



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

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Speaker*



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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	Saskatoon	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, April 15, 1992

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Sharon Evens, Maxine Gudnason, Marilyn Budzan and others requesting the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) call upon the Parliament of Canada to amend the Criminal Code to prevent the release of individuals where there is substantial likelihood of further family violence.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), and it complies with the privileges and practices of the House and complies with the rules (by leave). 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 of the 53 aboriginal languages in Canada, it has been predicted that only three will survive beyond the year 2,010 unless action is taken now; and

The Abinochi-Zhawayndakozihwin Ojibwa nursery program which began in 1985 has taught children between the ages of three and five the Ojibwa language, culture and history; and

The Abinochi preschool language program seeks to promote and strengthen aboriginal languages and has been praised as a model by groups across Canada who have requested its curriculum; and

The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry stated that maintaining aboriginal languages is vital to rebuilding the culture lost through years of colonization; and

The provincial minister's working group studying the school recommended that long-term funding be found for the school; and

The provincial government recognized the importance of the school in 1991 when it committed \$64,000 to the school that year; and

The provincial government has chosen in 1992 to not commit any funds to the program this year, threatening the future of the school, while it is increasing funding to private elite schools by 9 percent after giving them an increase last year of 11 percent.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba consider funding the Abinochi Preschool Program at a level which will ensure that the school continues to operate.

* * *

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), and it complies 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 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.

* * *

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), and it complies 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:

WHEREAS the Human Resource Opportunity Office has operated in Selkirk for over 21 years providing training for the unemployed and people re-entering the labour force; and

WHEREAS during the past ten years alone over 1,000 trainees have gone through the program gaining valuable skills and training; and

WHEREAS upwards of 80 percent of the Training Centre recent graduates have found employment; and

WHEREAS without consultation the program was cut in the 1992 provincial budget forcing the centre to close; and

WHEREAS there is a growing need for this program in Selkirk and the program has the support of the town of Selkirk, the Selkirk local of the Manitoba Metis Federation as well as many other local organizations and individuals.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Family Services to consider a one-year moratorium on the program.

* * *

I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes), and it complies 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 the Aboriginal Justice Inquiry was launched in April of 1988 to conduct an examination of the relationship between the justice system and aboriginal people; and

The AJI delivered its report in August of 1991 and concluded that the justice system has been a massive failure for aboriginal people; and

The AJI report endorsed the inherent right of aboriginal self-government and the right of aboriginal communities to establish an aboriginal justice system; and

The Canadian Bar Association, The Law Reform Commission of Canada, among many others, also

recommend both aboriginal self-government and a separate and parallel justice system; and

On January 28, 1992, five months after releasing the report, the provincial government announced it was not prepared to proceed with the majority of the recommendations; and

Despite the All-Party Task Force Report which endorsed aboriginal self-government, the provincial government now rejects a separate and parallel justice system, an Aboriginal Justice Commission and many other key recommendations which are solely within provincial jurisdiction.

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 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.

* (1335)

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

Hon. James McCrae (Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have a statement for the House.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to provide the House with a brief report on the status of the current series of multilateral meetings on the Constitution. As honourable members know, federal, provincial, territorial and aboriginal delegations met yesterday in Ottawa to complete a meeting that began in Halifax on Wednesday and Thursday of last week. The next multilateral meeting of ministers and aboriginal representatives will be held in Edmonton in two weeks. The following week, the same group will convene in Saint John, New Brunswick, and there will probably be weekly meetings thereafter until the end of May.

While there was extensive discussion on many of the issues that are part of this Canada round, no final decisions have been made on any major issue. There has been some clarification of the issues, and certain matters, such as changes to the mandate of the Bank of Canada, have been set aside. There has been a general recognition that because so many of the issues are interrelated, it would be inappropriate to sign off on individual components

until there is a reasonably clear sense of the nature and scope of the overall package.

Members of this House are well aware of the complexity of these issues. Our task force took many months to reflect on many of the same issues that are the subject of these meetings. Nevertheless, some encouraging progress is being made. For example, our task force report urged our fellow Canadians to adopt an inclusive Canada clause. The federal, provincial, territorial and aboriginal representatives are now working on such a statement. We supported reform of the Senate, and most participants now agree that the Senate must be reformed. Again, it is recognized that all of the components must be considered together as a Senate reform package.

"Elected" is a given, but the method of election is to be worked out. "Effective" is agreed in the sense that no delegation wants to create a Senate with no powers. We all want the Senate to have enough power to make the House of Commons think seriously about the effects of its policies on provinces and regions but not so much power that it can bring the whole apparatus of the federal government to a halt. "Equal" is still very much on the table as well, and discussions continue. We believe it is critical, during this Canada round, that all of the provinces in Canada be made equal partners in Confederation.

I am also pleased to advise that the Manitoba task force position on aboriginal rights, namely recognition of the inherent right to self-government within the Canadian Constitution with a process to define, is now the central basis for multilateral discussion. There is still a lot of work to do, as details of self-government have not been the subject over the years of the same kind of intensive analysis as Senate reform. I am, however, confident that the good will exists to work out the practical problems.

The work on the division of powers has progressed more slowly. In large measure, this is because of the way Canada has evolved over the last 125 years. It is very, very difficult to unscramble an omelette. In this area in particular, the absence of Quebec from the table has hampered the process. This item was placed on the agenda primarily to respond to Quebec's objectives, but no one from the Quebec government has appeared to clarify its position.

While some of the larger provinces are seeking more responsibilities, I believe most of the participating governments are more concerned with ensuring that the federal government lives up to its obligations in the fields of equalization, Established Programs Financing, the Canada Assistance Plan and support for aboriginal services than they are with redistributing power.

In this connection, honourable members will be interested to know that one of the major accomplishments of yesterday's meeting was a strong agreement among most provinces that the current equalization provision in the Constitution needs to be strengthened. That agreement is consistent with our task force's recommendation and is of major importance to Manitoba. This issue will be discussed again at our next meeting in Edmonton.

Mr. Speaker, we are one month into this process. We have made some progress, and although a great deal of work still has to be done, a substantial consensus on a practical set of amendments may well be achievable by the end of May.

Mr. Speaker, I will continue to provide regular updates to the House following each of the multilateral meetings. Thank you.

* (1340)

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I thank the minister for his statement in the Chamber here this afternoon.

The members on this side remain pledged to the all-party report and the all-party process that we have established in Manitoba. We believe that Manitobans should be speaking with one voice on this very important constitutional round. We believe that we should be speaking with one voice consistent with the report and the recommendations in the report that basically came from the hundreds of Manitobans who presented their views to the all-party task force in 1991, which was contained in the report made public in October of last year.

We note some of the areas of progress that the ministers have made. We noted last week that there was some optimism from the discussions dealing with aboriginal self-government and the inherent right of self-government for aboriginal people by the ministers at the table and from the aboriginal leadership, Mr. Speaker. We join with the thousands and millions of Canadians who feel this is long overdue to have recognition of the inherent

right of aboriginal people to self-government, and we are thankful that there was some progress in articulating that principle at the ministers' meeting last week.

I think it is very important, Mr. Speaker—those of us in this Chamber who know very well about the issues of aboriginal people remember that at the Meech Lake proceedings, various provincial delegations were at the conference centre and aboriginal leaders were left across the street at the hotel waiting to hear about their destiny. I think it is much more appropriate that their destiny is determined in joint partnership at an equal level at the table.

When we are talking about participation in the process, the minister has noted the lack of participation of Quebec, and I noticed the minister from British Columbia yesterday was very vocal. Minister Sihota was very vocal about the lack of participation with the Province of Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest very strongly that the ministers of Canada keep the invitation open to Quebec to attend those meetings, but I see absolutely no reason to discuss items that are allegedly on the Quebec agenda for discussions to be discussed without the Province of Quebec there. In other words, I do not believe there should be any incentive for Quebec to stay away from the table with any kind of implicit negotiations going on, on the massive division of powers that the Quebec government has asked for in this round. I think, not only would that be wrong in terms of the process, but it would also be wrong in terms of what Manitoba believes.

As the minister has articulated, we believe in a strong federal government with the ability to redistribute wealth to individuals and to regions. That is in direct contradiction to the position paper of the Allaire Report in Quebec, the Belanger-Campeau Commission in that province as well, and we remain united with the government in dealing with that issue.

I would note, Mr. Speaker, that the government has not mentioned the very important issue of the amending formula. I think it is important to be very specific that Manitoba remains committed to an amending formula that has 7-50 as the basis for decision making and not to agree to some proposal for vetoes that are presently being proposed by some provinces dealing with some issues, or the

Victoria formula which would remove power from Manitoba in the existing amending formula.

Mr. Speaker, we would note that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) a couple of weeks ago said that he would make available his legal opinions to all members of this Chamber. I raised that question in the Premier's Estimates. We have not received those legal opinions yet, and it is very important for all of us who are going to be working together that we have the legal opinions.

The Premier said on national television that the social charter wording could affect the enforceability of Section 36 of the Constitution. We have been told that may not be true, but if the Premier has legal opinions in that regard, we would like to see those opinions as committed by the government some four weeks ago in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, there are some other issues that we are very interested in—the Bank of Canada recommendation, basically a monetarist policy in the Constitution we are opposed to, and I believe Manitobans are opposed to, and I believe this government should be opposed to it. You cannot talk about the high interest rates in this country and then entrench in the Constitution a monetarist policy.

Similarly, I would remind the government that many women's groups in this province, many environmental groups in this province, many aboriginal groups in this province, are very much opposed to the Conservative proposal for entrenching in the Charter of Rights a section on property rights. That is again contrary to the Manitoba all-party task force report that recommends against any change in the Charter of Rights. I would remind the government of that point because I know that is also a matter on the table.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, we are glad the tone of the discussions are positive. We are glad that there are lots of discussions going on between all provinces except Quebec and the aboriginal people, and I would suggest and urge the government to continue in making sure that Manitoba's priorities are very much indeed part of this Canadian round of this very important Canada process. Thank you very much.

* (1345)

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): I welcome the report from the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs (Mr.

McCrae) in the province of Manitoba to this House this afternoon to keep us informed as best he can of the process and procedures that are going on. My concern remains the same concern that I have had from the very beginning because, as the minister says, progress has been made in a number of areas. No progress has been made, I would suggest, if in fact we do not know where Quebec stands on any of those issues. It is fine for us to talk about the recognition of the inherent right to self-government, but if Quebec is not prepared to recognize that inherent right to self-government, does that mean that the entire deal that is presently being drafted and constructed by First Ministers and constitutional ministers then all falls apart?

I share the same concern about the inclusiveness of the Canadian clause or Canada clause and I commend the minister for keeping that at the top of the agenda. I want to ensure that a Charter protection is part of that inclusive clause because it is certainly part of our inclusive clause here in the province of Manitoba, that the rights of all Canadians, no matter where they live in Canada, have to be guaranteed. This is particularly significant this week. On Friday, we will celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Charter in Canada and all of the accomplishments of that document as part and parcel of our Constitution and the inherent equality of Canadians—male, female and of all the colours and religions of the rainbow.

My concern also is that there were discussions yesterday with regard to the Senate, and there seemed to be, not from this minister—and I want to say that very clearly—but there seemed to be from others the sense of trade-off, that you could trade off effectiveness with equality. They are not trade-off positions. There is no point in having, quite frankly, a reformed Senate that is not also equal and effective. To say that you are going to sacrifice equality for effectiveness or you are going to sacrifice effectiveness for equality is not the name of the game here. If we are to have a Senate for which we are going to spend multimillions of dollars, then that Senate has to be effective. That Senate also must be equal.

Finally, in terms of the debate and the discussion of the division of powers, it is imperative that Quebec be at the table because it does not really matter what the rest of the provinces come up with. In the final analysis, if Quebec is not prepared to negotiate along the lines of a document that seems to be well

into the preparatory stages, seems to be getting the consensus of a number of governments behind it, there is one government that can quite frankly throw a wet blanket on this entire process, and that is the government of Quebec. Yet we continue to proceed along with these negotiations as if, again, the strategy is that all the rest of us will present a package to Quebec, and it is not that way. There are 10 provinces in this country. There are 10 governments, and each government has as much at stake in this Confederation as the province of Quebec.

I commend the minister for the progress. I also, again, give the warning signals which I know he is well aware of, and I again urge all of them to do everything they possibly can to get the province of Quebec at the table so that we are not left with what we think, and this certainly happened at Meech Lake with what we thought was a package that was acceptable to everybody, only to be told yet once again it was totally unacceptable to the province of Quebec. The spinning of our wheels is not a progressive spin if indeed one of those wheels absolutely essential to making the operation run smoothly is not there.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the Speaker's Gallery, where we have with us this afternoon eight visitors. They include two Japanese exchange students, namely, Katuski Yamaki and Ali (I) Murase from the Dakota Collegiate. They are under the direction of Mr. Wayne Ruff, the principal. These are guests of the Deputy Speaker, the honourable member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

Also with us this afternoon, from the Garden City Collegiate we have twenty-five Grade 9 students. They are under the direction of Mrs. Carolyn McCormack. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

On behalf of all honourable members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Employability Enhancement Programs Funding

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, the provincial government, in its Estimates, states that there will be 27,000 Manitobans accessing social assistance in this fiscal year. Eighty percent of the increase in the funding for the Family Services department is taken up by social assistance programs. The cost of social assistance benefits, not staffing and not administration, but pure benefits to each of those 27,000 Manitobans is \$12,500 per year. There are also Employability Enhancement Programs that this government has in its Family Services budget which are targeted solely to social assistance recipients. The cost for those programs are \$4,200 per client per year.

I would like to ask the Minister of Family Services why he has reduced expenditures for the Employability Enhancement Programs element to Family Services by \$500,000 this year, which will service 95 fewer clients than last year.

* (1350)

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): These are issues that we are currently discussing in our Estimates process. We have a number of programs that are provided for social allowance recipients whereby they can access training and education to enable them to get back into the work force.

Later this week we are announcing a new program, the Partners with Youth program, which in part is going to provide some additional programming for unemployed youth in Manitoba. We also are looking at the Employability Enhancement projects and have maintained many of the ones that have been successful and are looking at other ways by which we can provide training for individuals in the province who are unemployed.

Two of our most successful programs that we have maintained are the Single Parent Job Access and the Gateway program. We feel these are programs that have had a greater success rate, and we will be maintaining those and training people as best we can to put them back into the work force.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, we are not talking about unemployed youth; we are talking about social assistance recipients.

The cost for the Employability Enhancement Programs are one-third the cost of providing basic social assistance services for the people of Manitoba. Why has this government chosen to reduce by 12 percent the amount of money put into those Employability Enhancement Programs and reduce by 9 percent the number of social assistance clients who can access those programs, instead of putting that \$500,000 decrease into the two programs that the minister says are functioning well? Why has he chosen to eliminate cost-effective programs, instead of putting the money into additional programs?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, I would point out to the member that overall we have increased the Family Services budget by almost 9 percent in a year when other departments with tremendous demands have been unable to increase their budgets.

Government, not only in Manitoba but across this country, is under tremendous pressure to provide funding for health care programs, education programs, as well as the social programs. In addition to that, we have tremendous demands in rural Manitoba in Agriculture and other departments where we have to find funding.

Even given these difficult times, we have been able to increase our budget by some 9 percent, maintain programs, and this year we are also providing a new program called Partners with Youth. Some of the individuals who will be accessing that program are social allowance recipients.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, 80 percent of the increase in the Family Services department was not by choice; it was because they are mandated to because it is social assistance. What the department has done is it has chosen to take away \$500,000 from programs that had a 70 percent success rate by the government's own admission.

Why has this government chosen to decrease the funding for successful job creation Employability Enhancement Programs that were helping 500 social assistance clients every year get off social assistance into jobs and into training? Why are they doing that?

Mr. Gilleshammer: I would mention to the member that the addition of some \$10 million for other programs within Family Services is not a small amount. We have evaluated the programs, and we

are supporting the programs that have been very, very successful.

We are putting money into new programs to provide employment, not only for unemployed youth but also for social assistance recipients, and from time to time, we have to evaluate the programming and make some changes and keep the ones that are successful.

* (1355)

Youth Unemployment Government Strategy

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Family Services, who I understand this afternoon or later this week will be making an announcement about a youth partnership program which, when we consider that we have youth unemployment at 18.6 percent in this province, will be a drop in the bucket.

Looking back at the programs for youth before this government took office, we had a STEP program with 900 people working in it; today it is down to 300. We had a northern youth job program with 874 young people working in it; today it does not exist. We had a Manitoba jobs and training program, a multimillion-dollar program, most of which went to the young people, that does not exist today. We had a CareerStart of \$8.5 million with 6,000 jobs, and they are down to \$3.5 million. We had departmental budgets drop before funding.

Mr. Speaker, why will this minister, why will this government not go back and look at the record, take a lesson from the past and set up some real, significant programs for young people and restore real opportunities for our youth, a real partnership for youth?

Hon. Harold Gillieshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, one of the inhibiting factors in creating new programs by this government is the tremendous debt that was left by the member across the way in his term in government. It has reduced the flexibility, a flexibility that all governments are looking for to create new programs. We are paying that tremendous debt, that interest on the debt that was run up by the previous government.

I do not know why the member would criticize a program that we are about to announce, Partners with Youth, a program that has met with a lot of support from municipal level governments. They

are looking forward to this program, and I do not understand why the member for Brandon East would be critical of it.

Social Assistance Employment Creation Strategy

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I make no apology in spending money for jobs for young people to allow them to work. There is real goods and services.

Would this minister have his senior staff meet with the administration of the City of Winnipeg welfare department, which has prepared a series of seven major work projects for welfare recipients? These are the unemployed, employable welfare recipients, the bulk of whom are young people. Would he have them meet with the department of welfare in the city and explore a joint co-operative effort with the City of Winnipeg and hopefully with the federal government to get people to work? We have a record number of unemployed people in Winnipeg—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Hon. Harold Gillieshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, the member says he makes no apology for the tremendous debt that was run up in the mid-1980s. He makes no apology for the expenditures of the 1980s that we are inhibited by today. I hear his fellow travellers in Saskatchewan saying that they cannot do anything and that they are bringing in health care user fees because of previous debts. These are the same problems that we have in this province because of the debts that were run up in the 1980s when the actual income by government was much higher than it is today.

We meet on a regular basis with officials from the social allowance department of the City of Winnipeg to look at programs. I know that they will be very interested in the Partners with Youth program to see what funding they can access to do some of the works projects, and we would be more than willing to meet with them.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, we left this government with a surplus of money, not a deficit, a surplus, and you put it in the Fiscal Stabilization Fund.

Will this minister have his deputy minister today call up the administrator of the City of Winnipeg social services department and explore specifically the ways and means of getting people to work with

these seven major projects: newspaper recycling, forestry programs, nursery sod project, riverbank stabilization, large compost facility, noxious weed eradication and residential waste stream proposition study? Will you get your senior staff—

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

* (1400)

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, I know that not only the City of Winnipeg but all municipalities will be interested in the program that we will be announcing, and we will work with them.

We have recently attended the MAUM provincial meeting and talked to UMM representatives as well as the City of Winnipeg, and there is a tremendous interest in working with government to promote some job creation.

Youth Unemployment Government Strategy

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I take a certain amount of pride in bringing correct information into this House, but I have to suggest that yesterday when I stood up and I said there were 2,952 jobs that had been cut, I did not provide the most accurate information, because when we went into the Estimates process, I found out that there were another 530 jobs which had been cut between 1990-91 and the present time as far as employment programs for young people are concerned, and the correct figure is now 3,482 jobs which have been cut in the last two years.

Can the minister tell this House on what basis and on what philosophical background—because one likes to think they make it on the basis of some kind of party philosophy—has this government decided that young people are not worth investing in?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I hate to make an attack on the member's pride, but some of the information she brings today is not accurate.

One of the key factors that she is looking at is the Manitoba Youth Job Centre Program, which simply registers unemployed youth and youth looking for work. There are going to be again 44 centres throughout the province to register any youth who are unemployed and seeking work.

In 1985-86, for instance, there were just over 8,000 people who registered. These were not jobs that were created. These are simply people looking for work. Later on in the 1980s, there were some 12,000 children registered looking for work. This year, we are estimating that there may be 9,000. Now, that estimate may be low. There may be 10,000 or 12,000. These are simply offices where people seeking short-term summer employment register.

So let not the member leave on the record that these are job cuts. These are individuals who are looking for work. The government provides these offices where the individuals can register. We are basing that on the figures from the previous year, but there may be in fact more than 9,000 people registering for employment.

Employability Enhancement Programs Funding

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have never known the Estimates of any government department under any administration not to give the best possible news to their numbers, and the best possible news to their numbers are down, down, down. At the same time that they are cutting these kinds of job opportunities, they are cutting out other programs.

Mr. Speaker, in light with the same kind of philosophical rationale, can the minister tell the House today why, under Employability Enhancement, a program called Job Access for Young Adults—these are young people who find themselves on social assistance wanting desperately to get off—that program has been scrapped in its entirety?

Hon. Harold Gilleshammer (Minister of Family Services): The member is asking the same question that the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) asked. We have retained the programs that have been most successful, the Single Parent Job Access, and the Gateway program. We feel that by creating some new programs that are more receptive and more in keeping with job searches and employment for the 1990s, we will be serving those individuals.

In addition to the figures that the member is putting on the record, we might also mention the Environmental Youth Corps which employs a number of young people and also brings forth

thousands of volunteers across the province. This is part of new programming that was introduced last year. As well, the senior level of government is proceeding with the CHALLENGE program for 1992 and will be providing somewhere over 2,000 positions in the work force for young people.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, nobody likes it, this government nor opposition, but the increase expected for those who will have to look to social assistance is 34 percent in the province of Manitoba, 34 percent.

Can this minister explain why, to this House, there is not going to be one single person from that new group, those 34 percent new recipients, not one single placement in an Employability Enhancement Program which will allow them to get off welfare and to get into the workplace? Is this Tory philosophy, people on welfare and social assistance and do not get them back to work?

Mr. Gilleshammer: We have maintained the majority of our programming which puts people back to work. I have mentioned the Single Parent Job Access, the Gateway program, the HROCs that we have across the province. These are the ones that have been successful. We have maintained those programs and are confident a number of these individuals will be finding their way into the work force.

Single-Industry Towns Equity Insurance

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I intend to give the government an opportunity to do something it often says it would like to do, and that is to accept positive solution from members opposite.

Last year, I wrote to the Minister of Energy and Mines and asked him to begin to investigate the concept of equity insurance for homeowners and small business people in northern Manitoba. The then Minister of Energy and Mines refused to accept that suggestion. On March 24 of this year I asked the new Minister of Energy and Mines whether he would consider that concept, and he refused to respond. Yesterday, at the MAUM convention, a resolution introduced by the town of Snow Lake and supported by many, if not most, of the people at the MAUM convention, recommended that the government undertake that kind of investigation.

Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Energy and Mines is: Will he today indicate whether

he will appoint a task force to begin to look at the possibility of establishing an equity insurance program, a tripartite, a multiparty equity insurance program to protect the investment and encourage investment in our northern single-industry towns?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Energy and Mines): Mr. Speaker, let me respond by saying that what we have attempted to do is to try and change the attitude of the international mining industry, particularly the Canadian mining industry, as to its attitude towards this province. We had the worst tax regime of any province in this country as it related to the development of mines and the continuation of building new mines.

It is our belief, through the mining tax incentive program and through the mineral tax incentive program, the new mine tax holiday, Mr. Speaker, that we will do more to encourage the long-term existence of those communities by new mine developments and by new mineral exploration activities than other programmings that would bring in insurance such as the member is talking about.

If that fails, Mr. Speaker, if we fail to find new resources and new job opportunities through mineral extraction, that is another option, but first of all, we had to change the draconian tax policies that were in place under the NDP government.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, I gave the minister an opportunity to be positive.

Mr. Speaker, maybe the Minister of Energy and Mines can explain then why the Conservative government, in 1989, placed a 1.5 percent surtax on that supposedly impossible tax regime and has not lifted it to this day. Can the minister explain as well why yesterday at MAUM he was nominally supportive in face of some 450 delegates from municipalities across the province and today he has all of a sudden turned his back on his commitment of yesterday? Will he now agree to support this resolution, which is supported by—

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

* (1410)

Mr. Downey: Mr. Speaker, I have not turned my back on the people of northern Manitoba. The recommendation that the member has brought forward is worthy of taking a look at to see how it may in fact work and help. The bottom line, though, for the people of northern Manitoba is through meaningful resource development and creating the

policies to create the employment opportunities and add wealth to this province so we can pay for the social services that the people have come to expect.

Mr. Storle: Mr. Speaker, we have today with us, in the gallery, representatives of Leaf Rapids Town Council. They can tell this minister that communities throughout northern Manitoba, but certainly single-industry towns, are doing without investment, that homeowners are not investing in their community, that small businesses are limited to the extent they are investing in our communities because of a lack of securities.

Mr. Speaker, the minister did accept the premise that this concept may work. Will he today announce the creation of a task force to begin the work immediately of exploring the concept and seeing whether in fact we can develop an equity insurance program that is not taxpayer supported, which will protect the investment of northerners now and into the future?

Mr. Downey: This government has put in place a Northern Development Commission which will look at all options and opportunities for northern policy. I would recommend that the member, I would recommend that the communities take before the Northern Development Commission the very ideas that he has talked about so that it can have the full and complete review of people who are fully knowledgeable and qualified. We do not need an additional commission; we do not need an additional task force. There is a mechanism there, Mr. Speaker, for this idea and this proposal to be reviewed under.

Furnace Inspections Mandatory

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): My question is to the Minister of Labour.

Mr. Speaker, nearly a month ago the Canadian Gas Association issued a warning concerning the Flame-Master furnaces. About one week later, the Minister of Labour was persuaded to put out a press release stating that Flame-Master furnace owners should have their furnaces checked immediately and that carbon monoxide could cause headaches, nausea and even death.

Now, Mr. Speaker, since then the gas company has been swamped with calls, as many as 850 alone on Monday. Is the minister now prepared to follow the lead of Ontario, Saskatchewan and Alberta, all of which have mandatory inspections?

We would like to know what is holding him back on this matter, because he has had a month.

Hon. Darren Praznlk (Minister of Labour): First of all, in the preamble of the member's question, he makes it sound as if someone had to twist this minister's arm to issue a release. I have to tell him that as soon as I was notified by my staff, we issued the release. In fact, I think the time might have been five minutes from the time it was provided to me to give the okay to issue the release.

Mr. Speaker, with respect to the issue of mandatory furnace testing, we in the Department of Labour are always interested in assessing what in fact is causing the problem, what the risks are and what is the best way to minimize those risks.

We are always prepared to entertain a discussion as to the proper way to ensure that risks are reduced, but I caution the member, in this particular case, we still have a fair bit of information to gather, and just the idea of jumping into mandatory inspection is not necessarily the answer.

Condemning Authority

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I would like to know if the minister will require the gas company to have sign-off authority before a furnace is condemned so that perfectly safe units are not replaced, as was the widespread case last year.

Hon. Darren Praznlk (Minister of Labour): I am not quite certain I appreciate fully the member's question with respect to sign off. Under our appropriate legislation and regulation, the gas company has responsibility to ensure that before they are providing gas, there is a safe installation.

If the installation is not safe, they have the provision to cut that off in order to ensure that gas is not going into an unsafe mechanism. Perhaps the member could expound in a subsequent question.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Speaker, for clarification, perhaps I could repeat the question to the minister. We are quite clear that the gas company has authority on new installations.

What the question was today, and was the other day, was: What about furnaces that are being condemned? Currently, installers can condemn furnaces and have new ones put in without the gas company even knowing about it. We want the gas company to have the final authority before an old furnace is thrown out and a new one is put in.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I see a somewhat inconsistent comment with the gas company having final authority. I think yesterday we were in an exchange where the gist of the member's questions was whether the authority ultimately lies with the Department of Labour and not with the gas company.

Mr. Speaker, before a new furnace would be put into place, the gas company, of course, would have to be assured that the furnace is sufficient. I think the member's concern is that an installer may condemn a furnace or a repair person may think that a furnace is not safe and condemn that furnace. I believe what the member is asking for is a second opinion on that particular decision, and I would be prepared to have some discussions with him as to the proper process.

Always in those cases, if it is an independent installer or contractor, I think some of the difficulties that took place a few years ago or a year ago in installation are worth a second opinion.

Mr. Maloway: Perhaps we ought to put the minister in a room with a Flame-Master to see how—

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

Minister of Labour Meeting Request

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary to the same minister is: Considering that aggrieved parties are quite angry over the lack of action on the part of this government, will the minister agree to meet with a group of homeowners to discuss this issue and perhaps have a better appreciation of the problem?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, I would be prepared to meet with a group of homeowners if the member would like to arrange that.

I just say to the member, he talks about lack of action, the greatest complaint that I have detected, of course, is those people who are faced with the cost of repairing or replacing their furnace or purchasing the replacement parts. In the news coverage I read of the honourable member, he even acknowledged that government cannot have responsibility to cover the costs of replacing that equipment in all cases.

Mr. Speaker, obviously we are trying to work with as many people as possible, the people who are affected, to resolve the situation. I admit it is not an

easy situation. Most of the difficulty, from the information that has been brought to me, has to do with those people who are having difficulty in finding the resources to do the necessary repairs, and there are programs available from the Department of Housing and others for those who are low income.

Canada Health Act Tray-Fee Regulation

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Health.

The Canada Health Act does not allow extra billing or user fees, but this government, like the previous NDP government, continues to allow this practice in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, certain services like tray fees, which are billed to the patients to cover the cost of providing the necessary medical supplies for a required procedure in a doctor's office as opposed to the hospital, they are not insured in Manitoba. It is costing as much as \$18 per person.

Mr. Speaker, can the minister tell this House, as some other provincial jurisdictions recognize that is in total violation of the Canada Health Act, why we are allowing such services in Manitoba?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I missed the specific name of the clinic my honourable friend brought on the—[interjection] oh, okay.

There have been, since we came into government, I think about four or five, possibly, clinics that provide out-patient services, the most notable one being for cataract surgery. In those facilities, we pay part of the physician costs, but additional costs are paid by the individual accessing the service that, in many ways, is similar to a number of Manitobans who, for reasons of choice, have accessed, for instance, a clinic for cataract surgery in Calgary and paid the entire costs themselves.

Mr. Speaker, those issues have been subject to discussion, the conclusion being that they would not be a violation of the Canada Health Act, and subsequently there has been no imposition of any negative penalty under the Canada Health Act.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, I will explain the question again. I am not asking about those five clinics. We are asking about a simple question of a tray fee which is being charged in some doctors' offices for minor procedures, and those services are

not covered in the doctor's office. If the patient were to go to a hospital, those services are covered.

The simple question is: Why do people have to pay in the doctors' offices when those services are simply covered under the Canada Health Act and we are paying in the hospital for these services?

* (1420)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I recognize my honourable friend's concerns with the tray fees. There are other areas which have been brought to our attention in the past in which physicians are asking for a contribution which has not contravened the Canada Health Act, and my answer persists. We have not had this issue found to contravene the Canada Health Act and have not taken action in that regard, Sir.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, will the minister not get a legal opinion, as some provinces say, that charging such a fee is in total violation of the Canada Health Act? Why can we not have a simple legal opinion, and then we can make a final decision in Manitoba?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I am troubled as to what purpose the legal opinion would serve because this practice has been in effect probably for a decade and is not a secretive practice, if I can put it that way, Sir, and has not been found in contravention of the Canada Health Act.

That being the case, I do not know why I would want to seek a legal opinion when the Canada Health Act, through actions of the federal government—they have not found this practice to be subject to their clawback, if you will, of such tray fees.

Pharmacare Clarythromycin Exclusion

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, on two occasions the Minister of Health told this House that clarythromycin, an anti-infectant drug important for people with AIDS, was being provided free of charge and, therefore, that was the explanation for the fact that many people were being hit with exorbitant drug bills.

I do not know if the minister had confused clarythromycin with another drug because our information is that the drug produced by Abbott Laboratories had never been provided free of charge and that they had always charged governments and patients for clarythromycin.

I would like to ask the minister if he would now like to clarify that statement and correct the record.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the pharmaceutical in question is a pharmaceutical that has very narrowed applications for ill Manitobans or ill Canadians or ill individuals. One of those narrowed applications, as indicated by the head of pharmacology at the Health Sciences Centre, has one or two applications in terms of people suffering from AIDS.

Mr. Speaker, that pharmaceutical has not been granted an order of compliance—I believe is the terminology—from the federal government and as such is not an included pharmaceutical in our Pharmacare program.

Now, because of—and I have explained this to my honourable friend time and time again—the new wave of pharmaceuticals coming up, the past practice has been, by manufacturers, that until they receive an order of compliance, they will provide the drugs free during the clinical trial period of time. There is an interim period of time in which the order of compliance from the federal government is made available.

Most companies have tended, in the past, to provide those drugs free of charge. There have been exceptions. This is one of them. This is something that all drug plans across Canada are coming to grips with because, if we allow the major pharmaceutical, multinational manufacturers to end-run the system and because of compassionate grounds force the costs on provinces before the orders of compliance, we open the floodgates for additional charges, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister if he would correct the record, and if he would indicate how he is dealing with a serious problem for people living with AIDS in the province of Manitoba, because in fact clarythromycin, an important anti-infectant drug, was covered under Pharmacare. An O/C by this government changed that policy. It is not the case that Abbott labs ever provided that drug free of charge. I would ask the minister to correct the record and change the policy.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, it is with difficulty that I can change the policy of government. Although my honourable friend can make the most emotional case around this pharmaceutical, because it is dealing with individuals suffering unfortunately from AIDS, there is a plethora of new drugs on the

research agenda, at clinical trials, for which the precedent was tended to be set, that without order of compliance, the pharmaceutical manufacturers would begin to charge for those pharmaceuticals. This is not narrowed to this drug. This is a policy across the board, that we will not pay for those drugs until they are accepted on the Pharmacare list of accepted pharmaceuticals, after they have received federal order of compliance.

To do anything less, Mr. Speaker, is to signal clearly to the pharmaceutical multinationals that they can pillage the taxpayer of Manitoba's pockets, with the compassionate ground that my honourable friend brings forward. I have every sympathy for the individuals, but the principle has to be to have drug companies, who have the resources to provide those drugs free, do so until we include them in the Pharmacare plan.

Ms. Wasylcia-Lels: The issue involved is that we are dealing with a cost-cutting measure on the backs of people with AIDS. That is the issue, Mr. Speaker.

I would like the minister—I would like to give him one more opportunity—to clarify his statements, to change the record and to give some commitment to people living with AIDS, and he knows the implications of that, that they will at least have the benefit of some coverage for an important anti-infectant drug, clarythromycin.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, we have engaged discussions with Abbott, as the pharmaceutical supplier, to provide that pharmaceutical free of charge until the order of compliance has come in. We will do that for every single new pharmaceutical that comes in because this government will not use precious taxpayer resources to line the pockets of multinational pharmaceutical companies prior to the order of compliance, neither, Sir, would the New Democrats if they were in government, but from the comfort of opposition, they are willing to bail out multinational pharmaceutical companies.

I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. The policy is appropriate. It is emulated in many other provinces across Canada and, I suggest, will be emulated by all of them because we cannot afford to pay for drugs before they are given an order of compliance in federal—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

CN Rail Producer Car Drop Off

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Highways.

Recently I wrote to the minister on a very serious matter regarding the reductions of services to farmers on the CN subline. The railway has discontinued dropping producer cars at points such as Slater, Renwer, Pine River and Garland even though the Grain Commission requests these cars.

I want to ask the minister: What action has he taken to address this matter? What is he doing to represent producers on that line?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I want to indicate to the member that the problem—she raised it with me in the earlier stage already. I have been making inquiries about the problem that has existed out there. The grain system is running pretty well at maximum right now, and I have had people from the area bring their concerns over to the Grain Transportation Agency. We are hoping to get it resolved.

Ms. Wowchuk: Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that the line is supposed to be protected until the year 2000, I want to ask the minister what action he is taking to see CN lives up to its responsibility of maintaining the Cowan subline and providing services, and I want to ask him if he is in support of producer cars being dropped off at these sites.

* (1430)

Mr. Driedger: Mr. Speaker, yes, I support it. I am trying to work to make sure that these cars get dropped off at those places.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Committee Changes

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that the composition of Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs be amended as follows: St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows:

the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) for the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau); the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) for the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine); and the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) for the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson).

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

House Business

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would like to advise the House that as the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs completed its consideration of Bill 45 last night it will not be necessary for that committee to meet this evening, so that will be cancelled.

Mr. Speaker, I would ask you to call bills in the following order. If you could please call Bill 44, followed by Bill 12, followed by Bill 43, Bill 53, Bill 64, Bill 70, Bill 68, Bill 72, and then the remainder of the government bills on the Order Paper in the order in which they appear.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 44—The Milk Prices Review Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: 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), who has 29 minutes remaining.

Committee Changes

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Prior to recognizing the honourable member for Dauphin, I wonder if the House would grant leave to allow the honourable member for Point Douglas to make committee changes. It is agreed.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs be amended as follows: Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) for Thursday, April 16, 1992, for 10 a.m.

I also move, seconded by the member for Swan River, that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) for Thursday, April 16, at 10 a.m.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: Now, the honourable member for Dauphin, who has 29 minutes remaining.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, I had the opportunity to speak on this bill on March 4, Bill 44 dealing with The Milk Prices Review Amendment Act. At that time, I raised a number of concerns with the minister that I felt he should consider.

I also indicated areas where we, in the opposition, felt there were some positive developments insofar as the actions being proposed by the minister, and I cited the issue of multiple component pricing as one which we felt was timely, particularly insofar as the fact that people tend at the present time to be consumers of milk where fat is not emphasized. In other words, the fat content is not the primary component that is of concern to the vast majority of consumers.

As a matter of fact, in my own family, most of our family drink skim milk. I probably should drink a lot more skim milk when we drink any milk at all. The others drink 1 percent milk, and we have moved off completely from whole milk and 2 percent milk. At one time, 2 percent milk was thought to be the milk that people would drink if they were on a diet, or if they wanted to drink something that is not fattening insofar as a dairy product, they would drink 2 percent milk.

That has changed completely in the present time, at least as far as our family is concerned, and I believe when I watch consumers in the stores picking up their milk, the vast majority are moving to at least 2 percent, but in many cases to 1 percent and skim milk. Therefore, they are no longer requesting or demanding high fat content in any way, shape or form, insofar as milk is concerned.

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

The only thing is it is really tough on the coffee cup because most people find that skim milk does not go that well with coffee. I find that I just cannot drink coffee when I have 1 percent or skim milk. I guess on that side we still have to take whole milk

or half and half, which then we are back on the fat side again, but the portion used is much smaller than you would if you were drinking a glass of milk or two or three or four in a day.

Madam Deputy Speaker, obviously the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) does not know what the bill is about because he assumes that I am not dealing with the bill. In fact, the minister would be well advised to review the comments that I made previously and that I started with in that we are dealing with multiple component pricing of milk as opposed to fat content being the criteria.

I was elaborating for the minister's edification and for other members who might be interested that I believe consumer demand has moved away from heavy fat content into something that has less fat and in most cases skim milk or 1 percent has become somewhat of the norm for most people and their families. We are gradually moving towards that, as I said, in our family where half of us are now on skim milk and half are not. We are moving eventually to skim milk hopefully, completely. It is, I think, important in today's society that more people are health conscious perhaps than previously, more aware of the harm that perhaps can be done to one's health because of overconsumption of animal fats and hydrogenated fats as well.

We are living longer, and one of the reasons that we are living longer is because of medical breakthroughs, but also because of diet. I believe that people are more conscious of the fact that there is such a thing as bad cholesterol and cholesterol levels that can in fact result in blockage of arteries and requirement of by-pass surgery. In many cases heart attacks result before remedial action is taken or dietary habits are changed. In many cases they are changed too late. For the people who have suffered fatal heart attacks there is not such a thing as a change for them, it contributed to their death, and they were not given a second chance.

In many cases nowadays people do survive a first heart attack. I know many neighbours and friends, and relatives even, who have suffered heart attacks at a very early age, and subsequent to that, survived the heart attack, and went into re-fit programs, changing their diet completely—exercise programs—and are really quite fit now. One of the things they attempt to do is shop wisely to avoid heavy concentration of fats in their diet, whether it be in milk products, whether it be with cheese or cottage cheese or even sour cream. There are light

versions of these products now. The light versions are very often quite low in butterfat compared to the whole product, the original product, that many people consume.

As well, people are more aware of the impact of saturated fats and unsaturated fats, the difference between the two and the impact it can have on their overall health over the longer term. I think this is somewhat overdue. It is perhaps something that should have been looked at in the past, Madam Deputy Speaker. I am pleased that the minister has seen fit to move forward so that people now will be buying a product I hope that will be labelled with other nutrients, that will indicate to the public and to the consumer the level of nutrients of such things as proteins, for example, in milk and other milk products.

* (1440)

It is interesting. I saw an ad on television about grapefruit. The company that was advertising grapefruit was saying that if this was in the form of juice, it would have all the nutrients in it outlined, but because it is a natural product in the form of fruit, there is no labelling on it. It does not tell what exactly is contained in that fruit that you might consume.

I think we have to change that. We have to indicate in all of these products precisely the content of the important nutrients in milk and emphasize those, make them more household terminology for people, for consumers, so that they are aware of what they should be looking for when they are purchasing these food products, that they are aware that protein is a good nutrient and minerals are a good nutrient and fat is perhaps, in most cases, a harmful nutrient for them.

I also noticed that in processed foods people are becoming more aware of the difference between hydrogenated and nonhydrogenated oils and the difference that has insofar as cholesterol buildup and the cholesterol content of these foods, I think that there again we are moving in the right direction. We have a great deal of progress to be made, but we are moving in the right direction. I think we are following consumer demand and that is a healthy sign in more ways than one, healthy being a very loaded word and used in that context.

So insofar of that aspect of the bill, I indicated that we did not have any problems. Insofar as the issue of flexible milk pricing, at present I understand there

is a trigger mechanism that triggers at 2 percent a change in the cost of production. It would trigger a review that results in the increased cost being passed on to the consumer and perhaps an increase plus or minus.

The minister notes that in some cases there may actually be a drop in the cost. If that was the case, then there would be a drop in the price of milk. He is proposing to change that mechanism. I had indicated in my speech on March 4, and I think it is worthy of re-emphasizing, that in fact he may want to have a system that is triggered every six months, but also one that might be triggered by a small percentage variation, so that in fact if there is a change in a three-month period, which there could very well be with the world markets and the changes that are taking place, perhaps, hopefully not our supply-managed system, but where there is impact on the costs in a very short time, there could be a passing on of those costs, or a savings to the consumer even on a very short term, two months or three months or one month since the last review. In other words, it is not an arbitrary time period.

I felt that the minister might want to have both systems in place, an arbitrary review that would take place every six months, but another one that would be triggered by a change of say, 0.5 percent or 1 percent or so in between, if that happened, in between the six-month period. I think that flexibility would be something that the minister might want to consider, and perhaps he has looked over that point if he has reviewed some of the things I was talking about on March 4 in this House regarding this bill.

I think the issues that the minister related contained in the bill with regard to the financial report and the separate reporting mechanism to the Legislature of the Milk Prices Review Commission, those points that he was making are something he might want to consider, the comments that are made as well in that issue, because there is a need, I think, in terms of the public perception to have an arm's length commission to review the actions of the industry.

Perhaps by amalgamating it within the department, it is less apt to have that objectivity and be perceived as impartial and so on. I think that is something that the Milk Prices Review Commission has resisted to a certain extent over a period of time, and the minister now feels that due to the savings that could accrue that he should embark on this change.

It may be that, there again, there will be some loss of autonomy. I do not know. I guess it remains to be seen, and the minister has to take the responsibility of that as to whether that will be substantial, and whether, in fact, it will be justified in the longer term.

It may very well not be justified, and it is perhaps just a perception. It is something the minister has to be very sensitive to and aware of, I think, in the future as he watches the operations of the commission with some of the autonomy being removed.

Those are the major points that we have raised with the bill, and I think it is important that the minister consider those. I reflect on another aspect of the arm's length operation of the board, and that is that the commission has made a review in various times in history of surveying the costs and monitoring the operations and so on amongst producers to ensure the cost-production formula adequately represented their costs.

It is possible there that, if the industry is in itself conducting these reviews, the consumer and public interest is not always put as one of the primary concerns. The objectivity is not there to the same extent. While the review commission was undertaking that, there was more objectivity there, and fairness ensured and the perception of fairness.

That is one area where concern was expressed to me, insofar as the future tallying of costs and developing of the formula, and changes that might take place with the prices, based on the cost of production, ensuring that it is done fairly.

So with that, I want to indicate that we would like to see that this bill moves on to the committee stage. At that time, we can listen to views that might be put forward by members of the public, or by consumer groups perhaps, and by producer groups and producers as to their feelings on this. I do not anticipate that it will be particularly controversial, but certainly we will want to hear from them before making a conclusive decision on the exact and precise components of the bill in its entirety. Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Nell Gaudry (St. Boniface): Madam Deputy Speaker, I stand to put a few comments on Bill 44, The Milk Prices Review Amendment Act.

The dairy industry of Manitoba is undergoing a number of changes in response to adjustments in consumer demand and the market conditions for

dairy products. When the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) introduced this bill to the House, he indicated that the amendments he proposed could be classified into four categories. Today, I would like to comment on two of those categories, namely the first and the third categories he referred to.

In light of the changes in the dairy industry, I feel that the pricing of milk according to the value of its components is a very logical, if not to say positive, amendment.

It is a well-known fact that the consumers are paying more attention now to the number of proteins and calories a product contains. Consumers want less fat, and less fat is healthier for our society. The way consumers have gone about this is that they are being more conscious of the components of products such as milk. They, therefore, tend to buy the milk with less fat in it. Very seldom do we see a consumer purchasing whole milk nowadays.

The pricing mechanism that promotes what consumers do not want and what is not as healthy for society should be changed. This amendment seems to reflect the consumer's demand at this present time, and it is one that we are willing to support.

As mentioned earlier, I would also like to comment on the third category the Minister of Agriculture referred to, that being the leading of the requirement for a separate account and annual report from the Milk Prices Review Commission.

Madam Deputy Speaker, ending the requirement for a separate annual report audit is a positive step at ending waste in the government. The same information will be available in the department's annual report, so the public will not be less informed, while fewer tax dollars are being spent and less paper is being used.

* (1450)

I realize, however, that this will mean that the minister will not get the picture in print as often as he does now, but the public will be better served.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to know whether these proposed changes will affect the independence of the commission. Would it not be possible to try for a system where a separate account can be kept without the need for a separate annual report?

The disaster of the Farm Lands Ownership Board annual report which was filled with 75-percent blank

pages which the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) brought before the House in December, do you remember that?

An Honourable Member: Yes, I do.

Mr. Gaudry: It is an example of waste. Perhaps the minister can look at putting more of these relatively small annual reports in the department's annual report to save more money. I hope the minister will consider these—[interjection] I know he will. We get good compliments for the minister. I have been going around, and they seem to be satisfied with what the minister is doing.

On this note, Madam Deputy Speaker, I will not spend any more time, but we would like to see this bill go to committee. I thank you very much.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 44. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 12—The Animal Husbandry Amendment Act

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

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe the member for Dauphin is going to speak on that bill. He has just stepped out for a minute. Is it possible to—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there will to leave the bill standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin? [interjection] Yes, this is to resume debate on second reading of Bill 12, standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin. Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Bill 43—The Farm Income Assurance Plans Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 43 (The Farm Income Assurance Plans Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les régimes d'assurance-revenu agricole),

on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Madam Deputy Speaker, Bill 43 is an act short in terms of its printed content in length in this House, but certainly not short in terms of its impact in the issue that it raises and brings before this House, a rather significant issue that has received much debate with regard to the Gross Revenue Insurance Program.

I, frankly, was expecting that the Minister of Agriculture was going to close debate on Bill 44 before it got passed, and I would have had a little more opportunity to get some of my information together that I intended to use in speaking to this bill. I do not know, but from what I heard on the monitor in my caucus room, I believe the minister chose not to close debate on Bill 44, which is traditional, and, unfortunately, caught me a bit by surprise. [interjection] Well, I do have to. Yes, it is a very important issue.

The member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) is aware that perhaps GRIP in itself is a very big and important issue that has profound ramifications for farmers and for federal-provincial relations and even for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), as we see in the bill that is before this House. For that reason we have considered the impact of this bill and of the program over the last year and a half, as I am sure the minister has, and there is a broad range of subjects that can be dealt with in relation to this issue. I think that they deserve a great deal of consideration by the Liberal Party in Manitoba as well as by the governing Conservatives as well as the New Democratic Party in opposition.

I have raised many of those issues with the government over the past year. Of course, there has been a review committee reviewing crop insurance as well as GRIP in the province of Manitoba over the last number of months and over the last year, since the implementation of GRIP, to see that the program could be changed perhaps to make it more responsive, to make it more sensitive, to ensure that it is fairer in its application.

Many of the concerns that were raised were raised by us in this House last year, and I was rather disappointed that the minister, at that time, Madam Deputy Speaker, felt that it had to be done right then in that way. It was the producers, he said over and over again in this House, who designed the program

which was, I think, at best an overstatement; and, because of that, it was the right program at the right time, and far be it from him to insist that the brakes be put on and that the program be revised and redesigned so that in fact it would reflect the needs of all the producers in Manitoba to the greatest extent possible.

We found after that first year that in fact there were several concerns—well, a large number of concerns with regard to how the program has worked. There were some changes that were put in place at the last minute in the first year, not to the extent that we hoped would be put in place, but that were put in place at the last minute or in the latter stages of development of the program—I should not say at the last minute—that were somewhat positive to meet some of the concerns that were being outlined by people.

For example, in the southwest corner, people have been hard hit; farmers there had been hard hit by natural disasters over the last number of years. I guess you could call them disasters. A drought is a disaster. Certainly droughts have brought down the productivity, the yield in many of those areas in the southwest, and many of the farmers there stood to lose a great deal because GRIP was being based on past crop insurance experience. In those areas the farmers felt that it was unfair, and I felt that their position was correct and that the minister was not being fair in his implementation in the province.

I keep in mind that it was the federal government and it was a committee and there was a minister and there was a lot of parties involved in the implementation. It is a cumbersome process, not necessarily that easy, but I ultimately have to say that the minister is responsible, as the Minister of Agriculture in Manitoba (Mr. Findlay). He has to be responsible for the program that is brought in place and put in place in Manitoba.

So when the farmers came forward with their concerns that they were being penalized even further, that those hardest hit by natural disasters were the ones being hurt the most in this program, Madam Deputy Speaker. I said that is exactly true, and that should not be. That is unfair, that is wrong.

What should happen is that under GRIP it should have been ensured that there was a minimum coverage per acre to meet what we call cost of production. Whatever figure was used, higher than what they were insured at, would have been positive

for those producers. Many of those producers were insured at \$90, \$95 an acre and they estimated their costs at least at \$140 an acre.

So they were falling way behind in terms of breaking even and with the offset provisions here in Manitoba where even if you produced more, you would be penalized. This would come off your insurance level of GRIP that at certain yield times the support price of \$4.15 a bushel for wheat, for example, that if you produced above that, that was taken off the amount of money that you would have got for that amount of production.

You were not able to earn additional revenue until you were completely off the program in essence. So you would have to produce 70 or 80 bushels per acre before you could actually start earning additional money above the support price that you were insured at.

* (1500)

That offset has been something that has been criticized and has hurt as well, because there was not an opportunity for those farmers to, in essence, earn their costs back. It was very little opportunity. It was almost impossible.

So there they were faced with an insurance level, a revenue insurance level, that was somewhere in the \$90 to \$100 range and they could not make it. In many cases, it would have been lower. I understand this year some of those farmers are going to be faced with \$70 coverage if they stay in GRIP because this year the minister is removing the provision that I started to talk about, about five minutes ago, which was put in near the end of the development of the program, which would allow for one year only the area average to be used or the individual average under crop insurance, whichever was the better.

So in the case of the southwest farmers, most of them were able to take the area average which helped them, especially those who were hardest hit. I felt that the ones who are hardest hit should have been able to get some of the relief or their fair share of relief from this program, because indeed they were the ones most in trouble.

If you look at the southwest corner of the province and you look at some of the municipal maps and the owners of the properties in those areas, I understand a vast majority of them now have changed hands in recent years. A large percentage have been in the hands of financial institutions.

Many of those quarter sections, a high percentage, have been repossessed or turned back over to financial institutions because the farmers could not make a go of it.

So here they were facing this kind of difficulty at this time, coming off years of drought and low prices and so on, and then they are asked to sign a program that will ensure that they continue to lose money at a level of some \$90 to \$100 even with the area average—some \$9,200. Now I am being told that the minister has not listened to those concerns, and the provision that was put in for one year is not being extended, so that those producers are being faced with some, in cases that have been brought to my attention, \$20 per acre less coverage yet from that losing level in the first place, and they are still having to pay premiums, and the premiums are going to be higher this year.

So, under those circumstances, the program is absolutely useless for them, and yet some of them were in the program because they felt that there was no alternative last year. There were a lot of suggestions and rumours being made and bandied around that if you were not in the program, you were not going to receive any third line of defense, as it is called, relief or any additional support from governments, because you had to be in the program first or else you could not get that additional help.

Many of them felt they were really thrown out to the wolves, that there was really no alternative for them, so they would have to join the program, even if it meant ensuring themselves at loss, paying premiums to lose money. Those people had some level of security though, because the area average was allowed if they felt it was to their benefit.

Now they find that with premiums increasing—because the federal 25 percent share is being lifted this year, their premiums are going up. They may be going up for other reasons as well, and the minister has still not relayed to the producers what their premium levels will be this year.

He probably knows as he sits at this particular time what they are going to be compared to last year, but the information has not gone out, as it should have been sent to the producers by March 15 of the year that is covered as contained in Clause 37 of the contract that farmers signed. I have pursued that with the minister in this House, asking him for legal information that would support his

contention that in fact the contract has not been broken by the government.

I believe that the contract has been broken by the government, and that the information for the other clauses has been sent out is all well and good, even though they missed the deadline there by a couple of days. The minister tried to say it was sent out by the 12th of March; in many cases the postmark was the 16th but the 15th was a Sunday, so I did not argue with the minister on that point.

Just as we know for income purposes, if the 30th of April falls on a Sunday, we are usually given one extra day without penalty to get our income tax returns in. In the same way, the minister was able to get that information out on the Monday.

However, it did not contain all of the information. It did not deal with Clause 37. Therefore, farmers who are trying to make their plans about the coverage levels and support levels and premiums were not able to do that, and they are still to a certain extent not able to do that. The coverage levels for wheat, using a revised IMAP, have resulted in higher coverage than would have been the case if the original design of the program of the index moving average had been used. However, the price is down from the previous year. They know that right now but they still do not know their coverage levels and their premium levels, I should say, for the coming year. Therefore, they do not know what the costs of the program are going to be for them for various commodities.

When I speak about the moving average, it is kind of ironic—and the minister will probably have a lot of stories or information to relate to this House about why it took so long to get the change made, what the discussions were around the minister's table and why some provinces—he was blaming Saskatchewan for holding up the process, but the fact is it was this minister and his colleagues who realized they had made a serious mistake on the index-moving average and, therefore, they wanted to have it dickered with a little bit to result in a little bit higher coverage.

We told them that this year. We told the minister last year. We said if you use an index-moving average, you are dropping off the high years and you are adding a low year every year, you are going to have drop in price every year. He knows that. The minister knew that because he is a very intelligent man, he knows these things.

He knew that the index-moving average was going result in lower support prices, but then he could not handle it politically this year so he wanted it changed a little bit so it would not be as big a drop.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): By the letter of the law.

Mr. Plohman: The minister says by the letter of the law, and he can explain those things. The fact is—the minister will have to explain what he meant. If one index-moving average was presented by the bureaucrats, and then it was rejected by the ministers, if that was the case, or by the committee, it went back and developed another scenario which resulted in slightly higher coverage levels for No. 1 wheat, for example, from \$3.84 to \$4.08. There was maybe a difference in interpretation about what the coverage should have been.

We said to the minister in the first place, use a cost-of-production pricing mechanism and put in place the same kind of mechanism that is in place for other commodities.

We just talked about the Milk Prices Review Commission, The Milk Prices Review Amendment Act that is brought before this House, that there is a formula that is used. There are various variables that are plugged into that, and every six months, as proposed by the minister, there will be a change perhaps in the price of milk based on the cost of production. So there is a cost-of-production formula and there is a margin so that these farmers who are producing these commodities can make a profit on it and earn a living. Therefore, there is a total price that has to be charged to the consumers.

We wanted that same kind of thing to be done with regard to grain farmers with some caveats we had mentioned about capping so that it was not wide open, open ended, in terms of total dollars that could flow to an individual producer. We felt that this was a positive way to deal with the issue. If they had used cost of production, he would not have run into this problem now, and he is going to run into it every year with this index-moving average.

* (1510)

In fact, each year the price is going to be dropping unless we see a major change in the world price, export prices of these commodities, it is going to become an issue. The minister is going to be faced with the dilemma of having to announce \$3.50 and \$3 wheat. At one point the world price, and hopefully it will be soon with meat, that index-moving

average, would become academic and farmers would not be too concerned about the index-moving average perhaps because they are going to get more on the market. We hope that happens soon.

In the meantime, we have a formula that is just rolling itself right out of existence in terms of support prices. I think that was very unfortunate because it does not recognize that there are increased costs faced by producers each year. They only have to look at their fuel cost and their fertilizer cost and their chemical cost, and if we do not have any regulation for those—if we are not going to regulate, and we are going to allow greater patent protection, and we are going to allow more of this power into the hands of the multinational corporations that are producing it, then we are going to have rising costs. They will charge whatever the market will bear, and the market is the farmer in that particular case, the consumer of those products that he needs in order to produce his crops.

Of course, we realize as well, Madam Deputy Speaker, we are hearing more and more about the productivity of soil being eroded by the overuse of chemicals, and that is something that we hope will change and that there will be less reliance on that over a period of time. But I raise that because we know that costs are increasing, and even because of the policies of this minister and his government. He has been part of a cabinet that has taken a mill off residential and forced municipalities and school divisions to add additional costs on the local levy which has resulted in a shift, in many cases, for farmers of up to 10 percent or 12 percent increase on their farm land.

The same government, Madam Deputy Speaker, says that they are going to take the tax off farm lands. The minister is just saying it, and they are adding it on. They are adding it on this year.

An Honourable Member: We are not adding it on.

Mr. Plohman: They are moving in the opposite direction, and they say they are not moving it on. The minister says he is not moving it on, but the fact is, as a result of the actions of his colleague in government and his cabinet that he is a part of, we have in fact seen a shift, and the minister knows it. He must be hearing about it already. He is going to hear more about it. KAP even had it in their brief.

There is a shift this year from residential to farm land again, and this government says that they do not believe in taxing farm land for education. That

was the consequence, the result of their actions, and so farm costs are increasing each year. That is why the index moving average was totally ridiculous in its application in the first place. It was again this year even though they were able to, as the minister says, ensure that it adhered to the letter of the law. Whatever the case was, there needed to be some tinkering with that formula this year in its application in order that the price would not even drop below \$4 to some \$3.84 a bushel for wheat which, again, did not reflect the increased costs. It is going the opposite way of cost.

So we have said to the minister that what he should have done in the first place, and we say that again, is that he should have ensured, and he should have fought for, a cost-of-production type formula that could be used, that would ensure that the increased costs would be reflected in that formula each year in the support price rather than going down each year as it is through the mechanism that this minister adopted along with his colleagues at that time. Now, I really believe that the GRIP as it is now constituted is going to be, and has been, limited help but basically overall a failure unless major changes are made to it. Basically a failure, Madam Deputy Speaker, because it did not ensure that farmers got the fair share out of the market for the new goods that they produce and the wealth that they create.

I think it is worthy for the minister to reflect that there was a movement and a term being used a great deal, I guess in Canada and the United States called "parity pricing" at one time that is not used to the same extent now, but it is certainly something that should be the subject of study and discussion by the ministers in terms of the kind of formula that should be used.

Because farmers are creating new wealth in the country, if they are getting a fair return and their fair return would be one-seventh of the economy of the price of all goods produced in the United States—one-seventh. I am not sure what that figure would be here in Canada, but if they are getting their fair share, that money goes back into the economy and generates multifold benefits over and over again in various facets of support industries to agriculture. It is money that is generated and created, wealth that is created as a result of the production of new goods. It is not borrowed money, it is not money on credit.

What we have now in the agriculture community is record levels of borrowing and debt. That means that when support programs like GRIP and NISA are developed, albeit, as I said earlier, insufficient to meet the costs, but still for many people better than what they would have had with no program, it does not go into the communities and generate that spin-off benefit to the extent that it should. In many cases, it just goes to pay interest and to make back interest payments, to pay back loans that have been incurred by these producers, as they have sunk further and further into debt and are just barely able to keep their noses above water so they can continue to breathe and exist.

The money is going direct from governments into the banks to pay the interest, into the lending institutions. We are not getting that spin-off. They are not getting that spending taking place in the communities that generates economic activity and therefore buoyancy in the economy and taxes being paid, and that is why we have the continued recession in this country.

I think that the agriculture sector too, and the debt that is being held by the agriculture sector has contributed a great deal to the recession and the continuing stagnation of the economy.

I think money spent in agriculture is well worth spending, and it is money that pays dividends back to the government and to the province many times over, if, in fact, it is done properly. If support prices are such that they do meet the costs of producing the goods plus a margin, a profit for the producers, that money will go back into the economy and will generate a great deal of economic activity and wealth and job creation and taxes that will indeed assist in moving the economy out of the recession in a hurry.

I do not think, when the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says, oh, what is it going to cost, we talked about cost of production, pricing, that he was considering the whole factor. Maybe he chose not to consider the whole picture when he said that.

He wanted to leave the impression that we in opposition just wanted more money poured out, and that we wanted a bigger deficit. That is what this government likes, to leave the impression that it is New Democrats who want to run up the deficits, even though they are running up higher deficits.

Their colleague Grant Devine in Saskatchewan made one of the biggest messes of any province

that we have seen anywhere in this country, right in Saskatchewan. But the fact is that the Conservatives in Manitoba have run huge deficits over the last number of years.

* (1520)

Madam Deputy Speaker, you are only too painfully aware of that, I am sure. We saw a surplus when we came to the government. We left them with a surplus. They benefitted, I have to say, from large tax increases that were put in place. That is why this government has been able to sit there and say they have not raised taxes.

Yes, we raised taxes to pay for the services that were there. Yes, we made cuts in programming where it was necessary so that we could keep our spending under control, and yes, we left the surplus when we left government. This government has turned a \$55-million surplus into a \$500-million deficit in the span of three or four years, and their deficit continues to grow in this province.

So I say to the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) that he should ensure that the kinds of spending in four agriculture support programs do reflect the cost of production. Because only then can we ensure that farmers are going to climb out of this whole debt spiral that they are in, and can once again start contributing and spending that money in the communities where it has that tremendous, positive effect on the local economy and on the economy of the province and the country as a whole.

I think that the sooner this government recognizes that fact, the sooner we will see a buoyant economy. Now we have said that in grain production, since we export the vast majority of our production, that we cannot have it open-ended, because we cannot be subsidizing the consuming countries to all that they will purchase from this country.

It is just not fair for the taxpayers to do that even though there is a great deal of return, as I said. But the fact is, there have to be some caps on, in terms of the amount of government dollars that would in go to support—you can talk about a quota system. I mean, that is in the supply-managed commodities, we have that. It is capped, the amount of production that is paid.

An Honourable Member: Which farm are you going to cut down?

Mr. Plohman: Now, well, the minister says, what farm are you going to cut down? The fact is that we could have a sliding scale of support that would be

acceptable to everyone, that would recognize that there would be less support at the larger levels of production, so that every farmer would have the support for the first amount of production, 10,000 bushels or 20,000 bushels or a thousand acres or whatever it might be.

Then on a declining scale, you would have cost of production guaranteed, first of all, for the first amount of production. Then you would slowly and gradually drop that off to three-quarters of cost production, or half, or whatever the case may be. I believe that ensures that the money that is spent is targeted to the smaller producers—to all producers—but ensures that there is that base of production that is covered for all producers, and ensures that the population is maintained in our rural areas, because we do want to have more farmers.

We want to have more people living in rural areas. We want to have more farmers on the land. I was driving along the other day from the Hudson Bay Route Association. It was dark, and you could see the lights, as you drove along, of the farms along the way. Well, those lights are becoming fewer and fewer as you drive. Years ago the yard light was on almost every quarter section or two. There were many people on the land years ago. I am speaking after Hydro was introduced of course. There were still a lot of farmers.

Since then, that number has been dropping off. Now you can drive along through agricultural sectors and you will see very scattered lights as you drive, very few, because the farms have been thinned out. Farmers are becoming larger and larger in order to survive, some of them. They think that is to survive but, in fact, they are getting into more trouble and more debt, and in many cases, the medium to larger farmers have been in some serious difficulties, as have the smaller farms.

But the point is that we want to keep more and more farmers on the land instead of less. We must have programs that are targeted and tailored for the smaller farmers, and this program did none of that, in GRIP.

In fact, it ignored the fact that the huge corporate farms could take out hundreds of thousands of dollars—I hesitate to say millions but there may be a few—out of this program, supported by taxpayers, whereas the smaller farms, 500 acres or whatever might have been the case, would take out very few dollars out of a program such as this, in support.

It just is not enough to help them, realistically, pay for their fuel and their taxes, raising their families, and their machinery costs, which are continuing to increase, and their repairs and all of that. So we need to have programs that are targeted better to support those who need it most. We have not done that with this program. The minister has missed the boat with this program in that respect.

So I say that one of the positive things about the changes in Saskatchewan is that they have eliminated the offset that was there—and I talked about this earlier on—where it is deducted from your GRIP payout if you produce more and cannot even sell on the world market, you get it deducted off your insurance level. I think that is wrong, so I said to the minister, that is wrong.

An Honourable Member: How is it targeted?

Mr. Plohman: Now he asked me how it is targeted. I can tell you that—well, what is it now since the Saskatchewan government was changed? How many months has it been? The minister wants to know how is it targeted? He knows it is a national program.

Well, yes, there was a minority report of NFU members, from the committee that the Saskatchewan government set up, that wanted more drastic and radical changes to GRIP than were actually made by the minister, and that were criticized severely by the federal minister, McKnight, in response to the NDP government's changes in Saskatchewan.

But the fact is, Madam Deputy Speaker, that six months is not a lot of time to make the kinds of major changes when you are part of a national program.

Mr. Findlay: Why do you give excuses?

Mr. Plohman: No, no excuses, realistic: I am being realistic and the minister knows that. Because you know the minister and his colleagues use the excuse that they could not do anything about it because of what the NDP left them in Manitoba, for years and years.

They are still doing that, and it is five budgets later. They are still saying that the taxes are our fault. Well, why have they not taken those taxes off if that is the case? Why have they not eliminated the waste if that is the case? They could not find the waste that they talked about, politically, before the '88 election, before the '90 election.

You see, it does work on the one side for this minister to blame the previous government. Then here we have a new government in Saskatchewan only six months old and they are wrong to be blaming the previous government, or they should have—[interjection] No, they should have made all the changes they are going to make in the first six months, with seeding season coming up, Madam Deputy Speaker, pressure to make those changes.

The minister himself is in a mess here because he has not got his changes in this province in on time. He has not announced them, and this minister runs the risk of having all of the contracts declared null and void.

Now I would think that over a period of time, and had the New Democrats been in government in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and the other provinces, that this program would have been much different in its design than it is at the present time, and at the national level of course. It would have been much different.

The Conservative provinces and federal Conservative government ended up with a deal that resulted in massive offloading onto the provinces, and it still did not result in a fair program.

This minister is a strong advocate of crop insurance. He thinks that crop insurance is the be-all and end-all. I would think he thinks it is the greatest thing, and he actually feels I believe—and I will be putting words in his mouth—that it almost should be compulsory to belong. As a matter of fact, in order to belong to GRIP he wanted it to be compulsory that you are in crop insurance, and he even sweetened—that is what he did. [interjection] Well, the minister advocated in the House that they should be part of crop insurance. As a matter of fact, his lending agencies, MACC and the banks, were going around telling producers that if they want to get operating loans, they would have to join GRIP. That was something that was being said.

The minister may say that it was never said, and I think he has softened on that a bit. I hope he has, because I do not think it was their business to tell them that, but in fact they were putting pressure on a lot of producers to in fact sign up for GRIP if they wanted to get an operating loan or they were going to be out of business forever. So it was—[interjection] well, and other loans that they were looking at through the Mediation Board.

The minister knows that through the Mediation Board there was pressure being put on people to join GRIP. As a matter of fact, it was a policy, they must join GRIP before they could get a renegotiation of their loans at that time. The minister knows very well that for a time that was a policy. I do not know if that is a policy at the present time.

Clearly, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have seen a program that has helped some and hurt others. Insofar as crop insurance is concerned, the people who had positive experience in crop insurance reaped a windfall from the program. Those who had negative experiences got hurt by the program, and those who were not in crop insurance did not get their dues when they signed up for GRIP, because there was no recognition of their good management and positive yield history in previous years simply because they chose not to sign up for a voluntary program.

Now the minister cannot have it both ways, that it is a voluntary program, that there is no way he believes it should be compulsory, yet he builds into the program penalties for those who did not join crop insurance over the years because it was a sound management decision not to join up because they lost money by paying crop insurance premiums. They lost money, because the coverage levels were not sufficient in many areas of the province. The Interlake was one of them.

* (1530)

In other areas, they found by in fact self-insuring themselves, they were able to take the bad years with the good years and come out on top by not being in crop insurance. Gilbert Plains is one area where there were a lot of people not in crop insurance and where they did very well. Yet, the people that were in crop insurance across the road from a farmer that was not—both of them equally good managers—the person that had been in crop insurance maybe never having drawn from crop insurance over the years, that he paid for that peace of mind of having insurance to fall back on if he needed it was getting on a thousand acres some \$30,000 more in coverage under GRIP than the person who had never taken crop insurance before.

Fair? We raised that in this House. We raised it throughout but, no, the minister went headlong with this program. You had to be in crop insurance. He even stood in this House and justified through the policy that those people who are in crop insurance

have in fact paid a lot of money into crop insurance over the years, so maybe they are entitled to get higher coverage. Yet, it had nothing to do with GRIP. They never knew GRIP was coming. The minister did not know GRIP was coming. Crop insurance did not know GRIP was coming.

Why would they have been entitled to some kind of reward, because they were in crop insurance? Why not start them all at the same point, and let them show that they are better managers or if the minister chose to in fact allow increased coverage because of good management experience under crop insurance, then allow an individual to prove through their own records that they were indeed outproducing the average and were producing at a high level, because of their good management skills and allow them to buy higher coverage.

The critical thing, Madam Deputy Speaker, was how much coverage could you buy. That was all. That is what resulted in the amount of money you could get from the program is how much coverage you could be covered for, how much you could buy. Those that could buy less were guaranteed to receive some \$30,000 less or more based on a thousand acres. We had done those kinds of examples. It really divided communities. It was very unfortunate. I say to the minister that has been one of the disasters, the major faults of this program. He has a lot of work to do.

I will be watching with interest, when he looks at this kind of a proposal which will give the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) the opportunity to place money in an account to be paid out. Sure that will have to be done, because the premium levels that are paid in are not always going to pay the bills, so you have to have a mechanism. I do not know whether the minister feels—he said he did not feel he was doing it illegally up to now. This should have been done last year when the program was brought in, so it could have been fully debated in this House at that particular time.

I think the minister did not bring this in last year, because he did not want to face the music and have the kind of debate in this House on GRIP and the problems that it was facing at that time. He felt now after one year it was a little safer to do it. Why did he not do it last year? Why did he not bring this mechanism in? He knew that it was needed or did he not know? It may be that he did not know. You know why? You know why he did not know,

because he was not organized. He did not have his act together.

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

Is the House ready for the question?

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

Motion agreed to.

Bill 53—The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 53, The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la manutention et le transport des marchandises dangereuses), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave.

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Deputy Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill 53, The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Amendment Act. The bill deals with—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Selkirk is commencing debate on second reading of Bill 53.

Mr. Dewar: This bill deals with the cleanup of contaminated sites within the province. Site cleanup, as all members are aware, is a very costly and a very lengthy process, one that I will be dealing with later on in the debate this afternoon.

I would like to specifically deal with my own constituency and nearby area and that is the ground water contamination in the Stony Mountain, West St. Paul area.

I would like to refer now to some of the notes provided to us by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) where they talk in a little bit more detail on the bill. I will quote from this. It says new past owners, handlers of the dangerous goods and contaminants also tied to contamination, e.g. Bristol.

That is, I believe, a direct indictment of Bristol Aerospace at the Rockwood propellant plant in the Stony Mountain area that is a culprit in that particular contamination. Though it is slightly premature, since the UMA report was released yesterday, and though we have not had a chance to review it as yet, it did not categorically accept Bristol as the culprit, although all indications, of course, point directly to it. It was brought to light late last year when former employees of the plant came forward to talk about some of the practices that they used to do when they were employed at the Bristol Aerospace Rockwood propellant plant.

I would like to quote from one of the former employees. I thought about it for years, he states, a man who dumped barrels of assorted chemicals and debris into a disposal pit at the Bristol Aerospace site as part of his job. He said the pit is likely the source of solvents found in the water at the propellant plant and nearby residences. I almost swear by it. It works out perfectly to where the wells are being tested.

A man who worked there for 20 years said the rockets would come back from NASA and they would be filled with solid fuel. They would scrape them out and put them into drums and most of the contaminants then were burned. The actual raw propellant left over after mixes are put into big oxidizer drums. I used to wonder what would happen, he would say, even if these drums do not leak, they will rust and there is oxidizer in the drums, and as soon as it gets wet it is like salt. As long as it is dry they are okay, but with any amount of moisture they go bad. He is wondering, he said a lot of people working at the plant have died of cancer, and it is worthwhile wondering if it is worthwhile working there. Individuals are wondering if it is worthwhile living there as well.

Madam Deputy Speaker, as I was stating before, individuals are now wondering if it is worthwhile living there. This is probably the worst water contamination problem in Manitoba now. This was confirmed by Dr. Lockhart Gray, who is the head of the province's ground water section, and he states that the solvents that have entered the aquifer from the plant have likely sunk to the bottom of the aquifer. The nature of the contaminants is that they are heavy metal, they move to the bottom of the aquifer and then flow with the ground water. He said the concern is, the contaminants have entered an underground water system that is a single huge

aquifer generally flowing west from Lake Winnipeg and the Red River. Everything east of Stony Mountain to the Red River is at risk.

I do not know if honourable members are aware, what is between Stony Mountain and the Red River are of course the West St. Paul, St. Andrews, Lockport areas of my constituency. I know the Liberals have no concerns about this since they have no members outside of the Perimeter. I am surprised they know where Stony Mountain is, but anyway—

* (1540)

An Honourable Member: There are lots of members outside of the Perimeter.

Mr. Dewar: The Liberals, I stated.

An Honourable Member: Oh, that is not nice. Bring back Gwen.

Mr. Dewar: That is interesting. He says, bring back Gwen, but I remember Gwen Charles, the former member for Selkirk, in a newspaper article stated there are no environmentalists left in the Liberal caucus. This is the position of one of their former members. Gwen Charles stated this, so I am glad you want her back, especially how she has denounced your leader so often in the local media. I am surprised you would like her back. Anyway, she is very honest. She is very, very truthful at least in that one incident where she did say that there are no environmentalists left in the Liberal caucus. She certainly was accurate in that analysis.

Some of the chemicals found in this particular area: trichloroethylene, and trichloroethane, that would be TCE and TCA. They are manufactured organic solvents, colourless liquids with a chloroform-like odour. They are used as cleaning solvents in dry cleaning and degreasing agents in industry. They have been used at the plant in the Bristol area for around 30 years, and I was raised in that general area, maybe five, six miles away from the plant.

I remember every summer, actually throughout the year we would be outside and we would hear this explosion and we would notice in the sky a huge plume of black smoke coming directly west of us which was exactly what they were doing. They were burning off these chemicals at that propellant plant and now there is a general concern that the water table in the whole area may be contaminated. The problem though is that the Environment department has been very—the people in the area

no longer trust the Environment department. In a letter I wrote to the minister on the 13th of November, I say that recognizing the seriousness of the problem the company has ordered its own inquiry, however it is incumbent upon the provincial government to conduct an independent inquiry. Only such an inquiry would be able to reassure residents that their water is truly safe. Additionally the provincial government has an obligation to ensure that other potentially dangerous chemicals and materials are not improperly stored in the adjacent area.

Residents in the area have been using the artesian wells from the Oak Hammock area as a source of drinking water for generations. In fact, I have, and several residents of my constituency have used the water from the artesian wells as their source of drinking water. I asked the minister then if he would test that water and post the results of the finding. As of yet unfortunately, they have not. Again it raises some serious questions about the actions of this minister in that area.

There is a sort of misinformation—I have again a letter from Dr. Joel Kettner. He is the medical officer of Health in the Interlake region. He states, thus in accordance with the guidelines, I am recommending that it is deemed safe to use your water for all purposes and that no special measures be taken at this time so long as the measurements stay within safety guidelines.

Again, of course we have a letter here from Dr. Eva Pip, a professor at the University of Winnipeg. She states, while findings indicate levels of less than one part per billion, the fact is that these chemicals are still present nevertheless. The water that you are drinking is, in my opinion, a deplorable situation.

The Canadian Water Quality guidelines do not even list TCA and TCE in its standards, and like thousands of others chemicals they are only rarely found as pollutants in drinking water. Very little information exists as to their toxicity, and virtually no data are available. Chronic dosages needed to produce long-term effects are generally far lower than acute dosages, but unfortunately data on chronic exposure is sketchy at best.

I asked the minister on the 13th of November to conduct an independent investigation into this. His deputy minister stated, we were told that Bristol has hired their own consultant. We were clearly going to have to do an independent investigation of our

own. Unfortunately the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) obviously overrode his deputy minister because now we are not. We called for an independent inquiry into the problem. We had the deputy of the department agree to it, then we had the Minister of the Environment override that.

So now we have a situation of incredible confusion over there. Residents do not trust Bristol; they do not trust the Environment department; they certainly do not trust this government; they do not trust the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer). No one there is getting any kind of answers to help these individuals out. So now we have a very, very serious situation there, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Again, it is so easy because we have governmental documents here which back up our claim. The chemical spill at the Bristol site located in the R.M. of Rockwood has resulted in the contamination of the ground water supply in adjacent areas. This sort of gives you an example of the cost of this potential cleanup, or an answer—not a cost of potential cleanup, but an alternative to the contamination that is there presently. A task force has been set up. It says that there are assumptions made. There are four options I would like to go through. Cost-estimates have been developed for installing pipe water in the most—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): On a point of order. If the member is going to read selectively from press clippings, I hope he refers to the one heading that refers to the task force as a miracle.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Environment does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Mr. Dewar: Madam Deputy Speaker, this option is estimated to cost \$878,000. Option No. 2, the pipeline has been extended to include fringe areas from the main flue of contamination. This option is expected to cost \$1.24 million. So you can see, it is going to be very expensive to supply the individuals there with a pipeline. Of course, the logical question is: When are they going to be receiving this

pipeline, and who is going to be receiving water supplied by this pipeline?

An Honourable Member: Right now.

Mr. Dewar: Well, great, because I am pleased the Minister of Environment is acting on this issue because the area residents are very anxious to have their water supply dealt with, and I want you to know that. We assume that the government will be moving in this direction very quickly.

I hope that the bill, once it does assess the guilt, will deal with including Bristol, will be treating Bristol as part of the problem, and will be fining them with a sufficient enough fine to deal with some of these expensive costs. Anyway, as I said before, we assume that the bill will deal with this particular issue. We are pleased that the government is bringing forth this legislation at this time, and now again would state that they deal specifically with the Bristol issue.

They are naming Bristol as the culprit here. I hope that they will be taking Bristol to task for some of the huge costs that will be associated with the cleanup, or at least providing the area residents with a fresh supply of water.

With those brief comments, Madam Deputy Speaker, I will end my comments now and leave it for my colleagues to continue.

* (1550)

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Deputy Speaker, The Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Amendment Act is an important amendment and one that many people have been calling for, and we are going to pass this bill very soon. I would like to put a few comments on the record.

I think there have been many messes, so to speak, left in the province where people have not been held responsible to clean up what they have done. Corporations have not been held responsible, and then have pulled out of an area after they have had their development, after they have done their work, and left the municipalities with that responsibility of cleaning it up.

It is time that people be held responsible for what they are doing. It is not fair that municipalities have to clean up, or other people who have to move into an area get left with the cost. However, although we are prepared to move on this, Madam Deputy Speaker, I just want to mention that there are parts

of the province where people are not aware of the legislation and what the impacts of it are going to be. In fact, they appear to be very unhappy. That is in the area of Gimli. It is disappointing that this government has not made the people of Gimli aware of the implications of the bill, because they are being led to believe that the proposed pollution cleanup legislation will be negative for them.

The mayor says that the intention is to make landowners responsible for whatever pollution has occurred on their land, and it is going to make the taxpayers of Stonewall responsible for the cleanup of the PCBs on the golf course. It is this kind of confusion that is causing a lack of understanding or information available about the bill, that is causing problems for the people of Stonewall, and I think that it would be the responsibility of members of government to clean up.

The people in that area are also concerned that the proposed legislation will provide a giant loophole for renters who pollute the land, and will leave landowners on the hook for cleaning up the cost. As I say, the government should just clarify this as to whether or not there is going to be this kind of responsibility.

The contamination with PCBs is a serious problem and causing concern to people. I hope that we can get this information out. With that we will allow the bill to go to committee and give the people of the community an opportunity to have their input to the bill and changes, and we can go ahead and rectify some of the problems that are out in the community and deal with it.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Deputy Speaker, I just had a few words to say on this particular bill. Our critic is here and we want to pass this bill to committee. I will let the member for St. James put on the record our position.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Madam Deputy Speaker, after the long-windedness of the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman), I must admit I was taken by surprise with the short and concise statements of the fellow members, the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) and the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). Very concise, it is what I like to see,

mind you, is comments to the point. Such a rare treat from the member from the NDP.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am going to take my guide, and rare as that may be, from the member for Selkirk and the member for Swan River in terms of the brevity, conciseness of their comments.

This Bill 53, I must admit to the minister I am pleased to see this bill before the House. However, I approach it with some cautiousness, because as with other bills the minister has come forward with in the environmental area, there is usually lots of fanfare surrounding bills that appear progressive on the surface. Seeing them come to fruition is quite another matter. They tend to have lengthy periods of introduction in terms of having an effect in the community at large.

I am concerned about the implementation of this, and I want to see it come to fruition and have an effect in the community. I challenge the minister to that. I accept his comments, which he put on the record when he introduced this bill at face value. I have no reason in respect to this bill, other than his past record, to suspect that these will not be put forward in a timely fashion.

The dangerous goods handling and transportation area is an area which, of course, has gained prominence in recent years in this country, with good reason. There have been many incidents, including incidents in this province, which have brought the public attention the need to adequately protect the public in respect to handling goods, dangerous goods, goods which pollute for many years to come, generations to come, and not just the transportation of those goods, but the handling of those goods and their effect on local environments.

The Domtar incident, of course, is foremost in our minds in Winnipeg. The problem with Bristol Aerospace out in Stony Mountain is another serious issue facing this province. We are learning every day of the increasing detrimental effect of processing of chemicals, use of chemicals, hazardous materials and their long-term effects. We certainly cannot be too cautious and too concerned about safety. We owe it to ourselves and future generations to approach these issues with the utmost caution.

This bill, of course, attempts to deal with the issue of who should pay, who should clean up the mess that has been created. We hope through

preventative progressive legislation, if the legislation that we have in place is enforced properly, to prevent these types of occurrences. That is the hope.

In fact, we know on a daily basis that we are not doing that as effectively as we should in this province. We are not unique in that, I do not mean to suggest that we are unique, but that is clearly the area to concentrate our foremost efforts on to prevent the pollution of our lands and air and water prior to an incident actually occurring.

The province is certainly not blameless. The province itself has been involved in large-scale pollution in this province. You do not need to look much further than a block up the road here at the Remand Centre where the provincial garage was which leaked for some, I believe, they consider at least 10-15 years. There was gas leaking into the soil from the provincial garage—a shameful situation. A provincial government owned and operated that provincial garage and was either unable to detect gas leaks or unwilling to acknowledge a gas leak that was occurring throughout that period of time and left an area in this city saturated with gasoline—a shameful situation.

When it came to light, one wonders what the government does. The government is supposed to enforce the laws and would in circumstances like that perhaps have laid charges. The government was put in a position where, what were they to do when they, themselves, were the culprit?

Madam Deputy Speaker, another situation came to light not so long ago, and I do not blame the Conservatives government entirely for this one. It dates back to 1981, up in northern Manitoba. MTS was responsible for quite a large—[interjection] I will not forget Repap. Quite a large amount of pollution occurred up in northern Manitoba up near the Conawapa site, and an order was actually issued in that case and was not complied with and was not followed up on by the government of the day. In fact, the officials did follow up on it; it was shut down at the political level, and searching the history of that incident gives a lot of insight into the New Democratic mind-set of the day during the '80s.

* (1600)

They did not practise what they preached; in fact, they did the opposite. They were talking about being environmentally concerned, but when the truth be known, up in northern Manitoba, in terms of

enforcing, monitoring the enforcement of a clean-up order against MTS, they turned a blind eye. They turned a blind eye year upon year upon year. Now the Conservative government was much less dilatory but, nevertheless, waited a significant period of time prior to getting the job actually done.

One wonders, had it not become a public issue in this Legislature, whether or not it would be cleaned up even yet, but the fact is that it has been dealt with now, and one hopes that we have learned a lesson. The NDP have learned a lesson in particular, in terms of practising what they preach.

I would be remiss if I did not, of course, harken back to the Repap situation, Manfor as it was, which stands today, even yet, as probably the single greatest embarrassment to the people of this province in terms of its absolute lack of environmental control over the operations and the wholesale destruction of the local environment in and around that mill. A project which was undertaken without even so much as an environmental study being done, and here we have that same party, the New Democrats, rightly so calling for a high level of environmental review, but it does not lie too well in their mouths to be making those calls. They are the ones who presided over this province being ranked tenth out of 10 in this country, in terms of environmental protections and sensitivity. That was their legacy.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the motivation behind this bill which is "make the polluter pay," is a principle which deserves recognition in law. Clearly, in cases where there is contaminated soil or land, the department should have the power to order the polluter to clean up a problem, even if that polluter is no longer the owner of the property.

Now, that is going to cause a rethinking of obligations on the sale of a business, the sale of property. This will have ramifications for corporations, individuals entering into purchase and sale agreements of ongoing businesses and of property. One can imagine the various further documents which will be required in a closing, a transaction of this type, to ensure that people are protected and understand where liability rests should a polluted situation be found out later on down the road.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is for that reason that I do have one serious concern about this bill, and that is its retroactive application. I am willing to

listen to the arguments at the committee stage about the retroactivity and how it will work, but keep in mind that transactions have gone on around this province for many, many years which may, in fact, now be reactivated in terms of the liability which would flow to the vendor of that property based on this bill.

In principle, retroactive legislation is regressive legislation. We should not, in this Legislature, as a matter of course, be purporting to bind past actions, past transactions, what has already gone on. That is not good legislation in the normal course. There are extreme situations where retroactive legislation is appropriate, but as a matter of principle, governments should not seek to bind what has gone on before. Binding the future is one thing, we have a mandate to do that, binding the past is another, purporting to change the situation, tip the scales, in effect the legal obligations from transactions which have gone on in the past. Of course, the principle is obvious. The people who entered those transactions took on those legal obligations, or did not sign off those legal obligations, had no way of knowing what future laws would say.

So it is unfair to go back and impose obligations retrospectively. It is for that reason that I do have some serious concerns about the retroactive provisions of this bill. I, as a rule, look very closely at retroactive provisions. As I say, I am willing to have the minister explain this and give some assurances to meet those concerns.

But I start from that basis, and as much as I would like to see polluters pay, as much as I would like to see the corporate awareness changed so that this does become a reality of future transactions, I am not sure how fair it is to look back in time and deal with obligations which have already been taken on, a certain set of circumstances already accepted.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the bill in general, of course, as I have already indicated, is working in the right direction. This is an area which needs to be clarified. It needs to be clarified not just for actual owners, vendors of property, but insurers, investors. This is a growing area all over North America, and you are seeing various state Legislatures in the United States and provincial jurisdictions searching for ways to define rights and obligations, which can be substantial in the case of pollution of a large scale. Witness Bristol Aerospace, the cost could be quite substantial. That is just one example. Look

around this country and you will see many examples.

Of course, courts are searching for ways—and it is not clear yet what the common law will say about many of these issues. In some cases it has been clarified. The United States is ahead of us in this, and we can learn from what has happened there. But it is not crystal clear, and investors are nervous, so nervous that I had an interesting read the other night and took a look at the publication of the Canadian Bankers' Association. They published a whole booklet explaining the most recent law, as they understood it, on where liability rests in the event of large-scale pollution.

What about a case of bankruptcy or receivership? Do those people, does the estate in effect take on the obligations of the polluter? What responsibility does the receiver have to meet those obligations, and where do creditors rank in terms of the obligation to clean up a mess if in fact the cleanup cost is going to eradicate any assets in the corporation? Those are questions which investors want to know, because if an investor is not going to, even a secured investor, get the money out before the person pays a statutory obligation to clean up pollution, they will want to know that when they lend the money. They will want to have assurances and perhaps even monitor whether or not that corporation is functioning within the environmental standards so as not to expose itself to what we are in effect doing here, which is imposing an enormous obligation, potentially, on corporations.

I am not saying that obligation is not correctly placed. What I am saying is that one of the things this bill seeks to do is to define where that liability rests. I guess in terms of that question, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have another question for the minister which I will be hoping to canvass at committee stage, which is: Is it clear enough that we leave the level of discretion in his department that is left in this bill? Should we be seeking further to set out some principles beyond polluter pay, then leave it to the department to assess what level of pollution occurred when the former owner was in the property? I am not sure it is clear enough in this legislation just where liability rests.

I think if we are going to move in this direction, which is appropriate, if we are going to move in it, we do have an obligation to think clearly about the principles we are espousing and put them clearly in the legislation so that the open market, the potential

losers as a result of this legislation, will know exactly what their risk is, and their investors and their creditors will know exactly what the obligation is and can react accordingly—another reason, Madam Deputy Speaker, that we will want to look closely at the retrospective aspect of this legislation.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I have those concerns and as I indicated at the outset, we support in principle what this legislation is attempting to do. We have many questions as to the details of this legislation, but that is not to say that we do not want this to move to committee. We do. We want a full and thorough canvassing of the issues we have raised at the committee stage. In terms of this legislation going further beyond the committee stage, we reserve that decision at this point, pending the outcome of those committee hearings at which time, of course, the minister presumably will have the experts available, and we can ask the very questions and more than what I have put on the record here today.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the house is the second reading of Bill 53. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed?

Some Honourable Member: Agreed.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 64—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 64 (The Child and Family Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington.

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? Leave?

Some Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Bill 70—The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 70 (The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Evans).

Stand? Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? Leave?

Some Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave has been granted.

* (1610)

Bill 72—The Law Reform (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 72 (The Law Reform (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act; Loi sur la réforme du droit (modifications diverses)), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan? Leave?

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Madam Deputy Speaker, I have had the pleasure of reviewing the minister's comments given just a few days ago on this bill, and I must say that his indication that the bill is relatively noncontroversial, at this point, I cannot agree with.

I put on the record up-front that we are going to allow this bill passage to committee, but I also put the minister on notice that at the committee stage, we are going to be seeking some answers to many aspects of this bill, and at that time will be making a final decision as to whether or not the bill should be supported.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in particular, I want to indicate that the Law Reform Commission Report which recommended the repeal of The Bulk Sales Act clearly was a result of a thorough analysis of the law in this area, and I have no particular problem

with that aim being achieved. As the minister points out, other provinces have moved in this direction; specifically British Columbia repealed the act in 1983. There do not appear to have been adverse consequences, and it is suggested by the minister and in keeping with the Law Reform Commission report that The Bulk Sales Act is outdated and not necessary.

Madam Deputy Speaker, with respect to the issue of life tenants being liable for equitable waste, The Law of Property Act amendments, that too appears to be relatively noncontroversial.

The withdrawal of the rule in Shelley's Case with respect to The Mercantile Law Amendment Act again appears relatively straightforward.

The concern that I have is under The Liquor Control Act, Section 183. The minister indicates that it is no longer necessary to have that provision in the law. I am not so sure. My concern is not that the penalty there of \$1,500 is not appropriate, clearly, it is not. If responsibility flows in the circumstances where an innkeeper overserves an intoxicated patron, an obviously intoxicated patron, liability should flow. There is no question. The minister is correct when he says that common law has surpassed that in the 1974 decision of the Supreme Court of Canada.

But, Madam Deputy Speaker, I see no reason why we could not preserve in legislation a clear indication that a penalty will flow, and that liability will rest without setting a limit. I see no reason why we could not leave in the legislation a clear indication to innkeepers that liability will flow, not just at common law but in statute as well, to add to and buttress that responsibility and make a statement from the provincial Legislature that we will not tolerate innkeepers serving those who are clearly intoxicated. Not just in respect of their own health and their responsibility to those individuals to not add to their waywardness in becoming overly intoxicated, but also for those others in society who pay the price for intoxicated individuals who then go out into the streets—in particular, I know in my constituency, which has a number of drinking establishments right up against residential neighbourhoods—wreak havoc on local neighbourhoods, also for those who go out and get into motor vehicles and take on the risks associated with driving intoxicated, not just for themselves, but take on the risks that they impose on others in society who might come into contact with them.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I want to review this issue carefully with the minister to see if, in particular given this minister's lengthy, noted statements on his fervent desire to do everything possible to not promote and, in fact, to curtail drinking and driving, in light of those comments, I want to canvass with him thoroughly at the committee stage whether or not we should not be amending this provision, as opposed to repealing it.

I can think of many ways that it could be amended in a useful way while maintaining the message to all Manitobans that provincially, under The Liquor Control Act, we do not accept the innkeepers serving those who are obviously intoxicated. I wonder if we would not do better to maintain that message, in some form or other, in The Liquor Control Act.

So, with those comments, we are pleased to have this bill move to committee. But I would like the minister, specifically, to address his proposed repeal of Section 183 of The Liquor Control Act at that time.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Bill 9—The Economic Innovation and Technology Council Act

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

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave has been granted.

* * *

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 10.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, just for clarification: did you call Bill 72? I believe that the government had requested 72. We have a member who would like to speak on 72.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is that not the one the honourable member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) just spoke on?

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Deputy Speaker, I understand that the acting government House leader called 72 first, then 68. So then it would go to 68?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. My error. I neglected to call 68; I am sorry, I jumped from 70 to 72. So we will revert.

Bill 68—The Public Trustee Amendment, Trustee Amendment and Child and Family Services Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 68 (The Public Trustee Amendment, Trustee Amendment and Child and Family Services Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le curateur public, la Loi sur les fiduciaires et la Loi sur les services à l'enfant à la famille), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

Stand? Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? Leave?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave has been granted.

* (1620)

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Madam Deputy Speaker, I commence comments on Bill 68 with the same indication that I did on Bill 72, which is that I do not view this bill as entirely noncontroversial.

I am prepared, and our caucus is prepared, to have it go to committee, Madam Deputy Speaker. However, there are going to be questions on many of the sections in this bill at the committee stage. I want to outline some of my concerns for the minister so he can be prepared to address some of those at the committee stage.

The bill makes changes to The Public Trustee Act and The Child and Family Services Act, as well as The Trustee Act. The amendments to The Public Trustee Act are varied. Let me highlight some of the ones that I have concern about. The minister indicates that the permissive provisions in the MPIC act are preferable and all that are needed with respect to dealing governing payments on behalf of infants or mentally disordered persons. I wonder if that is correct, and I am not sure in what context the minister is talking. If he is talking about infant settlements as a result of actions in which MPIC is

involved as an insurer, I do not think MPIC should be the final word on payments that are made to infants.

My suggestion was that the full involvement of the Public Trustee should be maintained. MPIC, after all, being an insurance company, takes on the role of the defendant. It acts as the defendant. It in a sense owns the defence when it agrees to insure an individual who is responsible. It is a party to the action. I do not think we should be taking away from that role by purporting to have it step into the shoes of the Public Trustee and play a neutral role on behalf of an infant or otherwise mentally disordered person.

I would not want to confuse the role of MPIC and place it in an unfair position as both the defender of the interests of the mentally disordered person or infant with its role in the normal case in these situations which is that of one of the parties actually involved.

Madam Deputy Speaker, with respect to eliminating the potential liability of the office of the Public Trustee concerning mortgage sales agreements and tax sales certificates or applications, again I have a concern. I am not sure why we need to do away with that liability. I personally believe that, and this follows through in this bill.

There is another provision of this bill which suggests that the Public Trustee should not be responsible for costs in an action which it defends if it can meet the test of defending it reasonably. Now that is not a standard that anyone else is entitled to avoid costs on. Costs are set by courts in the normal course in this province based on who wins and who loses. Acting reasonably, defending reasonably is not necessarily the same standard as being successful in court. One can act reasonably and still lose.

Just because the Public Trustee is involved in a case and acts reasonably but loses, I do not why the Public Trustee should avoid costs. I am not convinced by the rationale, at least insofar as it is put forward in the minister's comments, because someone who sues the estate of an individual represented by the Public Trustee should have the same rights and the same obligations to pay costs as any other litigant. I start from that premise and I do not see in the minister's comment sufficient reasons to deviate from that.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I apply those same comments and that same rationale to the attempt through this bill to insulate the Public Trustee from liability in the area of proceedings such as mortgage sales, agreements for sales, tax sales certificates or applications, transmissions or caveats. I do not know why we would want to further insulate the Public Trustee from liability.

The Public Trustee is staffed by competent trained professional people, estate administrators and lawyers. They are fully able to protect themselves from liability in those circumstances, in my view, and I do not think we should statutorily protect them from the same liability that everyone else in society is susceptible to in such proceedings.

Madam Deputy Speaker, with respect to the other aspects of this bill dealing specifically with the Public Trustee, there is an amendment which would add to the Public Trustee's ability to delegate day-to-day personal supervision of clients to other departments like the Department of Health and the Department of Family Services. I have some concern about that.

The Public Trustee is a unique body, and it has a unique role in this government. That is, it is the body which comes forward in cases where people are unable to defend themselves, to protect themselves, or in the event of estates where there is no one to step in to administer the estate, that is their role. In terms of protecting the interests of mentally disordered persons and infants, it has a unique role.

I am very concerned about a statutory ability to delegate that to Health and Family Services officials. They do not have the same role and mandate as advocate for the mentally disordered and infant as the Public Trustee has. I do not think we should allow that delegation statutorily to occur without making absolutely clear that ultimate responsibility for protecting the interests of that individual lies with the Public Trustee. I want that made crystal clear, Madam Deputy Speaker, in any legislation.

I look forward to the minister amending this bill or coming forward with proposals which will satisfy that mandate, which should not be eroded in any circumstance, in my view, Madam Deputy Speaker, given the unique role and purpose of the Public Trustee's office.

There are other amendments. The amendment which would allow trust companies to avoid going to court every three years and simply appoint an independent auditor makes some sense, I must say, given the other protections in the act in terms of notification going out to the beneficiaries. The proposal in the bill to enlarge the provisions for counsel for children in court proceedings under The Child and Family Services Act does make sense, Madam Deputy Speaker. I acknowledge the minister's rationale given in his comments for that, specifically dealing with underage parents and ensuring that they have a right to legal counsel in proceedings. That was an anomalous situation arising out of The Child and Family Services Act. That is in effect putting into legislation what is already common sense and in fact done in the courts, and that deserves support.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in conclusion, it is the provisions which seek to insulate the Public Trustee from the legal obligations that everyone else in society is susceptible to and it is the provisions of the bill which amend The Public Trustee Act to allow for delegation which give me the greatest concern, and I look forward to the minister coming forward with representatives from the Public Trustee's Office to deal with those concerns at the committee stage.

Madam Deputy Speaker, with those comments and those caveats on our agreement to send this bill to committee, our party will conclude comments and look forward to those further answers and further discussion at the committee stage.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Bill 10—The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 10 (The Manitoba Hydro Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'Hydro-Manitoba), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Downey), standing in the name of the honourable member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman).

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

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

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave. Leave has been granted.

Bill 14—The Highways and Transportation Department Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on Bill 14 (The Highways and Transportation Department Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le ministère de la Voirie et du Transport), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger), 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: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave. Leave has been granted.

Bill 15—The Highway Traffic Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 15 (The Highway Traffic Amendment Act; Loi modifiant le Code de la route), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation, standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson.

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

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

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

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

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave. Leave has been granted.

Bill 21—The Provincial Park Lands Amendment Act

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

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

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

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave. Leave has been granted.

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

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on 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), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources, standing in the name of the honourable member for Interlake.

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

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

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave. Leave has been granted.

Bill 34—The Surveys Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 34 (The Surveys Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'arpentage), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), standing in the name of the honourable member for Interlake (Mr. Cliff Evans).

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

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

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Bill 42—The Amusements Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 42 (The Amusements Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les divertissements), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

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

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave. Leave has been granted.

* (1630)

Bill 47—The Petty Trespasses Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 47 (The Petty Trespasses Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'intrusion), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

Some Honourable Members: Stand.

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

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave. Leave has been granted.

Bill 48—The Personal Property Security Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 48 (The Personal Property Security Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les sûretés relatives aux biens personnels), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of

Justice, standing in the name of the honourable member for Kildonan.

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave. Leave has been granted.

Bill 49—The Environment Amendment Act

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 49, (The Environment Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'environnement), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), standing in the name of the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli). Stand? Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? Leave? Leave has been granted.

Bill 61—The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (4)

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on second reading of Bill 61, (The Consumer Protection Amendment Act (4); Loi no 4 modifiant la Loi sur la protection du consommateur), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave has been granted.

Bill 62—The Business Practices Amendment Act (2)

Madam Deputy Speaker: To resume debate on Bill 62, (The Business Practices Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les pratiques commerciales), on the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh), standing in the name of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

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

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave. Leave has been granted.

What is the will of the House?

Mr. Doug Martindale (Deputy Opposition House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, if it is the will of the House, we would like to call it five o'clock.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, have we gone through all the bills and the government resolution?

Madam Deputy Speaker: Yes, I believe I have called all the bills for second reading.

Mr. Lamoureux: Madam Deputy Speaker, I would be prepared to speak on the proposed government resolution which follows the second reading on bills if this would be the most opportune time to do that.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Deputy Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, I think that this side would be prepared to grant leave for the member to speak if it will remain standing as is and then we could proceed to the private members' hour and we would agree to have it called.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is the honourable deputy government House leader calling the proposed resolution?

Mr. Praznik: Madam Deputy Speaker, I think we are agreed to allow the member time to speak on that in the remainder of the hour. If it remains standing as it is on the Order Paper, we are prepared to call it.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Madam Deputy Speaker: On the proposed resolution of the honourable Minister of Justice and Attorney General (Mr. McCrae), standing in the name of the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli). Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave. Leave has been granted.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Deputy Speaker, it is with pleasure once again that I speak to this particular resolution. I know I had another

opportunity prior to the Leader of the Liberal Party speaking to it and moving what we believe is a most appropriate amendment to the resolution, really commenting in terms of the need to have additional resources. It is one thing to fight for zero tolerance when it comes to domestic abuse, but as the amendment from the Leader of the Liberal Party has put onto the record it really is asking for the Chamber to vote upon. Unlike most other resolutions, ultimately this will be a resolution that will be voted on.

It will be very interesting to see, in fact, how the government, in particular some of the government backbenchers, treat the whole issue of domestic violence. Really what we are asking for is that the government use the appropriate resources to ensure Manitoba is a truly domestic violence-free zone.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do not have to tell you how much we have heard this government time after time talk about the importance of domestic violence and the efforts that are underway to reach that zero tolerance. I know that the Leader of the Liberal Party and myself and other colleagues from our caucus have put a number of our concerns on domestic violence on the record, and have really asked the government to take a much more proactive approach to domestic violence. We can appreciate the work that they have done thus far, but there is a long way to go.

One of the biggest concerns that I can recall from a presentation that was made to our caucus regarding domestic violence was with respect to where does an individual or a client go after Osborne House or the shelters. This is a legitimate concern that was being expressed to us a year and a half ago. We have some 20,000-plus nonprofit housing units throughout the province, and the government, when we raised that issue back then, made a commitment in terms of these individuals would be given a higher priority within the nonprofit housing.

We appreciated the gesture that was being made from the government, but I would encourage the government, and in particular the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ernst), that in fact there is another role that the government can play by converting, by allocating out, some of those units strictly for housing for individuals or clients that are leaving shelters so that they are not in the midst of looking for a place to go after they have entered into Osborne House or any shelter home.

The moral support that is needed, the counselling that is required once you enter into a shelter is very important, but far too often we see that that counselling is foregone primarily because the individuals that are in Osborne House or in shelters are too concerned about where are they going to go next.

It is a legitimate concern. What do they do next? Where are they going to be sleeping after they are leaving the shelters? I think that the Department of Housing does have a larger role to play. We have other areas in which there needs to be more of an emphasis.

* (1640)

I make reference to some of the recommendations that were put through, through the Pedlar report, where it talks about the need for counselling, talks about the need to have all aspects of society educated.

One cannot emphasize the importance enough when it comes to the educational component of domestic violence because I believe, as no doubt I like to think every member of this Chamber believes, that domestic violence is a crime. We have a responsibility, and here I look more so to the Minister responsible for Education (Mrs. Vodrey) to take the responsibility and to take some action within our own educational system.

We need to have or provide educational programs for our youth because far too often, and statistics will demonstrate it very clearly, you have individual spouses or children who are abused in the home, and they will continue or carry that abuse to their own homes when they grow up and they have their own families.

We have to use what resources we have available to ensure that there is some form of an educational process, and there are different ways that you can do it. One is in terms of the educational facilities that we currently have. The Pedlar report made inference to the need to have it as a part of the curriculum.

Madam Deputy Speaker, there are other community organizations, I know of a number of different organizations within my own riding that if they experience, or if there was an educational package that could be made available to the different individuals or the different organizations, that we would be able to get the message out. We do not solely have to rely on government

advertising. You need to be a lot more aggressive in trying to accomplish what in fact the resolution is calling for itself.

I do not believe the government is really doing the things that can be done. That is why when the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) proposed the amendment, I was somewhat surprised on how low a priority the resolution was given. I can recall when the government tried to place blame on myself as a member for not allowing leave to have another resolution, the exact same resolution, debated. They felt it was important that that resolution be debated, and that resolution be passed and thought I was doing an injustice to the individuals who care and want to do something about domestic violence.

Well, we have seen a government, as opposed to just the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), bring forward a resolution and the government has chosen to put it at the end. In fact this is the first time it has been called now for how long?—and that is more so as a request.

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

The government talked about domestic violence. The government talks about trying to achieve that zero tolerance, but its actions, Mr. Acting Speaker, are far different from what they are talking about, and that is why we have some reservations. We do not question in terms of the sincerity of the resolution that was being proposed with the actual content of it. I believe that all members of the Chamber in fact support the resolution.

After all, and I will read because it has been a long time since we have heard the THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, what it is that the government and in fact all three political parties are trying to accomplish, and that is that the Legislative Assembly support the position adopted by the government of Manitoba in declaring Manitoba as a domestic violence free zone where partner abuse is viewed as a criminal offence and in adopting a tough stance against partner abuse.

Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, as I say, all three political parties support that. That is not being questioned. We all want to achieve what the resolution is saying, but there was one very important factor that was missing. That was put on at the end of the resolution in the form of an amendment, because it is one thing to talk about it

because when we talk about it, we all support it. It is another thing to take action on what it is that the government is doing.

That is why the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) moved that we regret that the government has chosen not to provide for the appropriate resources to ensure Manitoba is truly a domestic violence free zone. When we talk about resources, we are not just talking about a dollar. We are talking about programs that could be implemented virtually with no cost to it. There are a number of them. I have made reference to some of them.

That is why I think it will be very interesting to see how the government is going to vote and the New Democratic Party is going to vote on the amendment, because the amendment says a lot more than just words. It is calling upon the government to take action.

The resolution, including the amendment is seeking direction from the Legislative Chamber, not from the government of the day, not from an opposition backbencher or a government backbencher. So one would like to think that the individuals on the government side will vote with their conscience on this particular amendment as put forward from the Leader of the Liberal Party, because if the will of the Chamber was to support, it the government would be obligated by the Legislature to in fact allocate the proper resources. As I pointed out, the resources are just not financial. One of the biggest and most important aspects of achieving what it is that we all want to achieve inside this Chamber is the zero tolerance ultimately, Mr. Acting Speaker, and there is nothing wrong with aspiring to get zero tolerance. It is something that we should all strive for.

The single most important issue, in my opinion, and I would argue in all likelihood in most opinion, is the one of education. I do not believe that you can have too much education on the whole question of domestic violence. As I have earlier said, in terms of our educational institutions—when I refer to educational institutions I am referring to everything from the universities to our elementary, to our high schools, to college programs—that it is virtually unlimited in terms of if the government chose to take some policy initiatives, could get a message across. We have seen that there is a line to fight domestic abuse and we saw the results from that.

It is interesting, you know, the other day I was talking to a constituent and the constituent said it seems that domestic abuse has more than doubled over the last couple of years. Why is that? Mr. Acting Speaker, I think that what we are seeing is that more individuals are feeling easier at saying, yes, I have been abused, whether it has been my spouse or my parents. We are seeing that there are more people coming forward.

The other day inside the Chamber we were debating seniors abuse. Seniors abuse, as I had made mention, was one of the other issues that also need to be addressed. When we are dealing with domestic abuse, in the back of our minds at the very least the abuse that seniors are put into also have to be given the same sort of consideration.

When we talk about abuse we are talking more than just physical abuse. We are talking about mental abuse. We are talking about financial abuse. There are things that are out there that I believe that many of us would be very surprised to hear about.

* (1650)

I know I have had the opportunity to discuss this issue with individuals, in particular from Osborne House. One particular case that I had in my own constituency and the issue that came out of that particular constituent was one in terms of the police, that she felt the treatment from the police was most inappropriate. Mr. Acting Speaker, there were a number of recommendations that were brought forward that addressed this particular constituent's of mine concern regarding the police, regarding some other things that can be done.

We can recall reports that have said things such as having more lights in bus shelters. You can recall hearing things about educational awareness programs for our police, for our judicial system. To a certain degree, there are all aspects of our society that need to have some sort of educational package, educational conference of sorts that would allow them to become more in tune in terms of what is happening the real world.

In this particular case of my constituent, the individual had phoned 911. The police had come down, and it ended up that she was the one that was taken over to the Remand Centre. All throughout, I have had discussions not only with this particular individual but also with the City of Winnipeg police and some Osborne House officials, and it raised a

lot of concern when I found out that the husband, the one that was actually being charged, was not apprehended in any fashion. The mother was, in fact, apprehended.

The issue is still ongoing right now. One of the objectives is the child. The child was, in fact, left in the house with the father; and, as the mother had said to me, she was the one that called 911; she was the one that was being hit. I am not trying to say that this particular individual was an angel and that she had no right in being taken to the Remand Centre because other things did occur, but what was forgotten is what initially happened between the two and the child. The child was left there. There was no immediate follow-up, from the best of my knowledge, that was given.

So, when we talk about awareness of domestic violence and trying to achieve that zero tolerance, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have to think in terms of all aspects of today's society. I know in the very first WHEREAS, where it says, "endorsed the philosophy that abuse is a crime," is something that I spent some time talking about prior to the amendment being amended. One of the most important things that we want to try to get in the mind-set of the public as a whole is that it is time that individuals from society recognize domestic abuse, recognize elderly abuse as a crime.

All we need really to look at is how effective governments in the past have been able to get messages out to the public. I will refer to another issue like the drinking and driving. At one time, Mr. Acting Speaker, drinking and driving was something that individuals or the public at large did not think of as being as wrong as it is today. Now you see in our high schools, you see in our bars where they have DDs, where they have Safe Grads, where the mind-set has changed when it comes to drinking and driving.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we need to have the mind-set of society changed on domestic violence. We need all individuals in society to believe that domestic violence is a crime and it is a very serious crime. Domestic violence is not just a woman's issue. I know when the Attorney General appointed his board which addressed domestic violence, one of the concerns that we had was that all of the members on the board were in fact women.

Domestic violence is not a gender issue. It has an impact on all of us. Men have a role to play. We

are missing out on a very important aspect of domestic violence by trying not to say that it is a men and women's issue. I say to the Attorney General that is something that he should reconsider in the appointments or in the discussions whenever domestic violence comes up, that you have to hear the stories from all sides. We have to get a better understanding why domestic violence is where it is at today and why this crime has been allowed to continue in the fashion in which it has over the last number of years, when in fact if the government's will was to see changes occur, that they have the ability to implement those changes.

I go to the education. Mr. Acting Speaker, I have attended vigils, as no doubt most members of this Chamber have attended vigils. When we start hitting the double digits on vigils, it causes a great deal of concern. Whenever there is one vigil, because every time we have a vigil that indicates that some individual has suffered domestic violence to such a degree—

(Mrs. Louise Dacquay, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

* (1700)

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 5 p.m., and time for private members' hour, when this matter is next before the House, the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) will have 15 minutes remaining.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

ORDERS FOR RETURN, ADDRESSES FOR PAPERS REFERRED FOR DEBATE

Madam Deputy Speaker: Orders for Return, Addresses for Papers Referred for Debate, standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik).

An Honourable Member: Stand.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Stand. Is there leave to permit the Orders for Return to remain standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Labour?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Leave. Leave has been granted.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): I would like to speak on the Orders for Return.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I regret a great deal having to speak on this issue today. This is an issue

that should have been dealt with two years ago. The issue that we are discussing here is the issue of Bill 91, so-called antisniff legislation. The reason that we on this side have been forced to use the Orders for Return process is because the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has refused for a year and a half to proclaim this legislation after his government voted for the legislation in this House.

I would like to briefly refresh the members' memory on what transpired with Bill 91. Bill 91 was an outgrowth of a real grassroots community process. For years we have known about the problems associated with individuals, and in many cases young people having access to substances that they could sniff, hence the idea of antisniff legislation.

In 1979, there was an antisniff coalition established that worked very hard in the community and in the inner city community in particular, and throughout the rest of the cities and towns and rural areas of our province ensuring that the people of Manitoba understood the problems and the issues concerned with the problem of sniffing.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Bill 91 came about as a private members' resolution first brought forward to the House by the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis). This bill was as a direct result of years of discussion and work within the community and by members of the community, by residents, by professionals in the health care community, the school community, the social services community, all of whom realized this problem was becoming an enormous problem not only for the victims of sniffing and their families, but for society as a whole. It was literally becoming a scourge.

The member for St. Johns introduced for first reading Bill 91 on December 15, 1989. On February 1, 1990, it was introduced for second reading. On February 6, 1990, in response to a question from the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), the Justice minister (Mr. McCrae) stated: "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."

That, Madam Deputy Speaker, is not a negative response to this bill. It is a very positive response to this bill, and we on this side of the House appreciated the response of the Minister of Justice at that time to this important piece of legislation. He was not, at that time, viewing this private member's

bill as a partisan political piece of legislation. He was legitimately seeing the need for something like this and appreciating the support that was given.

On March 1, in his speech, the Justice minister said 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 all members of this House are." Another positive comment.

On March 8 and 13, 1990, the committee for Bill 91 met. There were five presentations. All were supportive with the exception of the Manitoba Medical Association. On March 13 when the committee went clause by clause, all the proposed amendments were approved. Upon adoption of the bill as amended, the Justice minister stated that he moved those motions so that the Department of Health could 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 commitments to the honourable member for St. Johns and to 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. March 15, third and final reading.

One would suggest that on the basis of that support by all honourable members of the House whether they are government or opposition that Bill 91 would then be proclaimed, put into law and regulations would be drafted so that this bill could, in fact, have some positive impact on this serious problem, a problem which all members of this House agreed was a serious problem. All members of the House passed the bill. All members of the House supported the bill in its form as passed by the House.

On December 11, a good many months after the passage of Bill 91, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) was asked in Question Period about the proclamation of that bill and he responded in the affirmative. He stated that he would proclaim the bill between the 2nd and 31st of January, 1991. Madam Deputy Speaker, the Minister of Health—not that I might add parenthetically for the first time in this House, nor unfortunately for the people of Manitoba for the last time in this House—did not live up to the spirit or the intent of his statements.

In February 1991, the month after the minister had stated the bill would be proclaimed, the staff from the Minister of Health indicate that further study is

required and no date for proclamation has been set. On May 1, 1991, four months after the Minister of Health stated the bill would be proclaimed, he stated then that amendments may now be necessary to deal with technical problems with enforcement.

Between May 1, 1991, and today, the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) and other members of this House have asked the Minister of Health repeatedly for an update on the quote, "technical problems" relating to the proclamation of Bill 91.

As is the case in virtually all responses to legitimate questions put by members of the House to the Minister of Health, he refused to give an appropriate answer, continuing to state that there were technical problems with the enforcement, and it would appear, perhaps reconsidering his support for the bill that he voted for—

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Get it right. I was recuperating from an accident.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. The government members present at the time voted for the passage of Bill 91. The Minister of Health followed up that passage by stating the bill would be proclaimed. Clearly, if the Minister of Health and his cabinet and caucus colleagues were doing their job, if there had been major technical problems with this bill, they would not have passed it.

The idea that this Minister of Health and his government can sit here since February 1, 1991, and not proclaim the bill, stating technical difficulties, is absurd, and it can only lead to one inescapable and inexplicable conclusion, that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), the Minister of Education (Mrs. Vodrey), the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), all other members of the front bench and their caucus colleagues do not want the bill proclaimed.

An Honourable Member: I am glad you just stayed to the front bench, and did not include the second bench. You know that back here you got friends.

Ms. Barrett: I would certainly hope that, not having access to either the cabinet meeting or the caucus—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

* (1710)

Point of Order

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I think this a time for the honourable member to debate the matter before the House and not to drive wedges between the first and second rows in this House.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) does not have a point of order. It is a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Ms. Barrett: Madam Deputy Speaker, I find it very interesting that the members of the front bench and the members of the back bench or the upper benches, as they choose to refer to themselves, find this amusing.

This is an enormously important and complex issue we are dealing with here. Actually, it is not a complex issue, it is a very simple issue. It is the discussion about why the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard), with the implicit or explicit approval of his cabinet and caucus colleagues, has chosen not to proclaim this bill.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government talks time and time again about difficult choices and how difficult it is to make difficult choices in these tough economic times. I am just suggesting that they are once again making a choice. The choice that this government is making is a choice to hide behind technical difficulties, to hide behind the fact that their staff have not had a chance or have not been able to iron out the technical difficulties.

That is the action of a government that has—[interjection] I would like to conclude my remarks—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Jack Penner (Emerson): I believe that the member standing and speaking on the opposition side just made a technical error in indicating that the technical difficulties that this province was dealing with were in technical nature only. They are not.

The farm community in our province will indicate to you clearly and indicate to the member opposite that the economic difficulty that they are facing is real and is not of a technical nature.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Emerson does not have a point of order.

* * *

Ms. Barrett: Madam Deputy Speaker, if the member had paid attention, the member would have known that the technical difficulties I was referring to were the technical difficulties that the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) keeps hiding behind, dealing with the proclamation of Bill 91.

There is no one on this side of the House that does not know full well that the problems facing Manitobans, whether they are from the rural areas, the cities, the towns, the communities or even the northern part of our province, are having with the economic situation and the total lack of any support on the part of this government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I hope that this government will act as expeditiously on Bill 91 as it did when it removed muscle massage from grocery store shelves and put it where they belonged, on drug store shelves. I would hope that the government will act as expeditiously on the private member's bill that is coming forward from the member for Point Douglas (Mr. Hickes) dealing with cooking wine.

However, I am not convinced, based on the actions or inactions of this Minister of Health and his cabinet and caucus colleagues in their cowardly inaction in dealing with the proclamation of Bill 91, and the people of Manitoba will—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. McCrae: Madam Deputy Speaker, a minute ago the honourable member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) was trying to drive wedges between the first and second benches on this side of the House, and now she is so desperate in her comments this afternoon to use language which, I believe if you were to check, would be found to be if not unparliamentary then language that would be of real concern to anyone dedicated to the highest parliamentary traditions which we all try to uphold in this House.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The honourable Minister of Justice does not have a point of order. The terminology used is not listed in Beauchesne as an unparliamentary word.

However, I would caution all honourable members to choose their words carefully.

* * *

Ms. Barrett: Madam Deputy Speaker, if, as the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) states, I appear desperate, I am desperate on behalf of the people of Manitoba who require this bill to be proclaimed.

How many more are going to have to suffer lifelong disabilities because of this government's unwillingness to proclaim an act that it supported in this House? That is not the action of a committed, caring, compassionate government. That is the action of a government that does not care for the people of Manitoba, and the actions of a Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) hiding behind his technical difficulties is not to be—

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

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 13—Selkirk Psychiatric School of Nursing

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos),

WHEREAS the Psychiatric School of Nursing has been situated in the Town of Selkirk for approximately seventy years; and

WHEREAS the school has a Canada wide reputation of excellence; and

WHEREAS the school has contributed not only human resources but also financial resources to the community; and

WHEREAS the Council of the Town of Selkirk was made aware of the decision to close the school, through the news media; and

WHEREAS the Council was not consulted by the provincial government on this proposed closing; and

WHEREAS the Town of Selkirk has always expressed a caring and considerate attitude to the mental health and wellness of the patients in the Selkirk Mental Centre; and

WHEREAS the quality of care would not be available without the high calibre of trained nurses acquired from the school; and

WHEREAS the Town of Selkirk is unanimously opposed to this unfair cut.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba call upon the Minister of Health to consider cancelling the proposed closure of the Psychiatric School of Nursing in Selkirk.

Motion presented.

Mr. Dewar: Madam Deputy Speaker, I note with interest that the mayor of Selkirk and the deputy mayor of Selkirk and councillor were here earlier, but unfortunately they left.

Well, it would have been interesting for the mayor and council, it would have been important for the mayor—

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Dewar: It would have been interesting for them to witness the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) defend this thing, this very, very ridiculous closure in our community, but unfortunately they had to leave, I suppose. Anyway, Madam Deputy Speaker, this summer will be a very dark period in the history of Selkirk.

In July of this year, a 71-year-old institution, the Selkirk School of Psychiatric Nursing, will close. Not only that, it is compounded, of course, this summer; again, it is a very bleak summer. It is compounded with the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), another ill-conceived act on his behalf when he decided to close the Human Resource Opportunity Centre there as well. So I should have left this as an open-ended resolution. I could have dealt with both of these issues at this very moment.

The Selkirk School of Nursing, of course, will close this July, the last year of the 71-year-old institution in the community. It is the community's only postsecondary educational institution. Its closure attacks the very soul of the community. I know that many, many of our residents in Selkirk have attended the school. I have a relative of mine who attended the school, and graduated, became a psychiatric nurse, worked in the profession and still continues to work in that profession.

It will be a blow to the local economy as well, of course, taking approximately a million dollars out of the local economy. It will be even a greater blow to the psychiatric nursing profession in the province as a whole. The closure will leave Brandon as the only psychiatric nursing hospital left in the province. It meant the elimination of 13 teaching jobs, three management positions and one and a half support

staff positions in Selkirk. These positions plus the contributions of the 60 students who attend the program generate over \$1 million annually into the local Selkirk economy. Unfortunately, the economy is now beginning to see the results of this and other ill-conceived government programs. At least 12 different businesses have closed.

* (1720)

That was the concern that I raised when this issue first came forward last year, that it will have a negative impact upon the business community in our community, and you are seeing that now. At least, as I have stated, 12 different businesses have closed, and the future for the others seems shaky at best.

We in Selkirk feel betrayed by this minister, by this government. They have isolated, by the closure in Selkirk, the major population base in this province. Winnipeg, well known, contains 65 percent of the province's population. The school in Selkirk received 500 inquiries and 100 applicants every year. Five hundred individuals in Manitoba made inquiries into the program at Selkirk. It had incredible interest, incredible recognition in this community, and 100 applicants each year for a mere 30 positions, 30 openings. The Selkirk school was noted for its academic excellence. Students chose Selkirk because of academic excellence, the program and teaching staff.

I remember I was at a town council meeting, and there was an individual there. He was in his first year, and now he will be in his second year, he will graduate this year. He told the council, he told everyone at the meeting, when he decided to become a psychiatric nurse he checked out Brandon and he checked out Selkirk and what he did was that he decided upon Selkirk.

He felt that would be a better program. It was an excellent academic program, an excellent teaching facility. The young man from Brandon decided to attend Selkirk, because he felt it was a better school. He felt that school was better, and that individual was from Brandon himself, but he decided to come to Selkirk because of the teaching quality of that facility.

Another woman contacted me during the debate over the closure, and she emotionally explained what the closure would mean to her. She is 38 years old, she is married, she has children, and she felt that now in this stage of her life she wanted to

do something for herself. She had raised her family, she had provided a home life, now she wanted to do something that was strictly for herself. She looked at different professions, she decided upon the psychiatric nursing profession.

She went back to school to upgrade her education. She took high school, university classes in preparation for the formal training she had hoped to receive at the Selkirk School of Psychiatric Nursing.

An Honourable Member: Now she cannot.

Mr. Dewar: Now she cannot, that is right. She looked around at different schools. She compared the different schools as the individual before had done. She checked schools inside the province, she checked schools outside of the province, and when she made her decision she decided to go to the Selkirk school and she applied.

Just after she had written her final examination, she found that the school would be closing. She had spent all this time, money and effort upgrading her academic skills, she spent time away from her family. Now she found out that the school was closed. It struck her very hard.

She did not understand why the government would close it. All these years of upgrading, all this money she found now was wasted. She found it was too late at the time to apply to Brandon, because there was a cutoff date. Apparently Brandon is restricting its enrollment. Its normal intake would be 50 students, and they are reducing apparently to 25.

Instead of amalgamating the two schools, they simply reduced the number of openings for psychiatric nursing in this province. This is one of the many human tragedies of this particular closure.

At Bill 5, there was an individual who came to present to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) on that particular bill.

She says: I am here to address the closing of the Selkirk school of mental health. I am one of the poor souls who had hoped to have entered that school this fall. I have been working at this for the past three years. The abrupt and sudden closure of the school has affected myself very emotionally and very seriously in that it was as though a rug was pulled from beneath my feet. I think closing the school in Selkirk is a mistake for a great deal of Manitobans, a large population of them living within the Winnipeg area, especially the would-be

students like myself who cannot relocate to Brandon or other facilities.

When I was called for an interview in Selkirk, one of the interviewers told me that the average student age is 28 and that this career choice is usually a second career choice which means that the would-be students are probably settled and have commitments within the Winnipeg area and cannot relocate—as is her particular case. If this decision, to close the school, was made earlier in the year, the timeliness has locked me out of a lot of other possible opportunities.

She cannot get into RN programs because it is past their closing date and the same thing with different university programs as well.

So it had a very human cost when the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) decided to close this school. It has financial cost implications to Selkirk. It has a human cost to the individuals who are in the program or wishing to continue to get in the program. It has a financial cost to the community where, as I stated before, at least a million dollars have been taken out. Thirteen teachers, 60-odd students will not be there. They will not be out in the community. They will not be spending money. They will not be economically contributing to the community at all.

What did the psychiatric nursing profession feel about this? I quote from Miss Annette Osted, the Executive Director of the psychiatric nursing association of Manitoba, and she said again in a presentation on Bill 5: In April 1991, there was a consolidation of two schools of psychiatric nursing through the closure of the school at Selkirk and a decrease by almost half of the students involved in psychiatric nursing education in Manitoba.

This action, taken prior to the development of any transition plan, will seriously affect a number of graduates from the remaining psychiatric nursing education program in 1993 and 1994. The decrease in intake from 70 to 45 students means that the number of graduates will be about 30 instead of the usual 50 or more.

The decrease of 40 percent will affect the system just when mental health reform should be in the process of implementation, just as in the traditional mental health system, and also the personal care homes and general hospitals, psychiatric nurses are found in many different places. They work in the Alcoholism Foundation of Manitoba, the Agassiz Youth Centre, at different hospitals, correctional

institutions in the province, Deer Lodge Centre, the Eden Mental Health Centre, the Grace General Hospital, Headingley, the Health Sciences Centre, Knowles Centre, the Manitoba Adolescent Treatment Centre, the Manitoba Youth Centre, Middlechurch Home, Mount Carmel Clinic, Misericordia Hospital and so on.

It shows a diversity of this profession and the very important role they play in the mental health care. Of course, if this government does not want to listen, as they have not, maybe they wish to listen to other groups.

The Chamber of Commerce says: The Selkirk and District Chamber of Commerce wishes to express its concern over your recent decision to cancel the psychiatric nursing education and program in Selkirk. It is for this reason that the chamber has endorsed the resolution passed by the town, urging your department to reverse this decision. I am enclosing a copy of the resolution and hope this will assist you in reconsidering.

The psychiatric nursing program is a valuable component of our community. The Town Council passed a resolution:

WHEREAS the Psychiatric School of Nursing has been situated in the town of Selkirk for approximately 70 years;

WHEREAS the Psychiatric School of Nursing in the town of Selkirk has a Canada-wide reputation of excellence;

WHEREAS the school has contributed not only human resources, but also financial resources to the community;

WHEREAS the council of the Town of Selkirk has been made aware of the decision to close the Psychiatric School of Nursing through the news media;

Whereas the council of the Town of Selkirk was not consulted by the provincial government on this proposed closing of the Psychiatric School of Nursing;

WHEREAS the citizens of the Town of Selkirk have always expressed a caring and considerate attitude to the mental health and wellness of the patients in the Selkirk Mental Health Centre;

WHEREAS the quality of care would not be available without the high calibre of trained nurses acquired from the School of Nursing.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Council of the Town of Selkirk implore the Premier of the province to reconsider the decision to close the Psychiatric School of Nursing in the Town of Selkirk.

* (1730)

This was carried and signed by the mayor of Selkirk. The resolution, of course, stresses the importance of the nursing profession, not only to the town, but the importance of the psychiatric nursing profession in regard to mental health care throughout the province. The government's decision to close the school is a blow to the local economy and even a greater blow to the psychiatric nursing profession throughout the whole province.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I leave this resolution and the future of the psychiatric nursing in the hands of my colleagues, knowing that they will support this resolution and knowing that, by their support of this resolution, they will stop the closure of this very important institution in Selkirk. Thank you.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Madam Deputy Speaker, I wish to address a few comments to this resolution by the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar), and I intend to propose an amendment at the end of my remarks.

Madam Deputy Speaker, perchance a little history into the educational programs for psychiatric nursing might be appropriate, since my honourable friend is concerned about the consolidation of the two schools of nursing that was announced in last year's budget.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government has embarked upon probably the most progressive and most aggressive reform of the mental health system that has ever been contemplated by probably any provincial jurisdiction in Canada. I would like to be able to take sole ownership of the concept, the process, the idea, the vision for a reformed mental health system, operating more substantially in the communities across the length and breadth of this province, and with significantly less emphasis on the institutional care for mental health services, that our system in Manitoba, over a number of years, has become highly institutionalized and minimally community-based.

I would like to take ownership for originality in that, but I cannot. For 20 years, governments in Manitoba have been presented with basically the same kind of reports that I inherited in 1988 when I

came to the ministry and the responsibility for the ministry of Health. But for 20 years, successive governments in this province have never embarked upon taking the advice of those very well-researched, well-written investigational papers, reports, on the reform required for the mental health system in the province of Manitoba.

They have not because it requires a massive change from an institutional-based setting for care to a community-based one. That means retraining of staff. That means changes in where we deliver mental health services, changes which in the past without understanding of the process, probably rightfully so, would have been resisted by the institutional side of mental health.

We have taken the issue very seriously, Madam Deputy Speaker. Over the three years of preparation for launch of mental health reform, we have tried to bring what were two disparate groups together, if I can be so direct as to describe them, that being those proponents of institutional care versus those proponents of community care. I have to say that both of them had rather rigid positions four years ago, and there was not a great deal of common ground. We have worked co-operatively. We have facilitated discussion between those two groups.

Now they are working in concert to make mental health reform in Manitoba a reality, because it is the right thing to do for the people requiring mental health services in the province of Manitoba. It is no longer acceptable to concentrate our services predominantly in the institutional side of our budget. It is no longer appropriate that we sit on reports for 20 years, as has been the case, and not expedite and facilitate and provide a vision for change in the province of Manitoba as my colleagues have given me the authority to do. So that is why the time is right, the process is right and the vision for the future of a reformed mental health system is right.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, what does that involve? That involves care professionals who can provide care in a substantially enhanced and greater amount in community settings. Who should do that? Well, there are a number of trained professionals that can undertake that sort of service provision in the community.

From the onset, I have enjoyed a good working relationship with the registered psychiatric nurses of Manitoba through their association. They have

always had their eye on the reform of mental health in Manitoba, the reform of the system. They are a forward thinking professional association, and when challenged to respond to a reformed mental health system they have taken up the challenge.

Here is the challenge which is so important as a key component of our consolidation of the psychiatric schools of nursing, Selkirk to Brandon. We need professional caregivers in the community, and who might those be? Well, I believe the registered psychiatric nurses of Manitoba believe that they can be a very important professional component of that care delivery in communities across the length and breadth of this province.

They believe they can do it not only with the current two-year diploma program in psychiatric nursing, but they believe they can contribute significant expertise through a baccalaureate program in psychiatric nursing, a degree program which has a community emphasis on care delivery, something which will be absolutely unique in Canada.

Where is the seed for that sort of an educational program? Where does it lie? It lies in Brandon University. So this consolidation of schools of psychiatric nursing is not the narrow vindictive closure my honourable friend the member for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) would like to portray. It is a move with vision for the future, vision that is shared by the psychiatric nursing association of Manitoba.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I will openly admit that when we made this budgetary announcement, the Psychiatric Nurses Association of Manitoba did not express joy and thanks. I openly admit that. But they recognized that we had a goal for the future and they were part of that goal. They have worked co-operatively with us in government over the last year, and that is why I was able to present the first \$50,000 cheque with my colleague the Justice minister (Mr. McCrae) to the registered psychiatric nurses in Portage la Prairie, on Friday, two weeks ago, just before we broke for our midterm break.

What was that first cheque of \$433,000 designed to do? To commence the development of an enhanced educational program in diploma nursing of psychiatric care and the baccalaureate program of psychiatric nursing. That is progressive thinking by that association.

Now I want to contrast that, Madam Deputy Speaker, with the previous history of psychiatric

nursing in Manitoba à la NDP under Howard Pawley—something that my honourable friend, the member for Selkirk and all his caucus colleagues will be strangely mute about. At one time, and it was only a very few years ago, there were not one, not two, but, in fact, there were three schools of psychiatric nursing in Manitoba.

* (1740)

Madam Deputy Speaker, do you know where the third school, which does not exist today, was located? It was located in Portage la Prairie. It was attached to the Portage school. What was it doing? Was it training psychiatric nursing in the disciplines of mental retardation? No? Yes, it was. It was unique in that regard because the school of Selkirk, the school of Brandon had their training emphasis on mental illness. Why did the NDP under Howard Pawley without consultation, without any discussion, without any vision for the future, unilaterally close that school in Portage la Prairie? To this day, I am mystified, baffled and unable to answer that question.

It might have been a pure and vindictive closure by the NDP under Howard Pawley, but I would be only speculating in making that kind of a conclusion, because no one in the Howard Pawley government ever explained that unilateral, behind-closed-doors, midnight skulking decision by the NDP.

I want to contrast that with the informed process that we went through, albeit not without dislocation in the town of Selkirk, not without dislocation at the Selkirk Mental Health Centre. I recognize the difficulties it caused in that community and that mental health institution. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, we have a vision for the future. Building upon the strengths of Brandon University to build a program of excellence in the province of Manitoba, supported by who of all people? Unanimously, wholeheartedly supported by the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), that veteran of NDP politics.

Where is the member for Brandon East when we need him? He is in that bunker again, because he has to allow this newcomer to the New Democratic Party to kick up a little fuss about the school closing in Selkirk, which I recognize is a difficulty for the town of Selkirk, but he will not have the support of members in the New Democratic Party when this resolution comes to a vote, because the member for Brandon East has told the rest of the New

Democratic caucus, hey folks, we did it wrong when we closed the school of nursing in Portage la Prairie. We were dead wrong that time.

This government is right. It has a vision for the future and we should support this action by this government. Now that is progressive government, that is thinking, that is a vision for the future, Madam Deputy Speaker, something that has been woefully lacking in the history of NDP government under Howard Pawley.

So it is with regret that I propose, seconded by my honourable friend the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey),

THAT the resolution be amended by deleting all words after the first "WHEREAS" and replacing them with:

the Howard Pawley government closed the School of Psychiatric Nursing in Portage la Prairie; and

WHEREAS this closure by the NDP was done without consultation and no plan of action for the future of the RPN in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the Government of Manitoba recognizes the importance of the RPN as a caregiver; and

WHEREAS the Government of Manitoba believes the RPN will play an enhanced role in the reformed, community-based mental health system; and

WHEREAS the consolidation of the Psychiatric School of Nursing in Selkirk with the school in Brandon will build on the substantial strengths of the training program for psychiatric nursing in Manitoba; and

WHEREAS the consolidation to Brandon presents a unique opportunity to develop a baccalaureate program in psychiatric nursing in affiliation with the Brandon University; and

WHEREAS the Government of Manitoba has recognized this opportunity by providing substantial support from the Health Services Development Fund to RPNAM for the development of said education programs; and

WHEREAS this opportunity will place Manitoba again as a national leader in the training of psychiatric nurses.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that this House do congratulate the Registered Psychiatric Nurses Association of Manitoba for their foresight in

developing reform-minded education and training programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this House do congratulate the City of Brandon and Brandon University for their enlightened participation in this consolidation process; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this House do congratulate the Government of Manitoba for demonstrating foresight and vision in working toward education programs in psychiatric nursing which will be national leaders in their excellence.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Motion presented.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Due to the length of the amendment, I will be taking the amendment under advisement and reviewing it in more detail, and we will proceed to debate the main motion.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Madam Deputy Speaker, it is a privilege to say a few words on this resolution and the amendment on the resolution. It has been moved by the government to close the psychiatric school in Selkirk. It is being rationalized as a justification for improving mental health education in this province. How can we improve things by closing institutions and by laying off people? Is that the way to improve our mental health? We are adding tremendous pressure on those people who are laid off work. They themselves will be the victim of mental health.

In our society we have so many problems because of our, in my own opinion, preoccupation with material things of the world. It is worry and stress that is dragging us down, because we have forgotten the basic roots of our own spirituality. I believe that all our troubles, in terms of mental health problems, depression, are caused by the trouble that we encounter in our workaday world because of our focus and emphasis on the material things of the world that do not last after all. We are so worried about income, about status and about other things that we become so preoccupied with things, and we lose our mental stability.

Psychiatry is a body of knowledge that is very difficult to master, because it digs deep into the spiritual and mental and emotional roots of the human being. Of all the branches of nursing, psychiatric nursing is the most difficult branch of nursing because you have to deal with patients who are, by definition in our conventional society, outside of the normal realm of behaviour.

It is so easy to be infected by the interactional effect of the kind of people that we deal with. As we often say, we become like those people whom we interact with. Pretty soon some of the psychiatric nurses themselves are behaving in a rather curious way because of the effect of their interaction with their patients. It may be subconscious, it may not be noticed, but they themselves are affected in their own forms of behaviour. Even among experts, the psychiatrists themselves, it has been said that so many psychiatrists are so worried this day about each other that they begin seeing each other so that they can treat each other in a psychiatric way.

It is psychiatry that can tell us what makes us people tick before we blow up.

* (1750)

An Honourable Member: That is a questionable assumption.

Mr. Santos: Why do you think the psychiatrists are called shrinks? [interjection] Well, somebody said that we call them shrinks because they shrink your wallet and your bank account. [interjection] Worrying, that is not anything to a person's resolution of any problem.

An Honourable Member: What about stress?

Mr. Santos: Stress, that is not anything. The basic root cause of this is our lack of self-confidence, a lack of our inner capacity to deal with the problems that we encounter in our everyday life. This lack of confidence is because of our inability to believe in a power greater than ourselves. Although we can be master of our own destiny and captain of our soul, there are certain areas of human life by which we are utterly helpless, in which case we have to ask something—some help from a power which is greater than ourselves.

Our inability to do that would lead us and drive us to depression, and all kinds of mental imbalance, and all kinds of problems.

An Honourable Member: . . . on the psychiatrist's couch. That is where you shrink our wallets.

Mr. Santos: That is right. I think sometimes it may give us some inspiration to understand some of the belief system in other cultures. There are cultures other than the Western, Christian, Judeo-Christian tradition that we have grown up with, that we can probably derive some kind of lesson in dealing with life.

For example, one of the Eastern belief systems, I would call it a system of morality; maybe you can call it a system of religious belief. [interjection] No, this is about philosophical attitudes toward life. [interjection] Yes, the kind of moral and spiritual values that we should cultivate within ourselves.

For example, I encountered some literature in some Oriental kind of religious system like Taoism in China. This is a religious belief founded by a philosopher and a thinker and a venerable wise man named Lao-tze. You know what was the basic root of his teaching? I was trying to compare it in our mind with our own belief system, with our own values. For example, he said: To those who are good to me, I am good; to those who are not good to me, I am also good. Therefore, all men will tend to be good. To those who are sincere to me, I am sincere; to those who are not sincere to me, I am also sincere. Therefore, all men will tend to be sincere. To those who are truthful to me, I shall be truthful; to those who are not truthful to me, I shall also be truthful. So that in the long run, all men will be truthful.

These are the kind of lasting beliefs and lasting values that improve human relationships. These are the kinds of ideas that, if we can understand their meaning, last more than a lifetime.

An Honourable Member: Madam Deputy Speaker, what does this have to do with the resolution that we have before us?

Mr. Santos: This deals with mental stability, Madam Deputy Speaker. If you have basic moral beliefs and values in your life then you can face all kinds of problems without being unbalanced emotionally, without running to the psychiatrist's couch, because you have that basic belief in yourself and in a power greater than yourself.

If only people believed the other's word, if only people kept their promises to one another, if only people paid their own debts and lived up to their obligations, if all people performed their duties and their responsibilities in an honourable way, then there is no need to go to a psychiatric couch. There is no need to go to any shrink. There is no need to consult any psychiatrist. [interjection] Let every word that drops out of our lips proclaim the uprightness of our hearts and the cleanliness of our intentions. If we can go—[interjection]

The beliefs that I have imparted to you, the Oriental beliefs I have imparted to you are no

different from the golden rule that we have known all along. It is the same thing that we have said, and we believe to live it and abide by it.

The golden rule says: Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you. If we follow that basic rule, even in the observance of the rules of this Legislative Assembly, there will be no need to invoke any kind of reprimand to any members, because the rules are designed so that our behaviour will be canalized and guided accordingly, according to the rules. Rules are designed so that human relationships should be stable, so that human trust will be mutual, so that reciprocity will be established, so that our institutions will last longer.

Psychiatry, however, is a very dangerous profession. It is a risky profession. You have heard recently about a psychiatrist who is now in trouble professionally. She is a well-known psychiatrist in alcoholism, but she has been accused of taking an unusual therapeutic measure that regressed her

client, by the name of Paul Lozano, to the age of a six-year old child, who has been dependent on her, and calling her "mom."

In the end, this client committed suicide by imbibing too much cocaine. Now she is under investigation. She has been cleared of the allegation of sexual orgies and fantasy with a client, but she has not been cleared about the inappropriate use of therapeutic practices to the detriment of the client.

Psychiatry is a very dangerous profession. You cannot fiddle around with the essential spiritual and emotional nature of human beings.

Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order, please. The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Wednesday, April 15, 1992

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