of the collective decisions made at that Finance ministers meeting, also used that theme in his April budget.

I am not used to quoting The Globe and Mail as evidence of a trade union position because The Globe and Mail is Canada's foremost business and—large "c"—Conservative newspaper. In The Globe and Mail's Report on Business, they showed that even they recognized that this competitiveness tag is just a con game. In a June 14 article, The Globe said things like the following: Canada remains anything but uncompetitive. As a country, we are getting richer every year. Our merchandise

exports have done nothing but rise. Our labour productivity has not deteriorated. Canadian business has produced a higher return on capital than the competition in Germany, Britain, France, Italy and even Japan.

We have one of the world's most abundant resource bases and skilled labour forces. So why all the talk—and I am still quoting *The Globe and Mail* here—about declining competitiveness? Partly self-interest, and politicians are learning that they, too, can apply the "C" word to almost any economic dilemma.

Members of the committee, we can certainly get into competitiveness and carry that to any kind of absurd extremes. We can compete to see who can give the lowest tax break around the world for corporations; we can compete to see who will provide the fewest services to Canadian people; we can compete with countries that have no environmental protection at all to see who can lower their standards the most; we can compete to see who can offer the lowest wages around the world. That really does not have very much to do with a sensible economic direction for this country.

What we would like to ask is the following: Is it not time that we started to hear some truths about national and provincial economies? Is it not time that our governments started to be more honest about what they are doing and why? Is it not time our provincial governments started to treat people, of whom the people who work for them qualify, more fairly?

We could start with the public sector—want to look a bit more closely at governments' so-called economic basis for clamping down on public sector workers. To do that, we asked ourselves the question: Is the public sector wage bill out of line? Do tough choices have to target public sector employees? Well, our union did not go to our own bank of rhetorical flourishes to find the answer to that. We went to Statistics Canada, and we obtained public sector data from Statistics Canada for a five-year period. We wanted to determine, for our own information, the extent, if any, to which provincial governments' financial problems could legitimately be blamed on their wage bills.

What we found, based on Statistics Canada information, which is available to all of you, is that provincial governments' wage bills had actually become less of a factor over the five-year period that

we studied—less of a factor—not only in terms of provincial government spending but also in provincial economies overall. Wage costs in '85-86 were 11.44 percent of total provincial expenditures. By 1989-90, they were only 11.07 percent of combined provincial expenditures. They had dropped.

Wage costs in '85-86 represented 2.5 percent of combined provincial gross domestic product, wage costs for public sector employees. That percentage has dropped constantly through the five-year period so that public sector wages started to represent a smaller proportion of provincial output. By '89-90, provincial public sector wages accounted for only 2.29 percent of combined provincial GDP. The statistics, contrary to what our political leaders have been telling us, demonstrate clearly that public sector workers and their wages cannot legitimately be considered the source of provincial financial problems. Manitoba was not some kind of exception to this rule. In '85-86, wage costs represented 10.2 percent of provincial expenditures and 2.7 percent of GDP. By '89-90, the figures were 9.1 percent, a drop of over a full percentage point, and 2.5 percent.

In this province, the percentage of government money going to public sector wages has dropped in the last five-year period by over a full percentage point. In the face of that kind of hard fact, the argument that somehow governments have to visit the main source of the solution of their financial problems on government employees is just nonsense. I am not sure about this next statement, in fact across the country, we found that, even if provincial governments fired each and every one of their employees, their financial problems would still be there. Given the pattern that is existing across this country, I am not sure somebody is not going to try that as an experiment. We would underline the fact that that is not a suggestion.

According to the data that we have looked at, the real problems that provincial governments have really can be narrowed down to two significant ones: Significantly reduced federal transfer payments and increased public debt costs. Neither of those problems are going to be solved by wage freezes on the public sector. Provincial governments, as I am sure you well know, lost \$6.8 billion between '85 and '89 as a result of changes in the formula used to transfer funds. Provinces will lose an additional \$6.3 billion for the '90-96 period as a result of

changes in the '90 and '91 federal budgets. Those figures are not going to go away by the introduction of wage controls in this province.

Provincial governments lost a further \$3.5 billion as a result of increased interest rates that they had to pay on the money that they borrowed, and those interest rates were deliberately kept high by the Bank of Canada as part of its monetary strategy.

Now if those are the two most significant sources of a provincial government's economic problems, then why on earth would it be fair to visit those problems on people whose only mistake is that they work for those provincial governments? There ain't no justice in that. There is no fairness in it. All there is, is choosing to transfer a problem and getting the monkey off the backs of the government and onto somebody who can a hell of a lot less afford it and somebody whose choices are a lot more restrained than the provincial governments' are.

In the 1990s, wage controls and other policies aimed at provincial government employees are really a part of a deliberate strategy. The aim is to divert attention away from the choice that the provincial governments have made, being either completely unable or completely unwilling to take a stronger stance against the federal government, for causing provincial financial problems and targeting national programs like medicare. At the federal level, government worker bashing is a strategy aimed at diverting attention away from the government's unwillingness to attack the real problems in the deficit through more progressive taxation and expenditure measures. Would it not be nice if governments at all levels started to spend more time focusing on their real problems instead of trying to deflect criticism by attacking public programs, services, jobs and the wages of those workers who deliver them?

I would like to deal with one final issue, and this is an issue that strikes me as one that, even for people with different philosophical orientations, must be one that would give us some pause. Sam Goldwyn used to say a verbal contract is not worth the paper it is written on, and that has become a sort of caricature of a fast-talking, cigar-chomping movie mogul, but what Brian Mulroney and many of the provincial Premiers are doing is demonstrating that even written contracts in this country are no longer worth the paper they are written on if those written contracts happen to be with provincial

governments and happen to be with provincial government employees.

* (2040)

Does being elected mean that you have a licence to lie to your employees? We would argue that it does not. Does it mean that you have a licence to sign formal, legal contracts with them that you have no intention of honouring? Surely not, yet that is exactly what has been happening in the name of fiscal restraint and sound economic policy in several Canadian jurisdictions, including Manitoba. This is a more profound problem than just a setback to sane collective bargaining in the public sector, although it surely is that. If this bill goes through, it will take years for the collective bargaining situation in this province to stabilize, because the lack of trust that will be imposed on the system will be profound and fundamental.

It is more than just an attack on the collective bargaining system. Surely this goes to the root question of the integrity of our system and the faith that one can have in any commitment made by the governors to the governed. I want to put this whole issue in more recognizable terms. If some fast-talking shyster comes to your door and sells you a vacuum cleaner by lying about it, you expect legal protection. People just cannot get away with that, you would think, and you would be right. They cannot. If someone buys a car from you, takes the car, then cancels the cheque and decides unilaterally to pay you only half the amount you agreed on, you expect to be able to enforce the original contract, and you should. You hire a company to do work for you, and they do not do the work, they do not live up to their commitments, you expect to be able to enforce the contract.

For most of us, a deal is a deal. Our honour, our integrity and the legal system all enforce that understanding, that a deal is a deal, a contract is a contract. So when did governments get some kind of dispensation from this rule? Would they try this kind of deal breaking if they had a contract with General Motors and then decided they did not want to live up their end of the bargain, or would they be too afraid of the consequences and the outrage that would occur?

Governments sign all kinds of contracts for supplies, office space, equipment. The people who sign those contracts assume, as they should, that those contracts are going to be valid deals, and they

expect them to be honoured. In fact, governments do not break leases, and they do not write laws to change the amount of rent they have agreed to, staying in the same office but legislating a lower rent. They do not accept delivery of supplies and then legislate a lower price, yet when it comes to public sector workers, all of the rules apparently change. Governments can sign collective agreements, and then they decide they do not like the terms and then legislate new ones. They can even sign those contracts with apparently their fingers crossed behind their back or something, knowing that the contract is soon going to be unilaterally changed by legislation they have already drafted.

That is what has happened in different degrees in B.C., Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and, unfortunately, I have to say, in Manitoba. Your Premier sat across the table from the head of the Manitoba Government Employees' Association and had a conversation with him that was intrinsically dishonest because there was legislation already drafted so that Mr. Filmon was going to get his way one way or the other.

The camouflage, of course, is there. The deficit, fiscal restraint, sound management and all those wonderful-sounding words, but these governments, including your government, had deficits before, and they knew what their budgets would look like. Is there some magic line that says, up until this point, we are going to be honest, but if we cross this line, if the economic problem gets big enough, we can just throw our word to the winds and break our word?

Governments' financial situations are not cast in concrete. As we have noted, all governments make taxation choices which determine how much revenue they will get, and our tax system is being made more unfair every day. Profitable companies are not paying their share; governments are making spending choices. Some of those spending choices are pretty questionable.

Even if we do not question the figures, what price do we put on our new society, on our new world order, on honesty? What dollar value do we give to integrity? If it is \$35.2 billion, does that justify lying to the person on the other side of the table, where if it was only \$35.1 billion, you would still have to be honest? Is that where the line is, or is it \$36.2 billion? The discussion, of course, is nonsense, but what we seem to have accepted and what you will accept if you pass Bill 70 is that there is a line that

says, if the deficit gets big enough, then to hell with our word, to hell with our integrity, to hell with our honesty, to hell with going to the bargaining table like honest people and trying to negotiate an honest collective agreement. We will just use the force of law.

Let us look at this from the other end of the telescope for just a minute. What if your government employees' union in this province signed a contract for 3 percent and, six months later, the rate of inflation had gone up to 6 percent, double what they signed for? Would the union be justified then in tearing up the contract and walking out on strike? Your government would be the first to argue that they would not be justified, and you would use the force and the rule of law to get them back to work as soon as the police could do it. That is the other end of the telescope.

If an employee signs a contract through his union and makes some kind of a mistake in judging what is going to happen, the employee, through his union, is stuck with it for the life of the collective agreement. Why should the people on the other side of the table be any different?

In the public sector, we have the dubious distinction of having an employer who makes up the rules, appoints the referee and then joins the game as one of the teams. The employer then reserves the right, if they are losing, to change the rules anyway, even to move the goal posts. Your government here did not want to give to public sector employees the unfettered right to strike, and when they started to win at arbitration, they went through Bill 70 and changed the rules, moved the goal posts halfway through the game.

One union put it, breaking a legally negotiated contract is breaking the law, unless you can use the law to break the contract. Then you are not just any employer, you are the government. What governments are doing—and you have to know this, all of you have to know this if you look in any kind of objectivity at what is happening. This is wrong, dishonest and immoral. Quite frankly, I can see by the look on some of your faces that you are uncomfortable with this argument. I hope you are, because what governments are doing in this country, by accepting the kind of force and the kind of brute force that it is epitomized by Bill 70, is immoral. It is far too high a price for a law-abiding society to accept. You would not even have to

explain that to Sam Goldwyn; we should not have to explain that to our governments.

Before concluding, I would like to just talk about the image that Canadians have had about the public sector and public sector workers, because that is part of the problem. Over the last two decades, Canadian governments at all levels have worked hard at creating a false image about the public sector and public sector workers. Governments who employ those people have worked hard at demoralizing public sector workers with unsupported statements, holding that government activity is inefficient and misdirected, that government workers are overpaid or lazy, that freezing funds or further cuts to program spending are needed, that privatizing our contracting out operations will make them more efficient and that effective program delivery will result.

Governments have played a very large role in perpetuating those stereotypes. Public sector workers in this country have had enough, enough of this image and of the actions perpetuating it. Yes, many are demoralized, and as a result, you are not getting the kind of work that public sector workers are capable of. Yes, others are trying to leave, because they want to work for more enlightened employers, but the majority still believe in the job that they were hired to do, and they are very, very angry. They want to know why they have been singled out for treatment that is demonstrably unfair. They want to know why they have been singled out for that treatment when the facts show that they are in no way responsible for the problems that their employers are supposedly trying to address.

* (2050)

What are we talking about when we talk about the public sector? Everybody, I think, now has an image of the public sector worker as somebody who dresses in a tie every day, goes to work carrying a briefcase, pushes forms around a desk and does not ever, God forbid, do anything real. That is nonsense. That image of the public sector worker that governments like to attack is a false image.

The work that government employees do is absolutely valuable and necessary work so that society remains one that is decent to live in. We are not talking about some abstract concept of some person who works in some other city, preferably some city far away like Ottawa, or if you are in Thompson, you can blame everybody who lives in

Winnipeg, somebody who is far away and removed. We are talking about families and friends and neighbours. We are talking about health care. We are talking about inspecting food so that, when you go to a restaurant, you can be reasonably assured that you are not going to get poisoned. We are talking about senior citizens' programs. We are talking about search and rescue services. We are talking about counselling and help for unemployed workers, protecting the environment from polluters, training young people, providing roads and highways inspections and a host of other services on which Canadian businesses depend every day.

Government employees, those public sector workers who are being bashed, those public sector workers who are having their work devalued by their employers, our nurses, lab techs, ambulance operators, public health inspectors, nursing home staff, their scientists, their employment counsellors, their community college instructors, prison officers, snowplow operators, social workers, these jobs, the people who do these jobs that you are taking money away from in Bill 70 are doing work that is crucial to this province. Without those people and without the job they do, this province would not be as good a province to live in as it is right now. It is these functions and these people who are most directly affected by odious pieces of legislation like Bill 70, the piece of legislation about which an official complaint will be filed at the International Labour Organization in Geneva this fall.

We are not talking here about somebody else, somebody's second cousin twice removed, or some situation that exists somewhere else. We are talking about all of us, including government members and the society that you and your constituents have to live in, because we all make use of those government programs. When we talk about public sector workers, we are talking about people who work for the public, which is all of us. We all have a vested interest in having effective, highly motivated public sector workers, and that, in summary, is why Bill 70 should never have been introduced and why this committee must now reject it. Thank you very much.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Thank you, Mr. Brown. On a point of clarification for the record, it is my understanding that you are presenting this brief on behalf of the National Union of Provincial Government Employees. Is that correct?

Mr. Brown: That is correct.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Thank you. You were listed as a private citizen. You also were not noted as out of town, and I think in your earlier comments, you indicated that you had flown in. Is that accurate? So you are from out of province, are you?

Mr. Brown: Yes I am. That was indicated at the beginning, as I was being called up to present. I gather that is why I am on now and not at 4:30.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Mr. McAlpine, are the questions of Mr. Brown?

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Yes, Madam Acting Chairman, the interest is here in terms of what has stood out throughout the whole brief. I got the impression that you were not from Winnipeg and maybe unfamiliar with some of the things that we are dealing with here. Out of interest, I would just like to know what part of the country you are from.

Mr. Brown: I represent -(interjection)- I am sorry. Did I do something—

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): No. I am sorry. We have to identify the speaker through the Chair prior to responding to each question in order for Hansard to pick it up.

Mr. Brown: I represent, among other things, the Manitoba Government Employees' Association so that we are in close contact with them as well as our other components across the country. I am one of the two national officers of the national union. My home base is Saskatchewan, which is where I am originally from, and I was elected four and a half years ago. I have worked out of Ottawa ever since, but I have been in Manitoba often enough to qualify me at least as an honorary citizen, so I would claim some familiarity with what is going on here.

Mr. McAlpine: So I am to assume that you are from Ottawa? You said you are working out of Ottawa. Your home base is Saskatchewan, is that what you said?

Mr. Brown: My original home base was in Saskatchewan. I was elected four and a half years ago, and since then, my base has been in Ottawa, yes.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Are there further questions of Mr. Brown?

Mr. Dewar: Thank you for your presentation. I was wondering how you feel this legislation will affect settlements in the private sector?

Mr. Brown: I am going to learn to wait, before the end of the evening.

I think it is fairly obvious that the first set of wage control legislation that we saw in this country was in 1975, and that legislation was characterized as wage and price control legislation, if you remember. It was supposed to apply to all wages in the country, private and public, and all prices.

In fact, after two and a half years of operation, there was a major news release that the wage and price control board had finally rolled back the price of a bottle of ketchup. It was fairly clear by that time that it was a wage control board, and even the government stopped pretending anything else towards the end.

The next round of wage controls that we saw after 1975 dropped all that pretense and moved to being public sector controls, and that was the period from 1982 to about 1986. There were a number of governments across the country that introduced some kind of wage controls. None of them were as bad as the current round of wage freezes. In the '82 to '86 era, the wage control legislation was in fact legislation that said you can only bargain up to a certain limit. It was a much different kind of legislation then, but it was public sector only, started by the federal government with its six and five program and then copied by most of the provincial jurisdictions across the country.

The explanation from the federal government at the time was that they understood perfectly well that, if they controlled their own wages and the wages of provincial public sector employees, the end result would be to drag down the wages of all workers in Canada, because the process of collective bargaining is not some kind of simplistic or straightforward one. It depends on what else is happening, so if you go to the table here, you quote the wage settlement there; if you go to the table there, you quote the wage settlement here and so on.

If the wages of one group of workers, a fairly substantial group in our economy, are being dragged down legislatively, then the ability of anybody else, whatever their work situation, to get the same wage increases that they would have otherwise, is decreased. So what this is, is wage

control legislation which will by indirect effect spread out and cover all workers who are unionized, because the general pattern of wage increases will be driven down because of the public sector. Along with that, we are seeing an incredible increase in unemployment, as a result of a whole bunch of factors, including governmentally introduced factors, which is another way of controlling wages, because everybody knows that, in a period of high unemployment, the ability of workers to achieve wage increases is decreased.

Mr. Dewar: It has been estimated that this freeze will take \$70 million out of the provincial economy. What are your comments on that?

Mr. Brown: That is one of the reasons that people like John Kenneth Galbraith and Jim Frank, among other people, say that what is being done here is exactly the wrong prescription for the problem, because what we are in is a terribly serious recession. In some parts of this country, it is getting scary. There are people living in conditions in this country that would be embarrassing to any of us. This recession is not some academic, economic exercise; this is a real problem that is being visited on a whole host of people in this country.

It is the exact opposite of what we need, to be taking more purchasing power out. Galbraith is no amateur when it comes to economic advice. I told you before, I was in Geneva. At the Geneva meeting, I raised his name, thinking this was kind of a North American name. His name is known world wide. He is a respected economic adviser to governments around the world, whose name is magic in that circle. He says that this is nuts, that when you have an economy that is going like that, the last thing you want to do is push it down, which is recessionary budgets that take money out of the economy through wage controls, take money out of the economy through layoffs, take money out of the economy through the reduction in grants and all of the kinds of things that have been visited through this budget—exactly the wrong prescription. It is taking somebody who is dying of a blood disease and applying leeches. It does not make any economic sense whatsoever. It is a philosophical prescription that has no rooting in economics.

* (2100)

Mr. Reid: Madam Acting Chairperson, one of the comments that was made in your presentation here today—and I will read it to refresh all of our

memories: We all have a vested interest in having effective, highly motivated public sector workers to deliver those programs and services to us.

I find that a very, very interesting comment, and I am wondering how you see the effect of this wage freeze and, in many cases, wage rollback impacting upon the workers in this province, the Civil Service workers, the 48,000 of them who are going to be affected, how their morale is going to change, if it is going to change, and how the performance of their duties is going to be impacted by the freezing of their salaries?

Mr. Brown: There is a question of terminology that always bothers me when we are talking about zero being legislatively mandated for a year. That is not a wage freeze. It is worse than that, because at this point, and it has been proven fairly graphically, the worst impact on inflation right now is things like the GST. Inflation is going up at the rate of over 6 percent per annum, so that what we are talking about is not a wage freeze, it is a decrease in public sector wages by 6 percent.

At the end of the day, what public sector workers in this province—if you proceed as a government with Bill 70, the workers will not have had their wages frozen, they will have had their wages reduced by 6 percent. There is no other way that you can draw the equation. So what public sector workers are being told is that, in a time when there is more demand for their services, when there is more unemployment, when there are more family breakups, when there is more family violence, more alcoholism, all of these things flow directly from unemployment. The studies have been done conclusively that show that social services are more called on at a time of recession than they are at any other time. One percent increase in the rate of unemployment causes an exactly proportional increase in all of the social problems that you would expect, including family breakup, family violence, the illness increases as a result of unemployment.

We have tremendous new demands on public services being caused. Public sector workers are being told, and these are people who are working on the front lines, these are people who are out on the streets of Winnipeg and know exactly what this is about. They are not sitting in some cushy office somewhere. These are people who are out there trying to deliver hands-on personal services to people. They know how desperately those services are needed. They are being told that they are worth

less. Two words, but still worth less. They are being told that their employer is expecting them to work harder because the situation demands it, but they are worth less to the employer. They are being told that the situation demands more work, but there are going to be fewer of them. They are worth less to the employer.

It does not take an intellectual genius or a psychologist to figure out what that does. People do not go into the public sector for the kind of invalid reasons that I think are a part of the cliché. If people want job security these days there are more secure places to go. If people want a kind of sinecure where they can sit in a corner and not bother anybody, there are a hell of a lot better places to go than the public sector. The public sector is people who are going behind the closed doors of a jail every day. They are people who are out in the streets. They are people who are having their clients get violent because they cannot get the services that they need. Those people chose to go into the public sector because they believed that those services were badly needed by the people that they serve.

The idea that public sector workers would rather not work is one that really intrigues me. It annoys the hell out of me, but it also intrigues me, because I do not know where it came from. I never personally met a public sector employee who did not want to do the job and did not get frustrated by the levels of management that kept him from doing it. These people genuinely want to be out there delivering services that they genuinely believe in. They are being told by their boss that they are worth less. Their morale is just -(interjection)- Go ahead, you wanted to get into the discussion.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Order, please. Mr. Brown, would you continue your response, please.

Mr. Brown: Okay. These people are being told that in the face of that set of circumstances, their employer literally does not value them as much as he used to, does not value them in terms of the number of people he is going to keep on or in terms of what he is going to pay. The morale is incredibly bad, but it is a kind of morale problem that is unique in my experience, because it is combined with an incredible anger. Quite frankly, I would not want to be any of these governments going to the polls after they have done this. Here or in Nova Scotia where I have been at rallies and meetings or in New Brunswick or in Newfoundland, people are right

pissed off, if that is not an unparliamentary expression. If it is, I take it back.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): I am sorry, Mr. Brown, it is very unparliamentary.

Mr. Brown: Okay, well, I beat you to it. I took it back then.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Thank you.

Mr. Brown: They are darn mad. How is that? Is that parliamentary enough?

People are incredibly annoyed. The people who cannot get the services that they pay tax money for are annoyed and the people who are trying to deliver those services in the face of this kind of opposition are right mad. That one is okay, too. I am making light of a very serious situation. There is an incredible anger out there and sooner or later, as every student of industrial relations can tell you, that anger is going to find a way to come out. You cannot bottle it up. These sins are going to be visited unto the fifth generation, because there is an incredible mistake being made. It is not just going to go away. People are not going to wave a magic wand and six months from now say, gee, golly, it is over, so let us all go back to being nice and friends. The lack of trust and faith that is being built into this system is endemic now. It is really a terribly tragic mistake.

Mr. Reid: When I ask this question, I do not mean to be facetious when I ask it, but I would like to know whether or not the presenter has any awareness of which minister brought in this particular piece of legislation, Bill 70.

Mr. Brown: I know whose budget it was, but I do not know if Mr. Manness brought in the actual legislation.

Mr. Reid: For the presenter's information, it was brought in by the Minister of Finance, Mr. Manness. I am just wondering whether or not the presenter thinks that bills that come in that impact upon the labour in this province, the public sector workers, should be brought in by the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) versus the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness).

Point of Order

Mr. Praznik: On a point of order, I do not think that is relevant to Bill 70. The fact is it is before the Legislature.

Mr. Brown: I would be happy to answer the question on the instructions of the Chair.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): I am sorry, I have not recognized you, Mr. Brown. I have not ruled on whether it is a point of order.

Mr. Reid, on the same point of order.

Mr. Reid: Madam Acting Chair, I believe this is very relevant, because I would like to know the impressions of the presenters as they come before this committee on whether or not they think that bills that are impacting upon the labour in this province should be brought in by the Ministers of Labour and not by the Ministers of Finance. Therefore, I asked this question with respect to this particular piece of legislation that was brought in by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). It was labour legislation.

Mr. Praznik: Further to the same point of order. The bill was brought in by the government. The Minister of Finance introduced it. I brought in labour legislation in which the Minister of Finance, because I was at a constitutional meeting, introduced it for second reading. It really is not relevant. It is a government bill.

* (2110)

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Mr. Reid, I would just like to caution you. It is borderline on being relevant. I think it is more in terms of the way the question was posed. Would you please continue with your question? Do you have a subsequent question?

* * *

Mr. Reid: I will rephrase my question, Madam Acting Chair. Through you to the presenter, would the presenter think that it would be normal practice if legislation was brought into the legislative process in this province that would impact upon the labour in this province, that it would normally be brought in by the Ministers of Labour rather than the Ministers of Finance?

Mr. Brown: I, among other things in my checkered career, used to work for governments and used to work for the Minister of Labour and write legislation under his guidance. My short answer to the question is, yes, that is quite odd. The only experience that I have seen has been one in British Columbia where there was something called sunshine legislation that was introduced in that province that was quite distinctly different than any other legislation that had been ever introduced in

any jurisdiction in Canada. It was a piece of labour legislation that the Labour minister in that province refused to introduce and it transpired after the fact that the Labour minister was, in fact, in total disagreement with the bill and found that he did not want to put his name to it. I do not know whether that is the case here or not. It may be, and if that is the case, I commend your Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) for his wisdom.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Thank you for your presentation.

Mr. Brown: Thank you.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

Mr. Chairman: I am going to ask the clerk if she could please go out and see if there are any other further out-of-town presenters from the crowd. If you could raise your hand and give your names to the clerk, I would appreciate it. We will now carry on to going one by one.

Number two: J. K. Julius, K. Kryshka, D. Ewanchuck, Anita Lewis, Marla Niekamp, Walter Niekamp. Order, please. Darlene Bergen, Wayne Bergen, Rose Powers, Ron Bodri, Donna Jones, Pat Tambakis, Elizabeth Doerksen, Josie Musgrove, Rick Park. Come on forward, Mr. Park.

Do you have a written presentation, Mr. Park?

Mr. Rick Park (Private Citizen): No, I do not. I did not make copies.

Mr. Chairman: Just carry on then, Mr. Park.

Before you start, Mr. Park, I just wanted one point of clarification—have you clarified that—just carry on then, Mr. Park.

Mr. Park: I noticed this was the Industrial Relations Committee and I wondered why it was industrial relations. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) brought this bill in and should it not maybe be a Finance committee meeting?

Mr. Chairperson and committee members, as a private citizen I thank you for this opportunity to express my concerns on Bill 70. I am an employee of Manitoba Hydro, a member of the IBEW Local 2034, a resident of St. James-Assiniboia, and the breadwinner in our family of four.

This bill unjustly limits my constitutional rights to free bargaining and my ability to earn a fair and equitable wage. Ron McLean, a local business manager of Local 2034, has voiced many of my concerns with the effects of this bill on our

membership. I am here today to discuss the bill's effect on my family and myself.

Manitoba Hydro is a provincial Crown corporation which, last year, made profits of tens of millions of dollars during a period of drought and has projected profits of tens of millions of dollars this coming year. These projected profits are even before recent rainfalls. As a shareholder in this company, on three accounts: as a Manitoba citizen, a Manitoba Hydro customer, and an employee, I believe that Manitoba Hydro's management should be left free to manage the corporation and free to negotiate in a fair and reasonable manner.

My family's standard of living has been deteriorating slowly but steadily over the past decade because my wages have not kept up with the cost of living in Winnipeg, with wage increases being below or at the cost of living year after year. This proposed additional wage freeze severely compounds the problem with no wage increase for two years, that being this past year and the coming year and the prospects of an additional third year of legislated fiscal regression. The rumours are still out there and everything—it will be lucky if we get 2 percent this coming year, the year later from now.

The CPI for Winnipeg is estimated to increase by approximately 15 percent, that is 5 percent from past year, 6 this year, and 4 next year for the same period of time. The net effect of this will be an over 10 percent reduction in my family's standard of living. Will raises in taxes, fuel, electricity, telephone, and food be similarly limited? I think not. My wife and I have made many personal sacrifices over the years to allow our children a few basic extras like nursery school, music lessons, swimming lessons, Guides and summer camp. With more money going to the basic necessities, there will be even less for these few extras. It is hard enough now to tell the children they cannot have new bikes like other children in the neighbourhood.

In conclusion, as a citizen of Manitoba and a provincial shareholder and voter, I question the government's moral right to overstep the boundaries of reasonable government and destroy labour's legal right. The Tories were elected with a slim majority and less than half the popular vote to provide good government, not to trample the human and legal rights of public sector workers. Thank you for hearing my concerns.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Park. Mr. Minister?

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Park, I just want to thank you for coming in tonight to make the presentation. You spoke very well. Certainly, I just want to convey to you that your position is appreciated. This is not something government wanted to do and felt it necessary that we had to in these circumstances, but I just wanted to thank you for coming and your comments are certainly appreciated. I wish it were another way.

Mr. Park: I think we all do.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I am very interested in your opening comments. You are an employee of Manitoba Hydro, that is what you stated?

Mr. Park: I am an electrical technician with Manitoba Hydro and have been—it will be 25 years this fall.

Mr. Hickes: How long have you been a union member?

Mr. Park: Twenty-five years.

Mr. Hickes: The full 25 years? Thank you, I just wanted to get that clear in my own mind.

The reason I find this very interesting is your comment about Hydro being a Crown corporation. In your statement you mentioned that Hydro had made a profit even in the drought years. From my understanding of what you were saying, and I hope you will correct me if I am wrong, I just want to get a much clearer picture on this for my own self, is that when you talk about a raise for employees of a Crown corporation that generates a profit, do you feel that the employees should have a share in that profit, versus a government employee who would be taking a raise through revenues from taxes compared to profits from rates? Am I—

Mr. Park: Yes, I think I understand the question. Yes, I believe a Crown corporation is—although the provincial government, as somebody, I think the minister Mr. Manness said previously, a trusteeship—the corporation is generating profits and it is the workers who are out there 24 hours a day, seven days a week, year round, all kinds of weather, sacrificing their time, and they are required to work extra hours in storm conditions. They cannot beg off just because they do not feel like it, it is a requirement of the job to work, and I am one of those people who is on call. This year I will be on call eight different times during the year. That is where you are on call 24 hours a day. You do your normal day's work and then you are available for call

the whole week where you cannot leave the city. You have to be around and available at all times, and so you are giving up your time. You are putting in all this time to the corporation, the corporation is making money, and we were promised that when times were better that we would see it in our pocketbooks and now we are not seeing it.

* (2120)

Mr. Hickes: That is a very interesting comment that you just finished with. You said when times are better, you have been promised that the employees would get a just reward. Now with Bill 70 coming into play, with the wages being frozen, so you would miss a year of a raise. The following year, if Bill 70 was lifted or not reintroduced, what kind of a raise would the employees of Manitoba Hydro require to get what you would consider, what you just stated, would be a fair share?

Mr. Park: Myself, I would see a cost of living for the last two years would have to be—to get a fair share to get back to where—just to close to an even keel, and that is not even any catch-up for all the previous years where we have been falling behind. It is just more and more losses all the way along for the employee.

Mr. Hickes: I would just like to ask you one more question. With Manitoba Hydro employees, and I am sure through your contact with fellow employees and through coffee shop talk and stuff, what is the morale like with the employees of Manitoba Hydro since the introduction of Bill 70?

Mr. Park: The morale has been up and down this past year like a yo-yo. Last fall, getting prepared for contract negotiations and that, everybody was gung-ho and very strong in support and then, as these wage restraints came in, people's spirits are down a little bit and up again and down again. This has just brought everybody's spirits right down, and maybe a bit of an aside, there was a comment earlier tonight about the Hell's Angels, they were one of the guys at the coffee shop who was mentioning that they are free this weekend, who might be employed for something.

There is just a lot of people very, very disgusted and the morale is very, very low for this situation.

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson, through you to the presenter, you have mentioned that you are a member of IBEW, worked for Hydro. I recognize that organization. I, too, was a member of IBEW, in a different industry, mind you. You also

mentioned that you are a breadwinner for your family and that you see a 10 percent reduction in your standard of living for your family because the wages have not kept pace with the cost of living for your particular company. What impact do you see this having on your family and your children's opportunities for the future? Could you give us some insight into that, please?

Mr. Park: Yes, I know I have given up lots over the years. I am a nonsmoker, I hardly ever go out and I gave up curling a few years ago. One of the reasons is monetary and some other commitments besides. We do not go out to the movies or anything like that. I have not been to a Jets game in over a year. I have not been to a Bomber game in a couple of years. I coach Little League, my daughter's soccer team, but even going to a soccer game to see a Fury game and you would want to take a couple of kids along and you are looking at \$30 to \$50, and if you take the family it can be even more than that. We do not do a lot of those things already. Things like a vacation, we were planning to maybe take a little longer vacation this year and had to cut back on that. We are just going to go visit my sisters in Calgary and Vernon and then come back and that is it. So things are just being cut back even further. We have to try and cut our own personal budget down as much as possible.

Mr. Reid: Thank you, Mr. Chairperson. It is interesting when the presenter talks about having to cut back on all of the things that we work so hard to achieve and then have them taken away from us and that the opportunities are not going to be there for his family anymore. Maybe—and I ask through you, Mr. Chairperson, to the presenter—if the presenter could give us some insight on how this particular type of legislation will impact upon his fellow workers, fellow employees, in the company that he works for.

Mr. Park: I believe it will have an overall similar effect on just about everybody and a lot of people were—when it looked like there was a lot of strong talk earlier on about a strike going back to the fall and everything like that—even after everything was said and done and it was a choice between strike and FOS, there were still over 300 people voted to go on strike. There are still people talking to this day and even with this legislation do not understand or do not want to understand that they cannot go on strike, but they still want to go on strike. You know,

there is a strong number there, but it will affect everybody.

People were talking earlier about, well, we will wait and see about the strike before we buy a new car or something like that or thinking of upgrading their vehicle and that. All these people now are talking about, well, we will just have to make do with another year to two years with your own vehicle or things like that. So there will be less new purchases and there will be less money going back into the economy, that is my belief on that.

Mr. Reid: By the comments that the presenter has made here today, and I found them very interesting that these families, and his family as well, have had to cut back on the areas that they would normally be expending monies and that will seriously impact on the economy in a more than general way. Not only will the particular families involved and this presenter's family be impacted but other organizations throughout the city and the province will also be impacted.

Through you, Mr. Chairperson, to the presenter: Does the presenter see, as far as any future negotiations that his union would be looking for, would they be looking for catch-up or any other ways to rectify what appears to be an injustice in this situation, Mr. Chairperson?

Mr. Park: The negotiations? I am just not sure, I cannot speak on behalf of the union on that matter. My own personal belief is that there is a need for catch-up and there will be an even greater need with this legislation. The problem is most people and myself, I look at it that if one year down the road, in theory the legislation is still sitting there, and you come along and ask for 10 percent or 12 percent or something like that to make up for the last two years, they are just going to turn around and legislate another 2 percent, that magic number that has been out there, zero and two. Until three years down the road, approximately when the next election is, it will be pretty hard to negotiate fairly and reasonably. This is my own personal belief.

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Seine River): Mr. Park, I am not sure, I just want clarification that I heard you correctly. Did you say that your wages have been falling behind for the last 10 years?

Mr. Park: That is right, yes.

Mrs. Dacquay: Thank you.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Yes, I understand the presenter to say that he

supported profit sharing; would he support the same principle for the employees of MPIC?

* (2130)

Mr. Park: I am not sure that I said I supported profit sharing. As our company has stated, and our president, that everybody in the corporation is a shareholder, if you will, of the company. That is where I am talking about sharing in the profits, not as—just because they make money one year I would not say that. Over the years the union has taken less increases because of tough economic times before, so I am saying things are better, they are making a profit, there should be more money coming. That is to everybody, though.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Park.

Mr. Park: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Number 18, Joe Davis; Rod Moore; Frank Cleary; Gordon Diakow; 22, Shirley McKenzie; 23, M. Reimer; 24, G. L. McCreer; 25, Bloodworth; 26, Karen Bilowus; 27, K. A. Knudson; 28, Gary Goodman; 29, Glen Besteck; 30, Claudio O. Silva; 31, Fran Ester; 32, Pat L. Moore; 33, Dean Spencer; 34, Lise Vass; 35, Valerie Denesin; 36, K. G. Campbell; 37, Yvonne Campbell; 38, Richard Stefanee; 39, Roger T. Lartian; 40, Marie Rowan; 41, William Rogodzinski; 42, Penny Treffin—and on 42 she has advised she will be here on Friday; 43, Bonnie Gibson; 44, Jeanne Schiavon; 45, Darcy Anderson; 46, Elsie Apetagon; 47, Lorette Deschaneur; 48, Doreen Apetagon; 49, Ron Turner; 50, Dennis Slack; 51, Henry Mackie; 52, Al Schmidt; 53, Val Tores; 54, Peter Vanderelst said he would not be able to appear until Saturday; 55, Doug Vanderelst, also Saturday; 56, Bob Carmichael; 57, Lisa Bukoski—I hope I pronounced it right.

Ms. Lisa Bukoski (Private Citizen): Yes, you did. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Do you have a written presentation, Ms. Bukoski?

Ms. Bukoski: No, I am sorry, I do not.

Mr. Chairman: Then just carry on.

Ms. Bukoski: Greetings, committee members. I am pleased to be here today to talk about Bill 70. I am here to express my opposition to Bill 70, and I would just like to read to you from my notes.

On June 3, 1991, the government introduced Bill 70, the proposed Public Sector Compensation Management Act, saying that it would protect

taxpayers' vital services and jobs. If this bill becomes law, not only will it work against these goals but it will effectively also destroy the fundamental right of workers to free collective bargaining with their employer.

This regressive legislation is a direct attack on Manitoba workers' rights and it should not pass. Finance minister Manness is telling Manitobans that this legislation is needed to help curb spending and control the deficit. If the government is really committed to controlling spending, then I cannot see why it would be spending \$4.7 million in grants and loans for The Rotary Pines project or why it would give private schools \$18 million in funding this year, an increase of 11 percent over 1990.

Also, why have large profitable corporations like Cadillac Fairview received tax breaks and credits totalling over \$50 million when Manitobans under this legislation of Bill 70 would be very hurt?

Manitobans are being told to tighten their belts, and this bill is being proposed so that the government can effectively say it is cutting back on spending. This is not responsible fiscal management in my opinion.

Supposedly, the government is trying to protect its vital services. However, we have seen a cut of over \$500,000 to Family Services in rural Manitoba. This government has also affected low-income earning Manitobans involved with the CRISP housing program by a cut of \$1.5 million. Seniors on fixed incomes have also been affected by a de-indexed 55-Plus program. Children in our province no longer have to worry about \$650,000 in funding for health promotion and disease prevention programs that have been cut. Throughout Manitoba, people are reeling from the effects of this supposed protection of our vital services wondering what will be cut next.

Mr. Manness says that he wants to save jobs, but already this government has cut almost 1,000 jobs. The CareerStart Program has been slashed by \$2.9 million. The Northern Youth Corps jobs were simply eliminated. This is our government's job-saving strategy? I do not think so. I think there are better ways to be spending our public money.

Now we are being told that more jobs will be saved with a wage freeze affecting over 48,000 of our fellow Manitobans. Can the government tell us how jobs will be generated in our economy when 48,000 Manitoba consumers, after inflation, with less

money to spend on private sector goods and services—how will they be able to manage? All a wage freeze will do is make it harder for the private sector, especially small business, to survive. This means a vicious cycle of more business failures, higher unemployment, inevitably higher taxes and poorer government services for the already over-taxed average Manitoban.

Bill 70 proposes to freeze the wages of the lowest paid public workers, not the highest, and does not affect people such as judges, doctors, deputy ministers and the like. The Premier's senior staff received a 15-percent increase in wages last year. Some of the affected workers are paid at levels below the poverty line in the city of Winnipeg. An example would be hospital workers who earn less than \$20,000 a year, below the poverty line, and that is no means to support a family of four.

The only other conclusion we can draw is that our government is deceiving all Manitobans about its priorities and agenda. As has been demonstrated, Bill 70 will not achieve the goal of protecting taxpayers, vital services and jobs as outlined by the government. Through a wage freeze, it will actually work against these goals, but it does not stop there. In concert with other regressive policies of this government, this bill attacks all Manitobans. It will remove the only mechanism that workers have to protect themselves—the free collective bargaining process.

* (2140)

This is the same process Gary Filmon, our Premier, committed to act in good faith with all the employees with whom the government has to negotiate. This legislation can be used on any collective agreement and can occur through an Order-in-Council with no public dissent or debate in the Legislature. As it says in Section 9(1) of the act: "The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations . . . (b) extending the application of all or any part of this Act to any collective agreement on any terms . . . that the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers appropriate;"

This sweeping power would enable the Filmon government to freeze the terms and conditions of any collective agreement if the government so chooses. That, I feel, is an infringement on what Manitobans have worked so hard to achieve through their collective efforts and bargaining and through what they have to say. If they are not

allowed a public display with an action like Bill 70, I do not see that as a very democratic process. This threat will hang over every Manitoba worker if Bill 70 is passed into law.

Bill 70 does not help the economy. It seems to remove the workers' right for free collective bargaining, and Manitobans did not give this government a mandate to destroy these rights last September when they were voted in. Attacking the people of Manitoba is not the answer to this problem or to any. I realize that choices must be made on the part of the government, but it would be of greater benefit if the government would stop attacking people who cannot defend themselves when it comes to their wages and when it comes to what they have worked so hard to achieve.

I would recommend that Bill 70 not be passed and that is my presentation. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Bukoski, and let me commend you on your presentation. It was very well put forward. It is hard coming into the lion's den like this, and you did a commendable job. Are there any questions of the presenter? If not, thank you very much.

Number 58, Rory Behrendt; 59, Jean Altemeyer. Do you have a written presentation?

Ms. Jean Altemeyer (Private Citizen): No, I had thought there might be the possibility I would have a written presentation, but when I was called to be told that the hearings were started and that I could choose a date to be heard, I chose Saturday. Today I think is only Thursday, but I understand this committee has chosen to speed through this process, so I do not have a copy of what I planned to say for you. I would certainly have preferred to have a little more time to give this some thought.

I was also told, when I was called yesterday about the schedule of the hearings, that tonight's hearing started at eight. In fact, I understand they started at seven, so one feels somewhat under pressure or exclusion or trying to battle to be heard. Also, this is I gather one of the few provinces, if not the only province, that has these kinds of hearings, and that is wonderful. The wonderfulness is lessened when the access and the rules seem to be jerked around, and that is difficult to watch. I guess my feeling is that I feel that kind of abrogation of rights. On the one hand, you are being offered the opportunity to speak and, on the other hand, all kinds of barriers are being put in the way towards that speaking.

I think it is important to mention that I am not now and I never have been a member of a union. If that sounds a little like the House Un-American Activities Committee Hearing, that is with intent, because people do feel under siege. I think it is really important for people who are not members of unions to come forward when this kind of legislation is presented. It feels like an assault. It feels like the loss of rights that people have fought for for a long time, not just in Canada but in other countries.

If I do not speak, because I am not affected by this, it is easy to stand by and be quiet and say, oh, I escaped this go around. We have to stop doing that. People have to speak when anybody is being treated unfairly, and this feels like people are being treated unfairly. It feels arbitrary, reactionary, retrograde, Draconian. The list is quite long.

I wonder what the authors of this legislation told their children they have spent the day doing when they go home at night. Do they say, oh, we spent the day upholding democracy or promoting equality and fair treatment or ensuring due process? I would hope not. I would hope they could at least be honest with their families about what they are really doing, which is they have a vision which is not particularly shared. They choose to pick vulnerable groups and change the rules.

The Lieutenant in Council, my understanding is that is a code word for the cabinet. Is that correct? The cabinet can make regulations that would expand the application of what I already perceive to be pretty bad legislation to any collective agreement on any terms that that same cabinet considers appropriate. The cabinet is not all of you, right? How many people who I am speaking to tonight are on the cabinet—two, three, okay.

It seems any time—I mean I am not a scholar of legislative drafts or anything else, but when I see words like "any," "all," "any terms," that feels pretty scary to me. That feels like there is not much opportunity to react, respond, resist, challenge, question. The processes that are set up to do exactly those things, as well as the same processes that are set up to support these things, also feel like they are being jerked around and "considers appropriate" is a little scary.

I do not know how many of these decisions I am going to talk about were decided by the cabinet, because I am not an insider. I gather folks here consider it appropriate funding The Rotary Pines

development, when there were other applications forward that seemed to be in ahead of time, seemed to be further along, yet we were told there was no money; the hijacking of the Child and Family Services system, the funding to elite schools when there is no increase in funding to the one division that has the most special needs, the most vulnerable people; deleting of items that have been covered by medicare; changing students' social allowance rates; eliminating all the public housing boards and replacing them with "superboard" which seems to be a theme because we now have a CFS superboard; changing the daycare fees and subsidy criteria; reducing the size of City Council; eliminating jobs at the community colleges, yet we are a province that has one of the lowest rates of folks who go on to university. So you would think if a small percentage go on to university there might be another set of folks that would go on to community colleges, and we now see programs and staff there eliminated.

* (2150)

At the same time folks did that—and as I say, I am not sure how much of this is cabinet and how much it is other ways—my understanding is the same amount of money that was going to the community colleges system has now been made available to the private sector for training. Somehow I feel, as a taxpayer, a little more ownership and responsibility honouring our education system. It worries me when tax funds are taken out of that alternative kind of education training system and being made available to the public sector.

At the same time that folks are withdrawing funds from the education system, they are cutting back ACCESS programs, whether they are for northern folks or folks who traditionally found it difficult to go to school. They also have cut back the universities, so you eliminate or increase the difficulty of gaining access through some of the programs and, at the same time, you make the regular program, university, harder for people to go to who already have an under income.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. Mrs. Altemeyer—I should remember with Rob after his presentation.

Ms. Altemeyer: Call me Jean.

Mr. Chairman: Jean. Thank you.

Ms. Altemeyer: You do not want me to wander.

Mr. Chairman: No. As long as you bring it back toward the bill.

Ms. Altemeyer: Okay, what I am bringing it back to—

Mr. Chairman: I see where you are coming from, I think, but just so that the committee sees where it is coming from as well.

Ms. Altemeyer: Oh, I suspect this committee sees where it is coming from, but okay.

Mr. Chairman: I have not got any concerns with that then.

Point of Order

Mr. Hickes: Mr. Chair, on a point of order. I think we have heard many people presenting, and I would venture to guess from what I am hearing, this is very relevant to Bill 70, because in her statements she is saying that with the dollars that are generated by this type of government—

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. Mr. Hickes, you do not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts and, Mrs. Altemeyer, if we can just continue. Mr. Hickes, I am giving lots of latitude. I am just explaining to Mrs. Altemeyer at this time that she has to be a little germane toward the bill and that is it. I am allowing lots of leniency, so, Mrs. Altemeyer, continue please.

* * *

Ms. Altemeyer: Could I ask you your name.

Mr. Chairman: Marcel.

Ms. Altemeyer: Okay. Hi.

Mr. Chairman: Hi, Jean. We have met before.

Ms. Altemeyer: Well, I know most of the faces around the table but not all of them.

I guess what I am saying is, I was quoting. The lead-in to that list was a quote from the bill that this committee, as I understand, is considering, and it raises questions for me, because it says here that cabinet will make decisions it considers appropriate about extending this legislation of folks not currently listed. What I am trying to do in my list is say, I have not been wonderfully impressed with your previous things that you considered appropriate.

I was trying to draw the contrast between what people are being empowered to do here and what I think a lot of other people would prefer you be empowered to do. It was really nice of you to wait, though, because I was almost at the end of my list and now it sounds like I had a whole long list to go on.

The other thing that concerns me about those kinds of decisions and the sense I get from this legislation is the impact again seems biased, and that seems to be a theme of decisions that if you accept that things are difficult—and we could probably debate that on some point. If everybody has to tighten his or her belt or make do or all of these other kinds of things, it would be nice to feel that everybody is being asked to do that and, frankly, it does not feel like everybody is being asked to do that.

Previous decisions feel like they unfairly affect people who are already vulnerable. Maybe to some people thinking of the unions is vulnerable. It sounds like an oxymoron, but I do not think it is. Unions did not appear magically. They appeared because people could not trust employers to treat them fairly. You think about things like child labour, unsafe practices, unfair firings, sexual harassment. Those things did not magically become part of our culture. People did not magically walk in the door some day and say, hey folks, we are going to pay everybody equal pay for work of equal value. Those have all been things that people have fought for, and this legislation feels like it just says, no, we do not need those. The need that brought them forward in the first place is not there anymore. I think everybody around this table knows those needs are still there.

I guess one of the things that concerns me is besides, as I understand it, the freeze on the collective agreements, there is also no bargaining and no strike action available for the duration of this freeze. I am wondering where the replacement protection for workers is in the absence of having these tools. The unfairness feels like you are taking away rights that were fought for and came out of demonstrated need or they would not be in place, and you are wiping off half of the slate in terms of the protections but not doing anything in terms of the potential abuses.

It is also my understanding that the job security agreements and the provisions are not also frozen, and therefore deferred—or extended, I guess, would be the better word—for 12 months. If they run out during this 12-month period, they run out, so those are some of the additional protections that seem to be made vulnerable by this legislation.

It also seems to, again, hit, in some cases certainly, lowest paid workers, folks who even working in a union under a collective agreement are

living under the poverty level as set by national organizations that look at this and say, how much does it cost to live with so many children. Those are the wages that have been frozen. My understanding is that was not applied to deputy ministers, nor was it applied to political staff, and I suspect both deputy ministers and political staff live above the poverty level.

I mean, if I am wrong, then that would be wonderful because it would indicate you may be pulling from a different constituency than I think you are. Again, if you want to be fair, if you want everybody to suffer the slings and arrows of the economic situation we are in, everybody should suffer equally, and it does not feel like they are.

It also freezes income but, as far as I know, it does not address prices, taxes or those kinds of things. So you are saying to people, over the next 12 months we are not going to give you any more money, but over the next 12 months inflation will continue to inflate. The taxes will continue to develop, and they may or may not be fair or equitable, but your wages are going to stay where they are.

Again, if somebody has disposable income, they can accommodate that. There are a lot of folks out there who do not in fact have disposable income. They are living from cheque to cheque, and so when they see that cheque is, in essence, going to get smaller and smaller each month as inflation continues to erode, they do not have the option of cutting anything else out.

Also, folks who are unemployed or who have been laid off or declared redundant or fired or, as the executive directors of CFS were, told to go home and consider their options without being given any options to consider; they do not buy stuff, I do not think, or if they do, they do not buy very much stuff. They do not pay taxes. They do not go to sports events at arenas and stadiums. They do not spend money. My understanding, not being an economist, is if people are not spending money then stuff stops getting made, and so you have more layoffs, and then people stop spending money.

This feels like you are doing the same thing again with people, who I suspect as a percentage of their income, spend more on the kinds of things that help the economy thrive than people who put their money in GICs and HydroBonds and stuff like that.

* (2200)

Again, it feels biased. It feels like the impact is not hitting all of us, and that concerns me. I think if you live in a community, you need to care about everybody in the community, and decisions are being made that consistently seem targeted at people who are already hurting. I think you have to speak out.

Along the lines of unfairness, correct me if I am wrong, but I think Hydro just negotiated a rate increase, and part of their representation for that rate increase was an increase in wages. If I am not mistaken, Hydro employees' wages are frozen by this legislation, so it would be interesting to find out if in fact the Hydro increase is going to be dropped equal to what was going to cover wages, or if it is going to go into the profit side or what is going to happen to it.

Also along the theme of fairness, and I know the speaker before me mentioned this and I assume others have. We do seem to have some big foes—the neighbours across the street and Investors corp and some of the banks who make really quite remarkable profits in a year and yet do not pay income taxes. I pay income taxes. I think it is about 25 percent. I think my husband's income tax level is about 55 percent. It would sure be nice if we could look around the table and look around the streets and know that everybody else is paying similar kinds of rates.

If folks are going to freeze wages of a particular group, it seems only fair that they look at all the other folks out there and say, there needs to be some equity here, and I do not see that happening.

The other thing is that in this package, as I understand it, it is not just wages but it is the whole compensation package that has been frozen. That means dental plans, long-term disability plans, pension plans. They have all been frozen. It is not just the wages. Again folks, particularly people in the lower-income levels, very much rely, I would suspect, on some of those other compensation packages to help them get by. So they are finding not only are they going to have less bucks in their hands to spend, but the compensation packages, that dental fees have been frozen, so that if somebody takes their kid to the dentist tomorrow they will pay the same amount that they pay in 12 months. Again, it is not equitable.

I think, in regard to the fact that the, as I say, job security agreements and things are not extended

under this legislation, if I think this through, that means they could expire, and yet since no bargaining is allowed during this freeze, a replacement package cannot be developed.

I would hope people could understand why somebody would find this confusing or puzzling as to why there would be such an erosion of the protections people have counted on, worked for, valued. I would not be surprised if it is on the Winnipeg 2000 list of why you love Winnipeg. It just does not fit with what I would like to see my community and my province having.

One of the other things that concerns me about this kind of legislation is that the people who are directly affected by it get intimidated. Some of them go into a siege mentality, where they say, whoops, you know, time to close down. I do not want to look at anything else, I do not want to think about anything else. I will just do my job and maybe they will miss me. Other people say, I have got nothing to lose, I am going to scream. Either way, I think we lose a lot. I think we lose people's expertise, I think we lose their commitment, I think we lose their loyalty, their contribution. I think if people go on the offensive and attack, that sometimes backfires.

We have seen so many areas—education, child and family services, day care, housing, renewal of the core, wildlife management areas, city of Winnipeg—in all of these, legislation has been passed or regulations have changed or folks have chosen to interpret the rules differently, and people are walking around in shock, dismay, amazement, frustration, depression. I do not think I would work very well under those kinds of circumstances, and it really pains me that there are people who do not feel safe enough to appear before this committee. If I were a lawmaker, which is, I believe, what you guys are, I would be real worried when there are people who will not come forward to a legally constituted meeting because they are afraid.

I think what also happens here is, you lose the good folks. They finally say, to hell with it. It is not worth it. They do not trust me, I cannot trust them. Why am I doing this? Why am I beating my head against the wall? So they leave, and we all suffer, and I have seen that happen. When people are jerked around, eventually, if they have the choice of waking up and saying, I am not going to take this anymore, they do. What is really scary is that people often do not feel like they have the choice, and so you are dealing with people who feel like they

are in jail, and I do not think we work real well when we think we are in jail.

I guess my personal reaction to this is, I really did not believe that folks would do this. It seems like such a throwback to a time that I do not think anybody looks on with joy, of unfair treatment and lack of safety. It is also spreading into the private sector. People say, whoa, if the government can do that to folks, imagine how vulnerable we are. People do I think still, perhaps foolishly, look to the government for protection, and it is beginning to feel like we are not being all that well protected. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Jean. I believe there are going to be a number of questions.

Mr. Reid: The presenter has raised many valid points here this evening. Many of those have to do with the human impact that this particular piece of legislation, Bill 70, is going to have on the people of Manitoba and the families of Manitoba.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

I would like to ask of the presenter through you, Madam Acting Chairperson, how the presenter views this piece of legislation and its impact that it may have or will have on the families and the potential for break-up, violence or abuse and any other social problems that go along with it, how the presenter views this piece of legislation impacting upon the families that are going to be affected by this bill.

Ms. Altemeyer: I can speak to that a little bit. There certainly are data that indicate in times of high unemployment there is increased family violence, both in terms of between partners and towards children. There are stresses. People suddenly find themselves at home, longer hours than they are used to being and maybe having to work out new relationships within the family, and that is not always done easily.

Our culture tends to value people on their work. You know full well that when you meet people at—well, probably not you, because when you go to political conventions you know what people there are doing, but usually the second question after, who are you, is, what do you do? When people have to say, I do not do anything, I have been laid off, I cannot find a job, whatever, that does pretty devastating things to people, and when we feel devastated inside we tend to take it out on others.

There is also an increase in dependency on drugs and alcohol, those other kinds of nonproductive things.

I was talking to somebody today who is finding that because of cutbacks, she has had to withdraw her child, partly, from daycare, because she is one of those people who falls in the magical land of, yes, we think you have enough money to pay this amount of the fee, but of course she does not. She is a single parent and she now also finds that she is getting fewer shifts at work. She is one of the people covered by the collective agreement, so she is one of your employees. She is being jerked around in the office, she is getting fewer shifts, she is being stuck in the evening shifts which, with a young child, means that kind of more elaborate daycare.

* (2210)

This kind of erosion of what people do, what they feel productive at, their ability to support themselves and their families, I have not heard much good stuff about it frankly. I mean, people may say, wow, I do not have to get up and face the old crow at the office tomorrow, and that may last for two or three days, but then they start wondering, what am I going to do? How many soaps can I watch? How many resumes can I fill out? How many rejection slips can I get? Then a mind-set sets in, and again, even I think economists talk about people's attitude about a recession, so you are in a recession attitude or you are in an inflation attitude, and people then say, oh, we are in a recession, that means I guess I should not spend any money, I should not do stuff, I should protect, I should withdraw. So that is the kind of thing.

I do not see this legislation responding in any way to that. You know, there seems to be the withdrawal of supports and rights, due process, whatever you want to call it, and no balancing thing in terms of how you protect people in the absence of those.

Mr. Dewar: This government, of course, is constantly complaining about reduced revenues as the basis for this attack on the public sector in this province. I was wondering if you could suggest some alternatives to the government instead of this wage freeze?

Ms. Altemeyer: I think again, I am not a taxation person, but my sense is, income taxes are not equally collected, that there are tax credits that seem to be given to developers that are not made

available to other people and, yet, it is my understanding that it is the small-business sector that is the heart of a community.

I think Newfoundlanders are the folks who have found this out most recently, that the megaprojects do not hack it. That has certainly been the feeling of folks in the inner city, that the megaprojects that were brought through CORE, such as Portage Place and The Forks, have not in fact generated income, ongoing employment or that sort of thing for folks in the inner city, but training of people to local banks, businesses, giving people money to start up their own businesses, giving people opportunities to return to school through the ACCESS programs, you then end up with people who have skills and can go out and work and do not have to rely on welfare and other kinds of social allowance. They then pay taxes.

I think making sure everybody is paying their fair share and then dispensing the tax dollars, because a lot of money gets given to folks here, and making sure that goes to some of the places where it will provide ongoing, lifelong employment skills in connection with the community.

I think a very specific thing this government could do, because I believe it is the one that has the legislative right to do it, is the residential property tax rebate is a flat tax. So, I think, if I am not mistaken, folks who live in a quarter-of-a-million-dollar house and folks who live in a \$20,000 house get exactly the same property tax rebate. That seems unfair. I doubt if it would cover the deficit, but it again would go a ways towards making things feel fair so that tax would be based much more on property value and not just on a flat tax.

The other thing would be, because I know there is controversy between this level of government and the city, things like different kinds of taxation possibilities for the city. Allowing school board taxes to be based on an income tax I think is crazy, to pay for schools on the basis of property, because what you end up with is, rich divisions get more money and yet they tend to have the fewer needs. So I think there is a range. I think there are also some taxes on—no, we will skip that. Okay. Did I answer your question, Mr. Dewar?

Mr. Dewar: Yes. Those are very good suggestions. I just hope the government members here were listening. Thank you for your presentation.

Mr. Ben Sveinson (La Verendrye): Ms. Altemeyer, did you mention at the beginning that somebody called you and told you that somebody was trying to speed this bill through? Did you say?

Ms. Altemeyer: The call I got was from the Clerk's Office saying the hearings were starting, the various times the committee would be meeting, the fact that they could not give me a specific time because the presentations are not time limited and that if I wished I could request a particular date, and I requested Saturday. As other people who listened to the media heard, this committee met until five o'clock this morning. When I inquired, I understand that 175 names were read through at a time when frankly no rational person would be sitting here waiting to speak. It is my understanding they read your name once, you get bumped to the bottom, if they read your name again and you are not here, you lose your right to speak.

Yes, that feels like things are being unfairly rammed.

Mr. Sveinson: I misunderstood then. In fact it was just a feeling that you had then that it would be—

Mr. Altemeyer: It is not a feeling.

Mr. Sveinson: Whatever.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Thank you, Ms. Altemeyer.

Mr. Sveinson: There was one more question.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Oh, I am sorry. Mr. Sveinson, a subsequent question.

Mr. Sveinson: Ms. Altemeyer, have you heard people say, we cannot pay more taxes? Have you heard that said around?

Ms. Altemeyer: I have heard it said, and I believe it more from some people than others. I was recently involved with some research where we looked into city taxation. The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce paid \$77,000 in taxes in 1977 on its Main Street head office. It turns out its tax bill last year was for exactly \$77,000. Its tax bill had not changed. It is no longer 1977 dollars, it is 1990 dollars which, with inflation, means they are probably paying, in real bucks, half.

You have folks in the north end on pensions whose property taxes have gone up over 100 percent. Both of those folks say to the public, we cannot pay more taxes. Frankly, I choose to believe the pensioner from the north end more than I believe CIBC.

Mr. Sveinson: Ms. Altemeyer, do you know whereabouts the corporations in Manitoba would rate as far as being the highest to the lowest in Canada?

Ms. Altemeyer: I have read it, but it is one of those numbers that did not stick. Could you tell me where they rate, and then I would be able to answer your question, because I assume there is an implied question here someplace?

Mr. Sveinson: No, madam, there was not. It was just that I wondered if you did know.

Ms. Altemeyer: I do have a question. Is it the federal level of corporate tax or the provincial level of corporate tax that has significantly dropped, that they pay a—

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Order, please. Ms. Altemeyer, the process is that the members of the committee ask questions through the Chair to you. Mr. Sveinson, a subsequent question?

Mr. Sveinson: Just one last, short question. You mentioned looking at this legislation, and the results of it are in fact already spreading to the private sector. Have there been some settlements in the private sector that show that this legislation really is already spreading to the private sector?

* (2220)

Ms. Altemeyer: I think when I was talking about that I was talking more about things like morale and attitude and myth, if you want to talk about it. I mean, let us face it, there are folks in the public who consider government workers fat cats. They have perceived to be secure jobs, frequently perceived to be higher wages, protections and that sort of thing, so there is in some ways some hostility but, when you see this kind of legislation coming forward that has potentially as dramatic an impact on folks who everybody thought were safe, what is felt is, other people who never felt themselves that safe in the first place feel vulnerable.

There may be some room for discussion as to whether people, for instance, in the Child and Family Services system feel like their public or private sector. I do not know how you would consider them. I would consider them not public sector. I know they feel vulnerable to this kind of legislation, and they are one of the groups, of course, covered by this.

Mr. Hickes: I would just like to follow up on Mr. Sveinson's question. It raised my curiosity, and I

was one of the individuals who was sitting here till five o'clock in the morning. As being new to the whole process, I really do not understand the process and I will not pretend to do so but, as a private citizen, I would just like to ask you, because some of the people who were here last night were here right from the start of committee time, and they were here right until five o'clock in the morning.

Ms. Altemeyer: And then they went to work.

Point of Order

Mr. Praznik: Madam Acting Chair, the member for Point Douglas may or may not be aware, but there is a long tradition in this Legislature of committees sitting to hear presenters, and there were presenters here to be heard. His question is not germane to Bill 70, and I would ask the Chair to call him to order, that the issue at hand is Bill 70, not the procedure of the committee.

Mr. Hickes: That is exactly the direction I was going to because, after the individuals who had sat here and had just gotten off their hours of work and who have sat here all evening, sat here till 4:30 in the morning and had to give a presentation on Bill 70, which is a very important piece of legislation to all of Manitobans, I would just like to ask Ms. Altemeyer—

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Mr. Hickes, I am sorry. I recognized you, because I was of the understanding you were on the same point of order.

Mr. Hickes: I am.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): The honourable minister was identifying the system that was an all-party system that was agreed to by all three parties in terms of the process to be able to afford as many, if not all, of the potential 600-and-some-odd Manitobans the opportunity to make representation at this committee.

Mr. Hickes, a question to Ms. Altemeyer.

* * *

Mr. Hickes: My question to Ms. Altemeyer is: In lieu of the importance that you have stated to Bill 70, is it your understanding that a presentation that is given at five o'clock in the morning where an individual who has been up all evening would be a fair presentation for the citizens of Manitoba?

Point of Order

Mr. Praznik: People were here, they made presentations. What time they make the presentations, what point in the committee they make it is not germane to Bill 70. I would hope Mr. Hickes would have a question with respect to Bill 70.

Mr. Reid: I believe that the honourable member of this committee across the table asked similar questions about the timing of the people who were involved and had to sit in the committee room here and asked about how the process was in place and whether or not this individual had been informed. The misinterpretation of the comments that this member has made of this individual shows that these comments by the member on this side are also germane to this bill and should be allowed, I believe.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): There is no point of order to dispute. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

May I just ask for the co-operation of all committee members to continue to focus their questioning that is germane to the bill? There are many people sitting here this evening and, if we do not want to be sitting till eight or nine tomorrow morning to afford those people the opportunity to make representation, I suggest that we proceed in an orderly fashion. I will request your co-operation.

* * *

Mr. Hickes: I would like to ask the presenter, in Bill 70, the freezing of the wages for public servants for this year, what would be the gap that would have to be made up in order to meet the freezing of the wages for this year if the bargaining unit tried to negotiate or wanted to negotiate a rate of inflation to catch up to the rate that would be in 1992?

Ms. Altemeyer: Okay. Are you asking, if the wages were frozen at the end of the year how much folks need to make up for the freeze?

Mr. Hickes: The next time, yes.

Ms. Altemeyer: Obviously inflation, which I believe is 4 or 5 percent—who knows?—I mean it keeps jumping around because the GST is confusing everybody. My sense is, you do not pass legislation like this with the intention of making the wages up later on. I mean, what you are saying is, too bad, folks, 1991 is a write-off, in 1992 we will look at it. Of course the phrase that scares me is the fact that

cabinet can extend this either additional time or to additional folks, so I would not see any indication even if the freeze were lifted.

It does not feel like there would be any need even to then bring it up to whatever the inflation rate is at that point. People would just start in the next month getting the same wage because it also eliminates bargaining. The whole thing would have to start. So I would think people could be looking at two years of a frozen wage without necessarily even changing the deadlines listed in this legislation.

Mr. Hickes: I would just like to see if I heard you correctly. My interpretation is that in two years time the rate of inflation that takes place every year and the frozen wage rate, you are saying that the individuals who lose that this year will never, ever, have the opportunity to catch up?

Ms. Altemeyer: I have not heard anybody saying, in a year we are suddenly going to find several hundred million dollars. I have suspicions that there are bucks being stowed because, in another year or so, we are going to be closer to an election and, amazingly enough, all levels of government seem to find money leading up to an election—(interjection)—or a war, right. That is true, we could go to war.

I see no projections of a massive infusion of funds, but an absence of a massive infusion of funds that would permit this government to pay its current employees the wages they will have lost under this freeze and the wages they will continue to lose due to inflation prior to subsequent contracts would not be made up.

If I am wrong on that it would be, I suppose, quite wonderful that people could live tight for twelve months and then suddenly get a bonus of the 12 months wages, but I did not see that anywhere.

Mr. Hickes: I would just like to ask you, being in contact with various organizations and various groups and also various union members, what is the public feeling and the perception and the morale that is out there among union employees who are affected by Bill 70?

Ms. Altemeyer: I would not presume to speak for union folks because, as I indicated, I am not a member of a union and, although I am quite willing to speak in advocacy for folks, I try not to speak for folks who can speak for themselves. Certainly in terms of some of the other groups with whom I do have a little more knowledge, and that would be primarily folks in the inner city in the nongovernment

service sector, things are really bad. Services are dissolving, demands are increasing.

* (2230)

People have been creative and innovative in how you do more with less, but you can only make so many silk purses out of so many sows' ears, and things are closing. I mean, we have already lost key projects like POWER, which I believe this government was asked to support, the parent-child centres, which this government was asked to support. Pritchard Place is on its way out. These are the absolutely most vulnerable folks who were served by these services. The services are gone. The workers, by and large, have not found employment. Often the most effective workers in that kind of service are not people who can compete for a Civil Service job, but they are people who have quite wonderful skills in those services, and they are needed. They do not have jobs. So, you have people who have had to go back on welfare.

I believe there were 230 folks who applied for what was thought to be 15 positions at the Winnipeg Ed Centre social work program for this coming year. Due to lack of support by government, only 11 students in fact ended up being accepted. That percolates through the community, because often the people who have been involved in these quite innovative and effective services and programs are your key community leaders, and they are the glue that holds the community together. A lot of that glue is rotten.

Mr. Hickes: Thank you very much.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Thank you for your presentation, Ms. Altemeyer.

No. 60, Lesley Brooks; 61, Robert Ages; 62, A. K. Faber—

Ms. Lesley Brooks (Private Citizen): My name is Lesley Brooks.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Welcome, Lesley. Please proceed.

Ms. Brooks: Okay.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Do you have a written presentation?

Ms. Brooks: Not to hand out, no, just to present to you orally. I am first going to read what I have prepared, and then I am going to try and expand a little bit, based on what I have been hearing from other people.

I have recently become aware of Bill 70. I am presently employed in the private sector and have been in the past. I have never been in a union, but at many times I have been frustrated with what I have viewed as an inability to contribute to factors which determine my economic status and my standard of living. For example, basically just being a small cog in a rather large organization makes me generally feel that I have very little power over what is happening to me and around me. In this regard I have always had an admiration and respect for labour unions and the way in which being a member of a union affords the worker an active and effective voice and therefore a control over his economic and environmental status.

From what I have learned about Bill 70, I believe this bill will silence the worker's voice. It deprives the worker of his hard-won measure of control over his existence, and I feel that it is only a matter of time that the ramifications of this bill extend to the private sector. In some sense I feel that what is happening right now is already out in the private sector. For example, in my job this year we did not receive an increase whatsoever. We were told that, all things considered, then perhaps we would get one next year. So it has basically already happened to me, what could be happening to these people, and it is very detrimental to the morale and to your feeling of what makes you get up and go to work every day. It certainly has an effect in my dealings at work and in my performance. So I just wanted to express my opposition to the bill and to let you know that there are people who are not involved in unions who are also concerned about what is happening.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Thank you for your presentation, Ms. Brooks.

61, Robert Ages; 62, A. K. Faber; 63, Harry Paine; 64, Susan White; 65, Karen Kaminski; 66, Fagie Fainman; 67, Victor Dobchuk; 68, Mukhtiar Singh; 69, Tom Campbell; 70, Barry Hammond; 71, Richard Dilay; 72, Terry Kennedy; 73, Jim Pringle; 74, Alan De Jardin—

Jim Pringle, is that accurate?

Mr. Jim Pringle (Private Citizen): Yes.

The Acting Chairman (Madam Dacquay): Okay. Thank you. Please proceed.

Mr. Pringle: Okay. I am very pleased that we do have the opportunity in Manitoba to be able to address legislative committees. This is my first time doing this. Although I have sat in on a couple and

listened to a few, this is my first time making a presentation, and I would just like to make one comment about the procedure or process. I, too, was called some time around 9:30 this morning to say that I was number so-and-so and that I would be proceeding in this fashion. I do not have any problem with that, but I do think, however, that we should be holding these hearings. There is nothing wrong with adding another day on to the hearings rather than going until eight o'clock the next morning. I happen to be a person who is no longer a union member. I used to be one. I am now in the so-called free market, self-employed sector of the economy, and it just so happened I got a job yesterday for a couple of weeks and all of a sudden I am presenting this evening.

I do not really like being in this position of talking off the top of my head. I would much rather have come here being able to give you something to read and to be able to make some reasoned arguments before the committee, but it is impossible to do that. It might have been possible if we had been able to, say, hold a couple of extra days of hearings so that people could present during reasonable hours and with a reasonable amount of preparation time.

I would like to make some comments from three different points of view, I think. One as a father, as a worker and as an amateur historian, if you will. All of those areas, I think, are centred upon what is democracy. It seems to me that this act is undermining some very basic democratic rights which we consider to be part of liberal democracy and that it is, I think, moving into an era of whatsome academics have called an era of permanent exceptionalism where, certainly, sure, we may have these rights, but if we do not have the right to exercise them, do we really have them?

* (2240)

This, I think, is related to—I am not going to take you, you know, for the next half hour through a history lesson from 1919, but there are a few points that should be made, and that is, the six-week strike that took place in 1919 was basically to establish some rights of association, to be able to form unions, to be able to choose our own representatives to act on our behalf with our employers. If people had listened with reason to arguments and requests for those rights for decades before 1919, we would not have had this major problem in 1919. I would also like to say that I happened to be a public sector worker during the anti-inflation board point in our

history of industrial relations. It seems to me that this was a step backward. Sometimes I felt like we had somehow gone into a time warp, and this was 1919, it was not 1981, you know. All of a sudden, for reasons that were not even related to union rights, our rights were denied.

Now, people have been making a few comments about what the morale is like. I would like to tell you what it is like when your rights are denied, which they were in 1981 during the anti-inflation board's attempt to so-call wrestle inflation to the ground, or whatever it was they were doing. It is difficult enough being a public sector worker, and believe it or not I was on a construction and maintenance crew for years, and people actually drive at you on the street. This is partly because there are certain people in our society who downgrade our work, who, you know, believe the myth that somehow we are not actually out there working. This has happened to me more than once when removing those yellow cone things, which we call pylons, after a day's work. People drive at you because they think that you are nothing on the street.

This is the type of attitude that is engendered by this removal of rights because you are something that can be played with. Your wages can be played with. You are not really doing any work anyway so, you know, we might as well just restrict you further. This to me is something that should not happen. It is part, I think, of Bill 70 in that, yes, we are having an economic crisis, in fact, in this country right now, and somehow we are made to believe that if we restrict this group of workers' wages, or this group of workers' rights that we are somehow going to solve this crisis. I do not think that this is an advantageous way of approaching this crisis. In fact, I think it undermines the very thing that the people who drew up this act are trying—to make Manitoba competitive or trying to solve the problems that exist within this province that are economic problems. I do not think that the way of doing that is by restricting the buying power and at the same time demoralizing people through removing their rights. It seems to me that democracy is more than being able to vote once every four or five years, whenever the Prime Minister or the Premier believes we need an election.

If Prime Minister Mackenzie King can bring in PC 1003, the rights for private sector workers to organize during a world war, that it is possible for us to protect those rights during an economic crisis. I

think that part and parcel of our concept of democracy is not just universal suffrage, it is free collective bargaining, it is rights on the job, it is these rights to be able to choose representatives, it is the freedom of association. This bill restricts the freedom of association clearly, and it does it over a period of time which says is limited in the act, but even though that may be the case, and it is arguable that it is, how far this act extends into the future. It is part of a pattern that has been going on since the recession of '80, '81, '82 of continual restriction of rights which should be considered to be part of what we call democracy.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

In fact, the distinction between a democratic or authoritarian country is never only one of universal suffrage. It is equally a distinction which rests on the absence or presence of the freedom of association, and this act, I think, undermines that freedom of association.

As I said, as one who was subject to the AIB and subsequently the six and five regulations that were imposed on federal government employees, there is a tendency to say to yourself, why bother? Why am I slugging it out? If I have no rights to negotiate my wages then I might as well just put in time. It takes a long time to overcome that kind of feeling that happens even though—I am not talking about people who are actively involved in their union or consider themselves to be militants. I am just talking about people who go to work every day. It is something that you take for granted, that you have these rights, and suddenly when they are denied there are a lot of other questions that you ask yourself about your involvement in this society.

That is what brings me to the point of, as a father of two daughters who are now entering the work force, they are 18 and 19 years old, this bill does affect them even though they are, unfortunately, part of the hamburger work force. If a strong organization, if people who are well paid, who have had lots of experience in running their union in the exercise of free collective bargaining, if these people cannot protect their rights, if the government does not take their rights seriously, then the person who goes to work, pouring coffee, flipping hamburgers and all the rest of that kind of area where they realistically have no hope—in fact I think there has only been one McDonald's restaurant ever organized—these people have no hope. Not only are they working at minimum wage with—if they

are lucky they will get a 10 cent an hour raise every six months or if that—when there is a clamp-down on the wages and rights of people who are in good positions, who are in positions of responsibility, who have professional backgrounds, skills as workers, if these people cannot protect their rights, if these people cannot negotiate their wages, then people in McDonald's and all the rest of that have no hope.

If we are trying to build a province where people can be involved not only in the economy, but in the political institutions, then we have to protect, we have to—in fact in times of crisis we must be more diligent in protecting those rights rather than using that crisis as an excuse to restrict those rights.

I think that is about it for now. Thank you very much.

* (2250)

Mr. Chalman: Thank you very much, Mr. Pringle. I believe there is a question or two for you here.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Chairperson, I just want to assure you in terms of the process that we in the opposition have expressed our concern about the process and intend to ensure to our greatest ability—of course we are a minority of members on this committee—that if it takes that extra day or two or week or two that time is put into place. Because, I feel it is unprecedented to have this number of people talking on a bill. I think the only thing that has matched this has been the Constitution. In that case the extra effort was made, and we certainly feel it is appropriate here.

I wanted to address a couple of the points that you made, because you referenced the anti-inflation board experience and the six and five. I had the interesting experience, by the way, of working for Inco during the AIB program. I had the interesting experience of ending up on strike, and in that particular case it was a strike where Inco wanted to pay the employees higher than the AIB guidelines. The employees, obviously, wanted to get paid that, but the federal government's anti-inflation board said no. We ended up on strike with the full support of the employer, which is probably unique in Manitoba history. I do not think it has happened since. I must admit, at the time I thought we were crazy. I walked the picket line, but I thought we had no chance of getting anything. In fact, what transpired was that the then Premier intervened and the AIB did review its decision, and in fact the original contract was paid out to employees in that

particular case. So, that was one case where—well, that was not a matter of fighting City Hall, it was fighting the federal government and we won.

I was also involved in another strike, by the way, in 1981, which I fully supported, and I do not think we would say that we won that particular one. It was a three-month strike. It was a fairly tough strike.

I wanted to deal with the AIB and the six and five, as you were a public sector worker at that point in time, and comments have been made by other presenters in terms of the fact that public sector workers have been in some way, shape or form essentially been subject to direct wage control or indirect wage control for a significant portion of the last 15, 20 years. I am just wondering, and I realize you are not in that sector currently, but how would you assess wages and buying power today as compared to 5, 10, 15 years ago. Would you agree with those who came before this committee and said it has declined significantly in the public sector? How does it compare in terms of your experience when you were working in the public sector?

Mr. Pringle: I think that—I wish I did have those particular—I know that those statistics exist and I wish I had them with me. There is a significant group of people who never recovered from AIB or from the recession of the early '80s. Either they are people who have never been able to get a full-time job again, are in a permanent part-time work force, or their wages have been, if not legislated to a certain amount, restricted by the industrial climate. I think that is one of the consequences of this bill, that already people's wages are on a provincial average, even for those who are organized, are increasing less than the rate of inflation. It is very common and has been over the last while that people are receiving wage increases of 2, 3, 4 percent. This is very common. Why it is necessary now—there has been this self-restriction, in a sense, in wage increases. I feel that this bill is really in a way unnecessary. The restriction is already there, and what it does, rather than just being an economic bill, it ends up being a political attack because the economic restriction is already there.

Mr. Ashton: Well, you referenced in terms of the political attack, and some people characterize this as a scapegoat bill. I certainly believe it is. This is the scapegoat currently. There may be other scapegoats in the future. Certainly there have been in the past. I find your comments interesting in

terms of the sense you had when you were working in the public sector, of the attitude of people working in the public sector. Are you suggesting that the political motive behind this is perhaps parallel to what you saw on a day-to-day basis in terms of picking on a particular sector, in this case the public sector, and using the public sector as a scapegoat for some broader problems in our economy and social structure?

Mr. Pringle: Well, I have a great deal of difficulty in figuring out the motives of the governing party when it comes to many of the bills that are being presented over the last short period of time. I have tried to put myself in the position of the cabinet and tried to understand the motives behind, especially this particular bill, and it seems that in thinking about it that there is really—they impugn these sort of negative motives behind this particular bill. I do not know if it is because—as in the AIB situation where it was initially called the wage and price review commission or something like that and it jokingly became the wage and wage bill. This seems to be a similar kind of situation, because it is easy to be able to restrict public sector unions, but it is much more difficult to be able to restrict prices. It seems that there is no attempt to restrict costs, just because it is easier I think to restrict wages.

I think the one point that I would like to make is that although the reasoning behind this bill seems to be given to us as one that is necessary now because of the economy and therefore it is an exceptional situation, that in fact this exceptional situation has been stretching and stretching for a couple of decades now. I have a book here that I did manage to grab before I came here, and it has an appendix which lists all of the acts that have taken place across the country—legislation and orders suspending the right to strike from 1950 to 1987. Now, this is only the right to strike, not restrictions on the right to organize, the right to association. It is just the right to strike, and there are over 100 of them. So it makes me feel like this is no longer an exceptional kind of situation, that this has become the norm, and that, therefore, this right to free collective bargaining which I heard many times—the Premier (Mr. Filmon), to his credit, say that he was fully in favour and support of the concept of free collective bargaining, but it seems that this is not the case when it comes to the devising of this bill.

* (2300)

Mr. Ashton: I also want to deal with the point that you raised in terms of the, during the Second World War. The fact that the then federal government introduced legislation—in fact, many provincial governments did—that recognized a number of things. The '40s saw, for example, the Rand Formula, which incidentally is under attack in another bill, the MMA bill, directly under attack, which allowed for the organization of unions in a sense that they were treated the same way any democratic organization is at the provincial and federal level. By majority support they were able to have some sort of taxing power. In this case the power to collect dues from individuals on a compulsory basis, recognizing the democratic will of the majority.

One of the other things that was introduced in the 1940s, and this was at a time when there were other scapegoats—in those days it was the Japanese, the Italians. There were various political scapegoats. Interestingly enough, until the entry of the Soviet Union in the war anyone who was involved with the CP at the time, the Communist Party, was in prison and after the involvement of the Soviet Union they became patriots. There were other scapegoats at the time, but during that period most of the labour legislation that we now see in Canada was introduced, including the key recognition to organize and to bargain collectively, and protected by legislation against employers who would bargain in good faith, who would not recognize the right of workers to organize. I am just wondering for your comments in terms of that. Because, are you suggesting that essentially this government now is, in 1991, using the excuse of the recession, and there indeed is a recession, to practise, invoke sort of another war measures act, in this case the war measures act of labour relations suspending collective bargaining. Except this time instead of the 1940s when labour rights were reinforced, it is labour that now finds itself the scapegoat. Working people find their rights under the gun. Is that the kind of parallel you were drawing when you mentioned that in your presentation?

Mr. Pringle: I think what I was trying to get at there was that Canada was, from 1939 on, at a state of full-fledged war. The entire economy was geared towards winning that war, and that included many hours of overtime, introduction of women into areas of the work force where that had never been the case previously. Even though there had been, sort

of the beginnings of people being forced out on strike to recognize their rights to collective bargaining and to recognize unions, the government of the day decided that in order to—I think the reasoning was that in order to have a 100 percent effort to win the war, that it was necessary to extend democratic rights.

It seems to me that the situation is somewhat parallel, that rather than restricting the rights now during this period of crisis, we should be extending the rights. We should be making it easier for people to become involved in free collective bargaining procedures, and we should not be restricting those rights. We should be expanding them to make it easier for people to become involved in the workplace, to be able to be more productive in the workplace, and that would include making it easier for people who are working in situations where there might be six or seven employees, like every fast-food outlet in the city. I think that would be a way of increasing productivity, of making people more interested in doing a good job and having some feeling of being involved in a truly democratic kind of situation.

Thankfully, we are not yet in the situation, I guess—I do not know if it is stretching the point too much or not—where we are not shot at if we go to a meeting, or if we attempt to exercise some kind of union rights, but as these rights become more and more restricted we become more and more estranged from the political process and then people begin to take measures which a few years in the past would not have even been considered as something, you know, worthwhile to be able to exercise or to be able to have your opinion known. I think that is one of the things that strikes me most personally about this bill, the effect that it has on people who are not even part of this bill. It is not even a matter of the legislation through regulation affecting more and more people in the private sector, which according to some lawyer's assessment of this bill is a possibility. I think it is one more of morale, of people realizing that they no longer have the rights that they thought they did, so therefore they become less and less part of the economy.

Mr. Ashton: I appreciate your perspective, you know, the thought that you have given to this matter, and I am hoping that members of this committee, and I have mentioned this before and you may have heard my comments, I hope that particularly those

who are thinking of supporting Bill 70 will consider the ramifications and some of the historical, philosophical aspects you have brought to it. I wanted to give you an opportunity. I have given this to other presenters before. If you had the opportunity to talk directly—because here it is a rather formal process and we have rules, et cetera, which some of us do not agree with, but those are the rules and the majority does rule on this committee—if you had the opportunity to talk to some of the government members who might be thinking of voting with their conscience on this or who have been keeping an open mind, hopefully, who might be thinking perhaps they should not support this bill, and recognizing that it would only take one or two government members to oppose this bill or even to abstain from the vote to prevent its passage, what would you say to them on a one-to-one basis to try and convince them not to support Bill 70?

Mr. Pringle: That is an interesting question. I guess, from my point of view, I would try to approach it, as I have said, because of my daughters who are now entering the work force. I think the Department of Labour needs, first of all, more funding in terms of educating people about what their rights are on the job and that those rights include free collective bargaining, they include the right to association and the right to choose your own representatives.

Without those rights, I do not believe that we are really a democracy any more, that we do not sort of park our democratic rights at the working door, that they must extend inside the workplace and that I would hope that those who are interested in maintaining our democracy, building our democracy and then extending it to every person and their ability to exercise their rights, that those people should not support Bill 70. I do not think this bill is going to go anywhere towards reaching the goals that it has been set up, that the goals established for this bill are not possible for this bill to solve. The economic crisis will not be solved by the provisions of this bill. We need other measures that would increase employment, increase buying power and job creation, job training. Those are the kinds of things that we need to solve this crisis, not restrictions on collective bargaining.

Mr. Ashton: Once again, I appreciate your perspective and certainly can indicate to you that there are some of us certainly on this committee, in the context of Bill 70, who believe that democracy is

more than just political democracy, as you have said, voting for a government for four or five years. It is also economic democracy, and in Canada, probably the most fundamental principle behind anything that is democratized in the workplace, has indeed been free collective bargaining to this point. It has been the ability of workers to determine their own destiny through the free collective bargaining process that probably resulted in more economic advancement and more economic control and democracy in the workplace than virtually anything else that has happened. So I share you that, and I thank you again for your presentation.

Mr. Dewar: Did you say earlier that you are a small businessman?

Mr. Pringle: No. I am self-employed. That is what the category is, I think, according to income tax.

Mr. Dewar: Would you say that some of your customers are public sector employees?

Mr. Pringle: Some, yes. My most recent employer is an educational institution, and I am hired to basically write fundraising materials. Because they cannot do the things that they would like to do, they cannot cover their expenses, they are having to carry out a fairly massive campaign to raise funds in the private sector to ensure the continued excellence of education.

Mr. Dewar: So in your opinion, how would this wage freeze affect their ability to purchase your service?

Mr. Pringle: Well, I think one of the things is that it reduces the operating funds that they have available to them in a general sense, so therefore, they have to make some very tough choices about how the money is spent, whether or not they spend the money in terms of increasing library acquisitions or in hiring people to provide services. In this case, they have to make a choice as to how much money they can raise in the private sector.

I think how this bill limits that is that it is quite amazing to look at the statistics that they have compiled. In terms of support-staff support, support-staff donations to, basically, the employer has been really something for those people to be proud of, the amount of monies—and I am not talking about faculty members or anything. I am talking about cleaning staff, people in the boiler rooms and in the cafeterias. These people have donated a lot of money, and when their wages are restricted, then it is a natural question for these

people to ask, well, do I make a donation to the educational institution, or do I keep it to make sure that I continue my level of nutrition or whatever?

* (2310)

Mr. Dewar: Okay. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: No further questions?

Mr. McAlpine: Mr. Pringle, I listened with interest, as you profess to be an amateur historian. You brought us down memory lane, going back a number of years. It brings to mind, as you well know, our revenues in this government today are at less than zero, and we have offered a zero percent to the MGEA employees. In 1986, I believe it was under a different administration, and we talked about the other members who were here at that time. I was not here at that time. Mr. Pawley, the Premier of the day offered zero percent when revenues were at 12 percent, and without any hearings, hearings that you are enjoying here tonight.

I am just wondering how you feel about the hypocrisy that goes on from this table when we reflect back on that. I would like to hear what you have to say about that.

Mr. Pringle: I am not familiar with that situation in detail, but I would say, because I am not a member of MGEA, that I would assume a zero percent offer was part of a process. The MGEA could accept or reject. I mean, this bill goes beyond, as I understand it, the restrictions of wage compensations to restrictions to the process itself and to the rights to be able to exercise that process. I think that, in the negotiations that went on between the MGEA and the government of the day, it was part of the negotiations. There was no attempt on the part of the government, as I can remember, to restrict the negotiations.

There was, during the AIB—I was very upset that the Premier of the day did go along with those provisions and accept the provisions of the AIB on provincial employees. That was a mistake then; it remains a mistake now. These restrictions should not happen no matter which party is in power at any given time.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much for your presentation, Mr. Pringle.

Mr. Pringle: Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Number 74, Alan De Jardin. Do you have a written presentation for the committee, Mr. De Jardin?

Mr. Alan De Jardin (Private Citizen): I do not, unfortunately. I am in the same position. Do you mind if I take off my sweater?

Mr. Chairman: Take off your sweater, make yourself at home.

Mr. De Jardin: I promise I will not take off anything more. You do not have to call the guards or -(interjection)- I have noticed there are a lot of mosquitoes coming in.

Mr. Chairman: That is what keeps us awake till six in the morning. Carry on.

Mr. De Jardin: I would like to thank you first for inviting me here, if I can say that. I think the invitation went out to all of Manitoba, and I am pleased that a lot of us are here.

Firstly, if I could, I would like to identify all those people who are friendly to my presentation, so all those who are, if you would just remain seated. Thank you very much. Now, being able to continue amongst a friendly audience, I would like to say that I do not want to be partisan in my statements.

Now, of necessity, some of them will be. You will see them slip through, but I would like to be as objective and as fair as I possibly can in these kinds of surroundings. I make no prejudgments, except when people read a paper when I am talking.

An Honourable Member: I can do two things at the same time.

Mr. De Jardin: Oh, okay. By the way, that reminds me, I would like to thank you very much—and this where I make no prejudgments. I am against the bill, but I would like to thank Mr. Driedger very much because he assisted me and 10 or 20 others during a particular situation, many years ago. He spent many hours on the problem and took a great deal of his time, and I think those are the kinds of legislators that we want in our government, but I would narrow it to one specific instance, if I may, in the Conservative Party.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. Mr. Pringle, I am sure the minister appreciates that type of comment, but I would ask you to please be relevant to Bill 70 -(interjection)- As I said, De Jardin.

Mr. De Jardin: Oui, Monsieur Laurendeau. Now, the only question that I have remaining is, who is buying breakfast? Okay, they are? Well, I saw the

Justice minister (Mr. McCrae) here a while ago, and I was afraid to ask that question because I thought, if I offered, you know, I would be hauled away for trying to bribe the government, and I do not have those kinds of funds—other people may, but I do not.

I will have to be excused if some members notice a repetition of information in my presentation. One of the problems that presenters face is that this committee changes members so frequently that we are always presented with a different committee. I would suggest that, if you see my twin come back next week, you will know that it is not me, but he is a guy that looks exactly like me. Please greet him, and I am sure that you will give him the appropriate amount of time that is necessary.

I would like to start off with some good news, so I hope that perks everybody up—just a couple of brief items. I do this, by the way, if I can digress. Can I? I have not really started my formal presentation yet, but if I can digress, the reason that I do this is because Clayton Manness, two evenings ago, not last evening, the evening before, was absolutely right. Now, Mr. Manness and I rarely ever agree, but he was absolutely right when he questioned earlier presenters as to where the money should come from. He opened up a very broad subject, but he accurately referred Bill 70 to an extremely broad perspective, and that is where we should be. If we are just talking about the government cheating—pardon me, there is my bias—talk about the government—can I say, taking advantage?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. De Jardin: Taking advantage of workers with a club that very few people have, then that is one thing. Workers have been clubbed before, you know. They get pretty accustomed to those kinds of things, but that is not it. What we are talking about is the very essence of our democracy here, and if we think we live in a free country, we have to think again. I have friends who tell me all the time that—pardon me, I am digressing again, but I have friends who tell me all the time that we do live in a free country and that, if we lived in the Soviet Union, for example, we could not do what we do here.

Well, they are right in that perhaps in the old Soviet Union we might be put in jail for political mistakes, but here we are put in another kind of jail. It is an economic jail which does not allow the kinds of social justice that we should be engaging in, in

our country. We have that opportunity, and I will not allow people to come forward and say that we are a poor country. We are not. I read you a very recent item, a July 8 item, in the Winnipeg Free Press from Joan Cohen's column. It simply states that Canada's wealth per capita is still the second highest in the world, after that of the United States. That is based on measurements of comparative purchasing power. We are significantly richer than Japan or the countries of western Europe. I think that is important to note because of what we are doing.

I have another item, also of recent date. A Statistics Canada study identifies the origins of the debt, i.e., deficit as deliberately reduced revenues and high interest rates, and not social programs and, I would suggest, certainly not government wages. So when Statistics Canada reports in a study, covering the years of '75 to 1991, that shows conclusively that the dramatic rise in the national debt is solely—and I draw your attention to that, gentlemen—attributable to taxes foregone and, might I suggest, corporate loopholes and suicidal interest rates, who do we blame? The workers, of course, because it is the workers who tell us what the interest rate should be, do they not? I mean, do they not change the interest rates every week? No, sir. Not likely. The interest rates are rates that the Mulroney-Filmon regime in Canada sets, and they are responsible for the debt. Do not make any mistake about that and do not make any mistake about blaming any particular government, because there is enough to go around for all of you. You just have to grab onto your share.

* (2320)

We know that the federal debt in Canada has doubled. You gentlemen know as well as I do that it went from—what?—when the Liberals left power, \$199 billion. Let us round it off—\$200 billion. What is a billion, eh? Is that not what they say in government, what is a billion? We go from \$200 billion to \$400 billion. How did we do that? We elected a Conservative government that was going to put order in the marketplace. Is that not right? We elected a Conservative government that knew how to manage things.

Now, if there was one appeal that the populace seems to buy, in terms of electing a Conservative government, it is based on one simple criteria, that they, the Conservatives, know how to manage things. They know dollars. They know how to

appropriate, do they not? Well, you have just lost it, gentlemen,, and you have lost it in spades, because you do not any more. You are no longer the government financiers that people thought you were. So in essence, you have lost your only card. You have lost that ace in the hole that you have always had because people could always say, ah, gee, those NDP guys, they will just shuffle out the money and all the social things.

The Liberals, well, we did not know quite what they were, did we? They were a little bit socialist, a little bit private enterprise, but they would also hand out the money, and they were not too good on the control, but the Conservatives, we always knew where they were coming from. They could handle the money. Well, they cannot any more. The Conservatives cannot handle the money any more, and we do not want them to handle the money any more because we know that they can waste it just as much as anybody else.

Okay. Now we have set the stage, hopefully. I would like to go on to some specifics. By the way, I would ask you, please, with your indulgence, question me during the presentation or else please take notes. I think it is important that the government recognize that there are an awful lot of people out there who have an awful lot of ideas. The ideas are not just stop spending; the ideas are, here is how you can stop spending, here is how you can do this, here is how you can be more efficient. When I say, be more efficient, I do not mean with an axe. What I mean is, at the very least, downsizing through attrition. Let us recognize that the little economic units that governments play with on their planning tables—

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. Mr. De Jardin, I hope you are going to be bringing this towards Bill 70 shortly.

Mr. De Jardin: Oh, I thought you were drawing the connection immediately. I apologize if you cannot see the connection. Could you tell me where you cannot see it and just elaborate a bit, sir?

Mr. Chairman: If you could just bring it and be a little more germane with the bill, Mr. De Jardin, I would appreciate it. Thank you.

Mr. De Jardin: I am sorry, I thought I was. I will continue, though. I will have to find where I was here somewhere. Just a second. Where was I? Can somebody—what did I say last? Do you remember? You remember. You were reading.

See, I told you. What I should have said initially was that there is an exam later.

What we were talking about was the ability of the government to handle funds, okay, and I did give you the background for the fact that we are not a poor economy, so we cannot cry "poor" in terms of cutting workers' wages. Having established that, then let me go on to a suggestion—well, why do I not read the appropriate portion that I have written? This is about a government infected with arrogance. Any similarity between living and dead, you will have to make yourselves.

Premier Gary Filmon's government—and I would like to say again the Mulroney-Filmon government that controls Manitoba is suffering from delusions of grandeur. It is a disease that strikes governments from time to time. They usually recover, but the odd one destroys itself. That could, ladies and gentlemen, be what they are seeing on this occasion. Mr. Filmon should take firm steps to root out the disease before it destroys his relations with the Manitoba public. The first victim was Urban Affairs minister Jim Ernst.

I am sorry, I cannot read while people are talking. Mr. Chairman, would you—

Mr. Chairman: One minute. I am getting some information from my clerk. You can continue.

Mr. De Jardin: Okay. Take your time.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Please proceed, Mr. De Jardin.

Mr. De Jardin: The first victim was Urban Affairs minister Jim Ernst. Large numbers of Winnipeggers with no private interest at stake told him again and again that The Rotary Pines strip mall and apartment building development is a big mistake. The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce and the management of the airport fear that encroaching development around the airport must in time lead to demands for curtailment of traffic at the airport, robbing Winnipeg of one of its few attractions for investors.

Mr. Ernst blankly ignored all such warnings about Winnipeg's wider needs and bulldozed ahead with the project as though he were sure of being right and all others must be wrong. The minister slipped subsidies to The Rotary Pines project while denying them to other equally useful seniors housing

projects, as though the money was his to dispense according to his own personal wishes. What makes him so sure he is right? Where does he think the money comes from, that he doles out?

Now the disease spread quickly through cabinet ranks. Finance minister Clayton Manness—I am sorry he is not here tonight; I hate to say things behind his back—honestly worried about the cost of labour contracts the province must pay for, concluded he must suspend collective bargaining and use the law-making power to set Civil Service employment terms for this year. Since other governments have been forced into similar action and since bargaining with the government is always faintly unreal, it was a policy that could be defended, but Mr. Manness let the power go to his head. He reached back in time and wiped out labour contracts that unions had sought and bargained for, and the government had already accepted. That was unfair and unnecessary. It was the kind of thing governments and ministers do when they start getting too big for their britches.

* (2330)

Speaking about getting too big for your britches, the position of a legislator reminds me of the similarity to being a parent. It is probably the only job that one needs no experience for. I wish the general public would understand that. I think they do understand when ministers get too big for their britches, because we have the kind of elitist happenings occurring in the Legislature that we have here in Manitoba.

People who come from vegetable stands on the road to the beach, who were mere runners for the Premier (Mr. Filmon), are now deciding what labour should be grateful for. If those positions are approached with humility, if they are approached by people of good will, if they are approached with a will to learn and to understand, the populace has no problem with that. If they are approached with the kind of arrogance that this government exhibits, we have a lot of problems with that, and that has to stop.

Natural Resources minister Harry Enns, despite his long years of political experience, also caught this arrogant virus. He decided that the Ducks Unlimited office building and tourist attraction at Oak Hammock Marsh is a good project that would go ahead whatever anyone else thinks. People who believe in preserving wildlife habitat are showing that the project is, on balance, a destruction and not

a preservation of habitat, but Mr. Enns has visibly stopped listening. He will not hear of any review or discussion. He alone will decide what land uses in the marsh are permitted. He forgets that it is not his marsh. Gentlemen, it is no longer your vegetable stand. It belongs to the people of Manitoba.

Family Services minister Harold Gilleshammer fell victim more recently -(interjection)- well, I think he still has to prove that, sir. He got it into his head that he and a few close associates could design the perfect child welfare system for Winnipeg, without consulting others, and then impose it in one dramatic gesture. Mr. Gilleshammer forgot that he is no smarter than the rest of mankind. He is at least as prone to error as his predecessor in office, New Democrat Muriel Smith, whose child welfare structure, he believes, is a disaster.

He has no superhuman gift that makes him a better builder than her. He forgot, also, that the child welfare system needs the confidence and co-operation of the people operating it and the families it serves. By his dictatorial manner of launching it, he has ensured that his new agency comes to bat with two strikes against it. That is not just arrogant, gentlemen, that is self defeating.

Mediaeval kings sometimes kept court jesters to remind them of their mortality and their human failings. Court jester was a dangerous job, but since kings and ministers are surrounded by flatterers they need someone to remind them of their limitations. Mr. Filmon needs to remind his ministers, and perhaps a few reminders for himself, how they reached office and what they brought with them, and I must confess that I think some of them did not have very heavy baggage to carry. He needs to set their feet back on the solid Manitoba earth. He should also advertise for a court jester to bring their overinflated egos back to scale. I am sure there are a lot of unemployed people who would apply if the job were open.

I think what I am going to read next should be fairly instructive in terms of you gentlemen keeping the positions that you have at the present time. Stability for most people is a very important aspect of their lives. Unfortunately, or should I say, fortunately, politicians do not have the kind of stability that they would wish for. God help us if they did. I consider what Mr. Gilleshammer has done in terms of the child and welfare area—

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Order, please. Mr. De Jardin, I have allowed you all sorts of latitude, and while you have every right as a public citizen to criticize the government, the purpose of the presentations is to be speaking to Bill 70, so could you please attempt to address your comments specifically to Bill 70?

Mr. De Jardin: I thought I was. You are not just following me, is that it? Or were you talking, or—

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): I have not heard you make one reference in the last five, six minutes specifically to Bill 70.

Mr. De Jardin: I apologize profusely. I will draw the connection for you.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Excuse me. Order, please. The clerk has reminded me as Chair of this committee it is my responsibility to ensure that the meeting runs procedurally correct.

Mr. De Jardin: I see. Are you going to then apply those same talents of fairness to cutting off maybe at one o'clock so that working people do not have to go till five? Could I have an answer, Ma'am?

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Mr. De Jardin, no, I am sorry. The committee will establish the time lines, No. 1. No. 2, the process is not that the presenter questions the members; it is reverse procedure. The members question the presenter after conclusion of the presentation. Please proceed.

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: Yes, on a point of order, and I appreciate the difficulty in terms of running meetings as Chair, but I do believe the presenter does have a point. Relevance, once again, is in the eye or the ear of the beholder. I found the comments to be very interesting and very relevant. The presenter is talking about government decisions, priorities, and has mentioned quite clearly he feels this indicates that this government that is now saying freeze wages is in fact spending money in other areas, or making policy decisions that are major problems.

Madam Chairperson, if we are going to get into repeated comments to presenters about relevance, the problem we run into is, once again, where do we draw the line, who decides what is relevant? As a member of this committee, I found the presentation of this presenter to be quite relevant, so I would hope that we would not overly restrict members—

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Order, please.

Mr. Ashton: —and also even in terms of asking questions, members of the public can ask rhetorical questions, obviously. I do not think the member expected to be able to get answers. Incidentally, by the way, we ask questions as members of the opposition to government members in Question Period; we do not always get answers either, so you are not alone. But I would ask that we would be perhaps a little bit more flexible and allow for—

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Mr. Ashton, I think we have, and in fairness to the people who are present this evening, I would ask the co-operation of all members of the committee as well as the presenters to try to expedite things to afford everybody an opportunity who is sitting here to make representation. It was my ruling, and it is my understanding that the Chair rules and makes the discretionary calls relative to relevance.

* (2340)

* * *

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Please proceed, Mr. De Jardin.

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: I would say in the way of advice, and I would ask that we not keep repeating the statement that we are trying to accommodate the members of the public wishing to make presentations. As this presenter pointed out, we sat here yesterday until five in the morning. We had many people called; their names were called at one, two, three, four in the morning.

Let us be very clear, Madam Chairperson, this committee has set rules by government majority. I do not believe that we should—and I as a member of this committee do not subscribe to statements that are made to members of the public that we are trying to accommodate them. I think we should deal, by the way, with the point raised by the presenter again tonight, which is not to go through the farce of having people sit here until four or five in the morning, Madam Chairperson, and I really have some difficulty with the way this committee is going. I have been in this Legislature ten years and I have never seen—

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Order, please.

Mr. Ashton:—such an attempt to restrict the presentations—

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Order, please; order, please.

* * *

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): I would please request Mr. De Jardin to continue with his presentation.

Mr. De Jardin: Madam Chairperson, I would certainly bow to the greater discernment of Mr. Ashton in terms of his view of the proceedings. I would, however, like to ask you one question if you would pay attention. Are you listening, Madam Chairperson?

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Mr. De Jardin.

Mr. De Jardin: I would like a clarification from the Chair. You said something that rather astounds me, and I mean I may not finish my presentation. It just absolutely astounds me. You just finished saying that you are here to question me. That is exactly, precisely—

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): No, the members, not the Chair.

Mr. De Jardin: I would like the record read back. Please do not interrupt me. I happen to have the floor at the moment. You said that specifically, that you were here to question me. That is not the case. I am here to question what you have done as a government. That is the reason for this committee hearing. Otherwise, there is no reason for the hearing, Madam Chairperson.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. Mr. De Jardin, you are here to make a presentation; you are 100 percent right. We are here to listen to your presentation, and we would appreciate if it were germane to the bill, and we will ask you questions that are of clarification of your presentation after you are done. I would appreciate if we could carry on and keep the decorum.

I know that you are used to meetings, we are used to meetings. I know this is a very emotional time. Let us try to carry it on and keep the decorum. This is the Legislature and let us try to keep it in order. Mr. De Jardin, please.

Mr. De Jardin: Oh, if we speak of decorum, I am sure that most public meetings I go to have a great

deal more decorum than a view of the Legislature. I do not think the public has any lessons to learn from the Legislature as to decorum. Having said that, would you please clarify, or would the previous Chair please clarify her remark? I want to know whether I am called to your presence to answer your questions, or whether I am here to question you. Now, a yes or no would suffice.

Mr. Chairman: You are here, Mr. De Jardin, to make a presentation. We will question you on your presentation for clarification, Mr. De Jardin. Those are the rules of the committee. That is the way the committee usually operates.

Mr. De Jardin: I would like to read an item by a W. A. Wilson who is not known as a flaming liberal. I will just read pieces of it. It is from the Free Press and they are not known as a particularly left-wing organization:

"The Canadian people have never had as effective an opportunity to tell the politicians how badly they think of them as they did while Keith Spicer's commission was holding its hearings.

"Literally thousands used the opportunity, so many that not even the most thick-skinned, dull-witted politician should miss the message: they have lost the respect and confidence of the Canadian people. It is not only extremely unpopular figures such as the Prime Minister who have brought about this view.

"It is the country's politicians in general, provincial as well as federal, who have destroyed trust in themselves and the political process. The report was hardly out, however, when one of the country's leading politicians, Jean Chretien, gave a public demonstration of how much difficulty they"—the politicians—"have in understanding it. He told media and television audiences, with all the considerable dramatics of which he is capable that 'No one is more fed up than I am.'

"The only answer to that is to say, 'Yes, Mr. Chretien,'—yes, Mr. Mulroney, yes to any other political party—"you haven't understood—it's you and all the others like you that the public is fed up with. It does not matter that you are fed up too—you are part of the problem.'

"Some day, that may sink in with politicians—"You are part of the problem.'

"It would probably be fatal to hold one's breath waiting. The system is so adversarial that few politician ever rise above their instinct to say, 'It isn't

us—it's those other people, the ones in power. If we just scream at them shrilly enough, maybe we can destroy them.' While they are screaming with all the shrill antagonism at their command it is not their opponents but the political process that is being destroyed."

A great part of the political process was destroyed when the Conservative government destroyed the bargaining power of its workers here in Manitoba. You do not understand. What you have done is exceeded by the process through which you did it. People are wondering, what next? They are wondering what next to such an extent that the government of this province and certainly the majority on this committee are not going to be here after the next election. You have got to understand that. Now, who the public will choose, I do not know. I do not think the choices are that good that are out there, but hopefully a few good men and women will step forward that we can trust.

"Naturally, the harshest public comments were directed at political leaders and if that were all there is to it the problem would be less serious.

"The more troublesome part is that it became clear to the listeners that there has been a public loss of confidence in the political process itself and that goes far beyond immediate issues of party leadership." Please listen. "The commissioners, in summing up public attitudes, said they had found that many people would support major changes to the political system if they felt that would produce a process that would give the country a responsive and responsible political process."

You just do not understand how much change people are ready for, but from your private jobs in industry you may soon find out.

* (2350)

"The report cites management of the economy, aboriginal problems, constitutional change"—which you have automatically put into Bill 70—"Quebec's place in the federation, bilingualism, and multiculturalism."

It further comments: "In all these areas, citizens have told us they do not feel governed according to their wishes and their fundamental values."

Would it not be a treat, ladies and gentlemen, if we had a government with fundamental values, and if those values were people values?

"Among the aspects of the present system that cause loss of public confidence is the rigidity of party discipline. Putting it bluntly, the real task of members of Parliament, except in the privacy of their caucus meetings, is to be yes-men. A government M.P.'s first duty is to sustain the prime minister and cabinet."

And the MLA's first duty is, of course, to sustain Mr. Filmon. I do not know what you are going to do about it, but within the next short while you are going to have to change that because there is no way that we are going to be able to continue to elect people of confidence, people of conscience, and people of ethics who are going to allow themselves to be shut up by a caucus or a cabinet, and I say this equally to the members of the opposition. There have to be major changes made.

"Some of the problems are inherent in any system where the government comes out of the legislature and is responsible to it. Much of the freedom for their representatives which people want comes with the congressional system where the administration is outside the legislature, independent of it. That gives the American congressman," as an example, "—and representatives in similar systems—much greater freedom than the parliamentary system permits.

"In fact, the parliamentary system has changed enormously over time and it would be appropriate" now "for Canada"—and Manitoba—"to take a hard, honest look at its imperfections instead of disavowing them. Its shortcomings have become severe.

"A shrewd political leader"—and I suggest we may even have a few here, because certainly those in power at the present time are not going to last very long—so "a shrewd political leader would study this report carefully until he was certain he had understood what the public finds wrong with the political system. Then he would make an honest effort to approach the public as it wants its political leaders to do." He might even "win an election. Then his problem would be to resist all the pressures pushing him back into the bad old ways."

I am very pleased that Mr. McCrae has joined us here this evening, because he is an example of what I am talking about. I try to be a nonpartisan as possible because I do not believe any political party has all the answers, but Mr. McCrae was a man that I looked up to when he first got into government. I

do not anymore. I do not anymore, and, Mr. McCrae, you can joke about it later if you would like to, sir, but, if you do not mind my continuing. I say that because I saw a man who had come from the people basically, who was well respected in his home town, and who really started out doing a good job, and there were certainly many people of all stripes who were persuaded to his point of view.

Now, he spoiled that, not perhaps by things that he felt he had to do, or by doing something out of conscience, but he spoiled that by having to take the Conservative line, hook, line and sinker, and regurgitating it to the public. But he went further than that. He began to adopt the kind of arbitrary methods, the kind of arrogance that has been seen day in, day out, by this Conservative government. I would like to mention one specific area. I was going to put it into the economic area because it seems to me the Conservative Party tends to think they are experts in that particular area, so I tried to set the stage in that field. But this is the field that, to me, the one I am going to broach now, has much more relevance. It is the field where people should be cared for.

Mr. McCrae had for years the opportunity to bring a new remand centre into operation. It was delayed and delayed and delayed. I do not know how many times he went down to see it, and I do have, I should not say on good evidence, that would, I am afraid, perhaps indict a member of the Conservative Party, but I have heard, let us say, that he fought very strenuously for that particular building. What happens to people when they get into political life. They let a building like that languish which is a critical item that is needed in our society. If you have seen the remand centre, if you have been in the remand centre, then you know how we treat human beings who are not guilty, by the way, are they? They are not guilty; they are just charged when they go there. That is how we treat people. Now we decide that we are going to build a remand centre. And what do we do? We build that remand centre over toxic waste, over gasoline spills—

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. I would like to ask the honourable members who are here this evening who are carrying on conversations if you could carry them on either a little further to the side, or just outside. I am having trouble hearing the presenter.

I would also ask the presenter if he could please try and be a little more relevant to the bill. You are tending to drift a little bit. So if you could bring it back

to the bill. I understand, Mr. De Jardin, where you are coming from, and I can see all your other concerns with the government, but at this time we are dealing with Bill 70, and I would ask you to please be relevant. Thank you.

Mr. De Jardin: Well, I would draw my relevance to the relevance of Mr. Clayton Manness, who was asking presenters where the money would come from. What I am doing now is suggesting where the money would come from, but I am tying that in with the fact that I think we should treat people reasonably, maybe especially prisoners who cannot fend for themselves. I would suggest that perhaps Mr. McCrae has been a party to one of the more reprehensible things that this government has ever done.

They are now building a new remand centre over gasoline wastes which we are told could infringe into that building into caged quarters and affect people who are incarcerated there. I find that kind of thing so reprehensible that I can hardly speak about it. I do not understand a government that cares so little about people that they are prepared to continue to build a building, which is what they have done. They have said, no, no, we are going to take care of the waste later. We have got the top stuff, but we are going to take care of the deep down stuff later. Now the fact that, we are told, "vaporious fumes" could exist, that they could permeate the building that is built on top of the old—what?—government services garage waste? If I was rude, sir, I would ask you for an answer, but perhaps you will just have to answer your conscience.

An Honourable Member: Perhaps if you will give me one that is relevant to Bill 70.

Mr. Chairman: Order, please; order, please. I would ask the member to please not engage in debate at the time. At this time the presenter is making a presentation; there will be ample time for questions after. Thank you.

Mr. De Jardin: Can I draw the relevance to money? Can I draw the relevance in terms of if you clean up your mess to begin with you can build a building that stays there? If you do not, you may spend millions and millions of dollars trying to get rid of it later on. That is the relevance. Do you understand that, Mr. Laurendeau?

Mr. Chairman: Carry on, Mr. De Jardin.

Mr. De Jardin: Okay, I just, do you understand that, sir? It is always nice to talk to the Justice minister; pardon me for smiling somewhat.

Let us talk a little bit about what we have come here for. You want to save some money, am I right? You want to save money. I am going to make some suggestions. Do you have your pens and pencils ready? Close down the Consumer branch through attrition. Why? We need one, but we have not got one. Speaking about that, pardon me if I go off on a bit of a tangent, but I think it might be important, Mr. Chairman.

* (0000)

I have always felt that if one of these creatures were to come down from Mars in a space ship and he was to take a look at our MTS telephone directory which is so beautifully done—is it in the States it is printed now?—I think he would probably look through it and he would see all these agencies that have been created to help the common man and woman. Being the naturally humanistic android that he might be, he would say: There is nothing I can do here. I cannot help these people. They have all the help they need. They have all the services and everything works for them. Well, that is where the simile comes to an end, you see, because we have a lot of agencies and we have a lot of services, but, members of the committee, the services do not work. They really do not, and I am going to point out a number of very specific areas.

I have gone to the Consumers' branch I do not know how many times. I am a real consumer advocate. I am the kind of a guy, if the cream sours in the fridge, it goes back, if I have to spend a buck and a half driving it back in gas and I get a new quart.

But, you see, you cannot do that with the government, because you cannot somehow force the government to become effective. I go to the Consumers' Bureau and: Oh, we'll fix that, do not worry about, we will make these guys toe the line; Canadian Tire, oh, we get along very well with them. Yes, they do, so well that they are still getting along well with them. I do not.

The Consumers' Bureau can only do one thing. Do the people know that? Do the people know that the only thing the Consumers' Bureau can do is to call people up that have aggravated the consumer, and say, would you mind please trying to help this guy out? That is all they can do, is persuade. Did you know that? No sanctions. No fines. No

regulations. No shutdowns. No penalties. What are we doing? Ridiculous. Look at that bureaucracy. Absolutely nuts.

So make it effective or shut it down. You guys want to save some money, so shut it down. I do not mind. It will not affect me; it will not affect the consumers out there. The consumers are not affected by it now. It does not do anything. So let us get rid of those things that do not do anything. Hopefully, through attrition, gentlemen, do not misread my remarks.

Number 2. You know what you could do, save a lot of money and you could probably extend it. I am just using five examples. Get rid of the five 1991 automobiles parked in front of the Legislature's closest reserved parking spaces. Could you do that for me? Do you have to have a new car every year? Good. I used to know a gentleman I had great respect for. He was not of the political party that I support now, but he was the Premier. I dated his daughter every once in a while, lovely young girl. Do not tell the judge she is married to now. Have I revealed too much? He lived at the end of Oak Street, and we lived closer to Academy Road on Oak Street and he used to drive his own car, and it was at least five or six years old at the time, maybe seven or eight years old at the time, to the Legislature, as the Premier.

I say very sincerely, gentlemen, we have to get back to that. This idea of the Premier and the Prime Minister coming in with his paid entourage of flacks and yes-people. There is a word that is used in a game that uses dice. It is called crap; that is what it is. Anyway, can we get rid of the cars?

Number 3. Stop funding the Rotary Pines project for millionaire elderly. They will be the first to tell you they do not need it. I will tell you just as an adjunct to that—pardon me for going off on another tangent to show you how to save some money, let us take the permanently ill out of our hospitals and put them in nursing homes. Could we do that? That would be a treat. What are we spending, \$200, \$300 a day? Only \$6,000 to \$9,000 a month. What would it cost in a nursing home? Could we do that gentlemen, save a few dollars? A specific suggestion, okay?

Now I have another suggestion and sometimes I think we are in the Land of Oz in terms of talking about money but maybe we have hit it for item No. 4. Do not pay your new MTS head an exorbitant

\$150,000 a year. You do not need to pay people that. That is a myth. That is an elitist myth. You do not need to pay those kinds of salaries. If people want to be in government service, they will do it—I am not saying for half that—they will do it for a third of that.

You have people in the public sector now who are working for nothing. I am not sure that you gentlemen and you ladies believe that, working for nothing to help the poor, the destitute, the halt, the lame and the blind and all the others who do not have the faculties that we have, and they are doing it for nothing. You do not think you can hire somebody for a lower salary to engage in something like that? I have a lot of friends who would love to have a job that put food on the table where they could help people. They have to forgo putting some of that food on the table because they have to engage in social activity that helps their fellow man and woman.

By the way, the fellow that you are giving \$150,000 a year to is the same person who is a senior executive of the MTS administration that lost \$27 million in Saudi Arabia. Good God, if you continue to reward people for that kind of performance, imagine the kind of person who you are going to have running your Crown corporation. Do not, please, pretend that Crown corporations are these unsullied, arm's length—because that is not true anymore. It used to be. The NDP tried to do that. I called up the NDP to ask about the former head of the Manitoba Telephone System and they said gosh, we do not know who he is. I said, you guys appointed him. They said, yes but we just kind of picked him out of a hat. I could not believe the honesty, the naivete, if you want to say that, but the honesty that was involved in that kind of a choice. Could we ask this government to be naive in that fashion once in awhile?

Another suggestion, could you not adopt sunset laws for the provincial budget? I did not create sunset laws. They have been around for a long time. Some of them are well used in the states and they could be well used here. I am sure the members know what I mean by a sunset law. It simply means that every three years you take a third of your budget or every four years you take a fourth of your budget and you shut them down entirely. They have to validate from penny one what they are going to spend in that budget. They do not get an

automatic 5 percent increase, 10 percent increase, whatever.

By the way, did your government departments take the same percentage cut that you asked the workers to take? Did they? Were the government departments cut? How do you do that? You cut the jobs but the departments and their allotments were not cut? I do not quite understand that. The departments presented their budgets on the basis of having to increase salaries. Did you get the money back—not very good guardians of the public purse.

You could also adopt suggestion No. 6, zero-based budgeting. I will not go into that because the Chair has been very generous and very amiable in letting me stray a little but I am sure you know what zero-based budgeting is. If you do not, my phone number is available.

I would also suggest that you have the capability now of renegotiating your present contracts with corporations to reflect the current financial times. I would like to give you an actual example. It is an example that none of you will probably know about because you have never been in this situation

To allow me less embarrassment that might be occasioned, let me just say that if one were to walk into the social services agency and need a pair of glasses they would say, fine, we want you to go and see so and so. You do and they write out a little slip. They will not tell you how much they are going to pay for the glasses. They just say we have a deal with the opticians. You go and you check in with the people who have the glasses. At a time when there are ads in the paper that offer two for one for \$99 and the government is paying \$113, \$115, \$125, you do not get that deal. The government does not get that deal. The government pays more. Did you know that? Just a suggestion, gentlemen. You have made a deal with corporate interests to supply glasses to people who need them and you are paying more.

* (0010)

Mr. Chairperson, I am quite serious about these things. This is not rhetorical, and I get that way every once in awhile but friends, excuse me. I would like you to look into this. I am very interested. You may not think so. You may think I am just partisan. I am not. I am very interested. I would like, in a week's time, to be able to come back. Let me do that, to Mr. Laurendeau, and say, have you

looked into the fact that you are paying more for glasses, about twice as much? I guess the thing I like about that is maybe you could supply twice as many glasses, but maybe, and here I get partisan again, it is not the object of this government to let the public see clearly.

How else can we save money? Oh, let me count the ways. I do not know if there are many people here who understand how much money the government has and what they do with some of their funds. I have lost one item but I believe just a couple of months ago that the government, in their wisdom, looked at the Royal Trust company and said boy, you guys are having a tough time. The Royal Trust company is Canada's largest trust company with assets of more than, and it is with a "b" not an "m", \$141 billion and first quarter profits this year of \$39 million. In order to persuade them that we have an excellent work force, great power and lots of empty space for them to locate in this, government loaned them a million dollars.

This government loaned the largest trust company in Canada a million dollars. What are we doing? Gentlemen, if you answer me, please, what the hell are we doing? Nonsense, absolute nonsense. If there was one shred of rational thought in a loan like this, please tell me, and interest free. That is kind of neat, interest free. These guys could not afford a loan where they paid interest. Good God. Do you want to know where the money is going? I am amazed but I will suggest something that you could do in penance. You could take that million dollars when you get it back and you could give it to the aboriginal people as two-thirds of the monies that they need to buy the old CP Station. That is what you could do. That might help to make up for some of the things that you have been doing.

Do you want to know how to make some real money? I will tell you because you are the guys in power. Put a tax on the sale of businesses. Why do I suggest that? Not to hit the corporate guy, because he has to live too, does he not? That is where the money is. Would that prevent any sales? It might. It would be doing the right thing. It would prevent the sale of small organizations and small corporations that should remain with their original inventor and investor and that provide the engine of our economy in Canada. The larger concerns it would not bother. I will give you an example, Centra Gas. Do you really think that sale would not have been made if they had to pay a \$10 million tax? No

way, Jack, it would have gone through and this government would have had \$10 million on that \$100 million sale, no question.

Am I saying that? Who is this guy? He is just one of the public and he has a kooky idea about putting this 10 percent tax on. I think if you talk to four, five, six, maybe seven of the economists out at the University of Manitoba, they would agree with me. They have agreed with me.

Are we so devoid of ideas at the top? Really, I think that is a fair question. What is happening? Are people just running because they have come to the end of their business career? Maybe that is it. I ran in the Riel constituency for the Liberal Party. I had a guy switch over from the Conservatives and approach me and said he wanted to run for the Riel constituency, true story. I got my group together, it was an open group. It is not always in Liberal circles, as you well know. It was an open group. Everybody was invited. We questioned this fellow who had just bounced over from the Conservatives. He told us the problems that he was having getting a riding. Somebody finally said well, why do you want to run? His answer was simple and to the point. He had had a pretty good business career. He was getting old and he thought this was a good next step for him. Shame. Shame, gentlemen, if that is how we choose our politicians.

I am sorry I might have to buy a breakfast. There is just so many examples. I wonder, would it be of any help at all if I volunteered to come back again so that you could hear some of the other speakers here this evening? I would gladly volunteer rather than—would that be helpful not to—oh, okay.

Mr. Chairman: Mr. De Jardin, you can only present the one time at a hearing. At this time the other people here will just have to wait until you are finished and then we will hear them in due course.

Mr. De Jardin: Now if my twin brother signs up and says the same things, just be very nice and polite to him.

I would like to draw your attention to the MTS net earnings. Anybody know what they were? How is \$39 million? Boy, that is some sinking fund, is it not? I certainly sank when I first saw it, at any rate. The Crown corporation reported net earnings of \$39.4 million compared to \$35.6 million in 1989. Oz Pedde could do a lot with that. Operating revenues totaled \$541.7 million.

* (0020)

You know what is interesting about that? I called the phone company, got a Roxanne Halverson on the line, just so you know. I said, would you mind telling me what the average bill for a telephone is in the province, not counting long distance? They got back to me. I am not sure if it was Roxanne, but it went up the ladder and they got back to me. They said the provincial average bill is, all services included, \$14.42. That is fascinating, is it not, gentlemen? I am sure you have already made the calculations ahead of me—\$39 million dollars. We have roughly one million people in the province. That is a \$39-per-person profit MTS made on the people of Manitoba. We are talking about per person, are we not, not per household. Am I correct? Let us say three people a household, \$120 a household and the average bill of \$14. What is that? Would that pay my bill for eight months?

Gentlemen, when are we going to get somebody in the government who can add not just subtract? You do that beautifully. You take away people, you take away our environment. You subtract quite well from our lives. We want you to add to it. We want you to multiply it.

Gentlemen, you are a rapacious government. That ain't a swear word. If you really believe that the people of this province would agree with the Draconian—you have heard that word before, but I will give you another one—or should I say Neanderthal act, as it certainly takes us back to a caveman's view of unions. If the people would agree with you then I would suggest that you go to the people. Dissolve the Legislature and let the people decide. Gentlemen, you will not be back in those same chairs, the government. If you want to place some bets, I have some phone numbers for you. I think we would wipe out the 6/49 with the volume.

I think it is reasonable to still, at the end of my—I do not want to tempt you too much, but coming to the end of my dissertation, I will still grant you the claim to be men and women of good will. Let me test that. You obviously would find it very tough not to let Bill 70 go through. I do not want it to go through. The people of Manitoba do not want it to go through but it would seem to me it is almost a foregone conclusion. Some people in your employ are having a much more difficult time than others, even those affected by Bill 70.

As an indication of the concern you have for those who make the least among us, I would ask you to

consider exempting the bottom 20 percent of government wage earners. I would ask you, in all humility, in all seriousness, and if you want me to get down on my knees I would do that. There are people having a very tough time out there. There are families who you have torn apart. I would ask you, with the greatest respect that I can muster, to exempt the bottom 20 percent of government wage earners. If you do not think they deserve that kind of consideration, I would ask you to do something else for me. I would ask you to go into one of the hospital laundries on a sunny, 30 degree Winnipeg day and I would ask you to spend eight hours, eight sweat-drenched hours, and then come and tell your public that these people are not worth the 20 cents to 30 cents an hour that you are taking away from them.

I implore you to find a way to find your conscience, to exercise it. It is great, take it out for a walk. You might get so accustomed to it you might quit politics or you might stay in and you might change it. That is what we would like to see because there is nothing the public loves better than a recovered sinner. We are for you and we will help you. We do not want to be lied to. We do not want to be cheated. We do not want to be taken advantage of anymore. The government that does not learn this, provincially, the city that does not learn this—you see, I do not think you understand, Portage and Main is going to be open. Do you know that? Do you understand that? The councillors do not have the last say. The people have the last say. That intersection is going to be open and it will be open this year. If you do not understand that then you do not understand what is happening with the people.

Just one or two more items. I told you what a good economy Winnipeg had and what value we have in Winnipeg and Manitoba and in Canada, if we can find some people to manage it in government. I am sorry, I did not mean to interrupt you Mr. Driedger, just tell me when you are finished.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): You can continue now.

Mr. De Jardin: The paper does not bother me because I know that you are a man of many parts but the talking would. We seem to feel that the public must be persuaded, governments and other major institutions cannot act during an economic downturn. I think one speaker prior suggested some specific areas where that occurred in spades. I would like to suggest another area. Pardon me if

I go outside the country to suggest that Franklin Delano Roosevelt, during the depths of the Great Depression in the United States, created most of the great social welfare legislation in that country during that time, in the depths of the depression, and pulled the country out of that depression. What we are lacking here, ladies and gentlemen, is not the capacity of the economy but the capacity of the people in charge of the economy.

I apologize for taking so long. I was hoping to last until five o'clock at least, but I will accept any questions.

* (0030)

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. De Jardin. Are there any questions of Mr. De Jardin?

Mr. Reid: It was an interesting presentation that we have heard here tonight from this individual. I am sure all members of the committee would agree with that. It is quite informative in some areas.

I would like to ask a question of the presenter through you, Mr. Chairperson. One of the examples that was given here by the presenter could have been thought of as being more of a challenge, I believe, but I accepted it as information, about hospital laundryroom workers and the roles that they play in our society, the job conditions that they have to work under and the salaries that these people, obviously from what I interpret from the comments that were made, seemed to be very meagre salaries. I ask the presenter to maybe elaborate a bit further on that so we can have a better understanding of the conditions that these people work under.

Mr. De Jardin: No words really can substitute for what some workers go through. We have a peculiar penchant in our society to pay those people the least who do the most. We pay a lot of lip service in terms of saying people that serve should be adequately recompensed. We do not follow that up. We give the paper pushers the top of the salary scale and on down the ladder to the point where those people who use their greatest capabilities, those people who work with their hands and their head, are at the bottom of the scale. Those capacities are not as rewarded as others would be.

If you take a look at our social system, if you take a look at our labouring system, you will find that those people who work the hardest, often receive the least. I would suggest that some of you who do not just want to experience things through words

and would like to experience things in person, accept the challenge. There are, for instance, some university presidents in the United States who have decided that they live in ivory towers, so they go out and they take off one semester or two and the one I was reading about the other day became a garbageman. He learned an awful lot about his fellow man and about working conditions in working for BFI. Gosh, I wish I could persuade one of you fellows to do that. It just brings another perspective. I would love to have a couple of your guys out of work for a period of time. I would like to put you on the dole for awhile. I would like to have you sit with me in a social services waiting room and wait for your name to be called to get that cheque. You do not want that name to be called because you are there for the first time. You do not want anybody recognizing it. You hold the paper up like that. Try it. Good exercise, good for the soul. Then you go and you get your pay cheque, for doing nothing, mind you. Know what the pay cheque is? It could be \$100, could be \$115. Is that for a week? No. Two weeks? No. Three weeks? No—28 days; 28 days and they give you \$115, \$215? Try it sometime. Do it. Go into one of those laundries. I am serious.

Do you want to know the first thing you guys would do? You would say every hospital laundry gets air conditioning. That is what you would do, because you would know how inhumane the conditions are that you set wages for.

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: I am sorry for interrupting, but it is 12:30 a.m. and what I was going to ask for by way of a point of order is if we can perhaps determine whether to proceed as a committee. It is, as I said, 12:30. I am wondering if we might canvass members of the public who are here and on the list wishing to make presentations and then, as a committee, consider where we proceed from here in terms of trying to give some signal within the next five or 10 minutes to complete.

Mr. De Jardin: I may be a little while. I wonder though if I could ask, on behalf of the others seated behind me—

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. At this time, Mr. De Jardin, we are just going to have a small discussion here. Mr. Ashton has raised a point of order.

Mr. Praznik: Yes, Mr. Chair, I understand that the Clerk has canvassed the public, and we have about

13 people who are yet to make presentations tonight. I have had the opportunity to have some discussions with other members of this committee, and I think we are going to try, if we can, to accommodate those people this evening, or a large portion of them before we shut down and then adjourn.

Mr. Ashton: What I might also suggest, too, because I realize that some people may not be able to stay into the early morning hours, that of those 13, if there are people who would prefer to come back on another occasion, that we make every effort to recognize them. I assume there will be a number of people who wish to make a presentation tonight. I am just suggesting that we also canvass in that context and try and be as accommodating as possible and proceed from there.

Mr. Chairman: Has that agreement of the committee then? Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Chairman: We will now continue on with Mr. De Jardin. Are there any further questions of Mr. De Jardin?

Mr. Reid: I think Mr. De Jardin had finished responding to that last question.

Mr. De Jardin: Yes.

Mr. Reid: I will pick up on that, Mr. Chairperson, if I might.

Mr. De Jardin: I wonder if I might add something. Mr. Chairman, I think it is dishonest of certain members of the committee to say that they are accommodating 13 people from the public who wish to speak this evening. They do not wish to speak at 2 a.m. or 3 a.m. or 4 a.m. He is not accommodating them at all. What he is doing is he is inconveniencing them to such an extent that he hopes other people will get the message that free speech is not allowed here, and I think it would be only fair to have a civilized committee that would say, either at one o'clock or 1:15, or whatever your particular or peculiar want would be, that you close down and then you have an organized meeting next, and you ask for the—

Mr. Chairman: Order, please. At this time, Mr. De Jardin, I would ask that we finish up the questioning. Mr. Reid, you had a question?

Mr. Reid: No, I had a comment, Mr. Chairperson. I wanted to thank the presenter for coming out this

evening and making a presentation to us. We have enjoyed listening to his presentation, and we look forward to hearing from him again in the future.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Reid. Thank you very much Mr. De Jardin for your presentation this evening.

Mr. De Jardin: Thank you. I hope to come before another committee of this government where the microphone is not cut off. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Mr. De Jardin.

* (0040)

Committee Substitution

Mr. Ashton: Just on a matter of committee business, I would move, by leave, that the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) substitute for the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) with the understanding, of course, that the same change will be moved in the House tomorrow and that we note the time as being 12:40 a.m.

Mr. Chairman: Is there leave of the committee? Agreed. Is the substitution agreed to? Agreed. This will be brought forward to the House tomorrow to be dealt with in the House.

Mr. Chairman: I have the presenters in order by number, if I could just have one minute, Mr. Ashton.

Mr. Henry Heller. Mike Gidora. Mike, do you have a written presentation?

Mr. Mike Gidora (Private Citizen): I wish I did, but I do not, Mr. Chairperson.

Mr. Chairman: Carry on, Mike.

Mr. Gidora: What I will do is, at the soonest available opportunity I will put this into some form of written form and make sure that the committee has it.

I take it for the record you want to know who I am and where I live. My name is Mike Gidora. I live at 167 Scotia Street in Winnipeg. In addressing this committee I just want to start with some reference to the previous speaker.

With all respect that I believe this Legislature deserves and this committee deserves, I have to agree with his comments that by holding sessions that carry through until one, two, three, four, five or whatever in the morning, it is not one that accommodates presenters. It is not one that allows

me to know that I can be at work fresh early tomorrow morning, that I can do my job. It is not one that I am sure that the other 12 presenters will be able to feel the same way and feel as though they have contributed positively to the legislative process or to the public consultative process. I would suggest, with due respect, that this committee should, in fact, be looking at setting hours that are known to people, hours that when people who have to go to work, who have to earn a pay cheque, who have to be at a certain place at a certain time, which most employers would expect them to get a good night's sleep the night before, they will be able to accommodate that.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

I recognize there are certain time lines, but at the same time, Madam Acting Chairperson, I believe that it is certainly not one that accommodates; it is not one that facilitates the process; it is not one that leads to an enhancement and a development of a genuine democracy. So I would say that if this committee in any way could see its way clear to allow for public presentations at hours that recognize that most people work between nine in the morning and five in the afternoon, that would recognize that most people have to be at work at nine in the morning, and would certainly try to schedule their time in such a way as to allow people to do that.

I recognize that is a little bit of a lengthy preamble, but I think we are all here tonight for some length of time, and I suppose that we are all here to see how long we can stand and talk and still be somewhat relevant to the point.

By way of myself, my name is Mike Gidora, as I said before. I am here tonight—and I want to stress this—I am presenting as an individual. I am representing no one other than myself. Some of you may know me from other lives. You may not. I believe that in some ways I consider myself here at considerable personal and business risk in that I am probably, unlike many of the other presenters, an employer. I am someone who sits at the table and negotiates with trade unions, not for trade unions, but with them. I am someone who has to sit down and look at the questions of bottom line, plus look at questions of profitability, who has to look at, is this a viable operation? I am someone who has negotiated union contracts, and I stress the word "negotiated."

I have negotiated contracts as an employer that have included wage increases. I have negotiated contracts as an employer that included no increases, freezes or extensions, if you will. I have also negotiated, as an employer, rollbacks. As recently as yesterday, I have negotiated a work share agreement, given the state of the economy in this province.

The key word in every one of those is that I negotiated them, as did my counterparts on the other side of the table, the representatives of the trade unions involved; as did my principals, my board of directors I reported to; as did the members who the negotiators for the trade unions involved reported to and sought clarification and approval for their actions. I guess that is why I am here tonight, because I see a fundamental difference between the concept of negotiations and decrees, and I think it is a very fundamental and important difference.

Last time I appeared before this particular committee, it was to express my opposition to another piece of legislation. That was final offer selection, because I felt that it violated the same principles that I feel that this legislation violates. It violated the principle of free collective bargaining between equal partners, partners equal not in economic might or wealth or whatever else, but partners equal in that they were jointly responsible for the ongoing operations of any business enterprise. I was opposed to final offer selection, and I made my opinions clear here.

I am opposed to this piece of legislation for the same reason. It violates the notion of a negotiation. It violates the notion of people sitting down and giving and taking and coming to what is the most amenable and best and positive solution that can be given under any set of circumstances.

That is why I have concerns with Bill 70. I recognize that Bill 70, as it is framed, as it is presented, is one that applies to the public sector. I recognize that there are conflicting opinions, legal opinions. Does Bill 70 or could Bill 70 be extended to the private sector which would affect me in my job, or not? There are conflicting opinions, You know, there is certainly one legal opinion which holds that, no, by the nature of the title of the act, that a court of competent jurisdiction, but there certainly is another legal opinion which holds that perhaps there are a whole level of quasi public bodies that could be affected by Bill 70.

Nonetheless, whether it can or cannot extend into my particular purview of where I have to do business, where I have to negotiate, it certainly sends a very, very, in my opinion, dangerous message out to the business community, the general public and labour in this province. If I understand Bill 70 correctly—and I expect this committee to bring me up short if I am wrong—Bill 70 essentially extends the provisions of current collective agreements. Bill 70 also, retroactively, removes some of the final offer selection decisions, and I guess in this case two wrongs do not make a right. Bill 70, as I understand, ensures that there will not be any negotiated changes to any collective agreement for those affected employees and employers within the province.

That means, as I understand it, that it is not only wages and conditions that are affected, but it affects other things—job classifications. It affects the way the workplace is defined. It affects the question of definitions of what is within the bargaining unit, outside of the bargaining unit. It can have far reaching implications as to a whole range of nonmonetary items which are commonplace to any collective agreement in this day and age. The effect, I would suggest to anybody, whether they are in the public sector, one of those who are affected by this piece of legislation, or those who are outside, one of those who are not affected, would be basically to make the collective bargain process fairly meaningless, because the message, as I read it in Bill 70, is do not worry about negotiations because ultimately someone has the hammer. Ultimately someone can decree what is acceptable, what is not acceptable. Ultimately someone can tell you that all the good faith, all the good will, all the work, all the research, all the efforts to try and pull any collective process together does not mean anything, because there is a bill, there is a Legislature, there is a process that is being circumvented by virtue of legislation being introduced.

* (0050)

I ask you, to members of this committee, what does that say? In the first place, for the public sector, I think the answer is quite clear. For those affected units the answer is very clear, is that there is going to be a sharp decrease in morale. There is going to be dissatisfaction. There is going to be the type of activities we have seen this week, whether there will be numbers of people out here expressing

their displeasure. I think that there is a certain tendency that some of that could spill off outside of the public sector, and it would spill off in the way that says, well look, why should we take this seriously? Why should we take any of this seriously on either side, because we know that there is a precedent established, there is a legislative precedent established and anything, and I would suggest—and I am not a lawyer—that anything that is deemed to be within the public interest, in fact, could be incorporated into this piece of legislation, or if not this piece, another piece of legislation which have disastrous effects, not only in the question of wages and conditions, but of morale.

We are in a time—we are in a shifting economy, a whole new workplace environment, that more and more we are looking at the situation where what is needed is a co-operative approach. We are looking at a situation where there has to be genuine negotiation and good will going in to any collective bargaining process, and I do not think this does it. I do not think it does it.

I have to suggest, and I am not going to say, and I do not want to get into the arguments of economics or if this is saving money, or if this is not saving money, or whatever else; I will accept the government's word that it is a difficult economic time, and it is not my place to suggest here before this committee what is the way to reduce government expenditures or maximize government revenues. I have my ideas about it, but it is not my place here tonight. What I do have to say is that I think the message that goes out in that respect that we are doing this because we are in difficult financial situations is the one that basically regards those affected employers and employees with a lack of respect. It is saying to anyone who has had to sit down and negotiate a collective agreement, we do not have confidence in you, the employees and you, your bargaining group, to recognize the difficult situation we are in and to recognize that, yes, there may have to be some form of accommodation.

I can tell you very directly I had to negotiate a contract like that a year ago. I had to go to a group of employees and say that the financial situation is such that there is not money on the table. What are we going to do to make it work? We had a settlement. There was no increase, but there were other things that were negotiated. There were some job securities. There were some classifications, but what it did is that there was a

taking into confidence of the people who were both employing and being employed by. It was a sharing and it was a development of a process that we were able to, painful as it was to everyone—just as I am sure it is painful to this committee to say, look, there is no money, and just as it is painful for the employees to say, yes there is no money, there is a process that brings it together and leads to a much stronger and much more healthy environment.

Unfortunately, I think this particular process, which I would regard as an administrative or a legislative process, does not do that. What it does it sets employees against the employer, be it the provincial government, be it community health clinic, be it a nonprofit agency which is under those guidelines. It is very difficult, and it also raises a whole number of questions in other jurisdictions. I see the honourable Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) here. The school divisions are wondering, are we next? I know the legislation says no, but I also know that the trustees are wondering, are we next, and what is that going to do to us?

I know that there were arguments, a raise with the City of Winnipeg—you know, why are civic employees excluded? Yet there are representations made, hey, you are going beyond what is expected here. So it leads to a situation that I view of uncertainty. It leads to a situation of unnecessary confrontation, one against the other, and it leads to a situation that is not going to be a healthy and helpful situation for trying to get, first of all, the public sector working together, but beyond the public sector, Manitoba's economy back on track. In that respect, I think that there is a fundamental concept, a fundamental precept here, and it is that the term free collective bargaining as understood by employers and employees means just that—free collective bargaining.

It means that you go to the table and you assume, at the table, that you are dealing with men and women of honourable intentions, men and women of good will, men and women who have the joint interest, the common interest, the public good at heart and that they proceed from that basis. I do not think that it helps that process to leave either the presumption or an impression that, no, one side or the other does not have the common good at heart. One side or the other is out for their own interest and no one else. One side or the other is saying, the public be damned, it is us that count. I believe, with respect, that is what this legislation is saying.

It may well be—and again it is not my place, I am not a pollster, I am not a political pundit—it may well be that, yes, large parts of the population in Manitoba or Canada or Winnipeg or Steinbach or wherever says that public sector employees are overpaid. They may say that. That is not up to me to comment. That is a process that is dealt with between employer and employee, and I do not think it is up to this Legislature to comment on that and to decree that or to decide that. That is what you have deputy ministers for, associate deputy ministers. That is what you have departments for and you have personnel people in those departments. They approach that, and they approach it as adults, as people of good will, and they seek to negotiate a process through.

If they are right, my experience has been both—and I have negotiated on both sides of the table—both as a trade union negotiator and as an employer representative negotiator. If they do have the genuine desire to find a solution, they do find it, and they find it in a way that does not jeopardize their future existence, either as a private sector employer or employee, nor do they find it in a way that is going to jeopardize the future existence of the public sector.

I would urge very strongly that this committee give thought to that because I fear, quite frankly, I fear for where we are going. I fear that if we create an environment of confrontation, an environment which says that, yes, we do have certain rights under the labour code of Manitoba, The Manitoba Labour Relations Act; yes, you are certified; yes, you are a collective bargaining unit; yes, you are recognized and authorized to act on behalf of your membership; and, yes, this is your employer and there is a certificate issued, and there is a process you go through; but that is held in abeyance now. That is put off for 12 months. It does not matter anymore.

If we do that, I think we are leaning ourselves to an environment that is going to be very, very unhealthy in labour relations in this province. Yes, the focal point will start here in the public sector but, believe me—we know who is sitting back there, they do not believe me—it is going to spill off into the private sector. It is going to cause me problems as an employer. It causes me philosophical problems to start with, but it is going to cause me very direct problems, and it is going to cause a whole variety of other small- to medium-sized employers in this province problems because what it is saying—and

the message is if you are strong enough and big enough and tough enough you can ignore all that. You do not have to remember The Labour Relations Act. You do not have to pay attention to that certificate. You do not have to sit down and negotiate in good faith. That is the bottom line.

Are labour relations in this province, is collective bargaining based upon negotiations in good faith or is it not? I think, with all respect that is due this committee, that this piece of legislation is ill-advised in that respect. It takes away the notion of good faith. It takes away the notion of responsible parties coming together to the table. It takes away the concept that people can recognize, yes, there are difficult decisions to be made—I do not want to use that nasty word “choices” but there are difficult decisions to be made—and to bear and to say that, yes, we can face up to them, and we can arrive at accommodation.

So in that respect I would urge very, very much that this committee bear in mind that you are not just acting—maybe it might be a short-term gain, maybe it might help a budgetary question. I say there are others who can answer that and argue that question a lot more than me—but the ultimate—and I would suggest that what does happen though is that it leaves a very, very bad taste in the mouths of all of those who are going to be faced with the question of having to negotiate a collective agreement in this province. It is one that I think would be very unfortunate and very ill-advised.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

* (0100)

I want to come back to where I started for a few minutes. Quite frankly, I personally would have liked to have been able to sit down and spend a bit more time preparing something on paper. I would like to have had time to consult some of my colleagues where I work and other people. I got a phone call tonight saying, hey, you are going to be on tonight, and so I am here. I recognize that we are playing within a certain set of parliamentary rules, that we are playing within that context, the notion that in some ways there is—how do I best put it—that in some ways we are in the sense of almost, there is a term, like almost standoffish, and we are sort of staring each other down.

Quite frankly and very honestly it is not a healthy environment in which to consider significant legislation. It is not. So, as Mr. De Jardin was

saying earlier, Mr. Chairman, I would really urge that the committee find a way to incorporate its time, in the first place, to allow those the most directly affected to present their point of view before this committee and that, quite frankly, is not at 10 a.m. on a Thursday morning, and it is not at 1:02 a.m. on a Friday morning. It is somewhere in between. So I would certainly urge that this committee does sit down and have a look at scheduling it in such a way that we can get into a meaningful dialogue rather than into this type of process where we are carrying on and basically trying to wear everyone down by attrition, because it is not a healthy process at all.

I guess that I want to conclude, and I am sure that it probably would have been a lot more impressive had I had reams of statistics, and if I had been able to maybe read from a few pieces of labour jurisprudence and point out the infringement of free collective bargaining and what is bargaining in good faith or bad faith all about; but I do want to come back to the fundamental concept that I am approaching this on. As I said before, I am not here with the grace or the blessing of my employer. I am not here—and I say that I think it could cost me in the business and the professional sense, but it is something that I feel very strongly about because the fundamental notion that anyone has to take when it comes to sitting down and treating the counterparts on the other side of the table is that they are equals. If I have any inkling as an employer that I can come to this government, or any other government, and say, hey, let us put the boots to this group—I am paraphrasing, I am not saying anyone here is thinking that, but I am paraphrasing, it is bargaining table talk—if I have any notion that I can do it, I certainly will. What it will do—and I think other employers will—what it does is that it throws the whole notion of free collective bargaining into that never-never land.

If for no other reason that what it does is says that free collective bargaining, which I think in Canada is recognized in all but the most extreme of emergencies as a fundamental precept of labour relations, if for no other reason, then free collective bargaining is being challenged and threatened and, in fact, taken away for a significant sector of employers and employees. I would very much urge that this committee recommend to the Legislature, that is your purview, that this legislation not be amended, that in fact this legislation be withdrawn. I think there are other ways that this can be

approached. I think that if it is deemed that there has to be a wage freeze, let that be negotiated at the table.

Negotiated is the key word because there is a big difference between negotiating something and being told that is what you have to do. I think, as someone who does negotiate, I would much prefer to be able to negotiate a settlement than have it imposed upon me, and I think that the people I deal with on the other side of the table would much prefer that as well.

Mr. Chair, I certainly do hope that these comments have been taken into account. If there are any questions or anything that I can elaborate upon, I would be pleased to do so for another 4 hours and 55 minutes. If not, please, I certainly do hope that these concerns are taken back.

Mr. Chairman: Thanks, Mike, I think there are a couple of questions.

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: Just before any potential questions, I was wondering if we could deal with the point of order I raised earlier and the fact that we obviously are late in the night. My preference, Mr. Chairperson, would not be to be sitting past midnight other than to truly accommodate people, in that sense, not to be running through the list, et cetera.

What I would like to ask, and there have been some discussions, is if the government insists on continuing to call the list after midnight, if there cannot be some indication of how far they wish to proceed and perhaps if we cannot accommodate members of the public by doing the following, asking those presenters who would like to make presentation tonight to do so, but ensuring that if we do continue through the list in terms of doing that, other people who were present and indicated to the committee chairperson, I believe there were 17 or 18 people, that they be allowed to indicate to the Clerk of the Committee if they are available on Friday, which is the next hearing, or Saturday, two other scheduled hearings, when they would be available and thereby not have been considered to have been called. These are people I know who have been here all night, Mr. Chairperson, in some cases and certainly in the last several hours in other cases.

So what I am trying to do is recognizing that the government has been running through the order,

which I do not agree with, but if they are going to do so, if we cannot come up with something that will be better in terms of the committee process and particularly be fairer to the members of the public.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, we have had the opportunity to discuss this a little bit, and I understand that some of those people, the clerk is aware, will be put over. Some will speak yet tonight, and I think we will call the list to an agreed-upon number at some point. We will try to accommodate those who remain and others have indicated their willingness to come back at another time. We would certainly be agreeable to that.

Mr. Chairman: Is there agreement with the committee then that the 18 people who have registered will be allowed to be heard? They will not be dropped from the list, they will be allowed to be heard Friday and Saturday, and that we will call up to a number that we will discuss as we are going along.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Chair, just to clarify this a little bit as we go along. People have registered, I understand. A number of people have indicated their desire to come at another time. There is a group—I do not know if it is five or six—who are prepared to speak tonight whom we will hear. I understand we will call in order to ensure that anyone who has been missed up to, I believe, 104, and I understand there were a number of people up to that who have indicated that they will be coming back at another time. So when we conclude those who want to speak and we have called to that number, then we will adjourn for the evening.

* (0110)

Mr. Ashton: Just by way of explanation, too, we went through this yesterday. Our preference was to not have anybody called after midnight, and we had a motion to that effect and it was defeated by a majority of members of the committee. Essentially this is what happened last night. I think it is important, regardless of whatever disagreements there might be between the government and the opposition, in this case on rules. I indicated our preference is that we not have people sitting here all night, quite frankly, not knowing if they are going to make presentations or not. I think this is an attempt to reach not an ideal situation and we would not prefer to do this. We have indicated so by resolution, but it is in attempt to be fair to the members of the committee.

Mr. Chairman: Just to advise the committee, as well as the presenters who want to come forward on Friday and Saturday, if this committee does agree to let this happen. I want everyone to be aware that there have been a number of people who have been moved over to Friday and Saturday. We will not be able to guarantee any specific times on those days. It will be as the order but you will not be dropped. I cannot guarantee any specific time for those days because there are a number of people whom we went through last night and the previous nights who have said they were coming back Friday and Saturday. They dropped to the bottom of the list, and the list will be heard in order—as long as everyone understands that. We will do the best we can to accommodate everyone though. That has been the will of the committee all along and we will our best to do that. So is it the will of the committee to agree to what we have just spoken of? I am not going to try to repeat it all. Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Chairman: Agreed.

Okay, are there any questions of Mike?

Mr. Ashton: First, I might clarify again, I think the intent was to make sure if someone was wanting to come here on Friday or wanting to come on Saturday that they would be able to do so by indicating—the accommodation has been made I know with other people who have registered specifically with the clerk. So for those who are here, and I believe there are about 12 people who would like to come back another time, if they can indicate with the clerk. If not, I would suggest we just basically not drop them from the list. As the members of the public probably know, one of the problems with the process we are following is if someone's name is called, they are dropped to the bottom of the list and then they get one more call and they do not get to present. This ensures that they do not lose that right by not staying here until God knows what hour. -(interjection)- Yes.

* * *

Mr. Gidora: This is quite unusual, but I meant to do this at the beginning. I feel at a certain disadvantage. I gave you my name, but I am afraid that I do not recognize people around the table. Is it okay if I ask who the various folks are or is that none of my business?

Mr. Ashton: I am Steve Ashton. We have met. As NDP Labour critic and House leader, that is why we have problems with calling the list after midnight.

Mr. Chairman: I am Marcel, Mike. You know that. You probably recognize me. We will move along here. Mr. Ashton, you had a question of Mr. Gidora? If not, we will just carry on.

Order, please. No further questions of Mike?

Mr. Ashton: I just have one question, and I apologize for that interruption. I just thought it was important for people to have some indication of where we are going tonight. I was able to catch part of your presentation, but I have asked this question to others, and I would like to ask it to you again. You gave a far-reaching presentation and an interesting perspective in terms of the business side of things. It is the same question I have asked of other people.

If you could talk to someone who might be wavering on this bill, and I assume in this case it would be one of the government members who might be considering supporting Bill 70 but might still have an open mind, might consider it in terms of a matter of conscience and understanding again, as I have indicated before, it would only take one or two people to either abstain or to vote against the bill for this bill not to become law in the province of Manitoba. Even a committee member, if one committee member or two committee members changed their vote from the government side, this bill could be killed at committee. What would you say to them on a one-on-one basis, more on a personal level than in terms of a formal brief that you feel might persuade them to change their mind?

Mr. Gidora: I appreciate the question. It is a tough one. Can you not give me a yes/no? It is much easier. Through you, Mr. Chairman, I suppose I would have to come right back to the point I came to several times throughout my comments, and as I say, I wish I did have a written presentation. It seems to me—and I guess maybe in this case I should be addressing myself to the government members of this committee. As I understand, the basic precepts of that particular philosophy is that a lot of it rests on the notion of individual and collective freedoms.

It seems to me that when a group of individuals, by free will, collectively decide that they are going to be represented in terms of negotiating wages and their working conditions and other things that come under labour legislation, and when they elect by

secret ballot or otherwise people to represent them at the bargaining table, and on the other side, when an employer recognizes that there is in fact a new relationship established, they may fight it through whatever courses are there, but eventually there is a recognition and they sit down and negotiate a collective agreement.

It seems to me that to have any say at all in what happens at that table taken away from you, be you the employee or the employee's representative or be you the employer and the employer's representative, it can become a very frustrating and scary experience. I think we can look to certain parts of the world where there has been mass turmoil and upheaval and changes because those types of processes apparently were not guaranteed. I am talking now about things east of the Elbe in Europe.

I would suggest that it would be very important just as much in making a statement to the rest of the labour force and the rest of the industrial situation in Manitoba that we do believe in the notion of negotiation, of people coming down and having differences. I do not have to like any of you and you do not have to like me, but we should be able to come down and come to a resolution on a question. I quite frankly do not think that this bill allows it for this particular group of workers. I think even worse than that—and this is what scares me from my perspective—it is setting a framework that in fact is raising unnecessary conflict, unnecessary confrontation, unnecessary intransigence between the people I am going to have to negotiate with and me because they are saying collective bargaining does not matter anymore, free collective bargaining does not matter.

I say if it is a financial question, if that is the reason, I suggest then that it should not be coming through this committee, it should be dealt with in the minister's Estimates. It should be dealt with in Finance, not here, because you know there is an awful lot of experience that is out there economically, in industrial relations, in everything else that yes, in the short term, wages may save an enterprise by rolling it back or holding them down. In the long term it does not do anything. If it is going down, it is going down. I am not suggesting Manitoba is going down, but I am suggesting that is the wrong twist to put on it.

So in answer to you, Mr. Ashton, I would suggest that the question should be basically that if there is

a belief in the free collective bargaining process, and I take it that this government does support that and all members of this committee support it, please maintain it throughout all of our realms. Have some confidence and some faith that we all are in this province people of good will, sound mind, wise intelligence and that we will in fact come to a common understanding that we will do nothing to jeopardize the province.

Mr. Ashton: I thank you for that optimistic note. It is not easy to be that optimistic at 1:18 in the morning after sitting here as long as you have.

Mr. Gidora: We are off to a party after.

Mr. Ashton: Now you have explained it. That is it, but I really thank you for your interesting thoughts, and thank you for your presentation. I really congratulate you and others in terms of sticking through this process and really coming forward and giving us some interesting ideas. Thank you very much.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Mike. We have always enjoyed your presentations.

Mr. Gidora: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman: We are now going to carry on. The next number is 77, Mr. Don V. Sullivan. Mr. Sullivan is here. Have you got a written presentation, Mr. Sullivan?

Mr. Don V. Sullivan (Private Citizen): No, sir. I thought democracy had a slower wheel to it.

Mr. Chairman: Just carry straight on then.

* (0120)

Mr. Sullivan: I was always taught that democracy sort of had a slow wheel, so I figured that I would have plenty of time to make this presentation. Unfortunately, it is only slow for the people who wish to make it slow or make it fast. I guess right now that happens to be the people who hold the power to make decisions on this committee.

However, I was here to be one of the people whom you are accommodating, as a presenter, and I think the logic is a little warped here. I think I am accommodating you. That is why I brought my sleeping bag and my tent. I worked 12 hours today. Unfortunately, I am not a member of any organized labour union that has a collective bargaining right. So here I am, really late, and I have to be up really early to go to work tomorrow. So if you are accommodating me, please spare me your nice accommodations.

I am going to speak from the heart here because I do not have anything written which is probably just as well. I spent five years in university trying to get a decent education. I think I got one, however, because unfortunately I could not hold a full-time job and go to university at the same time, and I was not privileged to be amongst those people who can afford to go to school and pay for their school and not have to work, I had to take student loans. As a result, I do not even think I have been out of university for three or four years now, I still have not even touched the principal. I am still right where I started.

That forced me to get a job that I do not think I deserve to have. I think my skills are under used, but because I have to make \$250-a-month payments, I have to take the first job that comes to me. To me, that is an injustice to the education system. That is because I have to pay all these exorbitant prices to the banks while the banks can go around and write off their Third World debts, I have to pay that. I have to pay because these people do not pay their fair share of taxes. To me, that is an injustice.

The company I work for happens to be a small business. They went into receivership under the rationale that they are going to rationalize their corporation or their small business. They closed down three of their stores. They laid off half of their staff. Fortunately, I happened to be one of those people who were kept on. That might be due to my education, I do not know. The thing is, as I am sitting here before you, not being a member of any kind of organized labour or any kind of right to a collective bargaining agreement, I have had my health care plan cut; I have had my holiday pay dissolved. The people whom I work for are getting increases in their taxes. I do not see how you can go around and have large corporations pay zilch in taxes when you put all the burden onto the middle class, the lower class and all the small business people in this province and have these corporate welfare bums get off the way they do.

I find that very upsetting. I find also the handouts to people like the Pines project, I find the degradation to the environment with such ludicrous ideas as the Disneyland alligator proposition you decided to give Ducks Unlimited free rein to, spending \$2 million possibly. I mean where is the logic here? Did you guys get into a hunting lodge and discuss this proposition or did you talk to the

people of Manitoba? There are other things. I think the rationalizing of Family Services is ludicrous. You are not saving money. You have hired yourself all full-time people. You had competent volunteers on there. You were not paying them a cent. Now you have turned around and made political appointments.

I want to get back to Bill 70 maybe for a few minutes—gee, these mosquitoes are incredible in here. They kind of remind me of Tories except I cannot go like this right away. Bill 70 is an insulting bill to the working class of this province. I do not know what your rationale is for it. To me, if you want to run a business, the people you do not hurt the first are your employees. I think the Tories have always said that they pride themselves as management of government. As far as I know, 80 percent of reasons why businesses go down under is because of poor management, and I would think that this is what is going to happen to you folks.

I think the very people you should be increasing funding to is to your employees and to the people of the province who are also your employers. They elected you. You work for them; we do not work for you. I see that everybody sort of looks around the other way. I think it is very important that you take care of the people who elect you. Not to a very narrow means of big corporations and private groups who want to build a megaproject here or megaproject there. This money could be well spent for human needs. It is the human needs that drive the economy.

Unfortunately, I do not have a right to bargain with my employer. I can only go to them as an individual and as an individual, I do not have much clout. As a collective thing, I do, so I am forced to have no holidays this year because of so-called economic policies of this government. The neglect of small business is just incredible in this province. The neglect to the environment is incredible.

I would like to say that the more you try to create—what you are doing here is you are creating a friction, a very unneeded friction. I always thought getting down and bargaining with people was in good faith. You have created a rift here; you have created your own antagonism, and it will come back to haunt you in hopefully not too long of a time. This kind of hostility does not make for favourable agreements. It makes for very angry, reluctant employees. To me, the way to run a business is to keep your employees happy, to do the extra mile, to

show that you bargain in good faith, to show that you are a compassionate person, and they in turn follow your lead. What you are getting now is you are getting the population of Manitoba turning against you and in too short of a time they will vote you out, and that is as sure as the sun shines.

I would like to close by stating that the committee people—Oh, there is a familiar face. Is that Mr. Praznik over there? Jesus, I thought I fired you. All right. I would like to just say to close that the people whom you are affecting with this particular bill are the people who work for you. I do not think that you are going to have a very productive environment for them to work hard for you. Thank you.

* (0130)

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Sullivan. Are there there any questions of the presenter?

At this time, ladies and gentlemen and members of the committee, I recognize two gentlemen out in the audience, Mr. Bob Clague and Mr. Ken Emberley. I would ask if the presenters out there would mind if we brought Mr. Emberley and Mr. Clague a little bit closer to the front of the list, and I would ask the committee members if it is okay as well. Bob Clague and then Mr. Emberley, is that correct? I am asking of the presenters who are coming forward tonight, if they would not mind if these two gentlemen went ahead. This is very unusual. You do not mind? The committee agrees?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Bob Clague (Private Citizen): . . . for the moving forward on this. In fact, you moved me forward earlier. Incidentally, is this being taped?

Mr. Chairman: Yes, it is, Mr. Clague.

Mr. Clague: Fine, then I will speak to it because otherwise I do not like using these things. I have a loud enough voice without it, normally.

First of all, you people have been getting pretty badly bashed tonight by some of the previous speakers, and it reminds me of the time when I was working in this room years ago when it was the reading room of the provincial library. One of the interesting things that I came across there was an account given of—in those days, they did not have the Hansard you have today, but some of the newspapers gave a verbatim account, excellent, much better than the newspapers ever would today, of what the members of the local House said.

There was a debate going on in the local House and one of the members accused a member on the other side of being stupid. The member on the other side replied, Mr. Speaker, the member may think that I am stupid, but let me tell him, I am not as stupid as the people who sent me here. That is him. I do not know whether it was the Standard or what it was, but it was about 1872, whatever the paper was at the time.

One of the other things doing research in this room that struck me was that I had to go through debates in the House of Commons. As you people know who sit in the Assembly, the debates are pretty repetitious, so are the presentations made here. So what I am going to give you tonight will be brief, and it will be in the way of an addendum. As a matter of fact, it may not sit very well with some people with whom I came down here, but my background, very briefly, is in the field of history. I have experience in government and I have been in Education.

I would like to put this thing on a larger perspective, so first of all, what I want to point out is I am going to try to avoid repetition. I do not want to repeat what has been already said. There have been a number of good points said, fine. Secondly, I am not going to apply the kitchen-sink principle, that is you toss in everything including the kitchen sink and that has been tonight quite frequently. The third is I am going to try to avoid as far as possible, nobody can do it completely, a subjective approach.

It seems to me that the government, the opposition, the employees and other interested groups are working within a double framework. There are two sets of arguments involved here. One is the downward amount of revenue available to provincial governments by virtue of the cuts made at the federal level. The second is the recession. Within that framework, this Bill 70 is set.

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Acting Chairman, in the Chair)

There are two problems here, therefore. The first problem is the governmental problem, how to reduce expenditures in compliance with the reduced revenues. The second problem is the employee problem, how to deal with the reduced income in the face of gradual inflation, which still continues.

The next point is that of philosophy. Here we have two distinct philosophies: A government which sets out to curtail spending and sometimes does it in a pretty crude manner, using a broad axe

instead of a scalpel. That is not new. That was true of the Sterling Lyon government, and it is no monopoly of Tories. The second is the philosophy of labour, which has been hollering all night for fair treatment.

This business of fair treatment unfortunately was not quite what we were hearing when times were good and some of the labour people were hollering for more and more and more for the organized unions, but not giving too much attention to the people who were not in organized labour and who were eventually going to suffer by virtue of their wage increases.

The proposal I have to make here is to attempt to offer something that is constructive rather than something that is confrontational. Tonight we have heard confrontation from both sides. You have heard it before. You are going to hear it through all these hearings here and across the province, ad infinitum, ad nauseam, to say nothing of the repetitious arguments.

What I would like to suggest to you are two things, and this may sound to the government like a loss of face. It is not intended as such at all. I would like to suggest that the government withdraw the legislation and go back and bargain, but bargain along these lines, that they would reduce first of all by, say, 10 percent—I am not going to fix a number—the salary, the annual remuneration, of all high-paid civil servants and the MLAs, and secondly that they reduce or freeze those at an intermediate level, and those who are at the lowest level below the poverty line be given an increase. It may not be as much as they would like, but it would be some measure of increase. This would be a more equitable approach than what is being done right now where the burden ostensibly is cast right across, but 5 percent of \$150,000 is not 5 percent of \$10,000 or \$15,000 a year.

The other thing is this. At present, in order to finance the increase that you would be paying to those in the lower levels of the public service, it would be further financed by a more carefully graduated gradient or scale on your provincial surtax so that those persons in the higher income levels would pay more, and this would only be fair and would tide you over the evil hour with which you are faced at present.

If this proposal were followed, I would suggest to you that it would defuse this present polarization that

is taking place and needless polarization in which two people are yelling across from both sides at each other. If the bill carries through as it is, it is going to leave unnecessary hard feelings, but it is going to do something else.

* (0140)

The thing that has bothered me for a number of years now is this. In the last something like I would say roughly 20 years, there has been a revival of antediluvian Toryism, a regrettable feature. By antedeluvian Toryism, what I refer to is the flood of democracy that brought Beaconsfield into the 19th Century and brought his party, the Tory party in England, into the 19th Century and enlisted for it the support of labour, because whether he in his heart's heart favoured them or not, he knew on which side his political bread was buttered. Today, with Reaganism, with Thatcherism, with Mulroneysism, we have been moving in exactly the opposite direction.

I would like to suggest to you that if you wish to refurbish your image in any way, and I do not mean by hiring high-priced PR baloney artists, but by doing something tangible that you consider seriously reverting to the high ideal of equity and fairness that prompted Beaconsfield to bring his party forward into the 19th Century. That, members of the committee, is all I have to say.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Thank you, Mr. Clague, for a very interesting presentation, particularly at this early hour of the morning. I am sure that there will be a few questions of some of the members of the committee?

Mr. Ashton: Actually, I just wanted to add my comments too, that it is an interesting historical perspective, and I think that is one of the interesting things, by the way, of the public hearings, that we get a variety of perspectives. As you said, perhaps sometimes with the kitchen sink thrown in as well, but it was very nice to have such a lucid historical perspective tonight, and I thank you very much for sticking with us and coming through with such a good presentation—

Mr. Clague: Normally, I do not get to bed until about two hours after this anyway, so it does not matter.

Mr. Praznik: I have just more of a comment. I too am a nighthawk, and I want to thank you for your presentation. The only comment that I offer, I think if the government knew it could withdraw the bill and

could negotiate at the table as opposed to having third-party arbitrations or selectors make the decision, that certainly would be our preference, but regrettably those third-party forms of decision making are what we face, and where we were able to bargain in the case with the Manitoba Nurses' Union, that agreement is exempt from this legislation. If we could be at the table in rough times and bargain, we would not be here tonight, but thank you for your comments. They are appreciated.

Mr. Ken Emberley (Private Citizen): Madam Acting Chairman, my name is Kenneth Emberley. We often wonder who the people are sitting up here. I know some are supposed to be MLAs and one is a chairman, but there are no name tags, and we wondered if it would be a common courtesy, but then we are not sure whether we should ask for that.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): Mr. Emberley, are you requesting that the members of the committee identify themselves? Is that your wish?

Mr. Emberley: There are six or eight people and then new people come in and they say their names and we often do not hear them because some of them speak softly, but if they had nametags on the table, it might be possible to see what the people look like when we came. It would enhance the prestige and charm of the committee.

The Acting Chairman (Mrs. Dacquay): That is a very worthwhile suggestion, and I think it is something that all members would be interested in pursuing.

Mr. Emberley: Thank you kindly. It was meant well, really.

Ladies and gentlemen, Madam Acting Chairman, this is a very difficult thing we face today. I have been taking part in hearings like this for more than 21 years. You cannot guess the disappointment and frustration it is to go to 18 hearings and know that 18 disasters result. It makes you excited to go to the 19th hearing and count on knowing that the system works so well that there is almost a 100 percent chance that the 19th hearing will produce a disaster too.

We often discuss among ourselves the point of going to a meeting like this. My friend and I spent a week preparing for the MacDonald Commission report of Donald MacDonald and we knew it was corrupt when he started, because he is a member of the trilateral commission that works for

international business. When Trudeau's MacDonald Commission reported, they recommended free trade and Meech Lake. The four key paragraphs of Meech Lake for the Conservatives came right out of the Liberals' recommendation. So we look at the 100 percent corrupt system, and you must forgive us if we are a little bit skeptical of the possibility of positive results.

This is a good institution, a grand institution. These committee hearings are, I understand, the Law Amendments committee and your committee, fairly rare among provinces in Canada. It is a great institution. The results are lousy most of the time, but it is a great institution.

Are you aware that during the last 10 years, almost every one of the main churches in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom have bitterly criticized with very sound economics the basis of running the right-wing agenda, the extreme corporate agenda of taking it out on the labouring classes?

You must be aware if you have read any of the papers in the last 10 years that for 15 years the United States has led the so-called civilized world in dividing its income unfairly between rich and lower classes. The United States has now passed Spain among 15 nations as the nation that divides its money most unfairly between the upper and the lower classes. I have reports from 1986 and 1984 and 1990 from three different sources, all confirming this. It is one of the proudest claims of Canada that last year was one of the best years for business there ever was. In the world, there were 24 new billionaires, and in the last 10 years, we have created eight billionaires in Canada.

It is a really proud record, it states right in here, and this is part of the cause of our problem. Since the 1980s, Canada created eight billionaire families. The American Forbes magazine says Canada has more billionaires than any other country in the world except the U.S.A., West Germany and Japan. Canada has more billionaires per capita than any country in the whole world. The Reichmann family increased its wealth in one year from \$8.4 billion to \$11 billion. The Thomson family of companies, with 600 daily newspapers, might as well use printing presses to make money, because they make a million and a half dollars a year profit.

The only way they can do that is to take money away from the lower classes. They do that with the

help of government through the tax system. They have been doing it for 30 years. They did it better under Trudeau and they have done it better under Mulroney than any other way in the world. This is why you have to take money away from the lower classes and the trade union people and deny them the right to bargain.

I am kind of an old-fashioned person. I heard from a previous speaker here who gave a talk about how grateful we should be that we do not live in the Soviet Union and the Ukraine, that we live in one of the world's greatest democracies. I wrote Trudeau in 1982 and I told him I feel more afraid for my own security in my own country today than I have at any time since Hitler was on the English Channel.

Since then, my Prime Minister sold my country to the United States on January 1, 1989. He sold my country and the people and the resources and the control of the government to the United States and their transnational corporations, and I hate his guts. Many, many people do in the world, and if you are following the identically same policies, we have a lot of the same kind of respect and admiration for you.

What style of government brought in this kind of thing? We are so financially in difficulty. Mr. Manness said, we are \$5 billion in debt in Manitoba, mostly Hydro debt, and we have to pay \$500 million a year in interest, and the province is almost going bankrupt. We have to save money. So there is a window of opportunity. The best way to save money is to borrow another five and a half billion dollars so that each year we will pay a billion dollars in interest, and that way you have solved your financial problems. For the million people in Manitoba, all we owe is \$30 billion in interest payments during the next 50 years to help the banks and to carry out the duty of the cabinet of Manitoba, which is to help the Americans get cheaper electricity so that they can compete better with Canadian business.

* (0150)

Now say that over nine times to yourselves slowly and write it on a blackboard. We sell electricity at a loss to make money, guaranteed because of the basis of 40 years of records of Crown corporations in Manitoba and Canada. Where did the Hydro ever produce any records to show what profits they have made?

This government is almost as good as Howard Pawley's government—identically the same policy.

Howard Pawley shut down every single major worthwhile project in the country for five years to get the money to build Limestone, up to our eyeballs in debt. Your government is scraping money together. I think there is \$500 million in the budget for Conawapa—\$500 million. Boy, that would have gone a little way to pay some of the raises for the labouring classes. I bet it would have only taken a fifth of that to pay the wages for the labouring classes.

How many of you have studied megaprojects and their economic efficiency? How many of you really studied it in depth? Did you know that in 1983, the only industrial strategy of the Government of Canada was 234 megaprojects, 90 percent energy, 90 percent frontier energy megaprojects, and within two years every single one had gone bankrupt, because they could not compete with energy efficiency and low-cost energy that could come from renewable resources.

Back in 1975, Business Week magazine had a special issue, 15 pages, and they said that right now we are investing 9 percent a year on major energy projects. The second you transfer enough money into more energy projects to make it 18 percent, we will get a big recession and every recovery from the big recession will be faint and half-hearted and short-lived and will go back into another recession. It happened exactly on schedule just as Hitler had written in Mein Kampf. What you are trying to do and what Bourassa is trying to do in Quebec is create another recession with your energy megaprojects.

You are not serving the people of Manitoba at all. You are working for the banks, the international banks, the foreign banks, the Royal Bank, the Bank of Nova Scotia, the American Express. When you have your megaprojects and you have to take it out on the labouring classes, you are carrying out a corporate agenda. It has nothing to do with the well-being of the people of Manitoba, and that is why you are so bitterly resented.

Do any of you know a person who has ever belonged to the Chamber of Commerce? I wonder if some of you do. It is supposed to be a respected organization. How many of you realize it is a businessman's union? Businessmen gather together in a protective association to help and promote their interests and lobby with government. It is exactly what trade union people do. How many of you have thought that the profits and the shortage

of taxes that have come from corporations should make it necessary for you to withdraw the rights of some of the Chambers of Commerce to lobby government and to use the funds they have, just the way you are doing to unions? Have you thought of that?

Your shortage of money is your shortage of tax revenue. You do not attack the Chamber of Commerce, but you attack the lower classes. How many are aware of the major movement in the United States to create a nonunion society?—the same as Tom d'Aquino has brought up to Canada and Mr. Somerville, a huge organization dedicated with the richest businessmen of the country to a nonunion society. They want a one-party country with no opposition, no socialists, no trade unions, a one-party, Christian, capitalist country. That is almost exactly the same goal that Adolf Hitler had.

You want to think about that when you put in your legislation. People know the names. We have been dealing with these issues for 20, 30, 40 years. We are not 12-year-old virgins. We may look it, but we are not. I have been down in Nicaragua and watched what George Bush was doing. I have talked to the people since George Bush put back in the tail end of the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua. I saw what happened. I know people who have been in El Salvador. You want to realize that we are watching you and monitoring what you are doing and if you follow the same kind of policies they follow in their antiunion policies, you get the same amount of feeling from the people.

Mr. Mulroney has a lot of feeling from the people. Mr. Spicer said it. Now, Mr. Spicer has more feeling against them than Mulroney ever had, because most of the people think this Spicer was a traitor. He never did nothing—he never did nothing. He did not have one piece of courage to come up with one single recommendation. If I ever see Spicer, I will tell him what I think of him.

You want to realize that in a democracy people are able to bargain. You do not take away the rights from the lowest classes in society by an arbitrary ruling. You do not do that in a democracy. It could not happen in a democracy. You do not take six decentralized citizens' groups that are looking after the welfare of the children and smash the organization and spit on the faces and slap the faces of their hundred volunteer citizens. That is right. I just feel the same way as if this Mr. Filmon and his agent had slapped the faces of those people. That

is the way I feel when I look at Mr. Filmon walking down the aisle here. That is the kind of guy he is. It is all because of economics.

The budget process is the same now as it was 40 or 50 years ago. I have a 30-page report from the Senate on poverty. Just think about it. Ten years ago, the level of the minimum wage provided 82 percent of the poverty line to the people of Manitoba and Canada. Now, because of deliberate policies of government and corporations to keep the minimum wage low, the minimum wage provides 42 percent of the poverty level of income. They get half as much as they got 10 years ago. The last '83 to '87, when the labourers got a 9 percent increase in wages while inflation went up 13 percent, managers got a 23 percent increase in income; corporate executives got a 30 percent increase in income. The top always get the gravy. Now, when the time comes along when we should be picking up from the second recession, and the workers should be able to catch up a little tiny bit in wages, they are not only not getting inflation, they are getting no wage increase.

Do you remember that Ronald Reagan's proudest boast was that he went for 10 years and never let the minimum wage rise. For 10 years, the poor people got 4 percent, 5 percent or 6 percent poorer every year and the great Reagan's hero, Getty and Loughheed in Alberta, did exactly the same thing. We have done almost as well, and that is why there is poverty in this country. One child in five goes to bed hungry every night in Canada and is living in poverty in a country with eight billionaires, and it partly because of tax policy that Mr. Mulroney and other good Conservatives and Mr. Trudeau and the governments have put in force. You do not fool us a bit with what you are doing. We know, and it is a deliberate policy. I have 10 books at home that I have studied.

What has happened to the United States, to follow this perfect example? Just think about it. There is a report here. We can become successful like the U.S.A. if we follow their policies, and every policy being followed in Canada is an exact copy of the U.S.A. In 1980, the U.S.A. had a trade surplus of 17 billion; in 1986, they had a \$136 billion deficit. In the 1970s, productivity grew in the U.S.A. .6 percent a year; from '79 to '86, it grew .4 percent a year. The U.S.A., the world's largest creditor nation in 1980, now is the world's largest debtor nation in 1986.

Who pays taxes? Here is \$1,213 million in profits from corporations, 14 corporations—not a cent of tax paid. The government will not collect tax from them—\$449 million in profits from another 12 companies and they still got \$50 million in subsidies.

* (0200)

Here is a nice little story about the eight billionaires. There is a little graph. Private individuals paid \$57 billion in taxes in 1988. Corporations paid their own subsidies and they paid \$4 billion on \$60 billion in profits—\$4 billion on \$60 billion in profits because of low taxes by the federal government of Canada, our good Conservative federal government, Conservative, but Trudeau had done almost the same six years before.

You are short of money to pay the labouring classes. There is a report from the Senate. The United States foreign investment is essential to make our country work so that we can produce Hydro projects for them to export the energy they want. They invested \$3.9 billion over 42 years. Think of that carefully. All they own now is \$72 billion worth of Canadian companies from retained earnings, mostly tax exempt. All they got for the \$3.9 billion investment is \$58 billion sent to the States, tax exempt. That is why you are short of money. It is not because of the working class. What happened to corporate profits? Corporate profits before taxes rose from 1986, '87, '88, '89 from \$45 billion to \$56 billion to \$62 billion to \$60 billion. What happened to the taxes? While the corporate profits were going up from \$45 billion to \$60 billion, their taxes dropped from 32 percent down to 26 percent down to 25 percent to 24 percent. Profits rose, taxes dropped, but we can always take it out of the wages of the lower class.

Direct taxes, personal direct taxes, \$85 billion, \$107 billion, \$112 billion for individuals. Corporate taxes, \$14 billion, \$15 billion, \$16 billion, \$15 billion, and that includes the subsidies they get back. The Canadian companies paid 8 percent of corporate taxes, 8 percent of their profits on corporate taxes; the States paid 8.1 percent; the United Kingdom, 10.6 percent; Japan, 22.9 percent of their profits were paid in taxes. Out comes the headline in the paper, Canadian companies are paying too much in taxes.

It does not matter where you look. I want to ask you, if you had a choice—I belong to the Choices coalition—what would it have cost for the 48,000

workers to add a thousand, 1,500, 2,000 in wages? About \$100 million for a year? That is one-fifth of the money you set aside for Conawapa in your budget. You did not have to do that, but you chose to do Conawapa because it is good to have the energy megaprojects for the Americans. That is our job in Canada, to provide electricity to the States, but you made that deliberate choice. You took the money away from the working people that would have spent that \$100 million within a week of getting most of it. You would have fed \$100 million into the economy of Manitoba, but because free trade is the goal of the governments in Manitoba—free trade and looking after American corporations are the goals of the governments of Canada and Manitoba—you do not give a damn about the economy of Manitoba. That is why free trade is so popular. That is why all our little businesses are going downhill in Manitoba.

What are the new companies coming in here? A big company, a foreign, American service company in—what is the thing?—the big BS line in the paper. They are going to create 5,000 jobs. Yes, but let me ask you. Who the hell is creating all those jobs in southern Manitoba? Those 5,000 jobs are going to be Canadian jobs they are going to steal from Canadian companies, and put all little Canadian Manitoban companies out of business. That is what we do. We are very good at those kinds of things.

You see, we are a Christian country. How come every single program of government for the last five years has been to cut support for the family—every single program cut. They had to make war on the Indians. I watched them for five months, the government sitting there picking their nose and sneering and laughing at the Indians, while they stood on their own land for five months. Then General Mulroney and General Bourassa said, let us send in the French cavalry. They sent in the French cavalry, and I am so glad that guy got killed. He deserved it. You know, they fired a thousand bullets trying to kill Indian women and children through stun grenades, trying to kill Indian women and children standing on their own land asking for human rights. Mr. Mulroney says we will take the money out of daycare and out of welfare and out of Indian education. We ought to have a war in Iraq? Okay, we will take the money out of somewhere else. We will take it from the poor and from family services.

I want to ask you people: some day you are going to be asked to stand up and say why people that call themselves Christians are so darn mean spirited and hardhearted. I call myself a Christian, but I am so damned ashamed of it. It is pitiful. Read the book, *Facing West—500 years of Manifest Destiny, Indian hating and empire building from Plymouth Rock to Vietnam*. Oh, it is a darling story. You will love it. Here is the people's history of the United States, celebrating 500 years of Christopher Columbus, 500 years of racism and stealing other people's land. There is a story, of brutality and war. You think Clarence Darrow tells about labour strife? This book tells nothing except labour strife—nothing except labour strife.

I just want to read one thing to finish off, one brief quotation. I have a beautiful book from the beloved Pierre Berton—the second Great Depression of 1989, but this is talking about a little strike in the mines in Saskatchewan in a place called—a little place in Saskatchewan where they had a whole bunch of mines. They had a strike and the people were trying to ask for wages. In the 1930s, you might not remember, a lot of people were getting 15 cents an hour. Two inspectors of the Mounted Police had gone out to the town and inspected the town, and the strikers were all peaceful. There was no trouble in the town.

Two different Mounted Police officers stated this in their official report: He believed that the operators of the coal mines wished the police to start something. Some of the Americans had been heard to say that if this was in the States, it would soon be settled. The strikers would be mowed down with machine guns as they carried on the way they do up here in Canada.

Let me tell you, I worked for the big Boeing military airplane company at the airport for 15 years. Back in about '84, the company had made, four years in a row, \$500 million a year net profit in the U.S.A. Not a cent of federal taxes did they pay on \$2 billion in profits over four years. They got a \$200-million tax credit to help them with the next year. That was the year they told us—I was making \$7.80 an hour and they said you can have a 35-cent raise. That will be two and a half cents, a 2.5 percent raise. If you do not like it, go to hell.

We went on strike. They hired policemen, and they had video cameras spying on us. They had cruiser cars with guys armed with shotguns and revolvers taking strike breakers through the place.

I had a woman assaulted by a policeman that grabbed her breasts when he was pushing her back on the picket line. She came into the strike office after and she asked if anybody had a gun or a knife. She wanted to go after him. If she could have found a gun or a knife, she would have gone after him—just like some of the police we meet today.

(Mr. Chairman in the Chair)

I want to ask you, why do you hate the labouring classes so much? Think about it, because we are all watching you. We are all monitoring you. We all know your names from the records, and we are ashamed. I am ashamed that I have to come down two nights in a row here and talk to you people about the brutality of the system that you operate. I have the books on the United States, 10 years of official war, the FBI against Negroes, Indians and trade unions. I see it happening in my country, and I am just deeply ashamed.

There is no excuse for it. It is purely and only for profit and because of the ideological bent of the politicians that hate the labouring classes and feel: we do not have to have a democracy; we can do whatever we want. We are the bosses. We can do whatever we want and those labourers will jump. We will break a contract; our word does not mean anything. We have \$500 million in the Conawapa kitty; I do not care.

That is not a good enough record for a government. That is not the way a democratic government should operate, sir. That ends my message.

* (0210)

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Emberley. Any questions of Mr. Emberley?

Mr. Reid: Just a comment, Mr. Chair, if I might thank the presenter for his presentation. I found it very informative and enlightening. I am sure we will be hearing from him some time again in the future.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Reid. Thank you, Mr. Emberley, for coming forward this evening. Sorry I was not here to hear the entire presentation, but I will make a point of reading it, because I have always enjoyed your presentations.

Mr. Emberley: I thank you kindly for your permission to attend the meeting and make my presentation. If I may, I will give these papers to somebody to pass up to the Chairman, if you wish to have them.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Mr. Emberley. At this time, we are going to revert to No. 78, Mr. Randall McQuaker; No. 79, Cathy Hellsten; No. 80, Erika Wiebe; No. 81, Tom Simms. Mr. Simms has indicated he will be present on Saturday. No. 82, Rob Altemeyer. Good evening, Rob. I guess I do not have to ask you if you have a written presentation.

Mr. Rob Altemeyer (Private Citizen): Probably not. No, this is pretty "winging." Good morning, everybody. The only reason I am wired like this is because I have been pigging out on junk food. So it is not your fault.

I am basically here to tell you a story. I hope that brings some relief to you. You do not look like you are too pleased being here at two o'clock in the morning. I cannot really say I blame you. I figured I would do everyone a break—politicians, public—at once and try and take an informal approach to things just this once. The relevance of my story might seem a little different, a little distant, rather, but I beg your indulgence, because I think it comes together at the end. I wrote it, naturally. Maybe it does.

Actually, one the members—I am not sure if they are still here—was reading up on this earlier in the sports section. So I have somebody on my side anyway. I play baseball, a great sport. I love it to death. You know, as I am sure the guy knows, just about anything can happen. I mean, I even played with the Manness boys, good old Clayton's kids. His youngest son was my catcher, a great honour, I am telling you; but Clayton is not here so there goes my shot at brownie points tonight. I just thought I would mention that anyway.

I play hardball. I am a pitcher. As I am sure some of you maybe know, the guy in the middle of the field gets to do a fair bit of stuff, makes a lot of decisions, not all of them good, but he makes a lot of decisions and it affects everybody else around him: everyone else on the field; everyone in the bleachers; what they are doing; how they are feeling. Kind of like government—kind of.

There are these other people out there on the field called umpires. The relationship between pitchers and umpires is immortal, even well documented on a few occasions. Umpires, of course, are supposed to be impartial. They are not supposed to have any particular interest in the outcome of a game, kind of like public service workers in that sense—impartial, middle of the road, that kind of thing.

Well, the relationship between pitchers and umpires has some correlation, I think, to the relationship between government and public employees. Every once in a while government will get an idea it loves. You know, there was not too much back door bickering and everyone is pretty pleased with themselves. Cabinet is happy. They throw it out in the open—a nasty reception. The public does not think much of it. Public employees are not at all shy at hiding their opinions.

The government says, what is going on here? What have we got? I mean maybe sometimes government just thinks public employees are incompetent, overpaid, et cetera, fat that needs to be cut out of the system. Other times, maybe they just plain do not agree with the decisions, just like I might not agree with an umpire's decision to call my pitch, down the heart of the plate, a ball.

Now, I do not know too much about politics, especially at this time of the day, but I do know in baseball that there are a heck of a lot of ways for a pitcher to rein in an umpire or let him know what is going through his head, if he has not made it vocal already—sort of a catharsis thing, you might say. One of these is called the stud buster.

Basically, what it involves is the catcher and the pitcher pretend to have a little communication problem. The catcher steps out from behind the plate, as if to receive a pitch out, throw out a runner, something like that. Instead, the pitcher does not even notice that at all, throws the ball right down the heart of the plate right into the umpire. The one bit of defence that the umpire has is the catcher, apart from a few pieces of plastic in strategic places. That is about it.

I saw this once—saw it, mind you. I was not taking part in it though the person involved was about my height, even left-handed, red-headed, kind of goofy looking. He reached what we call the summit, the point of no return in your windup, coiled up like a spring about ready to explode and throw that sucker 85, 90 miles an hour. The catcher had stepped out, nothing between the pitcher and the umpire, no protection whatsoever. I kind of cringed. This was my teammate, the pitcher was. I knew the play was on. I still did not like it.

The buster is just about the lowest, most vile, unfair aspect of the game that I love. He held that umpire's life in the balance. Immoral? Yes, I would say so. Necessary? Probably not. Cool? Oh yes,

it is a hard game. He held that life kind of like the government holds the lives of every Manitoban in the balance on a daily basis, all one million of us. We are the government's responsibility. Government is our protection. We are its charges.

* (0220)

Correct me if I am wrong on this, please, but in a democracy you have a system of, shall we say, checks and balances: kind of what makes it special, makes sure that no particular segment of the society or a particular part of a government or any part within gets too much say in matters that affect the greater whole. Laws are what do this. There are other factors. Laws is a big one; continuity between government; continuity between ages. They are, to go back to the analog; the catchers standing in front of the umpires.

Earlier tonight, for the first time, I came across statement 9(1)(b) in this Bill 70. We have heard it before. I might as well read it again.

"The Lieutenant Governor in Council may make regulations . . . (b) extending the application of all or any part of this Act to any collective agreement on any terms and conditions that the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers appropriate;". I can look at something like this and think, who is this serving? What segment of society is asserting itself? Who is going to pay the price? Is this something that is in the interests of the greater whole, as we would like to think government is here to do? I do not think so.

As others tonight have much more eloquently stated than I will or could, that it quite basically amounts to nothing less than the removal of a right of thousands of people—your own employees—to freedom from protection, protection from exploitation now and into the future. Immoral? Well, something like that, one line all by itself, kind of undermines every collective agreement that has ever been written, most specifically, with a nice retroactive clause that is also located in it. It wipes out anything that has been signed since September of 1990. There is a few grounds for immorality I think, especially when you consider all the people who are going to be affected and their families, hundreds of thousands of people.

Necessary? Maybe. Like I said, I do not know about fiscal spending, but we have heard a lot of people tonight that seem to think that a fiscally responsible government—a Tory government, any

government—has a lot of options about where it gets its money, a lot of places that have not been tapped and a lot of places that have been overtapped. I do not think you need to hit up your public people for more money. There were lots of examples of that earlier tonight.

Cruel? Oh yes, that hits the mark. You might be wondering what the pitcher did, the person in this all-powerful situation, what he did to that umpire. He came over after the inning was over and sat down next to me. I said, the buster was on on that one was he not? He said, yes. I said, why did you do it? He said, well, I may be a pitcher, I may be playing in a pressure cooker sport—game, whatever you want to call it—but I am human, so is the ump. So I threw the ball to my catcher like nothing happened. I figured I owed everybody that much. It is your turn to pitch.

Mr. Chairman: Are there any questions of Mr. Altemeyer? If not, as usual, Rob, it was very entertaining as well.

Mr. Altemeyer: Well, thank you. I am going to bed.

Mr. Chairman: Good night.

Mr. Altemeyer: Good night everybody.

Mr. Chairman: No. 83, Donne Flanagan. This presenter is one of the presenters who is going to be registered for Friday or Saturday. No. 84, Richard Orlandini and Richard will be registered for Friday or Saturday; 85, David Hesco; 86, Gordon Landriault; 87, Cynthia Devine—Cynthia will not be dropped from the list; 88, Jim Silver—will not be dropped from the list; 89, Marian Yeo; 90, Val Kellberg. Ms. Kellberg, would you have a written presentation?

Ms. Val Kellberg (Private Citizen): Of course, one day's notice—needless to say, no. For the record, of course, it is because I was advised yesterday and work a full-time job and have three children, et cetera.

Mr. Chairman: Just carry on then.

Ms. Kellberg: Okay, I shall. At this point in the evening, I do not even know where to begin. I am sure you are as brain dead as I am feeling right now and I just have no idea what it is I really want to say anymore. I did when I came in. There were all kinds of things and I felt very animated, about them, and all.

On the way here I was thinking about the absurdity of the situation. I could not think of the words for it. The only thing I could come up with was the absurd hypocrisy of the whole thing, coming to a public hearing to talk to people, some of whom have clearly said that they do not want to talk or listen to people, which is, I assume, the whole idea behind this bill. That you are not interested in negotiating or discussing—I thought, this is really silly.

Okay, it is a public hearing. Let us give it credit here, and it is something I believe strongly in, in terms of community representation. Then I walked in here and I—really, I mean the humour in it is even greater than that, to see people sitting here reading newspapers. I think I could count about two sets of eyes that were paying attention to the speaker. It was a truly amazing experience. I thought, yes, we are listening; sure, we are listening; you know, we are really interested here.

Now it is my turn. It is 2:30 in the morning and I think, who cares. I mean, the motivation here is quite slim I imagine. I did not know the process for this, and I am afraid I came with a number of questions, which I gather I am not supposed to ask, but, rhetorically, I gather I can.

I came with a comment. I think one of the things I wanted to say to you and by “you” I mean the people who seem to have cut yourself off from people in the public. So you can choose if you are them. I suspect that if you are one of them you will not be paying attention anyhow. I want to tell you that I am a person. I am a person. I am flesh and blood. I have feelings, I think, I care. I go to work, I have children. I am a person.

I am not a position. I am not a position that you chop out of the government. Oh, well, let us get rid of these six positions here, these 300 there, that 1,000 there. I am not a position. I am a person, with a family. I am not a chunk of dollars. Oh, well, we need to cut a few hundred thousand, a million, whatever it is. I am not a chunk of dollars. I am a person.

I am not some blob who sits in a chair somewhere in an office, supposedly pulling in a huge pay cheque and doing nothing for it. I work, and I care for the people I work with. I work with a number of different people, and they are important to me. They are what give me meaning. That is the purpose of it all for me, those people. So do not

forget that we are people working with people. There seems to be this huge gap that somehow ends outside of either cabinet or the discussions in the Legislature. I do not know.

There seems to be this gap somewhere there, that it is inanimate objects. I was feeling like maybe this was a variation on Star Trek or something—you know, a bunch of robots sitting around the table or downstairs or wherever. I remember talking to somebody. I said, I do not understand. I do not understand the decisions that people are making in the government. I just cannot understand it. I guess that is my next point. They said, well, you know what has happened is that we have been invaded by aliens. Honestly, really, I do not understand it.

* (0230)

I have spent a lot of my life working with different cultures and trying to understand different cultures. This is not my culture. This is not my country. You are not my people if these are the decisions that you come to: let us not talk to the community; let us not talk to people. I do not know where you are coming from. Unfortunately, I am white—I am glad to see there are a couple of female faces here now, because for awhile there I was not sure if that part of me was even being represented. I do not know where that comes from.

I work with the government. I have been a term employee for five years now. I go on, from term to term. Currently, the extensions of my terms have gone down to three-month extensions. Fortunately, I have a partner who brings in an income that is somewhat reliable. I have three children. I am fortunate to have a two-income family. I have no idea what other people do. How do you live on three-month extensions? Like I told you, I love my job, otherwise I would say screw it, but I like it. The people I work with are too important for me to do that.

I say, okay, job security is not everything. I can manage without that, right? So, I figure, okay, that is all right Valerie, you do not have to have job security. Then somebody comes down to me and says, well, Valerie we are going to decentralize. Pack your bags. You know, you have this big opportunity—you might get moved out to Brandon. Oh good, okay, well let us forget that I have a husband who is employed here. Let us forget I have children with all their connections in the

community—and mine. I would love to live in Brandon, but I mean that is not the only factor here. It is not as simple as that.

So I think, okay, well, we will deal with decentralizing. Then somebody else comes at me and says, oh, well, if you are not decentralized, then I guess we will cut your job. Yes, that is what we are going to do. We are going to cut your job now, Valerie. You know, like you work for the government, we have to cut your job. Okay, we have not cut your job; well, we will just put more taxes on; you know, the city, the feds, and the province. Let us just tax you a bit more, because you are employed. You are middle income. By gosh, you must be able to afford this, can you not?

Taxes is not enough—Hydro, et cetera. You get the picture. Oh, and then, pardon me, I have three little children, right?—ages eight and under. Shall I mention the little issue with daycare that now comes up, paying for child care. I pay approximately—this year, it will probably be over it—but I pay close to \$12,000 for child care in a year. You are telling me now, sorry, Valerie, we have upped everything else around you. We have threatened your job. You may not have one, but Valerie, you are not going to get an increase. You pull that money out of your little hidden bank account somewhere. I am not sure where that hidden bank account is.

Yet I do okay. Money for me is not really the issue here, really and honestly. I am paid well. I would live happily with what I have, but the thing I cannot stand with this, the thing that is unbearable to me, the thing that I cannot forgive, is the process. How do you come down to people and just say, we are not interested. We are not prepared to talk to you. You are not important. You know—we know, we up here know. We know what the best thing is for all of you people down there. We make these decisions. We tell you how to do stuff. How do you do that?

The morale in my office, my morale, right now is so low that it is like grave time. It is so low. We had a farewell luncheon for four people the other day because their contracts are not being renewed, or they just basically had it with some of the things going on. We have had people on sick leave. In my five years there I have never seen medical leave that is being ordered by their doctors because of the situation. You cannot do this to people constantly. You cannot keep chopping at them, chopping at them. I mean that is great when you are in power

and you can say to people, I am in power and this is what I am going to do to you, and boy, do you feel good. I mean you can do what you want, because you have all this position and power. But it does not feel so hot to those under you. We are people.

I guess the thing I came to say then also is, I just do not understand. No matter how I try to wrap my head around it, I just—where I come from I cannot understand what you are doing. How do you explain your actions when you say, poof, collective bargaining out the window? What do you do when you go home at night and say, we are not listening to people anymore. This is our democracy, in our democracy we do not listen to people. I do not understand that. The hypocrisy is beyond my comprehension.

How does such a small group of people in a province this size feel so righteous, so omnipotent, that they can sit there and do this to other people? I do not understand that. I really do not understand it, and I need somebody to help me understand that. Somewhere there is an explanation. I know there is. I have yet to find somebody who can explain that. You say it is dollars. It is not. That is nonsense. I mean, I do not know where that story comes from. We have had all these stats tonight. I cannot add anything to that, obviously, but how do you come up with that story? How do you have the guts to come up with stories, like it is money, it is economics? It is something I cannot understand. If I lie to my children that way, if I treated the people I work with that way, I would be out the door. What I cannot figure out is how come you are not, the people who have made these decisions, and it amazes me. There must be a reason. There have got to be reasons, and I just do not understand it. I just cannot. I just cannot see it.

I guess to you perhaps this is consulting or community contact or something, when you set up here and expect people to come out at eight o'clock at night. They probably have kids at home and they have to work tomorrow. We have heard that story many, many times tonight. What happened before now? What happened? Who did you talk to and what kind of community involvement did you have? I do not understand why you do not think you can trust me enough to come to me and talk to me. Why do you not trust me? Why can you not come to me and say, what do you think of this idea? By me, I mean many of the people out there. Why can you not do that? I do not understand that. What is it I

have done that you feel that you have to come to squash like a bug and say we are not interested? You do not have anything to say. You are not going to have any collective bargaining. I just do not understand.

I think that really says mostly what I want to say. I wanted simply to say that I am a person. I am not a position. I am not all those other things. I have a family I am trying to support and that I am trying to take care of. I am trying to live in a very depressing period in time, and there are many of those. My depression is nowhere near what other people's is. I am a social worker. I am a trainer. I work with people whose conditions are multi, multi times worse than mine, and people who also work within the government whose conditions are worse economically and in many other ways.

It is not appropriate. I do not care if I am okay financially or whatever, I still need to be heard. I still need to be part of a process. I am not just a statistic somewhere. Thank you.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you, Ms. Kellberg. There is a question or two for you.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Chairperson, I thank you for your presentation, because quite frankly I share some of your frustrations. I too wonder sometimes what is going on in this country, and I have been in public life for 10 years. When I see some of the things that have been happening on a broader scale, and this bill, I really question some of the things that are happening. I guess the way that I approach it is, I can assure you that we will be fighting on this bill and ensuring that this process is not a wasted process. I know it is frustrating sometimes to come before this committee, and I have sat through 10 years of committees.

One thing about democracy is, win, lose or draw, the ability to have that opportunity to have your say, and I think that is what I want to indicate here, please do not feel that your very fine sentiments are being ignored. I agree with you, I think it is time we got beyond the stereotypes—and I mentioned this earlier about the scapegoat factor with this particular bill—and recognize the reality, it deals with people, people like you. I think we had some similar presentations yesterday. I remember one woman. I guess she had to start her shift in two and a half hours as a nurses' aide in a nursing home. She took the time to stay here. I commended her, and I commend you for coming here and speaking from

the heart, from your own personal experience. As long as there are people such as yourself who are willing to do that, there is hope for this province and for this country, I believe. Thank you very much.

* (0240)

Mr. Praznik: I, too, would like to thank you for coming tonight. Just a comment, you indicated that who does government talk to. I just wanted to tell you just personally that I was part of Civil Service minister—a number of meetings in which the Premier, Finance minister and others meeting with the president of the MGEA put our financial situation in the province and made the offer to work toward some common solutions. There was never ever a response. I just make that comment tonight.

Mr. Reid: That was an interesting presentation, I am sure right from the heart. There have been other presenters who have come before this committee and have spoken as well about the impacts on their families in these situations, and I appreciate you taking the time to spend with us here this evening at this late hour, and to speak with us and tell us how it is impacting upon you and your family. I can assure you, as my colleague has, that we were opposed to this bill from the beginning because we saw other solutions to the problems that government has. We do not condone the actions that the government has taken with respect to this particular bill and the way they have imposed it on the people without any consultation process. I can assure you that we will do everything we can within our power to make sure that the government listens to the people in these matters.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Ms. Kellberg.

Number 91, Kevin Dearing, and he will still remain on the list. He is coming back. Number 92, Susan Barnett; 93, Richard Menec; 94, John Miler; 95, Joanne Pindera; 96, Rosa Orlandini; 97 is done, it is Bob Clague. Number 98, John Loxley, and he will not be dropped, he will be coming back Friday or Saturday; 99, Ken Emberley has been heard; 100, Lynne Gibbons; 101, Clarence Giesbrecht will be coming back; 102, Jeffery Dunn.

Floor Comment: It is my understanding that the arrangements were made such that I would be the last speaker this evening. I am actually No. . . .

Mr. Chairman: Yes. No, I am not going to call that. Do not worry.

Floor Comment: Okay, I do not think . . .

Mr. Chairman: I will not be calling all the names, no.

Floor Comment: No, I did not think you were.

Mr. Chairman: I just have to get a couple more. Number 102, Jeffery Dunn; 103, Bill Kitson, he will be here Saturday. Number 104, Rosemary Miguez, and she will be here Saturday, not dropped. Number 109, EdMcColm, he will not be dropped off.

So I am going to go back down to No. 189, Bernice Bryan. Is there a written presentation?

Mrs. Bernice Bryan (Private Citizen): No.

Mr. Chairman: In that case just carry on.

Ms. Bryan: I do not know if I can see; I am that tired.

Mr. Chairman: Maybe you do not want to see us at this time of the morning.

Ms. Bryan: Mr. Chairman, members of the committee. My name is Bernice Bryan. I am a health care aide in a nursing home.

A few short months ago, Premier Filmon went on record in the Legislature in support of free collective bargaining. He said, we will act in good faith at all times in this open free collective bargaining process with all employees with whom we have to negotiate. Premier Filmon betrayed these words. Premier Filmon betrayed the workers of Manitoba. Premier Filmon betrayed me. Premier Filmon lied.

The basic principles of free collective bargaining means nothing to the Filmon government. Government employers are not unlike other employers in Manitoba's economy and should face workers and our unions across the bargaining table. Premier Filmon said his government would act in good faith. This government has acted all right, and this taxpayer critic says your performance stinks.

Governments have obligations to their citizens which go beyond looking out for the narrow economic interests of their corporate friends. I have been very reasonable over the last number of collective agreements I have voted to accept. I have been a responsible caring person. I cannot give any more. I have nothing more to give. I have been bled dry by rising costs of food, hydro, gas and my rent, and you say to me that I must shoulder my share of the burden. Well, excuse me, folks, but I do believe you made a mistake here. It seems to me that I am shouldering my share, but somebody else's too. You know who I mean. The person out there who earns \$80,000, \$90,000 or \$100,000 a

year. Whoever that person is, they are not shouldering their share because you have dumped it on my shoulders.

Recently I was forced by financial circumstances to move in with a friend. I could no longer afford the luxury of living by myself. Between the two of us, my roommate and I, we earn jointly about \$40,000 a year before deductions in taxes. Do any of you have any idea of the dignity lost at my stage in life to having to forfeit my independence because I can no longer afford to live as I choose?

I am a health care aide in a nursing home and I earn \$10.03 an hour. I have worked in that facility for a total of 19 years. I work for private industry, so we never expect to get a huge increase in our collective bargaining processes, but that is okay, because we work where we work because we like the senior citizens of today, or of yesterday for that matter.

My right to sit down and bargain a collective agreement has been stripped away and taken from me and my co-workers for one additional year. All I have to ask this government, will it only be for one year, or at the end of 1992 will you take your legislative pen again and tell us, oh, well, let us do this again, because we had fun watching the workers dish it out some more? I cannot believe that you are trying to justify this piece of garbage by saying that taxpayers cannot afford to pay the wage increases that the unions are demanding.

I do not know if you realize it or not, but I am a taxpayer, along with every other worker in Manitoba. Workers, I believe, do not mind paying their fair share as long as everyone else does too. I listened to Mr. Manness last night saying that a family filing tax returns has tax breaks in their tax system. Well, I am glad for those families, but if you are single and have no dependants, you get no breaks, nothing at all.

* (0250)

Now the government today is telling me that for the next one and a half years I will get less than nothing. I will be losing over \$1,000 and I do not have it to lose. If we are not allowed to bargain, many of my co-workers are going to go down the street to a publicly-owned facility that cannot negotiate either, but their wages are \$2 an hour more to start. That means \$16 per day, that they can put extra bread, milk and fruit on their table for their kids, but then some of them will not be able to

because that money they could use for extra food will have to go to daycare fundings because their daycare fees went up by the same politicians, and those fees they have to be paid so that the people can work, work that must be done, so people can live.

This Filmon government, Mr. Manness and the rest of the Tory terrorists, as I so lovingly choose to call them, have chosen to hide behind the legislation which blames public sector workers for a situation which is the result of provincial government's mismanagement of the economy and an abdication of their responsibilities and obligations to the citizens of Manitoba, and this government should stop spending our tax dollars for projects designed to make the rich even richer. This government should stop the corporate tax breaks and corporate giveaways and start taxing their corporate buddies to the same extent that I am, and my co-workers, my friends and family members as well.

This government should dump this piece of garbage where it belongs and get back to representing the people who pay the taxes in this province, and thank you for listening to me.

Mr. Chalman: Thank you very much, Ms. Bryan. Are there any questions?

Mr. Ashton: I want to thank you very much. Out of our last three presenters yesterday, two presenters were in the virtually identical circumstances that you are faced with, women working for about the same wage, with about the same seniority, who indicated in both cases they were the most highly paid people in their area. They too asked the question, why them? Why someone earning \$20,000 a year, \$21,000 a year should have their wages frozen at the cost, as you say, of \$1,000 or more right out of their pockets when there are so many other things that governments can or should be doing in terms of fairness. I am really glad you came down, because I think it is important for anyone who plans on voting for this bill, and I will not, nor will any of our NDP caucus.

I can tell you if anyone is anticipating voting for that, I hope they will look at you right now or if they are not here today, will read your testimony because you are one of those 48,000 Manitobans who are going to be affected directly. I hope maybe when they think about that, they will reconsider supporting Bill 70.

I really thank you for coming out. It is important we hear from people like you who are going to be going through that wage freeze and hearing just how unfair it is. Thank you very much.

Ms. Bryan: I thank you for not voting for it.

Mr. Praznlk: Just a point of clarification, you work for a facility now that is a private facility?

Ms. Bryan: Yes.

Mr. Praznlk: My understanding of the intent of the bill may require, and I understand the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) spoke about that yesterday, and there is some intention to clarify that if it is not clear in the bill. I do not think you are covered by this, or at least the intention—

Ms. Bryan: Publicly.

Mr. Praznlk: Well, maybe publicly funded, but so are school divisions, for example, to the tune of 75 percent or 80 percent. The reason I raise that is there may be a lack of clarity in the bill, but my colleagues tell me that the Minister of Finance was made aware of that yesterday and is considering a way to ensure that the intent is carried through, which was not to include you. Obviously, as you point out, you are making less than government-run institutions. I mean, that is the collective bargaining that has gone on in the past, and you may be funded or partially funded on the per diems, the institution may be, but you are not a direct employee of the government. It was not our intention to include you. I am glad this has been again brought up—(interjection)— Well, I know there is some comment from the member for Thompson, and I understand from my colleagues, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) was made aware of that last night, and that was not the intention of the particular bill to include you in that. So that may require some qualification.

Ms. Bryan: May I speak to that?

Mr. Chalman: Yes, you may.

Ms. Bryan: If that was not the intention of the bill, then why in the bill does it say to cover all nursing homes? We are not the only private industry nursing homes in the province, and every one of us is under the impression that we can no longer sit at the bargaining table until 1992.

Mr. Praznlk: Two things, first of all, this does not prohibit anyone from bargaining if this freeze is for that agreement. I mean, one can still bargain for their next agreement. The second point I make is,

I am told by my colleagues who were here last night that there may be some clarification because of the point that was raised by other presenters, such as yourself. So your staying to this hour may reinforce a point that was worth making and may require some amendment to the bill.

Ms. Bryan: Could you write a letter to extended care telling them we can go back to the bargaining table then, because I have to be at work in three and a half hours.

Ms. Wowchuk: I know you have to get back to work in a short time, but I would just like to make a comment. I want to thank you for your presentation. You stated very clearly that it is going to affect many people in the same wage bracket as you are. Earlier this afternoon people who were working in a nursing field had indicated that we would be losing professional employees in Manitoba because of the freeze in wages. Do you think that we would be losing people in your field to go to other provinces or are you part of the population that will not be able to leave because of other circumstances, or do you think people will leave because of these wage controls?

Ms. Bryan: I do not know. I cannot afford to move. Mind you, I was born and raised in Manitoba, born and raised here in Winnipeg. I work in a building—private industry or not, I have been in a whole lot of the nursing homes in Manitoba. We have the highest standards. I have shit for employer, pardon me, but those old people are the best thing that this province ever had. I could not work without them, and I do not want to leave, but I do not know about the rest of the population. I do not know about the professional staff, because MNU got their increase. They are going to keep their increase. Because I am nonprofessional, I am a CUPE member, and there it is. You know, we are funded publicly and we were under the impression that we could not bargain. I have not heard of anybody leaving the province or leaving the city because of the wage freeze.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Ms. Bryan.

We will now move on to the last presenter of the evening. Should I call all the names before I get there? Number 536, Sheila Gordon. Go ahead.

Ms. Sheila Gordon (Private Citizen): I do not have a presentation to circulate to you. If you will bear with me, I am just going to read from my notes. It is a relatively brief presentation, and I thank you

for hearing me at this time, because I am unable to attend tomorrow and thereafter. I do appreciate the opportunity to address the committee.

My name is Sheila Gordon, and I am here tonight as a concerned citizen, a taxpayer, a member of the electorate, and a former government employee. Currently I am employed with the Manitoba Government Employees Association. I wish to go on record tonight as being opposed to Bill 70 and as asking this committee to defeat the bill.

The bill is, in my view, unfair and unnecessary. Manitoba has a proud history and tradition of collective bargaining, something that workers in this province have fought long and hard for. Collective bargaining is designed to right the balance of power between workers and the employer. It is through collective bargaining that fundamental rights are established and protected for the less powerful in our society and important concessions are gained.

* (0300)

In my view, Bill 70 turns back the clock on workers' rights. It suspends the collective bargaining process and deprives ordinary Manitobans of the right to sit down as equals with their employer and to negotiate the conditions of their everyday working lives.

I recognize that Bill 70 has been put in place on the basis that it is an economic necessity. I recognize too that these are hard economic times, but I believe that there must be some other way that we can come to terms with these economic realities, some other way that does not involve placing the onus on public sector workers.

A second point I would like to make tonight is that Bill 70 and the motivation behind it has had a negative impact on morale and has reinforced the negative stereotype of public sector workers. These workers are hardworking dedicated people who take their jobs and the services they deliver very seriously. These same people have just been hit with decentralization, cutbacks and layoffs, and they are increasingly being asked to put out more with less.

In this climate Bill 70 and the debate which has surrounded it is particularly damaging. I ask you to recognize the value of these workers and to let them go back to the bargaining table to negotiate in a climate of respect and fairness.

I would like to make one final request of the committee tonight and that is that you also consider

the impact of this bill on women. As many of you are no doubt aware, women earn on average considerably less than men. Public sector jobs are therefore particularly critical for women for this sector has provided women with some of the most stable full-time jobs that are available to them and jobs that pay a living wage.

These wages are very important to families in our communities, either as a vital second income or increasingly as the sole income in many cases. At the same time, the public sector jobs have meant good jobs for some women, many women in this sector are not so well paid, and you have heard from some of them tonight. Here I refer to home care attendants, nurses' aides and other such service workers.

Families are relying on the wages of these women as well, and Bill 70 deprives them of their right to bargain in good faith and asks them instead to hold the line. This, in the absence of needed supports for working women and the erosion of other supports, such as child care.

Finally, I think it is important also to recognize that wage freezes reduce income spent in our communities, in our stores, our restaurants, our small businesses, places where women work. As we continue to take money out of our communities, we continue to impoverish women.

All in all, I would suggest that Bill 70 will have a disproportionately negative impact on women and again I would ask you to consider this aspect in your deliberations. Thank you for your attention.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Ms. Gordon. I am sure there is going to be a question or two.

Mr. Ashton: I appreciate your perspective on the impact on women. I think one thing that has been noticeable from these committee hearings, is the fact that we have had a number of women come forward and raise exactly that point, that the real impact of this bill, it affects a lot of Manitobans, but it is particularly noticeable amongst the many women, many of whom are single parents, many of whom are not economically well off or earning \$10 an hour, if that. The presentations for this committee are very common in that theme. I appreciate your perspective on that as well, because I think that is something this committee should take into account when we are dealing with Bill 70. The fact is that it is going to directly target many women, particularly women on lower incomes

to begin with who are now going to be asked to pay a double price.

Ms. Gordon: To toe the line, yes. It was something I felt important to focus on, and I selected it out for my presentation this evening for that reason. It was heartening to hear individual women who are experiencing this come forward this evening. Another speaker mentioned how this kind of action affects most strongly the more vulnerable groups in society, and as we know, of course, women comprise the most impoverished groups in our society. I did feel it was important that I come forward, from my own sense of self and so on, and make the point specifically, draw the committee's attention to it as an issue and ask you to please consider it in your deliberations.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much.

Mr. Praznik: Ms. Gordon, I just noted your comment about going back to the bargaining table, and I reiterate that we wish we would have been able to. I was part of numerous meetings where we offered very much to work out some of our problems financially and work out arrangements and to negotiate and bargain with MGEA and meetings in which the president—just no response at all. Some of the solutions that were offered at one particular meeting which adjourned in a fight with the federal government and a number of other things that really did not improve our finances. We wish we would have been at the bargaining table. If we had been at the bargaining table, we would have had some hard bargaining, but the MGEA, as was its right under legislation, opted for arbitration and was not at the bargaining table.

I appreciate your comments, and I still am of the belief that the bargaining table is the best place to settle these things, as do my colleagues, and I just wish that we were there.

Ms. Gordon: I am relatively new to the MGEA, Mr. Praznik, as a staff representative, and I am not familiar with the meetings and so on that took place in the past, but it was my understanding, and correct me if I am mistaken, that the government made an offer to the union, but made it very clear that they were not prepared to budge on that. Rather than accept that offer, the union put a vote to its membership regarding arbitration. That is my understanding of the situation, and perhaps some other people would like to make comments.

Mr. Praznik: My wife is an MGEA member, and a ballot that arrived at our house, in which she voted, had two choices: strike or arbitration. She was never given the opportunity on a secret ballot to indicate whether accepting an offer was not a possibility. That decision was never given to her as a member. It was strike or arbitration. I think Mr. Olfert the other night mentioned there was some other choice, but it was not on the ballot that arrived at our household. I just raise that, and again I wish we were at the bargaining table.

Strategically I can understand the decision to go that route. Binding arbitration may end up, give you

more than what one gets at the bargaining table, but ultimately I still am of the belief that the bargaining table, even if there is tough bargaining, is still the best place to be. That is where we wish we were, but a whole series of decisions and schemes, et cetera, legislative schemes, made that somewhat difficult, and we are here today very regrettably.

Mr. Chairman: Thank you very much, Ms. Gordon, for your presentation and for staying up with us till this early hour in the morning.

The time is now 3:07. Committee rise.

COMMITTEE ROSE AT: 3:07 a.m.