



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, March 4, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of J.P. Walsh, S. Gephter, G. Gauthier and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to dealing with child abuse by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign.

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Georgina Shingoose, Germaine Mentuck, Jeffrey Clearsky and others requesting the government show its strong commitment to aboriginal self-government by considering reversing its position on the AJI by supporting the recommendations within its jurisdiction and implementing a separate and parallel justice system.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition, and it conforms with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth

THAT child abuse is a crime abhorred by all good citizens of our society, but nonetheless it exists in today's world; and

It is the responsibility of the government to recognize and deal with this most vicious of crimes; and

Programs like the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign raise public awareness and necessary funds to deal with the crime; and

The decision to terminate the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign will hamper the efforts of all good citizens to help abused children.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba show a strong commitment to deal with Child Abuse

by considering restoring the Fight Back Against Child Abuse campaign. (Mr. Reid)

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* (1335)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Hon. James Downey (Minister responsible for Native Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have a ministerial statement that I would like to make. I have copies.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to report to the Legislature that aboriginal affairs ministers from across Canada met with representatives of the national aboriginal organizations in Toronto to discuss aboriginal issues. The meeting on March 2 and 3 was the first to bring together provincial and territorial ministers responsible for aboriginal affairs and national aboriginal leaders. The meeting was hosted by the government of Ontario.

The meeting resulted from the Annual Premiers' Conference held in Whistler, B.C. in August of 1991. At that time, the Premiers instructed their ministers

responsible for aboriginal affairs to meet with the aboriginal leadership to determine ways to deal with issues of longstanding concern to aboriginal Canadians, including self-government. The Premiers also directed the ministers to address issues related to federal offloading of costs for aboriginal educational and social programs.

This meeting ended with agreement to work together to develop co-ordinated approaches to aboriginal issues. The two-day meeting was a unique opportunity for the ministers and aboriginal leaders to build relationships between governments and Metis, Inuit and Indian leaders and discuss ways of dealing with issues of longstanding concern to the aboriginal peoples, including self-government and improved delivery of services to or by aboriginal peoples.

The meeting was attended by ministers with responsibility for aboriginal affairs and officials from Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland, the Northwest Territories, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan and the Yukon. National aboriginal leaders and officials included the Assembly of First Nations, the Inuit Tapirisat of Canada, the Metis National Council and the Native Council of Canada.

Presentations and deliberations focused on:

the need for the federal government to fulfill its constitutional, treaty and legislative responsibilities in negotiations and financial arrangements;

responsibilities for off-reserve aboriginal peoples;

mechanisms to deal with potential conflict of laws of federal, provincial and aboriginal governments;

applicability of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms;

the need for the federal government to assume its jurisdictional authority for Indian, Inuit, Metis peoples and lands reserved for them under Section 91(24) of the Constitution;

the powers required for aboriginal self-governments.

Ministers, officials and national leaders discussed and agreed to an ongoing process to address the Canada-wide concerns of Indian, Inuit and Metis peoples.

Delegates expressed regret that neither the Province of Quebec nor the federal government attended the meetings. All agreed that all provinces and territories and the federal government, in particular, should participate in future meetings. They also agreed to report back to their Premiers with recommendations concerning the establishment of a working group to examine and make recommendations on models for financing aboriginal self-government. The proposed working group should be led by the federal government, with representation from the provinces and territories and the national aboriginal organizations.

We were pleased, Mr. Speaker, with the results of our first meeting. We had a meaningful information exchange and feel that our agreement to an ongoing process is a positive step in addressing the aboriginal agenda. Thank you.

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, I for one am glad that this meeting finally took place in Toronto on Monday and Tuesday. I am also pleased that it was Ontario hosting the conference. Premier Bob Rae has a lot of foresight and understanding, and is sensitive to aboriginal issues and so on.

I would like to say, Mr. Speaker, in spite of the meeting that took place, it is a start. I would also say to this government that the amount of time it took this government to make a response, which aboriginal people were not satisfied with, to the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry leads me to ask a lot of questions of this government and its sincerity in dealing with issues that affect aboriginal people, such as self-government, constitutional issues and those issues that affect aboriginal people directly here in Manitoba, such as the AJI.

I also want to point to the Deputy Premier that up until now the track record of this government has been not great. As a matter of fact, it has been dismal as far as dealing fairly with aboriginal people in Manitoba. I say that, Mr. Speaker, because north of the 53rd Parallel in the Northern Affairs area, the majority of the people living in the Northern Affairs area are aboriginal people, and the way this government has been cutting programs and so on leads me to ask a lot of questions. Until I see any concrete action coming from this government, I will reserve my judgment.

* (1340)

Another example I want to give is the treaty land entitlement, those bands that have their claims

validated by the federal government. I hope that this government is sincere in saying that they are willing to work things out with the aboriginal people.

Once things get going after the constitutional process is finished, I would hope that this Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) will be just as anxious to meet with his federal counterparts and ensure that treaty land entitlements are finally settled because that is one integral part of the aboriginal self-government. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the tabling of this announcement today by the Minister responsible for Native Affairs (Mr. Downey) in the province of Manitoba.

I think it quite frankly asks more questions than are dealt with in this submission by the minister today. For example, he indicated that their negotiations and deliberations focused on the need for the federal government to fulfill its constitutional treaty and legislative responsibilities in negotiations and financing arrangements, yet this government is going to participate in multilateral negotiations with the Prime Minister, in which aboriginal issues are going to be very much on the table, and this government will not take a leadership role in having the aboriginal communities invited to participate in that meeting so they can hear from them in a meaningful way.

If, for example, it is going to be potentially possible for one province to send observers, surely it is equally possible for observers to be there from our aboriginal communities, so they can give technical advice on the distribution of powers as it may affect the self-governing model proposed by our aboriginal peoples and their inherent right to that governing model which we have all accepted.

He went on to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that they had in fact specifically discussed Section 91 of the Constitution. Section 91 is one of the recommendations in the Dobbie-Beaudoin report which is presently on the table and which is going to be pieced off in a variety of ways from provinces to the federal government and from the federal government to the provinces. He also indicated that delegates were in agreement that all provinces should attend, all the more reason why all provinces should attend the multilateral negotiations beginning next week. Unfortunately, we are going to conduct those negotiations without a principal

player at the table itself, only there in a consultative manner.

While we are pleased that they had this meeting, if there was any real faith in the process that is now undergoing with our aboriginal people, then our aboriginal people would be asked to be present at any and future negotiations on the Canadian Constitution.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Mr. Speaker, under Tabling of Reports, I have the 1991 Annual Report of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation that I would like to table.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Third Quarterly Report for the Province.

At this time also, I would like to announce that the provincial budget will be coming down a week from today, March 11 at 2:30 p.m.

* (1345)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Budget

Employment Creation Strategy

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, we are pleased that the Minister of Finance has announced today the budget for the 1992-93 year.

Mr. Speaker, in 1990, this minister said continuously throughout the House, in November and December in our session, that the recession would be over in a matter of months and that there was light at the end of the tunnel, the recovery was just around the corner in the province of Manitoba.

In the 1991 budget, the minister and the Premier stated continuously that again the recession would be over shortly, that we would have a 7.8 percent unemployment rate in the province of Manitoba for the budget year, and that they would just step aside and let the private sector create all the jobs and opportunities in this province.

Mr. Speaker, a very direct question to the Minister of Finance: In light of his forecasting failures of the past and in light of the very serious difficulty 57,000 unemployed Manitobans face today, will the budget he produces next week be a budget that continues

to reduce jobs and opportunities in this province, or will it be a budget that finally creates opportunities for the 57,000 people who are unemployed?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have to refute every fact that the member has just laid before the Chamber. In my view, the four budgets that we have brought to date, given the fact that every one of them has had some element of tax reduction, given that we have decreased the payroll tax, given that we have decreased personal income taxes, given that we have decreased sales taxes to the tune of \$30 million, as we no longer cascade on the federal tax, I would say we have had more stimulation effects through our budgets than indeed the old model which the NDP used to use, that is, to try and buy jobs, defer the costs which we now have to pay by way of increased taxes.

Mr. Doer: The Minister of Finance did not answer the question. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance's predictions of 7.8 percent would be 39,000 people unemployed. We now have factually 57,000 Manitobans unemployed. That is the issue facing Manitobans. We have a 51 percent increase in social assistance in the city of Winnipeg, the largest increase in any urban centre in Canada, and the Minister continues to whistle past the graveyard.

Unemployment Rate Forecast

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I have a second question to the minister. He predicted last year in his budget—and let us get the facts straight. In 1992, the government of Manitoba and the Minister of Finance were predicting a 7.7 percent unemployment rate.

I would ask the Minister of Finance whether he is sticking to the prediction he made last year in this House with his budget, and will he be sticking to the 7.7 percent unemployment rate or 38,000 people unemployed in the province, rather than the 57,000 we see today?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I will gladly provide to all members of the House, indeed to the public of Manitoba, our latest forecast with respect to economic growth for this province. I am, though, heartened by some of the private forecasters who have looked at Manitoba vis-a-vis the nation as a whole, and indeed other provinces, and that will also be reflected in the budget document next week which will show

provincial economic growth for 1992 at or above the national average.

I might point out, Mr. Speaker, I probably am not the first Finance Minister to miss forecasts, and if I am, I know for sure I will not be the last.

Education and Training

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, our problem with the Minister of Finance is not the fact that he missed the forecast in 1991 and the fact that he is going to miss unfortunately the forecasts of '92. What our problem is with the Minister of Finance is that he is missing the boat in terms of creating jobs and creating opportunities in this province.

I would ask the Minister of Finance—[interjection] The member who is responsible for the Tupperware plant closure in his own riding should probably be quieted—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Doer: A further question to the Minister of Finance. This government has talked long and hard in all kinds of speeches and press releases about their investment in the future through education and training, yet last year's budget showed one of the largest decreases in funding and support to community colleges, ACCESS and other programs, as the member for Wolseley (Mrs. Friesen) has been pointing out day after day after day in this House.

Are we really going to invest in the future of our young people in next week's budget, or are you going to continue to just talk about it and cut at the same time in your budget that you present next week?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, let me say from the outset, there will certainly be elements of next week's budget that will address youth unemployment, and certainly, there will be areas of that budget that will also talk about the inclusion of skills training with respect to the next year. Indeed, announcements will be flowing in due course from the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) giving specificity to that announcement.

Mr. Speaker, let me also point out that tax increases per the NDP approach to governing is the greatest destructive force on youth employment in this nation. That has been proven out over and over again; that has been proven out throughout the world. I daresay, if the members opposite were in

control, the youth unemployment rates would be significantly higher than they are today.

* (1350)

Budget Revenue Sources

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance should check the record when it comes to youth unemployment because he is dead wrong. The losers are the young people in the province of Manitoba, and the people are leaving.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Finance. In the 1991-92 budget, the estimate was that the province would lose some \$88 million in revenue in corporate and individual income tax. The third quarter report that the minister has just tabled predicts even greater losses than that.

My question to the Minister of Finance is: How is he going to do those wonderful things which some people doubt the government will actually do, with respect to employment and training, the need in health care and educational institutions, when the province continues to lose millions of dollars in revenue, as businesses close across the province, as people become unemployed and people move out of the province? How is that going to be done?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is not an easy job to craft a budget today; I do not care what political stripe you have. Indeed, when the member opposite was on the executive bench of the former government, if he had asked himself and his colleagues that very same question so that the governments of the day, through a five-year period, did not go into deficit \$500 million to \$600 million for five years in a row, I say, my job and my task would be easier. There would be more funds in place in support of the youth who are unemployed in this province.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, in 1987, when the Minister of Finance stood in the House and said that he would balance the operating budget—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is not a time for debate.

Economic Growth

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): My question is to the Minister of Finance or perhaps the Deputy Premier.

What is the Minister of Finance and this government going to do to slow the rise of the misery index in the province of Manitoba? Mr. Speaker,

57,000 people unemployed, the highest level in the history of the province, and yesterday we find—

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

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not know what this misery index is. I know what misery is. I know there are people today who are suffering. I wonder, using the so-called misery index that the member alludes to, what the people in Ontario today are feeling, given the fact that upwards of 300,000 have lost their jobs in the space of a very short period of time.

I say to the member, what we will attempt to do is bring balance into this budget. We will attempt to make sure that there is no greater increase in tax load to the extent that we possibly can do so. We will continue to make sure that the important social programs that Manitoba considered dear are maintained. We will make sure that, where there is waste and inefficiency, we will try our best to strip it out of government. That is the balanced approach we will bring to the budget next week.

Employment Creation Strategy

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, the minister said he does not know anything about the misery index. He has a job; 57,000 other people in the province do not.

Mr. Speaker, my final question to the Minister of Finance is: Will the Minister of Finance indicate to this House, perhaps in general terms, what measures the province will be taking to increase the falling private sector investment in the province of Manitoba, to increase investment in job opportunities in the province of Manitoba and to create some jobs for those 57,000 people who are waiting and hoping that something in this budget is modestly positive?

* (1355)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am glad the member asked the question. No doubt, if he asks a preamble, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Stefanson) will give him more accurate details.

I would say, by my understanding as of last week, Manitoba is going to lead the nation in capital investment, as a percentage increase, Mr. Speaker, in the nation for 1992. That says that the course we are on is the proper one to be on—no tax increases, a holding in line of government expenditures and a

deficit that is not growing out of proportion like it did through 1984 to 1987 when it was in the realm of half a billion dollars a year. That course is working.

Provincial Deficit Increase

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, on February 17, the Minister of Finance said he did not need the additional monies for equalization to pay down an increasing and burgeoning deficit. On February 24, when he found out he had less money than he thought he was going to get in shared-cost programs and other programs coming from the federal government, he said he still was not going to need the money to pay an ever-increasing deficit.

Can he explain to the House today why we have just received a document which shows that, as of December 31, our deficit had gone up some \$25 million?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, if I were to table this report, indeed if I were to do a forecast, a fourth quarter a week from today, the number of \$24 million showing as the increase in deficit would no doubt be different.

As I have said on several occasions, work to the period at the end of the fiscal year, when significant changes occur in a number of lines, at that time, we become aware of expenditures within departments, as again departments are working towards their year-end numbers. We find out also, given particularly through the federal government and their revisions, there are significant changes to transfer areas. All of that causes an impact on the final bottom-line deficit number.

Yes, whereas a month ago I thought that we would be able to bring in the deficit at a lower level than we had budgeted for and indicated in the second quarterly report, the reality is today, as we look forward, there will be a slight increase, not one that will be six- or eight-fold as compared to many other provinces, Mr. Speaker, one that is a very small percentage in terms of what we said as of the second quarter.

Department of Education and Training Underspending

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): One of the figures which is very clear in this budget is that retail sales tax revenue has gone down by \$15 million, which expresses in very

clear terms the lack of consumer confidence. It expresses the need that many people have for jobs in our community, and if they cannot get jobs, Mr. Speaker, they need education and training.

Can the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey) explain why her portion of the budget is considerably underspent to this point in time in the fiscal year?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): The member knows full well that this is cash actual over cash planned. From time to time, as is quite often the case, as usually is the case, it is a matter of timing differences. Indeed that question should more specifically be put at the end of the fourth quarter when the books for the year close.

We do our best estimates, to put forward what we think the expenditures will cash flow by way of quarters, and quite often timing differences cause significant variations, Mr. Speaker, from those forecasted cash flows.

Mrs. Carstairs: Is it not interesting that the Minister of Education was not able to ask why her budget was underspent?

Department of Health Underspending

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Perhaps the Minister of Health can tell us why his budget has been underspent by some \$12 million while we have increasing waiting lists for almost every surgical procedure in the province of Manitoba.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend falls into the same lack-of-depth analysis that other critics have fallen victim to.

My honourable friend might know full well that where we undertake surgical procedures is within the hospitals in Manitoba. I can assure my honourable friend that the budget that we set for the hospitals at the commencement, at the tabling and passing of this budget will be expended in its entirety, so do not leave the illusion that underspending in other areas of the Department of Health are somehow to be translated over in underexpending at the hospitals. Such is simply not the case, and my honourable friend would be well advised to research the issue a little more.

* (1400)

Clearwater Lake, Manitoba Government Nursery Closure

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): On December 6, I asked this government what the status was of the government nursery at Clearwater Lake in The Pas. At that time, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) claimed that seedling production was increasing in this province and that the nursery would continue summer production despite the layoff which he reluctantly admitted was happening.

My question is to the Deputy Premier, the Minister of Northern Affairs. What is the status of the nursery now in The Pas? Will the minister tell this House today whether that nursery is closed permanently, a simple yes or no?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): The member, I am sure, is well aware of the fact that the activities of tree harvesting for some particular reason, whether they be held up for environmental hearings, or whether they be held up for other purposes because of decisions made by those who would be harvesting the trees, or because of the fact that the replanting of the trees were lesser than what they were anticipated, there is in fact the need to slow down or to close that particular operation.

It would be my hope that, as the activities were to be resumed after proper environmental processes were to take place, after my colleague has restructured the deal, there would be activity restarted or taking place at the reforestation greenhouse at The Pas. It would be our intention to have that happen, Mr. Speaker, but it has to be done on a viable basis.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, again to the Minister of Northern Affairs: Is the operation being eliminated completely in Manitoba or simply being moved from northern Manitoba to southern Manitoba as another example of what this government calls decentralization? Again, all I want is a simple yes or no.

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, it would be our intention to see that activity carry out the job of providing tree seedlings for trees that are harvested wherever they be needed. There is no intention to shift work activity from one area of the province to the other. It may well take place within the planning of the department but no intent to close one down and keep another operating.

Mr. Speaker, let me say as well that it would be less than responsible, as we saw in Ontario, for example, where they have been producing the trees in the greenhouses and are virtually either giving them away or having them destroyed because they do not have funds to plant those trees.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, my final question is again to the Minister of Northern Affairs.

How can this government, which has promised jobs, jobs, jobs to northerners pretend that this is fair? Has northern Manitoba not lost enough jobs already under this government? Will the minister reconsider and reverse that decision so that people in The Pas, 30 of them who were laid off, can continue working?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, it has been the intention of this government, in the interest of the taxpayer and in the interest of employing northern Manitobans, to do everything possible to make sure that there is an environmental process being gone through, that there is a restructuring of the negotiated deal between Repap and the Province of Manitoba so that we can have long-term stability for meaningful jobs for those young people in northern Manitoba. We are as desirous as anyone else of having employment and employment created in the North, and we will do so in the interest of the taxpayers and those individuals living in those communities.

Budget Crop Insurance

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture, this past year, has stubbornly refused to listen to the cries of concern from agricultural producers and ourselves in this House with regard to the unfair application of GRIP as it was endorsed and drawn up by this government. We and the producers said that GRIP treated producers in certain areas of the province unfairly and penalized those who were already hardest hit by natural disasters under crop insurance. The premiums were too high, and the coverage levels were too low for many farmers in many regions of the province.

Will the Acting Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Premier now support a cost-of-production-based program in next week's budget? Will he also recommend to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) a separation of crop insurance from GRIP so that in fact the wishes of the producers who were

at the recent crop insurance review meetings will be met?

Hon. James Downey (Acting Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I am quite prepared to compare the expenditure of this government to the farm community than what has been previously spent by the New Democratic Party in support of our farm people, millions of dollars compared to what the previous administration had spent on the farm community.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and this government last year committed to do a review of crop insurance to try to find out some of the difficulties that the farm community were having and some of the inequities. That is currently being carried out. I am sure the Minister of Agriculture will assess the recommendations that will come forward, and any changes that are needed will be discussed with the farm community to see that they in fact will assist the farm community.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, they are recommending a complete separation of GRIP and crop insurance.

Since this minister will not support cost of production, will this acting minister, at the very least, respect the concerns of the southwest Manitoba area farmers, farmers in his own constituency, by ensuring that next week's budget includes sufficient funds to cover these farmers at the area average, as the absolute minimum, as was the case this year and is being taken away by this government?

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, let me assure you that, in previous actions of this government in the drought program, I believe in 1989, there was a program put in place that was supported by this government and the federal government to assist those very farmers.

I have relayed to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) the concerns that I am sure the member for Dauphin is hearing from my constituents as to their concern on the coverage which they are looking at this coming year. I have relayed those concerns to the Minister of Agriculture, and we have planned to meet with the Crop Insurance Review Committee to find out what in fact changes could be made or additions could be made to assist those people.

I can assure you that I am as concerned and as knowledgeable as the member for Dauphin is as to the hardship those people are facing.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, an underspending of his Agriculture budget by some 6 percent this year by the end of the third quarter.

Budget Crop Insurance

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Can the Minister of Finance promise to include, in next week's budget, coverage levels at least as high as the levels in this previous year, in the current year, and premium levels no higher, because farmers cannot afford it, than has been the case in the past year under GRIP? Can he promise those coverages under the budget that he will be bringing down in this House next week?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I will not be coerced by the member for Dauphin to provide insight into the budget which is going to be open and indeed presented to people in our province next week.

Let me say with respect to Agriculture support, though, that there will be still significant level flowing from supplementary funding decisions made during this present year, and the level of funding will be maintained and I daresay increased as we bring forward the budget into the next year.

Women's Directorate Hiring Process

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

Last summer the government appointed a Miss Theresa Harvey to the position of Acting Assistant Deputy Minister for the Women's Directorate. On July 10, not once but twice, the minister made a commitment to open it for competition.

Can the minister tell the House why applicants were informed that the competition was cancelled as the government had chosen to make an appointment through an alternative method and Miss Harvey was subsequently appointed without a competition, despite the minister's promises that she made to the Chamber, as I say, not once but twice?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer that question. We did hold an open competition, in fact, and several candidates were interviewed. It was the opinion that none of

the candidates who were interviewed were of assistant deputy minister calibre. In fact, what we have done as a result is to cancel the competition and to appoint directly Theresa Harvey, who has been acting for six months and has proven that she is assistant deputy minister material.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, can the minister then respond to why it is a letter was sent to one of the applicants, and I quote, "I also wish to advise that a decision has been made to cancel the competition as the government has chosen to make an appointment through an alternative method"?

That is in a letter that was sent out to one of the applicants. The competition was in fact cancelled—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

*(1410)

Point of Order

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, the member opposite referred and quoted from a letter. As is the tradition of this House, I would ask him to table that letter.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I will be more than happy to table the letter. The name is blacked out; I hope it does not upset the minister.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to thank the honourable member for tabling the letter.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The question has been put.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated in my first answer, the competition process was conducted. In fact, there was not—[interjection] Mr. Speaker, Theresa Harvey did not apply for the job under the competition—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Mitchelson: Mr. Speaker, as I was trying to explain, Theresa Harvey did not apply for the competition. Those who did apply were interviewed, and it was the opinion that none of those who applied for the position were of an assistant deputy minister calibre. Theresa Harvey, who did not apply, was asked in fact whether she would consider looking at the job in view of the fact that people from within government and from the community over the past six months have written to me and indicated that she is doing an excellent job in the position of assistant deputy minister for the women of Manitoba.

Multicultural Secretariat Hiring Process

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I had asked the minister on previous occasions regarding the Multicultural Secretariat's office and the policy analysis position, and she made a commitment to open it for competition.

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, the question quite simply, so that the minister is able to answer the question, is—[interjection] It is a supplementary question. Did she open that particular position to fill the term position that Ms. Alice Kirkland filled? Has that been done?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship): Mr. Speaker, we are in the process of bulletining that now.

Clearwater Lake, Manitoba Government Nursery Closure

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have some additional information which I would like to provide for the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) as it related to his question, and that is that the summer production will be carried out at The Pas nursery this summer.

Pembina Valley Water Co-operative Assiniboine River Diversion Report

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Minister of Natural Resources. The Pembina Valley Water Co-operative has concluded in their most recent report that water diverted from the Assiniboine River and the Red River will be needed to augment the current water supply within the Pembina Valley region.

My question is: Does the minister support the conclusion of this report, and if so, what portion of the predicted \$63-million cost will be provided by the taxpayers of Manitoba?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Acting Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am going to take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), who is attending a federal conference on forestry.

Assiniboine River Diversion Federal-Provincial Review

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, can the acting minister tell the House if the department will allow for an independent decision on this proposal, unlike other projects, and commit to a joint federal-provincial, basin-wide review before any water is allocated?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Acting Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, again, I will take the details of the question as notice on behalf of the Minister of Natural Resources.

Assiniboine River Diversion Federal-Provincial Review

Mr. Cliff Evans (Interlake): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question, the same question for the Minister of Environment.

Can the Minister of Environment tell the House if he will allow for an independent decision on this proposal, unlike other projects, and commit to a joint federal-provincial, basin-wide review before any water is allocated?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am offended that the member would phrase his question, "allow for an independent decision." He had better have some facts to back that up, or withdraw that accusation.

Mr. Speaker, our environmental process allows for a full and complete review, and there will be an independent decision made.

Hazardous Waste Management Corp. R.M. of Montcalm Negotiations

Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert): Mr. Speaker, the constituency of St. Norbert was happy to hear the decision made by the Hazardous Waste Corporation last Friday.

My question is to the Minister of Environment. Seeing as this has been before the community for some time and the community of St. Norbert has spoken, will the minister be going forward to cabinet, at the earliest opportune time, to bring forward a resolution to this problem?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, yes, I have received instructions to begin negotiations with the R.M. of Montcalm.

Pharmacare Clarythromycin Exclusion

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, on February 19, I asked the Minister of Health a question about why this government discontinued Pharmacare coverage for clarythromycin, a medication important for a treatment of infection in people with AIDS.

The minister at that time suggested that it was because the manufacturer was providing this drug free of charge, and when that practice discontinued, it was left without any coverage. The minister will now know that he is dead wrong, that in fact this happened as a result of deliberate government policy and a change through Order-in-Council to exclude any investigational or emergency-release drugs.

I would like to ask the Minister of Health if he is now prepared to restore coverage for clarythromycin to make it feasible for people with AIDS to buy this otherwise prohibitive drug?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Madam—or Mr. Speaker, I almost went back to the good old days of the member for Wolseley in the Speaker's chair.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Orchard: I assure you there was no reflection on the current Chair.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend raised the issue of this pharmaceutical. The circumstance under which we will not pay for this pharmaceutical is that it was being provided free of charge during clinical trials. Those clinical trials were completed. A notice of compliance has been sought by the manufacturer and has not been received. It has been normal past practice by the manufacturers not to charge for those pharmaceuticals until they had a notice of compliance. It has been the policy of government not to pay for drugs for which there is no notice of compliance.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is the circumstance that is introduced and confirmed in the Order-in-Council my honourable friend refers to. What we are trying to do, because this drug is involved with one or two patients—but there are thousands of drugs on the horizon for which a similar charge by companies will be asked without a notice of compliance, and we can not accede to that kind of demand from the manufacturers.

* (1420)

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Let me just ask the Minister of Health, very succinctly, why the individuals in question, people with AIDS, dealing with very difficult life circumstances, have been paying for this drug for a good long period of time and being reimbursed to the tune of 80 percent as a standard practice under our Pharmacare program? I have the documentation here if the minister would like to peruse it. He is wrong. He has delisted these programs, and I am wondering if he will now show some compassion and restore Pharmacare coverage for this important medication?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that all of us have compassion and would like to have that pharmaceutical provided at minimal or no cost to those receiving benefit from its use, but one cannot make decisions on the basis of an individual case or two cases, and an individual disease and an individual drug, because what my honourable friend is suggesting is that we open the floodgates, and to whom we open the floodgates are multinational pharmaceutical companies who up until AZT were providing drugs for which no notice of compliance was granted by the federal government. They were supplying those pharmaceuticals free of charge.

Now, Mr. Speaker, is my honourable friend suggesting, based on this one pharmaceutical with a couple of instances, that we should open the floodgates for all future drugs to the benefit and profit of multinational pharmaceuticals?

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, I just do not know how the minister can say that when these people were covered—[interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Question, please.

Cyclosporine Exclusion

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): I will ask the minister, since he refers to other drugs which have been caught in this broad, sweeping change in the government's Order-in-Council of the end of 1991, why this government, through that provision, delisted, removed a drug from coverage called cyclosporine, which has been absolutely essential in the case of a 7-year-old boy, a case the minister is familiar with, to restore or prevent the destruction of one eye, and in the case of an older person who is fighting Felty's Syndrome, who needs cyclosporine. Why did this government de-insure, delist that important medication?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I cannot give further specifics on the

7-year-old circumstance, which I am investigating at present, but I do not believe that the same principle is involved. I believe that cyclosporine has a registration notice of compliance for certain applications. This appears to be one which was beyond that, hence the letter that went out.

* (1424)

Mr. Speaker, let me establish, so my honourable friend does not have the ability to sidestep the principle that is involved here, there is no monopoly on compassion in the New Democratic side of the House. Let me assure you of that. I can only assume that my honourable friends in the New Democratic Party want the taxpayers of Manitoba to pay pharmaceuticals for nonlicensed pharmaceutical products before the notice of compliance is in and to fatten the bank accounts of the pharmaceutical manufacturers across the world.

We cannot do that, Mr. Speaker, and we are asking those companies to continue with past practice—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Orchard: —of supplying those pharmaceuticals free of charge.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Committee Change

Mr. Nell Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) for St. James (Mr. Edwards).

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would ask—I do not know if this is the time or not, but I would like to ask whether or not, before I call Orders of the Day, whether there is a willingness in Proposed Resolutions, private members' hour, No. 7, whether or not there is a willingness of the House to change the sponsor of that resolution?

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable government House leader have leave to change the sponsorship of Resolution 7?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, as I commented to

the government House leader earlier, if there would be leave—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am asking the question: Is there leave for the honourable government House leader to change the sponsorship of Resolution 7? Is there leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, there is some difficulty for members in hearing what is being proposed. Our caucus is prepared to grant leave. You may wish to ask members to pay attention so that we can deal with it; we are certainly willing to grant leave.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the honourable member.

Is there leave? No, leave is denied.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call the bills during debate in the order in which they stand on the Order Paper, except I would ask you to call Bill 10 first, and then revert to Bill 9.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 10—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), Bill 10, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba, standing in the name of the honourable member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie).

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): I am pleased to follow the debate on Bill 10. My colleague the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) I think has outlined a very lengthy series of concerns with respect to this bill, and more particularly with the approach this government has taken on hydro development—

* (1430)

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): Laying out your party's position?

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, the member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) is asking me from his seat whether I will be laying out my party's position. I will certainly be laying out my position and the position of the New Democratic Party with respect to this project and

other megaprojects as they affect our economy and the environment.

I begin my remarks by saying those two things are, in my opinion, ultimately inseparable. We cannot do what is economic on the one hand and ignore the environmental consequences on the other hand, because we do that at our peril not only in terms of the social cost but ultimately in terms of the economic costs. I think we have seen that kind of dilemma—[interjection] in the past.

Mr. Speaker, the member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) wants to talk about our history, and I simply remind the member for Arthur that the history of hydro development is not the sole purview of the New Democratic Party. In fact, the damage that has been done to northern Manitoba is as a direct result of policies put in place by the Duff Roblin government in the 1960s.

It is true that succeeding governments, certainly the NDP government, the Schreyer government, proceeded with what only can be termed a prohydro development agenda. We are all collectively paying for the consequences of some of the mistakes that were made by the Conservative government in the 1960s and, quite frankly, the NDP government in the 1970s.

We want to say at the beginning that this is not the 1970s. It is no longer even the 1980s, which many people will say became the decade of the environmentally conscious. Until 1980, there were very few average citizens, people who were not involved at the time in Greenpeace or Earth Watch or Energy Probe or a number of other organizations that were set up in the middle '70s designed to start warning people about the consequences of megaprojects, about the consequences of man's activity on the environment in general.

The debate on this bill, I guess, nominally centres around the increase in authorities, capital authority that is provided to Manitoba Hydro. Underlying that, Mr. Speaker, is the question of this government's proceedings on the Conawapa project. They go back to the late 1980s.

In 1988, when the current government first assumed office on April 26, 1988, there were negotiations going on with Ontario Hydro, which we had all hoped would lead to the signing of a major, firm hydro power export sale to the province of Ontario.

We knew at the time that many of the complications which faced the province in the '70s

and the '80s with respect to hydro development would be only increased because of environmental concern, because of the concern of bands and communities in northern Manitoba, and individuals who had been affected by previous Hydro projects, and because of the growing uncertainty with respect to mega-projects generally.

We understood as we were structuring that deal, and if a deal was concluded, that any decision ultimately to proceed with the development of another Hydro project on the Nelson River would require monumental and even heroic effort on the part of the government in power to do what was right.

Mr. Speaker, it did not matter which party was in power, the same pressures would have been on the government. The same pressures from the aboriginal communities—the same pressure from the aboriginal communities that had been affected dramatically in a devastating fashion by the flooding of the Nelson River system and the Rat River and Burntwood River and Southern Indian Lake systems.

We knew that those communities would be putting additional pressure on to have compensation issues addressed. We knew as well, as the government is finding out, that environmental groups would be demanding answers to tough environmental questions before they would provide any kind of encouragement or support to another energy project.

Mr. Speaker, those things are given. The government should not today say, well, that is a surprise, we did not expect that kind of opposition. We did not expect the groups that raised those concerns to be so vociferous, so tenacious, in wanting their issues to be addressed. This government, I believe, has failed to satisfactorily inform, provide information to, consult with those very groups which everyone could have predicted were going to be opposing, in one way or another, the government's intention to proceed quickly as a result of ultimately the signing of the Ontario Hydro sale.

I want to dwell for a few minutes on some of the problems that I think are becoming apparent with the government's current approach, and I want to start first by saying, even prior to the signing of the Ontario Hydro Agreement, the government, it seems to me almost inadvertently, has made a serious error—and it was made by the minister then responsible for Manitoba Hydro—by not consulting

with native groups and northerners to improve the Nelson-Burntwood Collective Agreement, which was signed by Manitoba Hydro.

Mr. Speaker, aboriginal leaders in northern Manitoba quite legitimately came to the previous government when Limestone was being contemplated, at the time that the decision was made to proceed with the Limestone generating project, and they said, we want a bigger stake of the economic pie, the employment pie, when it comes to the development of this generating station.

(Madam Deputy Speaker, Louise Dacquay, in the Chair)

The facts were that in the 1970s the number of native people working, directly employed on Hydro projects, ran around 10 percent. For projects in the 1960s, the percentage was significantly lower, probably not more than 2 percent, from what I have been told.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we undertook, prior to the development or the initiation of the limestone project, to consult with aboriginal groups, both Indian leaders and tribal council leaders, but also Metis and other northern community leaders to ensure that when a new Burntwood-Nelson collective agreement was signed, that there were very significant preference clauses which would protect the interests of northerners and particularly Native northerners when it came to the Hydro project.

Madam Deputy Speaker, on top of that, we spent significant effort, and I was part of the northern working group that visited literally dozens of communities throughout northern Manitoba to ensure that once the project was up and we had a preference clause, that there was a mechanism for getting the people with the skills in the communities onto the job, for getting people in the communities who required skills into training programs, and for notifying people who had the skills in the communities that jobs were available.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we worked with Canada Employment and Immigration. We had an agreement, a training agreement with them, and by the time the project started, many of those training programs were underway and others were in the planning stages. Even that was perhaps too late—too little, too late.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the government of the day had an opportunity, first to design a collective agreement that strengthened the northern

preference clause, strengthened the obligation of Manitoba Hydro to employ northerners, to begin the process of bringing those people into training programs so that they would be ready when construction already started, and they blew it.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the people of northern Manitoba, the people whom I represent, many of whom have been affected by Hydro projects in one way or another, are not going to be satisfied when they learn that this government has dealt with their interests in such a cavalier fashion, has dealt with their interests without consulting them, without even apparently being aware that their interests were being sacrificed.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld) asked me if I am going to support the bill. I can tell the member that while there is much in the bill that is worth supporting, including perhaps the suggestion that Manitoba Hydro be given additional authority, I am only going to support the bill if I can be satisfied that someone on the government's side, perhaps the new Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, hears those concerns and outlines some way of addressing those concerns because if they are not addressed, no one in northern Manitoba is going to be satisfied. If they do not address them, I think there is still significant doubt about whether we will ever proceed with the development of the Conawapa project.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to start by the first one. The Burntwood-Nelson agreement is now a signed agreement, and it was done without the appropriate consultation, without the appropriate consideration of the interests, particularly of aboriginal people and young aboriginal people who would have liked to ensure their involvement in the project if and when it proceeds.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the second problem that the government has created for itself is with respect to training. We were criticized, and members of the Liberal Party went around in the 1988 election calling Limestone lemonstone. There was the implication somehow that virtually no one—and the Minister of Education and Training kept on with the most insidious, misleading comments about the training program that I have ever seen from a member in this Chamber, suggesting that there were only six people trained, six people who were actually trained under the Limestone training and employment agency.

* (1440)

Madam Deputy Speaker, the fact is that there were more than 2,000 people trained; trained, I will grant, at varying levels of apprenticeship programs, but also many completed training in short-term courses for truck driving, cooks, security guards and a host of other training programs that were offered—literally thousands of people. There was one shortcoming that I have always acknowledged, that members on our side have always acknowledged, and that was the lead time to ensure that people could begin, for example, in a Level 1 apprenticeship program in carpentry and graduate as journeyman carpenters before the project began.

This government, Madam Deputy Speaker, had the opportunity to correct that shortcoming. They still have the opportunity if they want to sit down and negotiate with the Department of Indian Affairs and Canada Employment and Immigration, the Department of Northern Affairs. If they want to create a training program that is going to work in the interests of northern people, they can do it. They can do it now. We need a commitment from the Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey). He has both of those portfolios under his responsibility. We need a commitment to make sure that this happens more successfully than it did in 1985 through to 1990.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would recommend to the Minister of Northern Affairs an editorial that was written by Mr. Fred Cleverley, someone who has been hypercritical of New Democratic policy for many, many years, who wrote what I can only term a glowing report of the Limestone training and employment agency in 1988 before the election.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) knows that Fred is my buddy. It still annoys me to this day that Mr. Cleverley continues to write as an editorialist for the Free Press, continues to say that the Northern States Power deal is a terrible deal because it is based on the cost of coal. I and successive ministers of Energy, New Democrats, have continued to write to inform Mr. Cleverley that he is wrong, that even if coal were given free to Northern States Power, the deal would still be a good one for Manitoba, but it is to no effect. However, Mr. Cleverley did see some positive things in the Limestone training and employment agency.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government is missing a golden opportunity to do things better.

What is perhaps more frightening is that the government does not appear to have the will to do anything that is even positive, let alone more successful than what was done when the Limestone Hydro project was underway. That is problem No. 2 that the government is failing to address.

Problem No. 3, Madam Deputy Speaker, is the whole question of compensation. I will give compensation. I will give the government, and then the Minister responsible for Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), which is not my normal course, some compliment, some support, in that there have been a number of negotiated claims in the last number of years and that the government continues, I believe, and Manitoba Hydro continue to deal with the claims, the outstanding claims in the Northern Flood Agreement as best they can.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have always said that the Northern Flood Agreement is a nightmare for all parties concerned. It is not easily enforceable and it is not easily interpretable, that there are many aspects of the Northern Flood Agreement that should never have been included. It is a nightmare of legalese and qualification.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the government has the obligation to northern flood communities and to I guess any communities who may be affected, either by the very limited flooding that is going to occur as a result of the construction of Conawapa or the impact it has on the flora and fauna of that area or the impact of the construction of Bipole III, the new transmission line, which is also part of this deal. They have an obligation to make sure that in advance of the project, the implications, the environmental, the economic, and the social implications, of whatever is to be done are understood in advance of the doing.

In other words, the government has to begin today to assess what environmental damage there will be and to begin to identify the individuals and communities that might be affected and address the compensation questions in advance, because if there is one lesson that history, in terms of hydro development, has taught us is that going back (a) to mitigate the problems or determine the nature of the compensation, it is almost too late after the fact. It is too late to come to agreements about the scope of a compensation and the nature of that compensation, and it needs to be done before the project gets approval.

If that does not happen, we will see the same scenario repeating itself in Manitoba. The flooding actually occurred in southern Indian Lake in the early 1970s. Grand Rapids forebay was flooded in the early 1960s. The fact is that Grand Rapids received its compensation some 30 years later. Madam Deputy Speaker, that is a huge gap between the damage and the consequences and the time there is some mitigation compensation.

Mr. Edward Connery (Portage la Prairie): What did you do about it?

Mr. Storle: Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Portage la Prairie asked what did I do about it. I did not sign the agreement and from 1977, we are talking about the Northern Flood Agreement. First of all, it was a Tory government that did the Grand Rapids forebay, and they did not do anything in terms of compensation. In 1977 when the Northern Flood Agreement was signed by the Conservative government, from 1977 to '81, there was virtually nothing done in terms of the Northern Flood Agreement. From 1981 till the time that the NDP lost government in 1988, some \$41 million was spent on individual and community compensation.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have acknowledged that the member for Portage would have been listening, that we should have decided what compensation was due, what mitigating efforts were due prior to the signing of the agreement in fairness to the groups that we were inflicting this damage upon. The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) has an opportunity, still has an opportunity, to correct that wrong, to do it right. When I listened to my colleague from Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) speak, he kept reiterating: all we want the government to do is do it right, to do it right.

They have an opportunity. We have made enough mistakes in our history in the last 75 or 85 years now of hydro development, 85 years, going on 86. We have enough history to know what kind of problems are going to present themselves. We have the technology, we have, I hope, everything but the will it appears, to deal with those questions. The Minister of Northern Affairs, the Minister responsible for Hydro (Mr. Downey), should be directing Manitoba Hydro to do as thorough and exhaustive a study of the compensation issues which may be raised as a result of this project as possible.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there is the third problem. We have the problem with the collective

agreement, the Burntwood-Nelson collective agreement. We have the problem with the training, and we have the third problem with the compensation claim.

* (1450)

We come now to perhaps the most delicate of the problems facing the government and Manitoba Hydro, and that is the question of the environment. Madam Deputy Speaker, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) asked me whether Hydro, whether the government, did an environmental review of the Conawapa project—

An Honourable Member: Of Limestone.

Mr. Storle: —of Limestone, and the answer is, yes, there was. Manitoba Hydro did an environmental review of the environmental damage that was going to be caused by the construction of the Limestone project. Madam Deputy Speaker, the member asked the question who built the dam, and I will be the first one to admit that the environmental review for Limestone was not thorough enough. I guess the consciousness of the people of Manitoba, and Manitoba Hydro certainly, in terms of looking for long-term implications and long-term ramifications of the construction of a dam simply were not paramount in people's minds at that time.

Also, of course, the construction of the Limestone Generating Station was quite different from the experience of the '70s when huge lakes, like Southern Indian Lake, were flooded to create the reservoir of water that would be used to support the hydro generating stations on the Nelson River system. The Minister of Northern Affairs—the former Minister of Energy and Mines quite rightly said that the construction of Limestone and the construction of Conawapa created very little incremental damage because there was no additional water power storage required, and there was very little additional flooding of land required in either of those projects.

So the scope of the damage is not what is in question here. The scope of the damage, I think, we admit in terms of construction of the project will be quite limited. The construction of Bipole III, particularly if it goes along the east side of Lake Winnipeg, is not quite so clear that there will not be some environmental consequences there, and we have to study those closely.

But Madam Deputy Speaker, what has changed from 1985, 1984, when Limestone was being considered, in 1992 what has changed

fundamentally is the public perception of the government and Manitoba Hydro's responsibility to the environment. There has been a profound change in the expectations people have with respect to the government's role in protecting the environment. That is what has changed fundamentally.

It has not just changed in the public. It has changed within the New Democratic Party. I think that there is an increased awareness that we cannot proceed to deal with megaprojects in the way we have in the past. If you want another example, and it is going to be a very contentious one, you have to only talk about the Assiniboine water reservoir project which is going to need the kind of environmental review that we are proposing for Conawapa.

I am not saying that we should begin this environmental review believing that necessarily it means the elimination or the discontinuation of the construction of hydro generating projects. I believe quite sincerely that we should undertake it with an open mind, an open mind which asks the question, what are the environmental consequences going to be? To put it crassly, Madam Deputy Speaker, what are the financial implications if we want to mitigate those damages? What is it going to cost us? Are the damages that will be created manageable in any understood sense?

The government has to proceed cautiously and openly when it comes to the environmental review. I have to say, Madam Deputy Speaker, the government is off on the wrong foot. The government has already tainted the environmental review process, and I am not pointing the finger unnecessarily at the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings).

I recognize that there were, obviously, outside considerations and concerns being addressed through the media to the minister and the committee that he established which were beyond his control. It only highlights for the Minister of the Environment and the government that the public perception, when it comes to these kinds of projects, is heightened. They are concerned about the environment and the impact, and they want an honest, straightforward and an independent process to do the evaluation. They do not trust, frankly, the Manitoba Hydro to do their own assessment, nor do they trust the Manitoba government to do the assessment. When outside

independent groups ask for support in doing the analysis, I think the minister has to be very, very careful in arbitrarily determining that this cannot be studied or that cannot be studied or this issue cannot be addressed or that issue cannot be addressed.

The government has the opportunity to do themselves and the province and the country, perhaps, some good in doing a thorough job of the environmental assessment of this project. It is beginning on a bad note. I believe that we need, certainly, a thorough review which will include assessment of the individual community-by-community results of this project. That is item No. 4.

Item No. 5, Madam Deputy Speaker, which I believe the government is juggling at the moment and another area where they are perceived to be weak is with respect to conservation. There are some in our province who believe that conservation could forestall the need for the Conawapa project. This government, I think, has either not understood the total picture well enough or not understood this issue well enough to deal with the people of Manitoba in a forthright way.

Conservation can work, and it can reduce the energy requirements, the requirements of Manitoba Hydro to produce energy for the people of Manitoba. It can do that significantly. Energy conservation programs can be in and of themselves a benefit to Manitoba Hydro.

We watched with interest as Manitoba Hydro developed its own demand-side management program. They presented a proposal to the people of Manitoba and said we believe that we can save 100 megawatts of power, a saving of approximately 2 percent of the gross production in Manitoba. We at the time said, no, we thought that 6 percent was a better figure, that if Manitoba Hydro was aggressive in terms of conservation they could achieve a 6 percent reduction in consumption.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I just happen to have a copy of a 1991 report from an independent consultant which dealt with the whole question of how effective a demand-side management program could be in Manitoba Hydro. It is very interesting reading, but let me summarize the result.

The consultant goes to some length to sort of identify three different scenarios. He provides a base case load growth presentation, assuming that we are going to see some continued growth and that only what he calls natural efficiencies will occur. In

other words, people amend their ways in minor ways and make some projections about what our energy demand is going to look like in the long term. He also presents us with another potential scenario which I believe he called the economic potential scenario. Finally, he said what was more realistic he called the attainable potential.

What is interesting is that if it were a perfect world, if Manitoba Hydro would implement aggressive conservation measures, if everybody, every individual consumer were able to or wanted to purchase the absolutely most efficient appliances and insulation and all the rest of it, this consultant believes that we could save approximately 30 percent of the base case scenario.

What is more realistic is what the consultant calls the attainable potential which uses existing technology and some assumptions about how quickly that technology will be assumed by people consuming hydroelectricity, how quickly they will transfer from existing gas stoves or electric heat to high energy efficiency gas stoves and so forth. The conservation target that he proposes is approximately 8 percent of the base case. He says that is immediately attainable, not with outlandish projections about what people should do in terms of converting to fluorescent lights or timers or appliances, but he says that is an attainable goal. I believe that Manitoba Hydro should be proceeding with an aggressive energy management system.

* (1500)

Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to perhaps set myself apart from some other people. I want to add that while our Hydro Crown corporation could achieve a savings of 8 percent, even with a modest demand-side management program or a series of programs, like Power Smart—we believe that this should go ahead, but that should not be confused, in my opinion, with the issue of whether there is also a potential for Manitoba to benefit from an export power sale. Those two things are not necessarily irrevocably intertwined. They can be mutually exclusive.

We can ask the question: How can we save energy in the province and turn that saving again into something else, or should we be getting export power for the sake of export power to create wealth for the province of Manitoba?

Madam Deputy Speaker, the government began this whole exercise in terms of Conawapa by saying that they were beginning to plan for Conawapa for

domestic use. Unfortunately, that argument fell from underneath them, and by 1990 we knew that the projections the government had used to support the construction of Conawapa for domestic use had fallen apart. By 1990, we knew that the domestic consumption would not require another generating station until at least 2009. We learned sometime later that this may be as late as 2012, and if you use the assumptions from the consultants that Manitoba Hydro hired, we may not need that power until 2015, if we can actually achieve savings of 8 percent by using demand-side management. We may not use that power.

Madam Deputy Speaker, what should a responsible government do, faced with this kind of confusion over what our domestic requirements are going to be? What should they do? What they should do is due diligence on behalf of Manitoba taxpayers. That is what they should do. Due diligence means that this project should be sent back to the Public Utilities Board, which this government designated as the agency that was going to review the capital spending plans of Manitoba Hydro, which this government said was going to be the watchdog to make sure that this decision did not become a political decision.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is what they should do. Why is the government unwilling to do what is only responsible? Why will they not send this back and have the Public Utilities Board address this very basic question: Is the sale to Ontario Hydro, the 1,000 megawatt sale, still in the best interests of Manitoba Hydro ratepayers, given that domestic requirements would not dictate building the dam or having the dam completed until perhaps as late as 2015? That is the question, and only if we get an independent view, only if other groups, interveners, are allowed to ask questions of Manitoba Hydro, are we to know with any degree of certainty whether the answer remains yes.

Let me say this. If the government is willing to do that, if we can have that independent review of the economic merits of proceeding with the Conawapa project and the answer to that is an unequivocal yes, then I am prepared to support the construction of Conawapa. Having said previous to that—and I do not want the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) to use my comments without referencing the concerns I expressed about the environment, about training, about compensation and about the collective Burntwood agreement—that is our

position. No one on this side has said no to Conawapa. What we have said is that Conawapa, if it is to proceed, must be done right. All of those issues have to be addressed in a straightforward, open and honest fashion, because there is too much at stake to rush into this and get it wrong.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I see some members on the side opposite nodding. They are agreeing that this is what should happen. I think there are two outstanding problems. [interjection] The former Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro is saying that it has always been Hydro's intention. I know that it was also Hydro's intention to provide the government with the very best possible guesstimates of where our low growth would be, what the domestic demand would be by the year 2000 or 1999. They have been wrong too often and we deserve a thorough review of the question of whether this agreement can stand on its own merit, whether there will be a return to Manitoba Hydro and to Hydro ratepayers.

I believe that the first analysis was correct, that there were significant economic merits to the agreement with Ontario Hydro. I believe that, but the changing base of information around this agreement leaves me and it leaves a lot of Manitobans wondering whether in fact the same can be said with all certainty today. We deserve an answer to that question.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is where we stand. That Conawapa as a project if it can be supported on its economic merit, if it can withstand an independent environmental review, if it can withstand the scrutiny of independent experts on its own, if the question of compensation, if the question of training, if the question of northern preference, if those issues can be addressed, then I think we will have a project that will benefit Manitoba, not only in the short term—and I know the government is concerned about the jobs and I am too, I want those jobs—but we can be protected financially and environmentally for the long term.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I put the government on notice, as did my colleague from Point Douglas, that we want it done right. If this government expects us to support this project there are certain things that they have to do. One of them is to be honest with the public and send this project back to the Public Utilities Board for that other review on the new circumstances.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) are asking the taxpayers of Manitoba to risk approximately \$6 billion on this project on very flimsy domestic demand assumption, very flimsy. If we are asking the Manitobans to say, yes, we are prepared to borrow \$6 billion on behalf of Manitoba Hydro, guaranteed by the province of Manitoba, let us make sure that there is an economic net benefit to the province of Manitoba. Then if we can address all the other questions, by all means, let us do Conawapa, by all means, but that is a tall order.

As I have said, Madam Deputy Speaker, the government has fallen short in a number of areas already when it comes to this agreement. We can only hope that in the next few months and years they will do better.

Thank you.

Mr. Downey: Madam Deputy Speaker, I will be closing debate.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill 10, The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act.

Today, I would like to talk a little bit about the importance of Manitoba Hydro as a publicly owned utility, the benefits of hydroelectricity compared to other forms of energy, the problems with hydro as a form of energy and finally to talk about Conawapa.

I think all parties in the House now are of the opinion that it is important to have Manitoba Hydro and other utilities as public utilities. I do remember a few elections ago, the Conservative Party considered selling some Hydro dams to the private sector. However, this policy was not particularly popular with the public, nor was their party at the time. I think they have abandoned that idea as not being a good idea. Probably they abandoned it because the majority of Manitobans believed that having Manitoba Hydro as a totally publicly owned utility is the wish of the majority of Manitobans.

* (1510)

Of course, we know that the Conservative Party has the ability to poll, especially when they are in government, and that they try to stay on the side of the majority, so that is probably why they agree with this even though there are probably some free enterprisers in their cabinet who would gladly sell off Manitoba Hydro, but they know that is not popular with the public. So for the time being they support

Manitoba Hydro as a public utility. Of course, we on this side have, I think, probably always supported Manitoba Hydro as a public utility and that it is in the best interests of Manitobans to keep Hydro in the public domain.

When one looks at the benefits of hydroelectricity as a source of energy, I think, compared to other sources, hydroelectricity is probably one of the most benign or environmentally friendly, to use today's jargon, of all different kinds of energy, although probably solar energy would be less harmful to the environment. In terms of a large source of available energy, hydroelectricity is comparatively a good source of energy in Manitoba. It is certainly much better than nonrenewable sources of energy, especially coal and gas and oil, which, first of all, are nonrenewable, so when they run out we will have to turn to other sources and, secondly, contribute considerably to pollution, which is becoming an increasing problem in our world.

On the other hand, there are a number of reasons why Hydro is problematic. Currently, there is research going on into the effects of flooding. In Northern Ontario, for example, they are looking at the effects of flooding, and how this is affecting global warming, I believe it is, so we may see some long-term consequences of flooding which we were not aware of.

Of course, the biggest effect of Hydro is on people. In doing research for my speech today, I came across a special issue of a periodical produced by the Canadian Association in Support of the Native Peoples, an organization which still exists, but has been renamed as the Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with the Native Peoples. I have their bulletin, Volume 15, Number 3, from December 1974.

This whole bulletin is full of articles about Manitoba Hydro and about flooding and its consequences, and I found an excellent quotation by Mr. Walt Taylor. This quotation is taken from Indian Truth magazine for May 1974.

Mr. Taylor said, "... Native land has been taken persistently throughout North America for scores of river manipulation projects since the Second World War. Promoters, financial interests, multinational corporations and political puppets have been so impatient to rape the earth and reap a profit that they regularly push each project into irreversible construction before the people most seriously affected by it can learn enough to raise any effective

objections. Impact studies can be done later if demanded. People can be moved if they are in the way. Courts and Legislators can urge the legal and constitutional questions long after the deed is done. Get the bulldozers and dynamite into action first, and then simply pay the damage later. . . ."

This is, I think, an excellent summary of megaprojects, especially hydro dams in North America and their effects on native people, a disturbing summary of how projects are pushed ahead.

Although I have not seen the flooding in northern Manitoba and its aftereffects, I have certainly read lots about it and met people who have been directly affected. For example, one day when I was working at North End Community Ministry, I was asked by our home visitor, Phyllis Keeper, to go on a home visit with me to a family who were having some problems with their landlord. Their stove was not working, and they were being forced to use the cooking facilities of their neighbours, and would I go with Phyllis and look into this. I said, yes.

When we got there, we discovered that this family had a multitude of problems, that the stove was really only a minor problem. It was obvious that a number of people in this household had been drinking, and it was having a serious effect on the whole family.

When we left, Mrs. Keeper told me a very interesting story about this family, because she had known the same family when they lived at Cedar Lake, Manitoba. At that time, her husband, Joe Keeper, was working there as an Economic Development officer, and she said she could remember what it was like. At four o'clock in the morning, she would be awakened by the noise, the noise of motorboats. It was the men going out to fish in the lake. At that time the community of Cedar Lake was entirely self-sufficient. They lived by fishing. They lived by trapping. They lived by hunting. They lived a traditional economy. They lived off the land, and 100 percent of the people were employed in that community, but because of flooding the entire community of Cedar Lake was moved, and they were moved to Easterville, and at Easterville there were no jobs.

There was 100 percent unemployment, and everyone there was on social assistance. The effect that it had on their community and on their life and on their families was devastating. It led to a total social breakdown of the community and of

families, because they were on social assistance, because they had no employment, and because they turned to drinking.

So she had followed this family. She knew them in Cedar Lake. She knew them in Easterville, and they ended up tragically in the north end of Winnipeg, very destitute. Their problems had followed them to the city. This is an example of what happened to one community, but this happened over and over again in a number of communities in northern Manitoba.

Another problem of the flooding, of course, was fluctuating water levels, and this problem has not gone away. It continues to this day, and the results are often tragic, especially in the winter when people are operating snowmobiles on the ice, and they do not know that there is an air space under the ice. The result is that snow machines go through the ice and people drown.

So, as I said in my sermon at Rosedale United Church on Sunday, the cost of Manitoba Hydro has been a cost that has been paid, literally, in people's lives. In order for us, and especially in southern Manitoba and in Winnipeg, to have cheap hydroelectricity, the cost has been at the lives of northern Manitobans.

There are many other effects which I could list, but I will not. I do, though, have a clipping from the Winnipeg Free Press of Saturday July 7, 1984, and it is titled, Bitterness: legacy left by Hydro, northern community grapples with impact of flooding.

In conclusion, we know that we have cheap hydroelectricity in Manitoba, but we also know that it was bought at a price, and the price has often been in the community life of native people and the individual lives of native people in northern Manitoba. We also know that hydro is not as clean a source of energy as it appears.

Of course, the government tried to mitigate the effects of northern flooding, and so a Northern Flood Agreement was signed with a number of bands in northern Manitoba, the Northern Flood band communities that signed the agreement with the federal government, the provincial government and Manitoba Hydro. They took a long time to negotiate this agreement. The negotiations were very difficult, and eventually they were signed. In fact, I believe they were signed by the Sterling Lyon government in the fall of 1977.

The next difficulty was in the implementation, as the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) pointed out.

Some communities were not compensated for up to 30 years after the effects of flooding began. A number of people in our society tried to intervene on behalf of aboriginal people, to support them in their campaign, to provide moral support and at times even legal support to the Northern Flood Agreement communities.

One of those organizations was Project North, a national church coalition. They had a local coalition here, the Manitoba Inter-Church Coalition on Resource Development, and I was part of that coalition throughout most of the 1980s. I was present at a meeting with the Native Affairs Committee of Cabinet and lobbied that committee of cabinet to implement the flood agreement.

We felt that aboriginal people were not having much success with implementing the flood agreement, and so one of the stands that the Inter-Church Coalition on Resource Development took was to lobby against the construction of Limestone. It was our position that the Limestone Generating Station should not be built until the Northern Flood Agreement was fully implemented. That was an unpopular stand with the government of the day who disagreed with the position that was taken.

* (1520)

Now we see that not much has changed. We see northern Indian bands who are saying that Conawapa should not be built until the Northern Flood Agreement is fully implemented. So it seems that the stance of the Inter-Church Coalition on Resource Development, back about 1984-85, was a prophetic stance, which said that this was wrong and that the Limestone generating plant should not be built until the Northern Flood Agreement was implemented. Now, almost 10 years later, we see northern Indian bands saying the same thing about Conawapa.

The Conawapa project is something which I believe our party supports, but we have a number of concerns. We want those concerns put on the record. First of all, we are concerned about the Public Utilities Board hearings. We believe that there is a need for adequate funding for all groups, and we believe that the government should be generous in funding those groups who are interveners and who are applying for funding for environmental assessments and other things. I think it would be better to fund these groups adequately and find out what the problems are

ahead of construction so that those concerns can be incorporated into the project, which it would seem in the long run would probably be cheaper than trying to mitigate the effects of Conawapa after it is built.

For example, I was just reading in the Manitoba Hydro newsletter which we all received as MLAs, and I took time to read it. They were talking about how they had built a weir at Cross Lake, and according to the map that was part of the article, they were going to be doing some dredging at Cross Lake. There were a lot of fish that were going to be put into the lake to try to restore the fishing economy there. I believe the cost was a million dollars, which shows that mitigating the effects after the fact is a very expensive proposition.

So we think that it would be better to adequately fund these groups before the project is built, and probably save money in the long run. Of course we hope that aboriginal groups who are applying for funding will be given consideration, and will be funded on the same basis as other groups.

Unfortunately, some of the effects that might have been there from the construction of Conawapa will not be as devastating or as bad as they might have been at one time because of the effects of damming the rivers upstream in the past. For example, the river at site was renowned for its sport fishing because of the brown trout. If you look at fishing and sport magazines from decades past, one will read articles about the famous sport fishing.

Because of the fluctuating water levels in the past, the brown trout have almost disappeared. I do not think it is accurate to say they have disappeared, but I understand that the levels of fish in the river are considerably diminished. Apparently Manitoba Hydro sent a biologist to look at this, and less than a year ago discovered that the fish level in the river was considerably down and that is because of already existing dams upstream from this site on the Nelson River.

Whereas in the past, people were concerned that the brown trout would be affected, now the brown trout may not be nearly as affected by the construction of Conawapa because previous dams have already devastated the brown trout in that river. This is a legitimate concern.

Another concern is the beluga whales in the Churchill River. We know that the dams are having an effect on the beluga whales. This affects the

town of Churchill because a lot of tourists go to Churchill to see beluga whales.

Mr. Connery: The NDP destroyed the tourism in Churchill, Doug, you should know that. I got the stats in my office. It went from 20,000—

Mr. Martindale: The honourable member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) is offering to share some statistics with me. I would be happy to see those after the debate today.

The second concern that we have about the construction of Conawapa is the need for affirmative action. To the best of my knowledge, we have not heard about any affirmative action hiring at Conawapa; in fact, what we do hear is members of the government ridiculing our party for their affirmative action at Limestone, which was quite good in fact.

We think that was an important part of Limestone, that affirmative action hiring and training were a good thing, that they worked, that they gave northern people jobs. In fact, there was a system of preferential hiring which gave preference to native people, to northerners and to Manitobans.

The former Minister of Energy suggests that I ask northern Manitobans. I have a colleague who is a northern Manitoban, the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes), and I understand that he was the director of the training program there, and I get my information first hand from a northern Manitoban—a good, accurate source of information. If the member for Point Douglas says it was a good training program, I believe him. That is all the assurance I need.

I think the problem with the current government is that they do not believe in affirmative action. They do not want to force companies to give preference to Native people and to northern Manitobans or even Manitobans, because their philosophy is so entirely free enterprise that they believe that business should be given a free hand to do whatever they want.

On the contrary, we believe that since northern Manitobans have been the most adversely affected by hydro development in the past, it only seems to be fair that they be given the majority of the jobs in order to compensate—[interjection]

Point of Order

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I was rising on a point of order,

Madam Deputy Speaker, but I have forgotten what I was going to say, darn it all.

* * *

Mr. Martindale: I think the Minister of Justice just set a record for the shortest point of order ever in the Manitoba Legislature. It can happen to any of us. All of us get moments of memory lapse here.

I would hope that the government would follow our advice, that they would build affirmative action into the hiring policies for Conawapa, that they would listen to northern Manitobans, because I am sure that they are going to hear from northern Manitobans. I am sure that they are going to hear from aboriginal people in northern Manitoba who are going to be asking for affirmative action.

We in the New Democratic Party are in favour of building Conawapa. I believe that we have repeatedly put that on the record; however, we believe that it should not be built until the demand warrants it. We know that the demand keeps changing, that at one time the demand was supposed to be there in the year 2001. We now know, thanks to the honesty of the former minister of Hydro, that the demand will not be present until about the year 2009 or 2010, and so the case cannot be made to construct it now. We think that the only reasonable and sensible thing to do is to build Conawapa when the demand justifies it.

We also know that because Manitoba Hydro has bought into the Power Smart program, there is an intention to decrease the demand for hydroelectricity in Manitoba, to increase conservation. That is probably going to push back the demand and the need for Conawapa by more months or more years.

* (1530)

I think what is required is not just a minor change or a tinkering in demand and in conservation, but what is really required is a change in lifestyle, whereby all of us consume less energy, and whereby all of our manufacturing and businesses and institutions, including the Manitoba Legislature, consume less energy, particularly from nonrenewable resources. We should also reduce our demand of renewable resources such as hydro because of its usual harmful effects on aboriginal people.

In doing research, I found a quote from the Prairie Messenger periodical from August 30, 1981, a good Catholic magazine. I think this speaks directly to

what I was saying about stewardship, to use the theological word, of our energy and resources. This quote is from the Canadian Bishops' Labour Day Statement entitled "Northern development: at what cost?"—their 1975 Labour Day statement. "In the final analysis what is required is nothing less than fundamental social change. Until we as a society begin to change our own lifestyles based on wealth and comfort, until we begin to change the profit-oriented priorities of our industrial system, we will continue placing exorbitant demands on the limited supplies of energy in the north and end up exploiting the people of the north in order to get those resources.

"Ultimately, the challenge before us is a test of our faithfulness in the living God. For we believe that the struggle for justice and responsible stewardship in the north today, like that in distant Third World countries, is the voice of the Lord among us. We are called to involve ourselves in these struggles, to become active at the very centre of human history where the great voice of God cries out for the fullness of life."

I think that sums up very well what I wanted to say about changing our lifestyle.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, I would like to repeat that we are not opposed to Conawapa. We just have some concerns, concerns that all of us are putting on the record, concerns about the Public Utilities Board hearings, concerns about affirmative action and concerns about the demand and the need for building Conawapa and the timing of it.

I would like to conclude by quoting from Chief Walter Monias, the former chief of Cross Lake, who at a public meeting in June 1974, said: "However, for a hundred years 'progress' has meant only hardship and poverty for our people. We have not shared in the great affluence of North American Society.

Mr. Minister, the people of northern Manitoba are not opposed to the idea of progress. What we are opposed to is 'reckless' progress. We are not opposed to development but only through co-operative development can true progress be ensured. Just as we have shared our lands, so we must share in the development of our lands." He quoted Franklin Delano Roosevelt, who said: "We have always known that heedless self interest was bad morals; we now know that it is bad economics."

I think that sums up our position. The government has been accusing us of being opposed

to jobs, being opposed to construction jobs, which is definitely not true. No one in this party is opposed to jobs. No one is opposed to any project which creates jobs and the inference is that we are opposed to progress. We are not opposed to progress. What we are opposed to is what the former chief of Cross Lake said, we are opposed to reckless progress. Until the need and demand for hydroelectricity from Conawapa can be justified, we are opposed to building it. Until there are adequate environmental assessments and safeguards, we think that it should not proceed. We believe that there should be affirmative action. We will continue to oppose this until affirmative action is incorporated as an important part of job hiring at the Conawapa dam site.

That concludes my remarks, Madam Deputy Speaker. Thank you very much.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 9—The Economic Innovation and Technology Council Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on the proposed motion of the honourable First Minister (Mr. Filmon), second reading of Bill 9, The Economic Innovation and Technology Council Act (Loi sur le Conseil de l'innovation économique et de la technologie), standing in the name of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans). Is there will to permit the bill to remain standing? Is there leave?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak on Bill 9, The Economic Innovation and Technology Council Act, a government bill which proposes to create a new version of the Manitoba Research Council.

It is, as I noted in my reply to the throne speech, a recycling of yet another promise on the part of this government. However, it does have some merit. It is considerably late perhaps in their term of office. It is something which other governments have moved to a number of years ago, amongst them Australia, other provinces in Canada and other parts of the United States. It is somewhat late in the economic strategy, such as it is, of this government,

but nevertheless it is an interesting proposal and one that merits our attention.

It is a bill which proposes to create a large council which will provide the opportunities for, as it says in the bill, ongoing leadership to generate prosperity through innovation, to provide for a dialogue and to sponsor interaction among stakeholders, including the exchange or transfer of personnel, ideas, research and technology.

In order to do this, Madam Deputy Speaker, the government has also indicated the range of people who are to be appointed to this council. Many of them of course are people I think that any government would appoint to this particular type of innovative council. They are representatives of trade unions, at least two are, out of the 20-odd people listed here. There are presidents of multinational corporations such as Cargill. There are people representing some aspects of the academic world, the president of the University of Winnipeg and the dean of science and the dean of engineering at the University of Manitoba. Beyond that, there are a number of people representing the industrial, pharmaceutical and agricultural technology perhaps aspects of Manitoba's economy.

All of that is fine and well. I think the government has looked at some aspects of Manitoba's economy and decided that these are the places where change and development and innovation can occur, and they are taking exactly the same road as a number of American states and indeed, as I mentioned before, of other parts of the world.

I would suggest, however, to the minister that he would be wise to consider other aspects of Manitoba's economy, to understand for example that textiles composes at least 10 percent of the Manitoba economy. Although we do have somebody here representing Western Glove Works, it seems to me that one element of Manitoba's future lies in the textile and clothing production area and that it would be useful at some point to ensure that that highly technological and rapidly changing industry is developed, is represented on this council.

I think another area that Manitoba should be leading in is food technology. I do not see any representatives of the food technology industries in this council. I would recommend to the government that food technologies, both at the experimental level of the university and the Faculty of Human

Ecology and in the Faculty of Agriculture, as well as the many small- and large-scale food technology producers or added-value industries in Manitoba should be included in this council.

* (1540)

Again, I think, Madam Deputy Speaker, as we see the future of our agricultural sector shrinking as we become more and more exposed to the international market, unprotected by our various governments on this, that I think that is one of the areas that we are going to have to depend on, to expand on and to see the future of Manitoba in. It is an area which can be adaptable to both rural and urban locations, and could be a very useful force in the maintenance of some parts of rural Manitoba. I am surprised to see that that is not represented here.

A third area that I would advise the government to look at is the area of design. Again, Madam Deputy Speaker, the University of Manitoba is one of the only universities in Canada, in fact it is the only university in Canada, which does have a Faculty of Environmental Studies and a Faculty of Architecture which includes a degree program in design.

I am sure that the minister and First Minister (Mr. Filmon) who introduced this bill are aware of the strides that Italy has made since the Second World War in using design, in using essentially an intellectual industry to create very large and very successful markets. This is, of course, in the area of industrial design as well as in the perhaps more ephemeral markets of fashion design, but in industrial design, in automobile design, furniture design, for example, Italy has led the way. It has done it because they have put money and attention and linkages into their various fields of design.

It seems to me, Madam Deputy Speaker, again, as we see our agricultural economy shrinking in Manitoba, and we are looking for innovative strategies for the development of Manitoba, one of the things that we can base ourselves upon is in fact the intellectual industry of design. We can do it from the point of view of industrial design. We can do it through museum and informational design. We can also look at it from the purposes of textile design and the development of new processes in design as well. Of course, this is one of the major areas that both Japan and Germany have made their tremendous successes in the international market with. So design, textiles, food technology, agricultural engineering, I do not see those areas represented on this council.

It seems to me, Madam Deputy Speaker, a government which prides itself on its understanding of the economy and its understanding of management, that this is a very narrowly based approach to the Manitoba economy and to the future possibilities of the Manitoba economy. So I am quite disappointed in fact in the range, although this has, of course—I will repeat again that this is not a criticism of the people who have been chosen. Certainly these industries and these people should have been included, but I would advise the government to look more widely and indeed to be more innovative in the approaches that they are taking to the future of Manitoba.

I suppose, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would have to share the concerns that many speakers on our side of the House have expressed before, that although we recognize the importance of this council, we acknowledge the expertise of the people who have been suggested as appointees, we also question, as is the responsibility of the opposition in fact to question, the serious intent of this particular government innovation. As I said earlier, it comes at a relatively late time in this government's tenancy of government offices, and it comes really with very little linkages to the basic educational strategies which will need to be in place to support this innovation.

It is a recycled promise. We have heard about it before; it has been in other throne speeches. The Manitoba Research Council itself is not very different from the nature of this particular council; there is no reason that the Manitoba Research Council could not simply have assumed the duties of this particular council. But, no, the government, with a very limited agenda, attempted to make this one of its major focuses, and so we are debating it in full today.

So I do have some concerns about how serious the government is. It did not do it earlier. It did not do it under the existing institutions that it had, and it offers this as a major strategy in its throne speech. It is obviously a strategy which is going to take some time to get up and running, as they say, and one that seems to have limited linkages to other basic initiatives which should be there to support it, particularly in the education field but also, I would say, in the government's much-touted sustainable development institutions.

This council will need a staff. It will need, as it says in the act, libraries. It will need direction. It will

need research. It will need to develop linkages with people already working in these fields throughout Manitoba and across Canada. We have seen before what has happened with these types of institutions. We have the very visible example down on Ellice street of the building set by the federal government, the National Research Council, whose purpose, in fact, was to do very similar things to this particular provincial initiative. They have been scrambling ever since to fill the building, to fulfill the promise that the federal government held out with that particular initiative.

On the other hand, Madam Deputy Speaker, we do see a lack of commitment from this government in other areas. There were \$700,000 which were cut last year from the predecessor of this council, the Manitoba Research Council, and that would give one great pause for thought for any kind of commitment of this government to research, to innovation and to the development of Manitoba through those areas. Information technologies, again, one of the basic infrastructures which this council will need, were again cut 10 percent last year by this government. We look forward, of course, to seeing those funds restored and a seriousness of intent and a commitment of value from this government to this particular initiative.

I would particularly like to draw the attention of the government, Madam Deputy Speaker, to the difficulties of establishing in Manitoba an innovation-based process when you do not have the basic infrastructure of education in place, particularly when your innovations are to be based upon the sciences and mathematics and upon technology, when we know very clearly that these are the areas which are suffering in Manitoba. I suggest from a report of a year ago, from the Department of Applied Mathematics at the University of Manitoba—now what could be more significant for the development of innovation and research and technology in Manitoba than the applied mathematics department?

This particular department, in 1990, at the University of Manitoba noted the absence of support for graduate students. If you do not have graduate students in your department, if you do not have the research that is coming from those students, you do not have the innovation that is being brought to Manitoba by those graduate students, where is this council going to find its workers? Where is it going to find its support? How is it going to build upon the

next 10 years, if it has an applied mathematics department without the basic support levels for student assistanceships and for graduate students?

So they noted that they were very seriously, in 1990, below the level required to attract good scholars to our various departments. In turn they note this will adversely affect the level of research, development and teaching in the long run. Many of their students, they notice, apply to the University of Manitoba but then take employment elsewhere and go to other universities and eventually stay in other provinces which can offer them this level of support.

I draw to the government's attention at the very beginning, you can create this council, you can put the \$10 million in place which will give it the basic infrastructure to start its deliberations. When it comes to putting something into practice, it is going to need those mathematicians that we have not been able to attract to the University of Manitoba or to the province of Manitoba.

Again last year, in the larger department of mathematics and astronomy, because of budget cuts they noted that their undergraduate sections of 100 people in each were forced to close, two sections of them. So 200 students in Manitoba who would have liked to have taken the first-year courses in university mathematics were denied access to it. This is happening not just in mathematics departments, but across the university overall.

* (1550)

The mathematics department also noted that they had 100 people apply in 1990 to their department for positions in graduate programs. They were able to offer on the basis of their ability to teach them 35 students, but of those 35 who were offered positions on the basis of their academic background, Madam Deputy Speaker, only two could be offered financial support. Now graduate students by this time really, in many ways, have very few alternatives, particularly for the first year of graduate studentships.

The number of students who have been supported by the national granting agencies in the first year of university programs at the graduate level have been constantly reduced in favour of supporting more advanced research, so we are getting to very serious difficulties in ensuring that we have a continuity of new blood and of maintaining students coming into the graduate programs. I draw this to the government's attention in the programs

of mathematics, chemistry, physics and other scientific departments.

You cannot simply set up a council, appoint 20-odd people in a variety of existing companies and expect them to develop a strategy for economic innovation in Manitoba if you do not have the basic infrastructure and the trained students in process. That is what we do not have. We do not have them any longer in process ready to come out as graduates five to seven years from now. I do not envy the task that this committee or this council is being set, because it is essentially being handed a super structure which does not have the possibilities of renewal.

I could talk about the difficulties in zoology. I could give you some statistics, for example, from the underfunding of science research in Manitoba from the department of geological sciences of Manitoba, an area which I assume would be of some interest to this particular council and to the government as a whole. They have noticed that most of their research funding comes through the federal government. Up to a year ago it certainly did, and in this new federal budget with the amalgamation of the National Research Councils what we are going to see are some serious changes. We do not know what they are yet, but there are going to be serious changes in the national funding of these programs.

In geological sciences the province contributes nothing to the support of research. I hope that is drawn to the attention of this new council which is being set in place, because if you are going to have a long-range plan—and we need a long-range plan in Manitoba for the innovation and for economic development of the industries which are going to remain here and which we are going to be able to retain here—one of the basic elements of that long-term plan has to be the production of graduate students. The first element in that is attracting them to Manitoba.

Some graduate students who come to provincial universities from elsewhere will opt to stay in that province after graduation. If they do not come here in the first place, and when you can only offer support to two students out of 35 in mathematics, then you are not even going to attract the skilled people to Manitoba, the potential for people who will stay in Manitoba after graduation.

That is a very serious concern for any government of whatever stripe when it looks at the long-term economic planning for Manitoba. It is not enough to

say that you can give 2 percent or 3 percent to this university or that university. You have to look at the overall issues of graduate student funding and the implications for the long-range economic future of this province.

There have been some serious omissions in the support for graduate funding in the province of Manitoba generally. Geological sciences I think is one that I would draw to the government's attention. I think in many others they will find similar processes.

I will draw to the members' attention the dramatic changes that we are seeing in the last federal budget in the support for research generally across Canada. We will see the specific implications of that, I believe, by the end of this summer.

A second thing that concerns me, Madam Deputy Speaker—first of all it was the universities and the provision for graduate students' support; second of all is the community colleges. Again, any committee, any council which is to look at the long-range economic development of Manitoba will have to face the very severe position which the community colleges have been put in over the last few years by this government. We have seen a series of cuts to community colleges, which can only be described as—perhaps the words escape me—foolhardy, shortsighted, a very limited vision for the economic development of Manitoba.

Community colleges, I think if we look across Canada we will see that those provinces where the economy is booming—or at least, perhaps I should not say booming because there really is not anywhere that is booming in Canada today—but those communities which have done well over the last 10 or 15 years in their economy are ones which have put in place extensive community college programs. I draw the members' attention to two of them in particular.

British Columbia has a very large network of community colleges. It also has, of course, the most dynamic economy in Canada. You cannot draw a direct relationship between the two, but I do not think you could have had—British Columbia would not have had the ability to pick up and to develop upon the Asia connection, the Pacific money and the development of all of the Pacific Rim if it had not been able to use the skills of its very large numbers of community college graduates. The money and the programs that were put in place, astoundingly, by a Social Credit government in the

1960s and '70s, to develop those community colleges, I think, was money that was very well spent, and all the people of British Columbia are benefiting from that today.

The second thing that the British Columbia government did—and this was done under both the New Democrats and the Social Credit government—was to develop some very strong linkages between the community colleges and the universities. In engineering technology programs, for example, in science technology programs, the areas where you need people who understand the process as well as the product development, who can do the research and who can also understand the ways to improve upon the production processes of those elements, those are the people that the community colleges in British Columbia produced.

They also produced large numbers of teachers and nurses and people who would fill the infrastructure of a growing provincial population. The linkages between the community colleges and universities, the movement between the two, have been very important in developing the British Columbia economy.

The second area of community colleges I would draw to people's attention is the CEGEP, le Collège d'enseignement général du Québec. Those were very bold experiments in the 1960s, Madam Deputy Speaker, one which I think laid the groundwork for the creation of the new middle class of Quebec, the new entrepreneurs, ones which the members on the opposite side should be very familiar with, people who in fact have made great strides in the development of the Quebec business economy. They were able to draw upon a relatively and increasingly well-educated population of people who now went from Grade 11 into two years of a general technology and academic training scheme.

They have, first of all, more years of education than do students coming out of Manitoba or Saskatchewan or Alberta. So there are the additional years, in any case, as well as that very beneficial experience of being in a college which does have the technical, the vocational and the academic streams, and enables the movement between the three. Although there have been many difficulties with the CEGEPs, and although perhaps in many ways they never really fulfilled the idealism, perhaps the utopianism that they had in the beginning under Lesage in the 1960s, it was hoped that the CEGEPs would be both English and French

and that they would have brought together in a generation the French-speaking and English-speaking young people of Quebec. It did not happen that way, and the colleges developed separately into two linguistic solitudes. I think perhaps that is one of the greatest disappointments.

In economic terms those CEGEPs have been extremely beneficial, and the level of education which is available both for technology and for academic pursuits in Quebec certainly, I think, is one that has paid off in the long run for that provincial economy.

I want to draw that, the role of community colleges particularly, to the attention of this government, and to express again my shock, my horror that this government chooses to cut community colleges. Really, for any government which can say out of one side of its mouth that it is interested in innovation, that it is interested in technology, that even as the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey) says every day in the House that she has a concern about education, and yet can continue to cut at large levels. Ten percent at least to the community colleges was cut last year, closing the doors of economic opportunity to many Manitoban families.

I would ask the government to reconsider those policies. I would certainly suggest to the minister that he put that on the agenda for this new council that he is considering. I cannot believe that council would recommend that there be further cuts to the community colleges. I hope that advice is sought and that we do get the input of trade unionists and of company managers, of vice presidents, upon the nature of the labour force that they will require and the role that they have found that community colleges in other parts of the country have been able to play in providing this particular labour force.

* (1600)

I want to emphasize again the role of community colleges in developing technologists in the broadest sense. I would like to draw the members' attention to a new book which was recently reported in Harper's magazine. It is a new book by the dean of MIT in Cambridge, Massachusetts. It is one that I found made very fascinating reading and which applied very clearly to the bill which we are discussing today. The author—he is a man called Lester Thurow, an economist—examines the question of why particular countries have succeeded at different times over the past couple of

centuries in becoming economic leaders in the world.

He argues that in the past the nations who succeeded economically were those whose businesses invented new products. I suppose most school children are brought up with those kinds of images of the spinning jenny and the sewing machine and the industries and the technological inventions, the new products, which have led to the development of European and North American industrial expansion in the 19th and 20th Centuries.

He looks at the current spending in the three economic leaders of the world: Japan, Germany and the United States. He looks at the contrast between the way in which Germany and Japan, on the one hand, and the United States, on the other hand, spend their research monies. There is a striking contrast. He argues that Americans have focused in the early 20th Century and, in fact, continue to focus today on the development of new products. On the other hand, the Germans and the Japanese, who were faced with the issues of developing their economies after the Second World War, coming with economies which were in great stress—perhaps in different ways than the economy of Manitoba today, but certainly the Manitoba economy is under great stress. What Japan and Germany chose to do in 1945 was to put their money into developing new processes.

They did not have the time and the market, in fact, was cornered on the development of the product, so they said we are going to put our money into the process. We are going to produce it faster. We are going to produce it better, and that is where we will put our research and development money. In the 1950s and '60s, of course, they really had no alternatives, but they continued with this strategy through the '70s and '80s.

If you look, Madam Deputy Speaker, at some of the successful products introduced into just one sector of the economy, the mass consumer economy of the post-1970 period; if you look, for example, at the video recorder, the fax and the compact disc player, you will find that Americans invented the video recorder and the fax and that the Europeans or the Dutch invented the compact disc player; but it is the Japanese and the Germans who have in fact benefited most from those new developments because they put their money into the research and development of technological processes, the production faster and better and

more efficiently, and the marketing better and more efficiently, of those products. Those are the ones which, in fact, developed.

The second thing that he points out, and I would draw this too to the attention of the new innovation council—[interjection] I will be, do not worry—is that the process technologies are the ones that depend upon a very broadly based educational system. He argues first of all that we need chief executive officers. The top executives of every company should be trained in the technology of the company that they are working in or in an ability to understand technologies generally.

If you look at American CEO's, he says they are far less likely to be technologically aware than either those in Japan or Europe. In Japan and Germany over 70 percent of the top executives come from a technological background whereas the very opposite is true in the United States where they are coming from legal, marketing or other backgrounds. So that kind of restructuring of companies and company priorities is one of the things that needs to be addressed by this particular council as well.

One of the striking examples that he offers of this is that 25 years ago the leaders of the American steel industry did not understand the technological innovations that were happening in Europe in the steel industry, so that the steel industries in North America, and certainly Canada was the same, failed to invest in the new technologies of production that were available to them. They have been playing a catch-up game, as he says, ever since, to the detriment of entire communities, of families and certainly of the general Canadian economy as well.

So what he argues is that the new technologies are the ones that are going to be important for America just as any government in Manitoba will recognize that this intellectual production is the kind of way in which Manitoba will survive. It is not something which just applies to steel rolling mills or to heavy industry, it is very clear to anybody who in fact goes to Polo Park. There are a couple of stores which have it there. Some of the department stores, I think particularly—well, I should not name them, but one or two of the department stores have in fact moved to very high technology processes in inventory enabling them to market to much smaller niches of people and to retain their stock at a much higher level in much shorter periods of time.

There are a couple of notable examples in the American garment industry, in the American

consumer industry, who have done this on a very, very successful basis. What they have found of course is that it is the retailing, the computer-aided design, the computer-aided manufacturing systems which allow the production people to know exactly and very quickly what is required in the market. So it is not just in heavy industry. It is in marketing, it is throughout, in fact, the consumer world that we have created in the late 20th Century in North America.

It is these people who will be the winners. These are the people who depend upon those mathematicians, on the people in applied mathematics, the people in the community colleges for whom this government is closing the doors. I draw that to their attention again, Madam Deputy Speaker.

It is no use simply creating a council of blue ribbon and dedicated people, but you do not have the infrastructure for them to work with, and the infrastructure that you had, you have cut.

A third point that the Dean of Management in MIT suggests is that the education that is required is not just for the chief executives, it is not just the restructuring and the impetus and the promotions that must be given to the technologically aware and the technologically educated within companies, corporations, and public institutions, but it is also to the working level of the companies.

He describes it in his article in Harper's magazine as the education of the bottom 50 percent becoming a priority. I would not want to use those terms. I think what we should look at is the work force, the people who actually do the production and what essentially he is arguing, in terminology which I do not like, but his argument is an important one: When success depends upon being the cheapest and the best producer of products, the education of the work force, the 50 percent who are producing and manufacturing throughout industries, whether they are consumer industries or heavy industries, must absolutely have the full attention of government and public institutions for their education.

They have to be able to learn what must be learned. They have to be able to do it quickly, and they have to be able to do it in a manner which ensures that long-term employment, long-term consistency within the company or within the corporation or public institution is maintained.

Information technologies have to be part of the entire production process. As Thurow argues, to do

this he says: requires workers in the office, the factory, the retail store and the repair service to have levels of education and skill that they have never had to have in the past.

* (1610)

Yet what is this government doing? It is cutting the community colleges, it is cutting the ACCESS programs in Engineering at the University of Manitoba.

An Honourable Member: You would not kid about a thing like that, Jean.

Ms. Friesen: No, I would not, and you have not given him a date either for response.

An Honourable Member: John says you are kidding.

Ms. Friesen: No, I am not kidding about that one. I think that is one of the most shortsighted cuts that I have seen coming from this government yet.

We have to educate at a very general level and to a high level, a large portion of a population that has not had that opportunity in the past. It should be again, Madam Deputy Speaker, one of the items, the first items on the agenda perhaps, of this new council is to look at the nature of the labour force.

It is not just this side of the House which is saying it. Look at the report of Winnipeg 2000. One of the things that they drew to the attention of this government two years ago was the abysmal state of education in this province.

With three universities in the province, with three community colleges, they point out on the one hand there is the opportunity. In many cases, in medical technology, for example, in agricultural technology, there are very high rates of success, but what there is not underneath is the infrastructure, the graduate students, the researchers in training, who are not there anymore and will not be there for any programs that this council wants to put in place.

So the sustainable, competitive advantage depends upon work force skills. We cannot continue to follow the American path of paying very, very small percentages of company monies into work force training. That has to be expanded.

You probably all—well, actually I should not say that. I gather the CBC is a political issue in this House. Perhaps I assumed that many of you watched the CBC programs on work force and upon skill development, comparing Canada and the United States and Europe. Of course, we have become part of the common parlance now that, in

fact, we spend very, very small proportions of our development money in the training of the labour force. We are paying for it and we will continue to pay for it for the next decade, in fact, until we can restructure our educational system, until we can provide literate, numerate people who are able to offer us the infrastructure for these new technologies, which we all admit must be developed in Manitoba. We cannot accept the slow pace of technological change, which we are going to have if we continue to cut these educational institutions, Madam Deputy Speaker.

So I draw, again, to the government's attention the role of basic education, of literacy education, of the very direct necessity of starting, first of all, with high school completion. When we have a 40 percent high school dropout rate in Manitoba, and much higher in some communities, we cannot then expect any Economic Innovation and Technology Council to really have the tools to work with. I hope they will address that from the very beginning.

Thank you.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that debate be adjourned.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. As previously agreed, this bill will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Cliff Evans).

Bill 12—The Animal Husbandry Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) to resume debate on second reading of Bill 12 (The Animal Husbandry Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur L'élevage), standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Stand. Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave. Leave has been granted.

Bill 14—The Highways and Transportation Department Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), to resume debate on second reading of Bill 14 (The Highways and Transportation Department Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère de la Voirie et du Transport), standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Stand. Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Bill 15—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), to resume debate on Bill 15 (The Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route), standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton). Stand? Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave? Leave has been granted.

Bill 20—The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion, the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), to resume debate on second reading of Bill 20 (The Municipal Assessment Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'évaluation municipale), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Stand. Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave. Leave has been granted.

Bill 21—The Provincial Park Lands Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion, the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), to resume debate on second reading of Bill 21 (The Provincial Park Lands Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les parcs provinciaux), standing in the name of the honourable member for the Interlake (Mr. Cliff Evans). Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave.

Mr. John Plohn (Dauphin): Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise to speak on Bill 21, The Provincial Park Lands Amendment Act, with a great deal of concern today, because again I see this government putting forward a bill that is not the result of a consultative process and a democratic process that has led to a consensus on a particular issue. Instead, it is a bill that they have brought in unilaterally, with a heavy hand that reflects not on the wishes and desires of those who are affected by the bill, but reflects only the opinion of the minister in a rather shortsighted way.

I say that I am concerned and saddened by what he has done, because he is attempting to deal with a real problem here, with a real concern that has faced ministers in the government for a number of years, but the methods that he is using are certainly not consistent with the methods that have been attempted in the past, and that certainly would have been successful, had he taken a little more initiative and effort to see them through to conclusion, whereby he would have had a democratic result, one that was not imposed. A solution that would work, in other words, because I do not believe this will work.

The problem, of course, is one dealing with people who have their principal residence in a provincial park or have landholdings in a provincial park, and at the present time are able to avoid paying any taxation on that property because of the simple fact that they are located in a provincial park and there is no authority, particularly at this time, to derive fees or a particular taxation from those owners in the particular provincial park that they reside.

This has caused a great deal of anguish and concern for a number of local government districts,

the LGD of Consol, for example, at The Pas, and a number of municipalities who see some of their residents able to move into the provincial parks, build homes there, live there, and not be subject to the same kinds of property taxes that their neighbours who live just outside of the parks are subject too.

Of course, that is an unfairness that has to be addressed. It is one that we as a government, up to 1988, were in the process of addressing, and one that we left with this minister, with this government, under the assumption, of course, that there would be a fair method arrived at for a fair solution. Now we are here four years later, four years later since this government has come into office, and they still did not arrive at a democratically derived solution.

What they arrived at was a solution that has been posed by the minister in a unilateral way, so he is not dealing with the problem of taxation for services provided within parks in a way that, as I said earlier, is going to last the test of time. The various rigours of all policies and continue to be in place over any period of years. It is a long standing problem that the minister is attempting to address, but he has not addressed it satisfactorily.

* (1620)

I want to outline why we feel that the solution he is offering in Bill 21 is not appropriate for the problem that we are dealing with here. I want to say first of all that I find it rather ironic that the minister in his introductory remarks said this bill has to do with fairness, when in fact it is probably as unfair as any solution to this problem could be. It is rather ironic for him to say that this bill deals with fairness when it creates unfairness because of the nature of the tax. It is a poll tax. Let us call it what we should, a Thatcher poll tax. A poll tax is unfair, because it is the same for those who are wealthy as it is for those who are relatively poor.

A person, just because he is living in a park, who some may say has a cottage or a cabin or whatever you might call it, or an estate in a particular location that is within the boundaries of a provincial park, does not make him or her a wealthy person. It may be a very modest little shack that they have for using as a fishing base or for skiing or for other activities that they might be involved in, it might be very, very modest indeed. It could be called a shack as I said. It could be called a little cabin or whatever, but there may be also, in those provincial parks rather substantial holdings, large homes, all-weather

cottages that become year-round homes that are rather large mansions with large acreages, and yet they are going to pay the same fee under this poll tax of these Tories, the same fee that the person who owns this little shack or cabin in the provincial park—\$500, no difference. They are not going to consider that one is a rather substantial holding, the other is very modest. There is no relationship to the value of the property whatsoever.

The minister has completely ignored that, and that is why we say this is an inappropriate solution. It could easily have been dealt with. There are a lot of assessors in the Department for Rural Development, formerly Municipal Affairs, who are quite capable of determining the value of these holdings and then could have applied some form of taxation that had some relevance with regard to the relative wealth of these properties, but they have not done that. They have simply taken a very simple solution to a complex problem and created more unfairness, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am sure that you recognize that and can see that this is creating greater unfairness. Of course, it is unfair not only because it is a poll tax that applies to all people regardless of their holdings and their relative wealth. It is also unfair because it has no relationship to services. As a matter of fact, the bill even references the fact that there is no relationship to services. This does not imply by collecting this \$500 poll tax, that in fact any services have to be provided to the individuals who are located in those areas, in those parks. They do not have to receive anything back.

The minister does not have to promise to give something back. He can charge the \$500 fee and provide zero services, no services whatsoever, and the people cannot do a thing about it. They cannot even vote him out of office, because they do not have representation. This is not taxation by representation.

If it was a local authority whereby they elected the local reeve or mayor and they elected some councillors to oversee their affairs on the local level, then they could say if they are not satisfied, we do not like the way you are doing your job. We are going to remove you in the next election when you come up for election. In this particular instance, they are only a tiny voice amongst many voices involved in the election of the particular government at that particular time.

They may or may not be located even in the minister's constituency so therefore have no direct vote. It is truly taxation without representation which is something that democracies have not tolerated. We say that this minister's actions are contrary to a democratic solution from that point of view. They fail that test of fairness and democracy, Madam Deputy Speaker, in addition to the fact that they fail that test of fairness from the point of view that they charge the same amount to everyone as a poll tax does, regardless of the relative value of the property that is being taxed.

We say, we have a Thatcherite poll tax here that is being imposed by this Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns). He does not promise to do anything for it, so he does not deserve to receive the funding. In addition to that, he does not pass on the funds to those, Madam Deputy Speaker, who are providing the services. There is no requirement in this bill that the minister must indeed pass on the fees that he collects, and that is estimated at some \$200,000 a year as a result of this \$500 assessment for a property holder in a provincial park.

There is no provision to pass that on to the LGD who provides, for example, the garbage services for the individuals, the garbage dump that must be maintained or the roads into the area, maintained, built by the local government district or by the municipality. This minister is going to collect fees under the guise that he is providing some service, but he says in the bill that he does not have to provide services. He will not even pass on those fees to the local government districts or the local municipalities so in fact they can undertake the work that they do at the present time without collecting anything.

I want to just preface any further remarks on this and the remarks that I have made so far, Madam Deputy Speaker, in clarifying that we believe that there should be a fee charged, that these people should not be exempt from taxation. That is precisely why we were undertaking an exhaustive negotiating process to ensure that the individuals who were involved had input into decision making and that, in fact, we could arrive at a democratic and fair solution to this problem, because it was not fair that the individuals who own property in provincial parks could in fact escape paying a fair amount of taxation for the services that they received. They accepted that. They understood that they should pay a fee for that, a taxation fee similar to a property

tax that others would pay in a municipality or LGD. They understood that, and they were willing to arrive at a mutually agreeable solution to this.

It may have required legislation. As a matter of fact, the minister had advised the people that he was working with that were involved with this amendment, the people that would be affected by this amendment, that in fact there were major changes to be made in this legislation in the very near future and that he would ensure that they had the utmost involvement in any of those changes.

As a matter of fact, the minister advised the private landowners that complete revision of the existing Park Lands Act was being planned for March 1991. At that time, he advised them that this group would be invited to participate in developing a related white paper by the fall of 1991 and then have input regarding the final drafting of a related new bill.

The minister advised the representatives of property owners in provincial parks that they would have direct involvement in the drafting of a new bill and that they would be able to participate in the development of a white paper by the fall of 1991. Those people say that they were not, in fact, consulted. They were not involved in any way, shape or form with this surprise bill and the solution that has been imposed by this cabinet and this government, who say they believe in democracy and say they believe in consultation and involvement of those who are affected.

In fact, we see precisely the opposite. They are doing it in such a blatant way that they have the nerve to say in the bill that the fee that they are collecting, and I quote, need not be related to the cost to the minister of providing services or defraying expenses. In other words, there is no relationship between the services provided and the fee collected. They just said a flat fee, easy to do, easy to administer, with no sense of fairness inherent in that system.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

* (1630)

Mr. Speaker, when you look at this situation, you wonder how a minister could have the nerve to entitle his news release, Levy to Create Fairness in Service Fee Collection. Levy to create fairness—he is going to create service, and he does precisely the opposite. He creates more unfairness by imposing a poll tax upon the property owners, and the poll tax, the principle being the same for all,

regardless of their ability to pay or the relative wealth of their property.

Now, the minister also indicates in a memo that was put forward from his department that we have been given a copy of, in putting forward the legislative proposal for 1992, that the legislation that we are dealing with here is consistent with the strategic plan of the department, and the strategic plan is qualified when they say yes, user-pay principles. That is the statement that makes it fit with the strategic plan—yes, user-pay principles.

Now we could do a lot of things with that strategic plan of this government if user pay is going to apply to all of the services provided by government. We could certainly raise a lot of concerns if that was being applied in the health care field, for example. Insofar as parks are concerned, if in fact the government is putting in a user-pay principle, then why is it not prepared to offer services for those who are allegedly being told that they are the users? If there are no services being offered, or no discussion, or no consultation with the so-called users, they are in fact not receiving the services that they should get and therefore are not users in the true sense of the word.

The government is taking a rather hypocritical approach on this when they say on the one hand it is a user-pay principle, and yet they are not promising to provide the so-called users with any services. I find that a contradiction, as I found a number of things in this bill a contradiction.

So we say in discussing this bill, that the government has failed on a number of counts. First of all, it has failed to consult and to undertake the development of this legislation in a democratic way. This certainly violates a principle of consultation and democratic involvement by those who are impacted by legislation—a long-standing principle, I might add, which our government had followed to an exhaustive degree in many instances. The Environment Act was one example where we had undertaken extensive consultation with my former colleague at that time, the Honourable Gérard Lecuyer who was minister for the Environment, before the bill was put in place. There were extensive public meetings, extensive consultation and input from those who would be impacted, and those who were interested and concerned about what was happening in the Legislature with regard to that bill.

We have adapted that same process to many other bills and many other areas of government, but we are seeing a gradual drifting away by this government as they deal with controversial issues. They seem to be entrenching and to be refusing to go out and talk to those people who are impacted and to arrive at a solution that certainly may not be one that they all like and they all love and think is great, but one where they have had real input and there has been real consultation in the final shaping of that bill.

Having been in the Legislature since, I believe, 1966, certainly the longest-standing member in this House, the Minister for Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) should know that he should not try to ramrod a bill such as this past those who are impacted. He should know better. He should certainly know better. He should have, if anything, mellowed over those years and recognized that—not as a brash new minister who came in and is trying to change the world overnight and accomplish everything that is put before him in one year or in one term of government—in fact he must adhere to the principles of constitutional democracy and that he would ensure that the consultation took place and that there was all of this input that I talk about before finalizing the bill.

I am rather shocked that the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) would, in fact, stoop to this kind of activity. I wish and I hope that he would read very carefully these remarks and that he would reconsider his decision to impose the \$500 fee in an across-the-board-poll-tax way, would go back and say, I failed; I should have pushed further to have these discussions reach completion, come to fruition through consultation; I should have made this a higher priority in my dealings as a minister for the people involved, and I want to put this bill on hold; I want to just let it sit here for a while, and I want to go back and have those discussions and then come back with perhaps a revised bill that reflects what is more democratic, more realistic and more fair in this particular instance, insofar as the imposition of taxation, Mr. Speaker.

I would hope that the minister would consider that. I would hope that he would work out the issue of who should get the fees once they are applied, once a method has been worked out, that he would discuss with the LGDs and the municipalities, who indeed provide some of the services, to have them share in the monies that are collected and the taxation that

is collected. I hasten to mention once again that this would be collected in a way that would reflect relative wealth or value of the properties involved and ability to pay.

I would hope that he would also go back and undo the hardships and hard feelings that he has created with the people who are affected here and who have become disillusioned with government as a result of their involvement with this minister who has abandoned some democratic principles in his effort to put in place a cabinet decision or a decision that he has recommended to his colleagues in cabinet.

Unfortunately, sometimes the minister may find himself in a position of having to raise substantial amounts of money, in this case \$200,000, and may not have wanted this to be done in this particular way. If that is the case, we give the minister, with his long record in this House, the benefit of the doubt, but we expect that being a person, a legislator who is dean of this House in terms of years spent here, he would set the example insofar as admitting that he has made a mistake, and if he did not agree with a decision that was made, he would say that he had no choice but to continue at that particular time with the issue as it was presented at cabinet, he had no choice, because at that time he may not even have been Minister of Natural Resources.

I understand the decision was taken in 1989, prior to the 1990 election. It certainly was not announced. It probably was the previous minister who was Minister of Natural Resources at that particular time who in fact brought in this \$500 fee. It was kept under wraps throughout the period of the election because they thought it might have been a controversial matter and they did not want to have it come out publicly at that time so they kept it under wraps. Now this minister has announced it here just a month ago, even though the decision was made in 1989, and he is bringing in the legislation now when he thinks he can get away with it.

I would say that the minister should be more independent. Rather than follow the legislation of his predecessor, the member for Rhineland, who perhaps was trying to accomplish all of the things that the bureaucrats put before him in one fell swoop, could look at this with second thought, and more considered opinion and more experienced opinion, and could realize that the member for Rhineland was going down the wrong path, as the Minister of Natural Resources at that time, that he

was moving in the wrong direction, that it was undemocratic, that it was not becoming of this government in fact to undertake decisions on that basis, and that he could have put this on hold. So the minister then would have that kind of an option, considering he did not bring it back.

* (1640)

I believe the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) agrees with that. I know he will raise that with his colleagues, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) and the previous minister who so brashly brought this in, in an ill-considered fashion, without undertaking the required discussions and consultation which should have taken place. He will be a moving force, this member for Niakwa, in having this changed, ensuring that there is some fairness, because in fact there could be residents of his constituency who have properties in those provincial parks, and are feeling the impact of this unfair decision by this government.

I want to, Mr. Speaker, close my remarks on this bill by reiterating the statement which I made earlier: that we believe that there has to be a method put in place which ensures the people who are residing in the parks are paying their fair share, so let no one misconstrue the statements and remarks that I am making today.

We are criticizing this government and this minister and the previous minister for the way that they are undertaking, as opposed to necessarily the principle of collecting some funds from those people who are residing in the parks, we are criticizing the government for the way that they are proceeding and also the methods used in arriving at a determination of the fee. An arbitrary across-the-board fee is not a fair one, and certainly the methods used were not fair. This government should recognize that, and I hope that they will.

We will be watching that with a great deal of interest. My colleague the member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans), who is the critic, will be speaking on this bill in due course, as well as perhaps some of my other colleagues, and will be making these points emphatically with the minister in hopes that he will reconsider what he has done with this bill and undertake the discussions required to ensure that it is arrived at democratically and fairly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. As previously agreed, this matter will remain standing in the name

of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans).

Bill 22—The Lodge Operators and Outfitters Licensing and Consequential Amendments Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), Bill 22, The Lodge Operators and Outfitters Licensing and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur les permis relatifs aux exploitants de camps de chasse et de pêche et aux pourvoyeurs et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres dispositions législatives, standing in the name of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans).

Stand? Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: It is agreed.

Bill 34—The Surveys Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources, Bill 34, The Surveys Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'arpentage, standing in the name of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: It is agreed.

Bill 42—The Amusements Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), Bill 42, The Amusements Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les divertissements, standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Bill 43—The Farm Income Assurance Plans Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), Bill 43, The Farm Income Assurance Plans Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les régimes d'assurance-revenue agricole, standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Nell Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I stand to speak today on Bill 43, The Farm Income Assurance Plans Amendment Act.

It was indicated by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) when he introduced this bill in the House that Bill 43 is a very brief bill. Its main purpose is to provide authority to make advances to stabilization accounts to enable payments to producers to participate in various income support programs.

Mr. Speaker, I am sure all members of this House will agree with me when I say that our economic climate is one that is very troubled at this time, and Manitoba farmers have many concerns regarding the hard times they are faced with.

(Mr. Marcel Laurendeau, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Acting Speaker, it is our responsibility as legislators to ensure that legislation is fair and in the best interest of the people who we represent, the Manitobans—

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): I agree with you.

Mr. Gaudry: I am glad to see the member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) agrees, and he will work for the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Acting Speaker, advanced interim payments have been forwarded to producers in the past and this amendment, as I understand it, is to be absolutely sure in the future that there are no discrepancies in such payments.

Mr. Acting Speaker, in those brief comments that the minister said, he said the bill was very brief, but we appreciate that he said it is designed to facilitate the ability of my department to have program payments in the hands of farmers as quickly as possible. We know that the farmers are desperate out there in these hard times.

Mr. Acting Speaker, our party will be prepared to let this bill go to committee, but we will ask questions when it goes into committee. Any proposed amendment to the act requires much deliberation, and we will be looking forward to discussing this bill further in committee. I am sure that we will be listening to Manitoba farmers to see what they want. I know that it has been compared to other programs like the GRIP program which there has been a lot of controversy in Manitoba with the farmers. We appreciate their concerns, and we will be working with them all through this legislation.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I will also be brief but like I said I will be the only speaker on this bill. We would like to see it go to committee so that we can debate this bill further.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): As previously agreed, this will remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

House Business

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Acting Speaker, do I have leave to change the sponsorship of some private members' resolutions?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Is leave granted for the honourable member to make change in sponsorship to a resolution?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Helwer: Resolutions 7 and 70.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): Leave? Is there leave for the honourable member for Gimli to make a change to Resolutions 7 and 70?

An Honourable Member: No leave.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): No leave. Leave is denied.

Bill 44—The Milk Prices Review Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laurendeau): On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), Bill 44, The Milk Prices Review Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le contrôle du prix du lait, standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker, for your consideration on this matter. I rise to speak on The Milk Prices Review Amendment Act at this particular time and to

respond to some of the remarks made by the minister at the time that he introduced the bill.

I want to indicate today that there should be general agreement, I believe, to move this particular bill to committee. I intend to move it to committee today, however with the limited time, it may be necessary to continue my remarks in the next particular sitting and then move it to committee, unless the member has further requirements for speaking—the Liberal Party. I want to deal with a number of issues on this, Mr. Acting Speaker, and then perhaps continue with my remarks in the next sitting, because we are getting close to five o'clock.

* (1650)

The major points that were raised by the minister involved multiple-component pricing, more flexible schedule of milk price review changes, the Milk Prices Review Commission's financial records and audits status being changed and a removal of Order-in-Council approval and requirement for the commission orders. Those were four points that he raised, and I wish to deal with each of those in some detail.

The issue of multiple-component pricing is the first which has come forward here. I think this is certainly a positive amendment, because it does reflect the consumer demand at the present time. I think most people when they buy milk now are looking at skim milk or 1 percent, at least 2 percent milk. Very few people buy whole milk to drink. Many buy skim milk and 2 percent and 1 percent, as I indicated. Yet the pricing of milk has always been based on the amount of fat content, Mr. Acting Speaker, in the milk. If your animal has generated more fat content, you were able to get more for your milk as opposed to less.

The fact is, at the present time the consumers are demanding milk with less fat, so I believe that the minister is moving in the right direction when he is talking about multiple-component pricing, because what he in fact is doing is ensuring that not only is fat used as a criteria for the determination of the value of the product, but that protein is considered and the level of minerals, for example, in milk. So I think these are important aspects to consider. I believe this is a move by the minister to reflect current consumer demands and is something that we can support from this side of the House.

Insofar as the issue of a more flexible schedule of milk pricing, under the current system in the current act each period or time that there is a re-evaluation

of the cost of production formula to determine if in fact the producers should be receiving more money for their product, the trigger mechanism is plus or minus 2 percent. In other words, if there is not a variance of plus or minus 2 percent, the producers do not receive additional funds. If the amount is 1.5 percent difference in cost of production, producers do not receive any additional consideration. There is not a trigger in this present system to ensure that there is a review done, Mr. Acting Speaker, unless it is plus or minus 2 percent.

So the minister is saying, well, we need a more flexible approach here. We need to ensure that if the cost of production varies even 1 percent or 1.5 percent the producers would receive that additional money. That makes sense with the rising costs and so on. It is important to be flexible and sensitive in the pricing mechanism.

I would suggest to the minister on this issue that perhaps he might want to consider having a dual system, because the minister says that he is going to have this reviewed every six months and if there is a small change, it would be implemented. What if there is a major change within that six month period? What if there is a major change because the costs of feed are very high? So it is over 2 percent. The producer will not be able to get that additional consideration in the cost of production formula until after the six-month period is up, until we have reached that six-month period for the next review.

So I think the minister might want to put in a system that would ensure the semi-annual review takes place, but if there is a deviance from the cost of production value of more than 2 percent as is currently the case that would also trigger another review. In fact, if it was three months after the last semi-annual review, it could be another review that would reflect the cost for the producers, so there would be a sensitive mechanism and a flexible mechanism truly. The minister said he is trying to be more flexible, trying to be more sensitive. In fact this goes the other way, and there are some dangers involved because, again, the producers may have to wait up to six months before they could get consideration for additional costs.

That is a suggestion the minister might want to take, and certainly if the producers are not concerned about that, then he may not pursue that, but I think it is something he might want to review

with the producers prior to finalizing this particular bill.

Now the third point the minister mentioned was changes with regard to the record keeping and audits for the Milk Prices Review Commission. The Milk Prices Review Commission up to this point in time has had a separate annual report, separate records published in a separate report for the Legislature. The funding has been in a special fund set aside in trust for the Milk Prices Review Commission. There was not funding taken from the Consolidated Fund from the department as such.

That is something that has left the commission at arm's length from government. In a way, that is an advantage, because the review commission should be independent, should be at arm's length in making decisions so that it is perceived by the public as representing the public interest and certainly not compromised in any way with regard to representing the producer interest, perhaps more so than the public interest, or perhaps government policies of the day, or government direction. Therefore, Mr. Acting Speaker, it would not be subject, under those circumstances, to reductions or major cutbacks in funding as a result of budget exercises that may be undertaken by the department. They have separate funding at arm's length from government.

There may be some savings, Mr. Acting Speaker, in amalgamating this, and ensuring that there would not have to be a separate audit done by the auditor, and so the staffing and so on would be all undertaken by the department. That seems to make sense from that point of view.

On the other hand, one has to consider the arm's length relationship. We raise just a caution with the minister with regard to that particular issue. It is certainly one that I think is necessary to consider both in terms of the real functioning of the review commission, but also from a perception that perhaps this is more government bureaucracy and it is not at arm's length insofar as its review of the issues that come before it, especially as they apply to the health standards and the price of the products and so on. That is the major function of this particular commission, the Milk Prices Review Commission, and one that we have to protect in terms of the job that they are doing.

The other point that was mentioned as well to me in discussions with some of the people in the industry that should be made here, I believe, that up to this point in time the commission has undertaken

its own monitoring and surveying of costs amongst producers to ensure that the cost of production formula adequately represented the costs fairly insofar as the producers are concerned.

If that ability to monitor and undertake the survey work that is needed by the commission is hampered in any way, as a result of the budgetary decisions being made by the government, since this review commission will now be under the auspices of the Department of Agriculture, it will be something that should be considered, if there is a hampering of the ability of the government or of the review commission to undertake this surveying and monitoring of the industry.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

It may be that this will be handed over to the marketing board itself, representing the producers. In that particular case, there might be some who would say, well, there needs to be some balance there. The public interest, the consumer interest, has to be balanced here. We have to look at the other side of it.

I would say to the minister in this particular area that he should consider, when passing this bill, that the ability of the commission to continue its work independently be maintained, that there not be budget-cutting exercises that impact on the impartiality of the review commission and its ability to undertake its work as it has traditionally.

I would be pleased to continue my remarks, Mr. Speaker, at our next opportunity.

* (1700)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) will have 29 minutes remaining.

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

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

ORDERS FOR RETURN, ADDRESSES FOR PAPERS REFERRED FOR DEBATE

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to begin discussion for the New Democratic Party caucus on the matter before us, an Address for Papers referring to Bill 91, legislation to curb solvent abuse, debated by this House, supported by all political parties and given a commitment by the government of the day for proclamation at the earliest opportunity.

Mr. Speaker, that was almost two years ago. Just about two years ago today, this bill was at committee stage of the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. It was two years ago minus several days, March 8, 1990, to be exact, that Bill 91, legislation to curb the sale of solvents among young people, was at committee stage where community groups and concerned individuals made strong representation in support of this legislation and where this government of the day, the Conservative government of Manitoba, gave its stamp of approval, line by line, clause by clause, till the process was over late in the day on March 13, and then on March 15 for third and final reading.

Mr. Speaker, we rise today out of great disappointment and sadness. This debate is before us, this request for papers is before this House because a very important piece of legislation, having received the support of all parties in this Legislative Assembly, has been gathering dust while young children and teenagers are growing sicker and sicker, day by day, as they become addicted to the ghastly substances listed in this bill, because of the horrible life circumstances that they find themselves in.

Mr. Speaker, the circumstances that have led children and young people to turn to solvents like Lysol, like glue, like paint thinner, like gasoline, like nail polish remover, have only grown worse and worse with every day that has passed since March 15, 1990.

It is criminal, Mr. Speaker, for this government to have allowed this legislation to gather dust when it could have been at work helping children and young people not just in our inner city but in communities throughout Winnipeg and in communities throughout Manitoba—urban, rural, northern, remote, reserve communities, everywhere. This bill, this act could have been at work preserving the health of our young people and saving lives.

Mr. Speaker, we are left today with the very few avenues available to members in the opposition to keep this matter before the government and to show our outrage and concern at the criminal negligence of this government in allowing this bill to gather dust when it could have been at work for our communities and for our children. We did not say from Day One that this was perfect legislation. We knew that there would be problems. It would not be easy to enforce, and it would not address the root causes of the

problem this bill attempts to address, but it was a step in the right direction.

It would have been making a difference over the last couple of years, but for the failure of this government to recognize its importance, but for the betrayal and broken promises and half truths of this government over the last two years and more, but for the fact that this government has allowed a bill of this importance, a law of this magnitude to be mired down in bureaucratic red tape, caught up in legal opinions, studied by reviews and committee, thrown to the wind and allowed to die.

Mr. Speaker, there is no excuse for that inaction. If there were problems we would have identified them long ago, and we could have been working on regulations or amendments to this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I remind all members in this House that this bill went through all the proper steps of the Legislative Assembly. It was reviewed by the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae). It was studied by his department officials, and he came to the legislative process with nothing but praise and support for this legislation. On March 1 the Minister of Justice says: We have to have legislation like this. In a matter like this there is all kinds of room for agreement amongst right-thinking and caring Manitobans, which I trust that all members of the House are.

An Honourable Member: Who said that?

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: That was the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae).

An Honourable Member: On the record.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: On the record.

An Honourable Member: He supports this bill.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Gave absolute support to Bill 91, and the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) and other members on that side of the House sat through the committee hearings where the Winnipeg Police force came and made pleas and urgent calls for passage of Bill 91 because they have no other means, no other laws, no other regulations to deal with a sick, with a troublesome and with a growing problem in communities throughout Winnipeg and, indeed, throughout Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) will recall that we sat around that committee table and we seriously considered each and every group and individual that made presentation, and in fact we accepted amendments. We discussed and perused and accepted amendments of the

organizations that appeared before us, in particular I think of the Winnipeg Police Department who came to us with a number of very constructive suggestions which were incorporated into the legislation and which gave the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) even more confidence that this was a good piece of legislation that would be helpful in addressing a very serious problem in all of our communities.

* (1710)

We have not only failed children and young people of Manitoba, we have failed all of those volunteer, nonprofit organizations who work to better our communities everywhere. We have failed the front-line workers who have put in hours beyond the call of duty, helping young people and children to find shelter and security and hope for a brighter future. We have failed those workers and those organizations who see the problem on a day-to-day basis and try as best they can to help.

We have failed future generations to come. Solvent abuse is a growing and serious problem in our society. The sniffing of mind-altering inhalants is unquestionably an escape for young people from the harsh realities of hunger, poverty, abuse, broken homes and prostitution. It is addictive, it is harmful to health, and it is sometimes deadly.

We have tried in this Legislature, members from all parties, to take our responsibilities seriously and to do what we can to stop such a harmful and deadly problem. We have been stopped dead in our tracks by an uncaring government who has broken faith and broken word with the people of Manitoba and now today is hiding behind legalities and rulings of this Chamber, and of our legal system, while kids get sick and kids die from their use and abuse of solvents.

Mr. Speaker, perhaps the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is correct when he says he is under no obligation according to the Rules of the House to provide legal opinions or advice provided for the use of government. There is nothing to stop this government from giving Manitobans and giving all of us in this Legislature all of the information we need to understand what the problems are and what the reasons for the delays are. They have chosen not to keep any of us in this House, or the community workers who have fought tirelessly over two decades for this kind of legislation, or the residents of our communities everywhere in this province informed of the delay for this problem, the delay in this legislation.

We will use every opportunity in this Chamber to keep this matter before this government and to remind them of their responsibilities for acting in the best interests of our children and young people to secure a brighter and better future for this province. It is this kind of broken promise, this kind of unexplained delay that contributes to the growing cynicism in the population today.

People everywhere are wondering what we are all doing here as legislators, as politicians, as political activists, as cabinet ministers, when they see nothing but a trail of broken promises, delays, unanswered questions, rhetoric, referral to reviews, establishment of task forces, of wars on drugs, of expensive consultative processes without any action.

Mr. Speaker, as I said at the outset, I will say again, Bill 91 may not be perfect. There may be problems with enforcement, but it was our responsibility and this government's obligation to have proclaimed Bill 91 within a reasonable amount of time after passage through this House and to then determine the effectiveness of that law and make changes accordingly. That was called for by every member in this House; that was called for by the police in our communities; that was called for by our community activists; that was called for by the concerned parents and guardians of our children throughout the province of Manitoba.

I hope that this government will see fit, come to its senses, take a little risk, if that is what it feels is involved, proclaim Bill 91, and ensure that we have taken our responsibility seriously and moved a little closer to ending a serious problem.

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

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I take the opportunity to rise on this address, because I share many of the concerns that the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) has expressed.

Everyone in the House that sat here in the minority government welcomed this piece of legislation. I think all of us, when we had an opportunity, congratulated the member for St. Johns for proposing the legislation. We saw it as something that was long overdue, something that was needed in our community in order to redirect children into positive lifestyles and not negative ones. It received unanimous approval of every single member of this House. If I would disagree

with anything that she had to say today it would be with regard to process, because I think what we are seeing is the tyranny of the majority as opposed to the co-operation of the minority.

When this legislation was introduced, there was the willingness on the part of all of us to see to it if we could propose good legislation. I think that there are backbenchers in all parties who would like to continue to present to the House good legislation, which for one reason or another—giving the government the benefit of the doubt—may not be at the top of the government's priority list, but may be at the top of the priority list of an individual member of this House. That is what private members' bills and private members' hour is all about, that each one of us, whether we are in cabinet or not in cabinet, have constituency issues, have people issues that are of concern to us.

We want the opportunity as legislators, elected in an equal way with every other legislator, to be able to bring forth good and valid legislation and to know that good and valid legislation is going to be seriously examined. There were a number of bills in that session that I think were positive.

I remember Mark Minenko introducing one with regard to handicapped parking. Last year, we saw the government show its true colours, because rather than proclaiming it and amending it, if they felt that there were amendments necessary—no—they had to grandstand, and they had to bring it in as their own piece of legislation. They did not want to give Mr. Minenko the privilege of saying: This was my piece of legislation. I suspect that is exactly what they are trying to do to the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), that the government would like to come along and say, well, we have to have a new piece of legislation.

Well, the tragedy about that is that the government could proclaim that legislation tomorrow. If it was required to make amendments, I can guarantee the instant support for reasonable amendments from my party to the bill. I am sure the deputy leader of the New Democratic Party can get approval from her caucus, that if it is necessary to even fast-track those amendments, if they are good and legitimate amendments in order to get this thing effective in law, then we will do so because the purpose here is surely not always partisan politics.

* (1720)

Surely, the purpose some days is to effect better legislation for our children, and that is what the

member for St. Johns tried to do when she introduced the legislation. I believe that is what she is trying to do today.

We saw another example of the tyranny of the majority last year with a bill that my party tried to introduce and tried to have passed, in fact, did introduce, tried to have it passed—the salvation army act. We wanted to have an amendment, requested not by us, but by an organization and the government decided—no, no, no—could not happen, could not let the Liberal Party introduce that piece of legislation, had to be the Conservative Party that introduced that piece of legislation. So they allowed it to die on the Order Paper.

An Honourable Member: And it is back.

Mrs. Carstairs: And it is back. It is back because our member went to the Salvation Army and said, look, if we introduce it, it is not going to get through. By all means if you can get the Conservative Party to introduce it, do it, because we are more interested in you getting your needed legislation than we are in playing political, partisan games. That is the difference between the majority and the minority positions in this House. Tragically the bill that they have chosen to do it with now is a bill which is in the interest of young people.

Mr. Speaker, let us talk about what this bill wants to do. It wants to make it more difficult for young people to become hooked on solvents. That is what the bill is all about. We want to make sure that businesses cannot indiscriminately sell this kind of material to young people knowing that they are going to buy it, go behind the store and sniff it. We want to have a piece of legislation that, inasmuch as it is possible to protect children, does. The member herself says it is not perfect. No legislation is perfect. Nothing we do is going to guarantee that every single child will never abuse solvents. Nothing. We have to be prepared to start. We have to be prepared as adults to show some example, to say we will do everything as adults, as lawmakers, to ensure that we have legislation which will prevent some young people from abusing solvents.

It is not a difficult concept, Mr. Speaker. It is really a very simple concept, and yet on a simple concept we would allow partisanship to be the order of the day. It is very sad. It is very sad for the member who is doing her job, doing her function. It is very sad for those of us who sat and voted for her piece of legislation, recognizing that it was good and positive, and might indeed deter some children. It

is, she said, a mark of an unfeeling and uncaring government. Well, it is more than that, because you have to be uncaring not to proceed with this legislation, and you have to be failing the people. You have to be putting narrow political agendas before children, and that is what is so sad. That is what is tragic about this situation, because you have put a narrow political agenda before our kids. Nothing is more important than our kids.

When I listen to people tell me—Why do you do this job; why do you take all of the abuse that goes along with being a politician?—well, I only have one answer. There is only one, and the answer to that, member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), is, you do it so that your children and your grandchildren can have a better life. That is why you do it, and some days it gets increasingly difficult to convince yourself of that, but that is what we are here for. That is what I like to believe we are all here for, and then when I see that kind of exhibition, I say, well, maybe some of us are not here for that. Maybe some of us are more interested in the games of politics than we are in the results of politics.

So, Mr. Speaker, I want to go very clearly on the record today and say that I think it is time for this government to act. If they have some problems with the bill, if they want to make amendments to that act, then I can assure them, from my party, that they will be given very speedy amendments to that act. We have certainly passed amendments in the past in jiffy time. Well, nothing, in my opinion, should be put into place more quickly at this moment than this piece of legislation, and I beg the government of the day to consider that very carefully and to move on this and not to stymie this one moment longer.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to—well, I should not say that I am pleased to be able to be speaking to this bill, because this bill should not even be before us today. It was supposed to be proclaimed quite some time ago.

This is not a bill that we are debating where NDP gets credit or Liberals get credit or Conservatives get credit. This is what the Leader of the Liberal Party has just stated. This is a bill that deals with children and the Manitoba youth. That is what this bill is all about.

So, Mr. Speaker, when you have promises and statements that are recorded by the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), that was in 1990, and now we are in 1992. That was two years ago when he

stated that the bill will be proclaimed in January, and the question was, when in January? The answer was, between the 2nd and 31st. I guess the minister just forgot to add the year to it. That was the only difference.

Mr. Speaker, when we talk about abusing sniff and gasoline and petroleum, that is a serious problem. You would think that the Minister of Health would be glad to address it, because it is not only a problem that the individual child or youth has today. It is a serious health problem that we in Manitoba have in the future. Those individuals who grow addicted to whatever, whether it is glue or nail polish or gasoline, they become, in most cases, a burden on taxpayers either through being incarcerated through the jail systems or are put into hospitals for treatment, and that comes to many, many dollars. This is not an issue of dollars and cents, but it could be in the future if this bill is not proclaimed.

Mr. Speaker, I was at a few rallies and pickets. What is happening, and I think the government should be very, very aware of this, especially the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae)—

An Honourable Member: Was Daryl Bean there?

Mr. Hickes: Well, I do not know if Daryl Bean was there, but I wish the Minister of Justice was there, because he should have been there, because what is happening is the grocery stores in the Point Douglas area—these pickets were organized and put on by the Point Douglas Residents' Committee. A committee in the area had to put together these pickets, because they are sick and tired of these grocery stores selling abusive substances to individuals, to the children and to the adults, who in turn are able, because their minds are altered, to put the residents in a very dangerous position. So, yes, the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), I wish he would have been there to see for himself. You picket those grocery stores, they take it off the shelf, and a month later they are back again selling it. Is that right? I say, no, because the people are up in arms.

What is it going to take for this government to proclaim something? Are we going to start getting groups and organizations acting on their own, and we have vigilante groups all over the place? Is that what it is going to take? I think we have gone beyond those stages. I do not think that something which is very important as this Bill 91, which I might add, where the Minister of Justice says jokingly, where is Daryl Bean, I do not think it is a joking matter. I will quote from the Minister of Justice—

An Honourable Member: Why do you support the likes of Daryl Bean, that is what I am wondering?

* (1730)

Mr. Hickes: I stated very clearly the other day, I do not support Daryl Bean.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) is put into such an opportune moment where a lot of us people in Manitoba never ever get a chance to be placed. He has a second chance to press his government and his colleague the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) to proclaim this bill.

In February 6, 1990, the Justice Minister said, "As I said, I have been working with the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), who had the foresight to bring this matter forward."

March 1, the Minister of Justice: "... we have to have legislation like this ... in a matter like this there is all kinds of room for agreement amongst right thinking and caring Manitobans, which I trust that all Members of this House are."

Today I ask you, are all members of this House that caring and that trusting? If you are, support this bill, put the pressure onto the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), proclaim this bill. We need it today. We needed it yesterday. We cannot go on forever and ever until some child or some person, either in Winnipeg or right across Manitoba loses their lives over this.

It is not just an issue that belongs to Point Douglas or belongs to Kildonan, it is a problem right across Manitoba. I have been in some of the communities in northern Manitoba where a lot of these communities are faced with very, very serious gas sniffers. They have a tremendous amount of problems with these individuals once they start sniffing gas. Their minds get altered, and they do crazy, crazy things. It is very dangerous to the whole community, not only the children, the women, but the whole community. It is very, very dangerous.

If we can have something that—even the police have come out and stated, if we could proclaim this bill, it would give us an opportunity to act on behalf of the citizens of Manitoba. The police have said that over and over and over. The Residents' Committee have met with the police. I have met with the police, and I hear the same things over and over and over.

There are a lot of seniors who live in these areas. It is not even safe for them to even go out for a nice

summer stroll in the evening, when you have people who are high on Lysol or sniffing glue, or what have you. The seniors who have worked all their lives for some peace and quiet and relaxation and to enjoy life, they do not even have that anymore.

It has passed through the House. All it needs is to be proclaimed.

I would just like to quote a little bit more from the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), who is very supportive of it, and I hope his feelings are still the same today. I really do because this is a very serious issue, and we have to seriously address it and make sure that it is proclaimed.

He said, I moved that motion so that the Department of Health and its minister, whom I have not had the opportunity to consult with in recent days, can do the work necessary to ensure that those who are in the business of distributing these things on a legal basis are made aware of the new rules. I do give commitment to the honourable member. I will not go on because it is not a one-party issue, and all honourable members— that here again this is a matter of some importance to us as a government to bring some reasonable level of control with regard to substance abuse.

That is your own government member making those statements. I hope when I conclude that same government member will stand up and say those same things again, because he has, like I said earlier, the opportunity to have a second chance at it that a lot of us never get. Stand up, take your pats on the back. Get that bill proclaimed, and we will gladly pat you on the back. It does not matter who gets it done. It is the people of Manitoba and our youth and children that are going to benefit, not me, not the party but the people that need that kind of support. That is who is going to benefit from it, and that is one thing that we have to make sure we keep very clear in mind.

The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) had no problems when it was first brought out. When he was asked about when the bill will be proclaimed he said, in the affirmative. When will the bill be proclaimed? Soon. When was soon? January of 1990. In 1991, May 1, the Health minister at that time said, amendments may not be necessary to deal with technical problems with enforcement. Reading that statement, it reads that the Health minister was very supportive of it. What happened? What happened in that process? What made the minister change his mind, and what made the

government change their mind? I hope it is not the interest of profit versus the safety of our children and our youth. I hope it is not. Because no matter how much money you are able to make or have, you can never ever replace a person's life, and that is a fact.

We all in this House have family and children, and if you saw some of those young youth that are high on sniff, and if they ever came home and you saw that, I bet you would not hesitate for one minute to be proclaiming this very, very serious, important bill. The bill is making sure that the youth under 18 do not have access to abusive substances because when you are young you are very easily influenced, very, very easily influenced.

I have to commend, again, the Residents' Committee from Point Douglas. They have taken up the fight on their own because of the inaction of this government. How many times do they have to do that? I know the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) has attended functions and stuff in the constituency of Point Douglas. He has met a lot of people there, you know. There are a lot of excellent people there. They are asking for the support of us as legislators. They are not saying that you Liberals, you NDP, you Conservatives proclaim this bill for us. They are saying, we have had enough. Enough is enough.

How long is it going to take? How long do we have to wait? We cannot continue on. You go into some of the communities right across Manitoba. The member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) was on that drug committee, war on drugs. Is that not what this is all about? Is that not exactly what we are talking about?

I heard her speak once at a school in St. Vital, and she was very proud of that committee, war on drugs. Where is it? What is going to happen to that? That cost a lot of money, and a lot of people put a lot of time and effort into that. Is it going to be shelved like this to proclaim for another two years?

Governments and people have good intentions. Those good intentions do not mean beans if they are not carried through. People are tired and tired of hearing talk, rhetoric from all governments—not only this government, from all governments. That is what we get right across Canada.

No wonder people are so cynical of politicians. They are sick and tired of that. They want action.

Today the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) came back from a meeting in Toronto. It is very encouraging what he had to say about

aboriginal people and aboriginal causes. This bill ties right into aboriginal issues and aboriginal causes.

If the government is very sincere in helping people in Manitoba, proclaim this bill today. Proclaim it. Do not wait until you have a tragedy take place.

I recently had a meeting with some members, and I was very glad to see that the government is going to be supporting that organization, at least in the interim. That was the group who came here from St. Theresa Point. The Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) will remember that group.

An Honourable Member: Saint where?

Mr. Hlckes: St. Theresa Point.

They have their own little community justice system—their own little community where they appoint their own judges, their own magistrates. The elders are involved; chief and council are involved; the community is involved.

They, in turn, have saved the government a lot of money by not having to fly in lawyers and magistrates and judges. You know, one of the things that struck me and will remain with me forever, because I have been into a lot of isolated communities and I have seen these problems where the individuals have sniffed a lot of gas. In communities where you have access to Ski-Doos, and outboard motors and stuff like that, you do get a lot of—I would not say a lot of sniffing, but certain individuals get addicted to gasoline sniffing. It is not a pretty sight to see.

In this community of St. Theresa Point, there was an individual from outside the community who had relocated into that community and had brought the addiction problem of gasoline sniffing with him. Like I said earlier, youth are very easily swayed, and next thing you knew you had more youth in the community who started sniffing gasoline, and it spread.

The community, with their own little justice system, dealt with it and dealt with that individual, and you know what that committee told us. They said, we now today have no problem, we do not even have a gas sniffer in our community. That is exactly what they said, and you were at those meetings. It is because the community had to take action on its own. The community had to take the bull by the horns and act on its own. Is that what we have to do here? Is that what Manitobans have to do, is stop relying on our governments, our rules and

regulations, our laws and start enforcing their own? I say no. I say this is too important to leave it. It is time that we proclaimed it. It is long overdue, and I look forward to the support of the government to have this happen for all Manitobans and our youth. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

* (1740)

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, it appears to me, honourable members opposite are using this Order for Return and Address for Papers to remind gently but firmly the government of their concerns with respect to the abuse of various substances in our province. While I appreciate the concern honourable members opposite are showing and agree with that concern, I rise today to inform them that regardless of the concerns they are expressing about legislation, the concerns they are expressing about the problem are shared by honourable members on this side of this House.

I listened to the honourable Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) talk about co-operation and offering the co-operation of her and her colleagues in moving this kind of measure along in order to make our province a safer place. As I listened to the honourable Leader of the Liberal Party talking about co-operation and working together, I was reminded of the way things went back in 1990 when, at the time honourable members are referring to, referred to some of my own comments. I see no reason for me to take issue with any of those things that honourable members today are raising.

As a House leader in those days, I operated to a large extent in dealing with private members' matters as Bill 91 was. I relied to a large extent on the undertakings given to me by the sponsors of such initiatives. In this case, it was the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) who gave me undertakings as House leader that, yes indeed, this Bill 91 would be effective in addressing a problem that we all agreed was there and we all agreed required some kind of addressing, that it would be effective, that it would be enforceable. I suppose if mistakes were made by myself in those days, it was to believe honourable members opposite who gave me those undertakings.

As honourable members will know, another bill at that particular session dealt with handicapped parking, parking for handicapped individuals, the disabled persons in our province. That bill was sponsored by the then member for Seven Oaks,

now known as Mark Minenko. I again made the mistake out of an abundance of good will, and I have to acknowledge that—of believing what the honourable member Mark Minenko told me about what was in his bill and how enforceable it was and how well it would work and how well he had consulted with the community. I just assumed he did that in the same way that we as a government consulted with various people who would be interested in such legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I made a mistake. I believed the honourable member for Seven Oaks, and I believed the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), who—I am not suggesting anything about her credibility; I am just saying she must have felt that her consultation and her research had been adequate to back moving forward a bill. I do not fault her for any of that because I say the honourable member for St. Johns is endowed with good intentions. I believed that then and I believe that now.

So do I believe those members of the Point Douglas Residents' Committee and the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) and all honourable members when they tell of their good intentions with regard to Bill 91 and the problem that we have before us. But let not the honourable member for Point Douglas lecture this government on carrying through with good intentions. You know the party that he supports and has supported has a record of its own which, I think, out of common courtesy and respect for those listening to me today, I ought not to burden those listening with a recitation of that particular, very sad and sorry record of lack of achievement and failure. I am not going to do that because we are talking about a problem that we all agree that needs to be addressed.

The honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) spoke of not to worry about pats on the back and so on, and I do not think that is what this debate is about really. I agree with the honourable member for Point Douglas because, having the background that I have, I think I know a little bit about this problem, as would others who experience these things in a first-hand way. You do not have to be in Point Douglas, and you do not have to be in a remote community, to find abusive substances going on. I live in a community in Brandon West; while I am very proud of my community and think that we enjoy a reasonably good standard of living and quality of life, nonetheless there are those who for whatever

reasons find themselves in a situation where they are abusing substances. That happens in Brandon West and Brandon East and probably almost every constituency in this province.

This problem is more a problem in Manitoba and perhaps Saskatchewan and in other areas in the West than in other parts of Canada. This is why I was disappointed that, when I as Minister of Justice for Manitoba saw to it that the issue of substance abuse was placed on the agenda for ministers responsible for justice across this country, was not able to garner more support for the concerns I expressed back in 1989, even before Bill 91 came before this House. The problem is not, as reported to me by other ministers of justice, such a big problem in other areas of this country. At least that is the way it was put to me in relation to certain substances. I mean, obviously Ontario is not going to say that drugs are not a problem because drugs are a problem more in the major metropolitan areas of the province of Ontario. Some of the Maritime provinces were quite curious about this because they knew very little about the incidence of sniffing gasoline or sniffing glue or other substances of that nature, so that the kind of support that I was looking for was not achievable.

That is why when the honourable member for St. Johns in 1990 came along with Bill 91, I was pleased. I was pleased to be able to say that I support the thrust of what the honourable member is doing based on the undertakings that she is providing to this House and to the committee of this House and to me personally. I made that mistake, I acknowledge, of believing what the honourable member for St. Johns said.

I do say, the honourable member, while she may be annoyed with my saying that, I do not question her good faith or her intentions at all. She is not a legal expert any more than I was. I assumed that she had the benefit of that kind of research. So Bill 91 then is the responsibility of this government to proclaim. This government is not going to proclaim something that is faulty and that therein is the problem. Honourable members will allow government, I hope, to do its work and to look closely—

* (1750)

An Honourable Member: It is not faulty.

Mr. McCrae: Well, the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid) wants to get involved in the debate. I assume he is going to do that next, but

maybe he would be courteous enough to allow me to finish my comments before he gets into the debate, because I am nearly finished. If he would be patient, then I will finish my comments and yield the floor to him. I may not even take my full time.

I think I am wrong, maybe the honourable member for Transcona is not going to be patient and wait. If that is the case, I may just have to raise my voice so that he and other honourable members can hear me as he chatters away from his seat.

I can tell honourable members the issues that I have raised in my comments are being addressed by the Department of Justice and the Department of Health. The honourable member knows the history of this kind of legislation just as well as I do. It has had a rocky history when it was the law of the land in this particular city and there were difficulties with that kind of legislation. The honourable member ought not assume that the government's concerns about this matter have subsided, because they have not.

You know, I do not want to take any lessons from the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), supported by the member for Transcona (Mr. Reid), when it comes to the expedition in proclamation of legislation. Now the honourable member knows well what I am talking about; the honourable member knows well that the issue of freedom of information is also an important matter to the people of this province.

Since coming into office, I know why the Deputy Leader of the New Democratic Party never bothered to proclaim the freedom of information act. You should see all the stuff that crawled out under the rock from the previous government when we did come into office in this province. I know why she did not proclaim freedom of information for over three and a half years and had to leave it for this government to proclaim it.

The honourable member for St. Johns will recall it did not take us very long as government after taking office to do so either. I am going to ask the honourable member for St. Johns and her colleagues, yes, to be vigilant, yes, to be concerned, but to be patient for a little while longer, while the government attempts to try to fix the legislation which we were told was fine in the first place but which is not and needs to be fixed.

I ask honourable members for their forbearance in this matter, but certainly remind them that as a parent and speaking to parents and people who

care about children in this province, I am sure you will not question the sincerity of the government in regard to the substance abuse.

This government understands very well the economic and the social problems that are brought about by people ruining their lives by abusing substances, how they do not know they are ruining their lives, but that is precisely what they are doing. You think we do not know that.

There seems to be some hint in some of the comments coming from across the floor. Those are just nothing more than cheap shots and not really needed in a debate like this, because all honourable members in this House feel the same way about this issue and want to see these issues addressed.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I am pleased to rise to take part in the debate on Address for Papers. First of all, because proclamation is long overdue and we, on this side, are hoping that by debating the nonproclamation of Bill 91, that perhaps we will have an influence on the government and they will get on with it and do what they should be doing. Secondly, I was the chairperson of the antisniff coalition incorporated and was very involved in this issue as part of my job at North End Community Ministry.

I went through my files from the antisniff coalition and pulled out some newspaper articles going back to 1976, so we know that there is nothing new about this problem. It has been going on for a long, long time. For example, March 1, 1976, in the Free Press: Street aid is needed, agency. It is talking about glue sniffers. Teachers handed sniffing problem because better for job than MDs; and Martians in supercars appear when boys sniff: Two more articles from March 12, 1976. July 1980: Pickets protest sale of intoxicants. September 1980: Despite flaws, by-law wise, only a fool would laugh at efforts to tackle glue sniffing, Winnipeg Free Press.

I have a page from the House of Commons debates, February 11, 1985, when Bill Blaikie, the member for Winnipeg-Bird's Hill, had a speech on dangerous products and solvent sniffing deaths in Manitoba. In November 1988, Free Press Magazine: Sniff abuse, solvents ruin lives on street. Then going up to a more recent time: Tories support NDP bill to regulate sniff trade, from the Free Press of February 7, 1990. It is good to see that the Conservative government supported the bill from the honourable member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis). Then February 6, 1990: Judge

flays, quote, void in law, fines sniff peddler \$2,500. The judge in this case condemned governments for not having any way to deal with the sale of sniff sellers. In fact, this story refers to somebody selling sniff products in cans that were not properly labelled, so it really had nothing to do with legislation on the sale of sniff products. The charge was under the hazardous products act.

We know that this problem has been going on for a long, long time and groups have been working on it for a long time. The antisniff coalition, for example, in its by-laws, their goals were to prevent solvent abuse, to stop kids from sniffing, to assist families who have a sniffing problem, to educate the community about solvent abuse, to prevent the indiscriminate sale and distribution of solvents to children, to co-ordinate and obtain resources to help sniffers, to help parents and agencies organize to deal with solvent abuse in the community.

I was part of those monthly meetings that went on for month after month and year after year, as residents of the inner city and staff of social and church agencies worked together to try to do something about the problems. We tried to get the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba to set up treatment programs for children. We tried to get money from the Core Area Initiative to provide a safe house for sniffers. In that regard we were unsuccessful, but we were successful in getting Pritchard Place opened. It started in a house owned by the United Church on Pritchard Avenue and then later moved to Andrews Street. Pritchard Place, I am happy to say, is still open. Unfortunately, they do not have a secure source of funding, but they are helping keep kids off the street and give them worthwhile activities so that they are not tempted to sniff.

The coalition tried picketing store owners and picketing stores to try and discourage them from selling sniff products, but that was not successful. The antisniff coalition proposed a city by-law and lobbied City Council and they were successful. They got a by-law through the City of Winnipeg Council to control the problem of sniffing. However, it went to court and I think it was upheld and then struck down on appeal.

It was the large chain stores that appealed the city by-law and they were successful. It is interesting to

know that when the by-law was being drafted, it did not criminalize children or youth. We did not want to penalize children in any way. The purpose of the bill was to penalize the sellers and the marketers, or to restrict the sale of sniffable products to minors. I think that is an important consideration, that the user is not to be criminalized, but the restrictions be placed on the sellers, on the retailers.

It is unfortunate that city by-law was struck down, and we are very fortunate, perhaps because of minority government, perhaps because of the co-operativeness of the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) as he alleges, that the antisniff bill, as it is known, of the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) was approved by the provincial Legislature.

During I think it was 1983 or 1984 there was a national conference on sniffing and similar problems held at the Fort Garry Hotel in Winnipeg. It was funded by the federal department of Health and Welfare, and I was one of the guest speakers at that conference. In preparation I did a review of literature on sniffing. I looked at academic and medical studies of sniffing and sniffers. What I was particularly interested in was the social and economic conditions of sniffers and of their families, what level of society did they come from.

The results were quite interesting. I was looking at studies in Canada, the United States, England and Australia. About half of the studies said that children who sniff came from the lower socioeconomic strata of society. About half of the studies said there was no correlation between the socioeconomic status of sniffers and sniffing. One study suggested there was a correlation between above average socioeconomic conditions and sniffing. I think that was an interesting and important finding, because I think it is often assumed and falsely assumed that sniffing is mainly a problem in the inner city and amongst poorer children. That is not held up when you look at—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Burrows will have eight minutes remaining.

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

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Wednesday, March 4, 1992

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