



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

39-40 Elizabeth II

*Published under the
authority of
The Honourable Denis C. Rocan
Speaker*



VOL. XLI No. 90 - 10 a.m., FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 1992



MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

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

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, June 19, 1992

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Lynn Fehr, Jake Fehr, Esther Cowlthorp and others, requesting the government consider reviewing the funding of the Brandon General Hospital to avoid layoffs and cutbacks to vital services.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Jamie McColl, Klaus Tibelius, Ruth Fletcher and others requesting the government consider restoring the former full funding of \$700,000 to fight Dutch elm disease.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans). 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:

The Brandon General Hospital is the major health care institution for southwestern Manitoba; and

The citizens of Brandon and southwestern Manitoba are deeply concerned and disturbed about the downsizing of the hospital and view it as a threat to the quality of health care in the region; and

The Manitoba government has chosen not to review the current budget to ensure that cutbacks to vital services do not occur; and

The administration of the hospital has been forced to take drastic measures including the elimination of the Palliative Care Unit and gynecological wards, along with the layoff of over 30 staff, mainly licensed practical nurses, to cope with a funding shortfall of over \$1.3 million; and

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba consider reviewing the funding of the Brandon General Hospital.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has adopted certain resolutions, directs me to report the same and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (1005)

Mrs. Louise Dacquay (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments): I beg to present the Fourth Report of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): To the honourable the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba:

Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its Fourth Report.

Your committee met on Thursday, June 18, 1992, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 47—The Petty Trespasses Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'intrusion

Mr. David Kovnats - Baker, Zivot & Company

Bill 74—The Law Society Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société du Barreau

Mr. Gordon Gillespie - Private Citizen

Bill 88—The Homesteads, Marital Property Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur la propriété familiale, modifiant la Loi sur les biens matrimoniaux et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois

Mr. Jack King - Private Citizen

Bill 89—The Family Maintenance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'obligation alimentaire

Mr. Gordon Gillespie - Private Citizen

Your Committee has considered:

Bill 72—The Law Reform (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act; Loi sur la réforme du droit (modifications diverses)

Bill 74—The Law Society Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société du Barreau

Bill 88—The Homesteads, Marital Property Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur la propriété familiale, modifiant la Loi sur les biens matrimoniaux et apportant des modifications corrélatives à d'autres lois

Bill 89—The Family Maintenance Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'obligation alimentaire

and has agreed to report the same without amendment.

Your committee has also considered **Bill 47—The Petty Trespasses Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'intrusion**, and has agreed to report the same with the following amendments:

MOTION:

THAT the proposed subsection 1(5), as set out in Section 2 of the bill, be amended by striking out "or articles" and substituting "articles or a resolution".

MOTION:

THAT the proposed subsection 1(5), as set out in Section 2 of the bill, be amended by striking out everything after "loitering" and substituting the following:

, nuisances, and other disruptive behaviour on the lands or premises, means such an official or officials acting in accordance with those by-laws or articles or resolution.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

I move, seconded the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the 1992-93 Revenue Estimates, Department of Finance.

Introduction of Guests

Mr. Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, may I direct the attention of honourable members to the gallery, where we have with us this morning, from the Southwood Elementary School, thirty Grades 7 and 8 students. They are under the direction of Jake Driedger. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard).

Also this morning, from the Kirkness Adult Education Centre, we have 17 adults under the direction of Lin Stevens. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos).

Also seated in the gallery, from Winnipeg School Division No. 1, we have four adult classes of the English as a Second Language Program. They are under the direction of Mary-Jean Davis.

Also this morning, we have some of the members of the Student Parliament at the University of Manitoba, and they are under the direction of Mr. Scott Murray. These students are the guests of the Minister of Education and Training (Mrs. Vodrey).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

**Labour Adjustment Strategy
Federal-Provincial Co-ordination**

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Premier.

Mr. Speaker, over the last three years, there has been absolutely no labour market adjustment training for people affected by the free trade agreement negotiated with the United States. At present, in spite of the decline in support from the federal government to labour market adjustment training in the province of Manitoba, there are two sets of negotiations going on that the province is involved in.

One is the trade negotiations with Canada, U.S.A. and Mexico, where the provincial government has put as one of their six conditions that the federal government provide labour market adjustment strategies to the provinces and to the people of the country. The other set of negotiations taking place is the Constitution, where this province and many other provinces have agreed to a rolling draft devolving labour market training to the provinces.

I would like to ask the Premier whether there is a co-ordinated strategy in his government dealing with the human elements of the proposals: One, to devolve power to the provinces; and the other one calling on the federal government to have a federal strategy for the human beings affected by the trade?
* (1010)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I might say that our government has always insisted that in terms of the funding and support for labour market adjustment and human resources training strategy, we rely upon Ottawa to continue to provide major funding for that, not only through the vehicle of EPF payments to the provinces, but over and above that, for special additional funding, where such adjustment is as a result of something such as a trade agreement which is an international agreement signed by the government of Canada on behalf of all of the provinces.

So we certainly have made that point over and over again. I might say as well, though, that we have not simply relied on federal action. We have initiated a number of programs that have, I think, been received very, very positively. As a matter of fact, I know that the Workforce 2000 program has been involved in the training and upgrading of training of thousands and thousands of Manitobans in the work force at very, very reasonable cost, because it has been done on an industry basis and it has been done, targeted to ensure that Manitobans are trained for positions that exist and for which they can be qualified by additional training.

We have in fact, I believe, received many, many letters. I was at a public event just yesterday, in which an individual—I might just say an individual, as it just so happens, is not necessarily a supporter of this government—took me aside to say that the Workforce 2000 program of assisting with retraining in industry in this particular case, a company to train people on CAD/CAM, computer assisted design for their particular purposes was the best training program that he has encountered in this province's history.

As a result, Mr. Speaker, we believe that we are discharging our responsibilities. We will also ensure that the federal government discharge their responsibilities of funding these matters.

With respect to the area of the Constitution, I would say to him that the area of devolution of

authority on work force training programs is a matter that we have two views on obviously.

The first view is that if there is evidence—and there has been—for instance, through many, many programs throughout the country, that you can do a better job if the priorities and the targeting is done by the province rather than somebody in Ottawa deciding what is a good training program for Manitoba. So there is some positive to that.

On the other side, we will be absolutely insistent that the funding that is required in order to discharge that responsibility is transferred along with any devolved authority, because obviously we must have that funding in order to do the best possible job on behalf of the people of Manitoba. [interjection]

Mr. Doer: I do not know how members opposite could clap for the federal government's delivering training programs to this province, Mr. Speaker, and how the Premier could talk about making his point, when ACCESS programs were cut and acknowledged last week, when the Core Area Training Program graduation exercise just completed last week, when 50 percent of the Canadian jobs strategy money has been cut, and this Premier says he has been making his point with Ottawa. No wonder Manitobans are worried about the free trade agreement with Mexico.

Mr. Speaker, I want to table a memo, produced by the federal government in the Department of Employment and Immigration Canada, wherein it states that on the table right now for delivery of services for movement potentially to the provinces is employment counselling, project-based training, wage reimbursement, purchase of training, purchases of training utilities, income support, employment assistance, outreach, mobility assistance, delivery assistance, Labour Market Adjustment, human resource planning, work-based training, industrial adjustment service, labour market adjustment grants, Community Development Program.

I would like to ask the Premier, (a) how that fits in with the all-party task force report on a a strong national government, and (b) how that fits in with a strategy of having a labour market adjustment strategy as part of the free trade negotiations being the responsibility of the national government and the federal government.

* (1015)

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I have had that memo for several days. I am surprised it has taken so long for the Leader of the Opposition to raise the issue. When I evaluated that memo, it appeared to me that it was one that was obviously developed by the self-interest of the individuals who are currently employed in doing these labour market matters by the federal government and did not want to lose their jobs and so were implying that somehow these matters would not be carried out by the provinces.

The fact of the matter is that every government in this country, and even previous governments of different political stripes, have been concerned about Ottawa imposing their view on what were the needs for labour market training in a province, that education and training have always been the major purview constitutionally of the provinces, because it does not make sense for somebody in Ottawa to decide what are the target needs of a provincial government. What are the needs in our economy? Where are the skill shortages? Where are the requirements for people to be trained? Where are the job opportunities? It seems that if people in Ottawa are making those determinations and those priority choices, they are not really going to be consistent with what the provinces are doing with their industrial strategy, with their training strategy and with their work force development strategy. This is the reason why that issue is on the table. Many provinces feel very strongly about it.

We have said that we are cautious about it, because the only basis upon which we believe that such a transition should take place is if it is fully funded by Ottawa so that we get the dollars that are necessary to ensure that the job can be done as thoroughly and as completely as possible. That is part and parcel of what people are looking at. It is not a matter of just saying, you are responsible; it is a matter of saying, you are going to take over the responsibility because we believe you can do it more efficiently and more effectively, and these are the dollars that we are going to transfer along with that to ensure that you can carry it out at least as well, if not better, than it is currently being carried out.

Mr. Doer: I think the Premier should be a little careful in criticizing employees of the federal government, impugning their motives. I think the Premier should take the high road in his debate, because the rolling draft that his minister distributed had labour market training in it as it devolved power.

The Premier, on March 2, said, oh, we do not want to make the federal government a post office box. Now he is defending a different division of provincial powers. That is his right, I suppose. I think he should be very careful. The memo is not inconsistent with the rolling draft distributed by his minister, and to impugn motives, I think, is really unbecoming of Premiers, Mr. Speaker.

A question, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier. You have one set of conditions to the federal government in your negotiations, your secret negotiations on free trade with Mexico, calling on the federal government for a national strategy. You have an all-party task force calling on the strengthening of the federal government, not the devolving of the federal government powers to provinces, and you have a situation where many powers are now in the rolling draft to be devolved to the provinces. How does this fit? How will this fit with the human beings who are calling on the government to have a strong national government, to have a co-ordinated national training strategy versus the provincial power position that the Premier is putting forward? How will this impact on the Manitobans impacted by a potential free trade agreement with Mexico? They had no adjustment strategies after the '89 free trade agreement. They have lost all kinds of federal government support through this government's negotiations. How will it impact on the families of Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that the Leader of the Opposition, despite some experience in government, does not seem to understand that there is only one taxpayer in this country of ours. That is all of us. To be honest with you—[interjection] That is not inconsistent, because he never recognizes the taxpayer in any of the things that he does in this Legislature. Everything that he does calls for more taxes and more cost to the taxpayer. He did that when he was in government, and he continues to do that while he is in opposition. That is why he has been discredited so badly by the people of this province. Raise the taxes is the only answer that he wants to give.

The fact of the matter is that we are 125 years since Confederation. At that time, when the Fathers of Confederation evaluated what were the appropriate distributions of responsibilities in jurisdiction, I do not think they could have anticipated the country evolving the way it has. This is an appropriate time for us to evaluate whether or

not we are having those responsibilities conducted by the level of government that can most efficiently and most effectively carry them out. I think it is incumbent upon us to look at that.

I have suggested that for instance, responsibility for financial institutions ought to be given to Ottawa from the provinces, because they are more appropriately placed and can do it more efficiently and more effectively. I have suggested that there ought to be greater responsibility in Ottawa's hands to ensure that our environmental standards across the country are conducted to the same level so that you do not have a pulp mill developed in Quebec or British Columbia with different standards from a pulp mill in Manitoba. [interjection]

Mr. Speaker, I wish that the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) would control himself. He will have plenty of opportunity to interrupt; he will have plenty of opportunity to demonstrate how little he knows about these subjects when he stands on his feet.

The fact of the matter is that if we do not take this opportunity to look at who can do things most effectively and most efficiently, which level of government is best positioned to deliver those services, then we will have missed a real opportunity, because this opportunity will not come back for decades, Mr. Speaker. So that is all that we are doing. But we are saying that if Ottawa transfers responsibility, it ought to transfer responsibility with the full funding to allow us to do the job as effectively as possible.

* (1020)

Mental Health Care System Reform Co-ordination

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, while the Minister of Health was away at a federal-provincial meeting discussing national co-ordination of health care reform, it became clear that there is further evidence of chaos and lack of planning and co-ordination in Manitoba's so-called health care reform plan. In fact, the minister will now be aware that a proposal went to the Seven Oaks General Hospital Board last evening to cut all of its 20 psychiatric beds. Fortunately, they had the foresight to turn down a draft plan that did not have any evidence of co-ordination.

I would like to ask the minister: Since his Assistant Deputy Minister, Reg Toews, appears not to have known anything about this proposal, who is

making the decisions and where is the overall co-ordinated plan for mental health care reform?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the issue of mental health reform is one that has been before citizens of Manitoba in a formal action plan since January of 1992. My honourable friend might be well aware that significant discussion is ongoing at present in the city of Winnipeg and Westman Region of the province of Manitoba and, indeed, northern and the Interlake regions of Manitoba around how the mental health councils representing the regions of Manitoba believe we can accomplish what all of us believe has to be accomplished, that being the shift of resources from institutional-based care in psychiatry and mental illness to more community-based care. That involves a series of discussions that are ongoing, development of plans that are ongoing.

My honourable friend talks about proposals. Now there are proposals that are even turned down that my honourable friend says are part of a plan. Obviously, a proposal that is rejected is not part of anybody's plan, Sir. My honourable friend is having a little difficulty coming to grips with the fact that there will be significant reform and change for the betterment of health care service delivery in the province of Manitoba under the leadership of people in the health care community.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: Mr. Speaker, that does not answer the question about chaos in the system, and these proposals going to volunteer boards to make decisions.

I want to ask the Minister of Health: Why are these proposals for psychiatric bed cuts going to boards to be acted upon without the knowledge of his own department, the highest officials in his own department of Mental Health reform, without input from health care providers like nurses and without any evidence of community alternatives in place?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, with all the respect I can muster for my honourable friend, maybe my honourable friend ought to simply be patient and allow the process of consultation, based on January's paper, the work of, for instance, the Winnipeg Regional Mental Health Council and a number of associated discussion groups to come to fruition. It shall point us, Sir, in a direction which will involve, perchance, the reallocation of resources from currently funded staff and occupied acute mental health beds in facilities in Winnipeg with a reinvestment of that resource, bridge funding,

development of community programs as the Winnipeg Regional Mental Health Council and associated discussion groups present action plans to government.

The goal, Mr. Speaker, is one that we all believe in. The process is a very, very excellent one, involving consultation and input from many providers and consumers—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Lels: These proposals are going to boards without the benefit of that consultation and knowledge of the overall plan.

* (1025)

Bed Closures

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): I would like to ask the minister then a very specific question. How is he responding to the proposals pertaining to Misericordia for 20 psychiatric beds to be cut, from St. Boniface for 24 psychiatric beds to be cut and from Health Sciences Centre with at least 17 psychiatric beds on the table? Is he answering positively or negatively to those proposals, and how do they fit into a plan?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, in terms of the Misericordia psychiatric acute care capacity, I would anticipate very shortly that we will be announcing a favourable acceptance decision and begin the process to build the community resources necessary to replace the acute care sources at Misericordia Hospital.

My honourable friend has used the word "proposals" at two other institutions. Those proposals are under discussion within the facility and are being presented to government, and they must fit both reform action plans, Sir, before they are accepted. My honourable friend refers to a third proposal that is no longer even a proposal as some concern that my honourable friend might have about a proposal that has not become a proposal because the proposal was turned down becomes a government policy. That is silliness.

Health Care System Reform Public Awareness Campaign

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Health.

The Liberal Party of Manitoba has tried very hard to give support that we thought was justified to a

policy of significant reform in the health care system. We believe that significant reform is very much required if we are going to preserve medicare in this province and in this country.

Yesterday, we were delighted when the Premier (Mr. Filmon), in response to a question from the member for The Maples (Mr. Cheema), indicated by a "yes" that he would be prepared to keep the public of Manitoba informed every step of the way as to what changes were being made and what alternative services were being put into place.

We would now like to know from the minister exactly what are the details of this commitment. For example, will there be a quarterly briefing like the one that we had a month ago when the minister very publicly presented his reform package? Will they be given the kind of data that was in that reform package? Will they be kept apprised, on a quarterly basis, exactly what the government is doing with regard to this health reform package?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the process of reform, as outlined in The Action Plan, is a two-year process of reform. It will commence with announcements by government and affected facilities as to processes of bed closures, types of bed closures at the teaching hospitals, replaced, Sir, at the same time, by additional resources and bed capacities at community and long-term care facilities within the city of Winnipeg. The balance of the process of change involves a whole dynamic of monitoring which has been referred to an evaluation, which has been referred to in The Action Plan discussion paper.

It is my full expectation that as reports are available from the various evaluations and recommendations for change, those will be made public, Sir, by myself, because I believe, after yesterday's meeting with Health ministers across the length and breadth of Canada, that we very much have an opportunity for reform, a very excellent opportunity based on common sense, logic, scientific evidence, and we have the best program of reform in Canada, Sir.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, the minister talks about monitoring. He talks about evaluation. He talks about the necessary processes that must be put in place to make reform work, and that is the goal here, to make reform work.

Will the Minister of Health now tell this House exactly what form that reporting process will take to the public of Manitoba, who are the ones who will be most affected by a whole reform package?

* (1030)

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I would anticipate the forum would be press conferences by myself, ministerial statements on topics appropriate to the reform, where the Minister of Health, as the senior centre of responsibility and leadership, would naturally make those kinds of statements.

I would expect, Sir, that as the next two years progress, for instance, the Centre for Health Policy and Evaluation in terms of development of issues important to the public, debate around health care reform would make those reports part of the public discussion with full briefing opportunities available to members of the opposition and members of the media. I would suspect, Mr. Speaker, that the process of public consultation will involve the direct participation of those involved in the evaluation process from time to time—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, the Liberal Party is convinced that this reform package will not work if, on a daily basis, we hear all the negatives and none of the positives. It simply will not work if one isolated incident is allowed to mushroom so that it appears to dominate the reform package. That is why we have called for an independent monitor system that would be free from the minister's office, that would be able to report, with no vested interest, on a step-by-step initiative.

The minister said that he would take that under consideration. Has he taken it under consideration, and what is his response to an independent monitor system?

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): You cannot monitor something that does not exist. There is no plan.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, as my honourable friend was posing her question, the Leader of the Official Opposition said there is no plan. Possibly the Leader of the Opposition ought to consider the statement by the former Minister of Health, with whom he sat in cabinet, as to whether there was a plan that was a good working document, a good vision of the future, something that is desirable for health care and the future of Manitoba. At least former Ministers of Health have the decency to

understand the need for change and the process of change that we have put in place and are not taking the narrowed, carping political view of my honourable friend the Leader of the New Democrats.

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend the Liberal Leader is making a suggestion that we ought to report on the process of reform as it happens. We shall do that, but I want to tell my honourable friend that the reform plan is a two-year, very much staged and developed plan of reform, in the first year involving our teaching hospitals, primarily. As those changes occur, the results of those changes shall be monitored and reported on. But, Sir—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Inner City Programs Minister's Position

Mr. George Hickey (Point Douglas): As each week goes by, it becomes ever more evident that the platitudes that this government makes on their commitment to the inner city, renewing the Core Area Initiative, the CP Station and their so-called urban aboriginal strategy—why does the Minister of Urban Affairs say, in a letter, that the long-term support and involvement of the business community is essential to any tangible improvement to the problems of Main Street and then refuse to support the very organizations that promote development there? Does he not read the letters he signs?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the question of Main Street and what can be done to solve the innumerable problems that plague that particular area is an extremely important issue and one that needs to be addressed.

We have, over the past year, year and a half, in our discussions with both the city and the federal government, raised the question of Main Street as a major focus for any new renewed tripartite agreement relating to the inner city of Winnipeg. Mr. Speaker, we agree that certainly the business community associated with that—they are the property owners, by and large, of the property there, and they are the ones who provide economic development opportunities for people who are in need of employment in those areas. So together we have to try and work out a solution to that, and I am hopeful that we will be able to do that very soon.

North Main Development Corporation Funding

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, he does not need a Core Area Agreement to back his own so-called commitment to the inner city.

If the minister does indeed care about the inner city, why is he refusing to fund a North Main Development Corporation which is central to the revitalizing of Main Street?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the question of funding of any numerable organizations that were previously funded, either in part by the Core Area Initiative or other organizations, comes to this government on a daily basis.

There is only so much money. If and when we reach a conclusion with respect to this new tripartite agreement, then there may be funding available, Mr. Speaker, but in the interim, they are businesses. They should be able to fund their own organization.

Inner City Programs Government Support

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Another prerecorded announcement. That is all we ever hear over and over and over—wait till the Core comes in.

How many other projects in the inner city are closing this month due to this government's refusal to support the inner city of Winnipeg?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I categorically reject the assertion by the member for Point Douglas that this government, in any way, is abandoning the inner city.

Mr. Speaker, I have spent countless hours, over the past year and a half, attempting to get a new agreement that will meet the needs of those people in that area. I could have signed an agreement a year ago, but it would not have been the best agreement that we could get for the people. It would not have met all the needs we could possibly meet with those people. They might have signed an agreement that was worth nothing, but this government is trying to get one that will work.

Youth Unemployment Rate Programs Funding

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): For months, Mr. Speaker, we have been warning the government about the problems that students and young people are going to be facing in terms of summer unemployment. For months we have been imploring the government to reverse its patterns of cutbacks in terms of student employment that has taken the STEP Program from 475 jobs to 300, that has cut the CareerStart Program in half over the last two years and has not done anything to reinstate a Northern Youth Corps, which previously employed 875 students.

Now the figures show what we have all known these last couple of months, Mr. Speaker: unemployment amongst returning students has increased by 50 percent. The increase is leaving many students without jobs and worrying about whether they will be able to return to their education in the fall.

I would like to ask the Premier (Mr. Filmon), once again: Will he recognize what is happening, and will he reinstate the funding for the CareerStart Program to its previous level and reinstate funding for the Northern Youth Corps Program?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): I would remind the member that we have maintained the CareerStart Program at last year's level. We have continued with the STEP Program. We have introduced a new program, the Partners with Youth program. We have also maintained our student job offices in 34 communities. We expect that upwards of 10,000 students will be placed through those offices in the various communities throughout the province.

We are hopeful that there will be more announcements in the near future about student employment.

Mr. Ashton: I want to ask the question again to the Premier.

Will he now recognize that it is simply not good enough to have those prerecorded announcements from his minister? Unemployment is up 50 percent. They have cut funding by 50 percent. Why will they not reinstate the level of funding that we had only two years ago, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Gillehammer: I would report that, in the job offices that are located throughout many parts of Manitoba, the enrollment of students looking for

work is at last year's levels, and those students are being placed in jobs. We have maintained the CareerStart Program and have been able to accommodate almost all of the requests for CareerStart grants. The federal government has also maintained its CHALLENGE program and are providing jobs. As I have indicated, we did create a new program, the Partners with Youth, that we are enrolling people in. Those projects will be starting in the near future.

Youth Unemployment Rate Programs Funding

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Once again, Mr. Speaker, to the Premier, and I hope he will answer.

How can he justify what he has done in terms of youth unemployment when the numbers of unemployed is up 50 percent? When is this government going to recognize it is a tough summer for students out there and do something, Mr. Speaker?

* (1040)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the minister responsible has indicated that there have not been the reductions from year to year that the member has indicated, and in fact, with the Partners with Youth program, there are more programs available than there were last year.

The fact of the matter is that the member for Thompson, of course, discredits himself, as he does his party, by just simply getting up here day after day and saying, spend more money, raise the taxes. That is all they want to do is raise the taxes to the people of Manitoba and spend more money. That may do well, may go over well in his constituency, may be good for vote-getting, but it is irresponsible. The people of this province do not want their taxes raised. They do not want government to just throw money at every problem that there is. They do not want us to do as the NDP did and drive up our taxes, drive up our debts, Mr. Speaker. They want us to be responsible, and we are listening to the people of Manitoba. That is why we have kept the taxes down for five straight budgets. That is why we do not accept his demand for higher taxes and just spend, spend, spend.

Mount Carmel Clinic Cross-Cultural Counselling Unit

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

This minister had made a commitment to the multicultural health policy. We see the cross-cultural program at the Mount Carmel Clinic losing its funding and the Planned Parenthood program, which provides health care to newcomers, does not have funding on a long-term basis.

The studies indicate that Mount Carmel Clinic's cross-cultural counselling program provides a cost-effective way of delivering the health care system in Manitoba. If it works, and if it is cost effective as they are saying, why is the minister not providing funding through the mental health program?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I think this is probably at least the fourth or fifth time that this issue has been brought up. I simply want to indicate to my honourable friend that within the request for grants and sustaining funding, we are often faced with the circumstance of picking up funding provincially on programs which have been started often through short-term, start-up funding from the federal government and from other sources other than the provincial government.

We attempt to accommodate those funding requests as their funding sources from either the federal government or elsewhere are cut off and stopped and curtailed. We are doing that, Sir, for instance, by providing almost \$165,000 to Planned Parenthood of Manitoba this year, to provide refugee immigrant health support and education programs—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Health Care System Multicultural Policy

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): The minister has a multicultural health task force. Can the minister tell us what are the recommendations by that task force, and when can we expect a multicultural health policy in Manitoba?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the multicultural advisory council that I established some two and a half years ago took a look at the number of requests that were coming from varying organizations to provide similar programming and appreciate, Sir, that as each proposal group presents their request to government, naturally they believe it is the best program available.

The Multicultural Advisory Committee has attempted, over the past number of months, to provide some guidance to government as to how we handle a multitude of requests to assure that we are not duplicating or replicating funding requests and to provide a central focus to government in terms of who we fund and what we fund in the multicultural community.

Multicultural Legislation Consultations

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (The Maples): My final supplementary is to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship has put forward a multicultural act, a significant act but it lacks many areas. One of them is the multicultural health policy.

Can the minister tell us: Has she consulted this task force, and what are the recommendations of the task force?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister responsible for Multiculturalism): Indeed, I have consulted many from the multicultural community on bringing in the multicultural act. We try throughout government to deal with programs that in fact can serve many, many individuals. Within the community, needs change, things do change, and we try to structure our policies and our programs to meet those needs so I have indeed consulted with many within the community.

Port of Churchill Grain Shipments

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Since April of this year, Mr. Speaker, the Port of Churchill facilities have been ready to accept grain for export. The Russian government has indicated that they want to purchase and ship grain through Churchill as they have indicated in a letter dated February 25, 1992. The Wheat Board on April 18 of this year indicated a willingness to ship grain through Churchill if the Russian government wants it to. The people of Churchill do not need further false rumours. This is very detrimental to them.

My question is for the Minister of Highways and Transportation. Has the minister met with Mr. Hehn of the Wheat Board as the Premier has asked him to do in an April 1 letter of 1992? What was the response of Mr. Hehn, and what guarantees of grain shipments did the minister receive?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, both the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) and myself met with the Wheat Board and Mr. Hehn. We have been in contact on an ongoing basis, but we had an official meeting with them about three or four weeks ago, and since that time, the Minister of Agriculture has again met with the Wheat Board. I have been in touch, on a weekly basis, with the Wheat Board, promoting the idea that grain should be moved through there. They indicate all the activity that we have in place in terms of the supposed willingness of the Russians to take grain to the Port of Churchill and the supposed willingness of the Wheat Board to take and move grain through there as well.

There is one other player involved, and that is Export Kleb, which is the Russian counterpart that is the purchaser of the wheat. We are having a terrible time getting everything synchronized to the point where we are going to have that commitment. I am still hoping for a commitment.

Rail Line Upgrading

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, given that the Manitoba Chamber of Commerce is pressing for an upgrading of the bayline and the fact that CN has received tens of millions of dollars in subsidies for this bayline maintenance, has the Minister of Transportation contacted CN Rail to express the government's frustration with the condition of the rail line to Churchill?

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, over the four years that I have had the opportunity to be Minister of Highways and Transportation and to carry some responsibility for the Port of Churchill and the rail line, I have had many, many meetings with representatives from CN, with the federal government. I think it is a well-known fact that CN is not a big supporter of the Port of Churchill, necessarily, with their line, that they would like to turn that over to the province if they could.

Mr. Speaker, there has to be the pressure from the federal government to make a commitment that the Port of Churchill is going to be an entity for the future. If we have that, CN, Ports Canada and the Crown corps are going to fall in line with that.

So we have to have that desire and that promotion from the federal government that Churchill will stay, that there is a long-term future for

Churchill. If we get that, then things are going to happen.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

Committee Changes

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I have some committee changes.

I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be amended as follows: The member for Emerson (Mr. Penner) for the member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay); the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) for the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render); the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) for the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer). [Agreed]

I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations be amended as follows: The member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme) for the member for Ste. Rose du Lac (Mr. Cummings); the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render) for the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer); the member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) for the member for Emerson (Mr. Penner); the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) for the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer); the member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay) for the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Rose); and the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) for the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson). [Agreed]

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 Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh) for the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns); the member for Kirkfield Park (Mr. Stefanson) for the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau). [Agreed]

I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs be amended as follows: the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach) for the member for Riel (Mr. Ducharme); the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) for the member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst); the member for Ste. Rose du Lac (Mr. Cummings) for the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau); and the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) for the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine). [Agreed]

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Economic Development be amended as follows: Burrows (Mr. Martindale) for Thompson (Mr. Ashton); Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar); Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), for Monday, June 22, 1992, at 10 a.m. [Agreed]

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: Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar); Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), for Monday, June 22, 1992, at 10 a.m. [Agreed]

I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: Transcona (Mr. Reid) for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans), for Tuesday, June 23, 1992, at 10 a.m. [Agreed]

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): I would like to make some announcements with respect to committees. Mr. Speaker, I understand that the Law Amendments Committee will be sitting this afternoon. I would propose that we also set aside Monday coming, Monday evening for Law Amendments and that committee, besides considering, having referred to it at this point Bills 71, 73, 75. I would also like to refer to that committee, Bills 86, 87, 93 and also private members' Bill 97.

Mr. Speaker, I would just also like to refer to Municipal Affairs Committee, Bills 82 and 79. I will give further detail on these committees later on today.

I would seek unanimous support from the House to move two bills that had been referred to the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources. I would request of the House to move them to the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs, Bills 34 and 49.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave to move Bills 34 and 49?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, would you call Bill 42?

* (1050)

**ORDERS OF THE DAY
DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS**

**Bill 42—The Amusements
Amendment Act**

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

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I look forward to speaking on Bill 42. It is an interesting bill and has an interesting history. This is a rather brief bill. It has a very direct intent and impact. It is something that this government has been trying to bring in for the last number of years in the guise of not being a matter of particular controversy. But I say they are wrong. Bill 42 is significant because once again it shows the true agenda of the Conservatives and what drives the kind of legislation we so often see in this Chamber from the Conservative Party.

This bill has a history that goes back to the late 1970s, Mr. Speaker. What it involves is delicensing projectionists. The Conservative government at the time, as the minister himself outlined in his opening remarks, attempted to delicense projectionists in their entirety. The projectionists objected, not the cinema owners and operators; obviously they had their own reasons for supporting and lobbying for this initiative. But the projectionists objected.

At that time, as the minister indicated in his opening remarks, in some of the smaller communities there were not licensed projectionists available. What was arrived at, at that time, was something of a compromise that continued to require, in major centres, that they be licensed, while removing that requirement in smaller centres, where there were few, if any, available licensed projectionists. Well, that was the late 1970s.

Lo and behold, we have another Conservative government elected in 1988. Lo and behold, the cinema owners and operators have again got the issue of delicensing projectionists on the agenda. Lo and behold, the three Conservative Ministers of Labour, in a row, attempted to get this included as part of our Statute Law Amendment bill. Well, those who are not aware of what we deal with in terms of

the legislative process in this House probably are not aware of what Statute Law Amendment supposedly is for. It is number of technical changes, Mr. Speaker.

The current Statute Law Amendment Act was just released this morning. It is a fairly extensive bill. Most of the changes are innocuous. But you know, every session, I think, for the last four years, the Conservative Ministers of Labour have been trying to sneak in the delicensing of projectionists in The Statute Law Amendment bill, Mr. Speaker.

Indeed, the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) withdrew it every time, and I do give him credit. Quite frankly, I wish it was back in Statute Law Amendment, because I know, if I approached the Minister of Justice now, he would again withdraw it as part of The Statute Law Amendment. He is a fair and reasonable man on some issues, at least, that we know, on the projectionists. We may disagree on others.

Mr. Speaker, we are now seeing that this Minister of Labour has come up with a new approach. It is to introduce a bill, Bill 42. Bill 42 is probably the shortest bill of this session. While it does not affect a large number of Manitobans, I can say right now, as far as we are concerned, it is a bad bill. We will be opposing it, and we will be continuing the fight against the attempt to delicense projectionists. I want to say why.

The minister has walked hook, line and sinker, the line of cinema owners and operators. Those who run the movie theatres, obviously, as a business have been trying to make the most of their business. I do not blame them for arguing of delicensing projectionists. You know, they use the argument that years ago there was a more dangerous situation. There was more of a requirement, given the type of equipment that was used for licensed and trained individuals, and that no longer applies, Mr. Speaker.

In actual fact, I believe that licensing of projectionists creates difficulties for them, both in terms of ensuring obviously that there are licensed projectionists hired, but in particular, in terms of salaries. I believe the real agenda here by delicensing projectionists is that they will no longer be treated as qualified tradespeople, which they are, but instead will be treated—and especially in salary—as just another employee. That is the

agenda of the movie theatre owners, cinema owners.

Mr. Speaker, what about the response of the projectionists? Well, I have met with the projectionists each and every time this bill has come up. There are licensed projectionists in this province, and there are licensed projectionists working in the designated centres, the major urban centres, and what they say is that the movie theatres are wrong. They say that the Minister of Labour is wrong when he suggests that there are no longer safety problems. The equipment that is being used is not the same as it was 20 or 30 years ago. For example, the bulbs that are used in the projection process are highly volatile, can explode, and—[interjection]

Well, if the minister is concerned about rural Manitoba and wants to bring in the previous situation in terms of licenced projectionists rather than Bill 42, I can tell him right now we will withdraw our opposition. If he wants to change this bill to bring it into rural Manitoba, as he says from his seat, Mr. Speaker, that is fine. We will support that, as will the projectionists.

What he is doing here is, he is buying, hook, line and sinker, the line of the motion picture industry, the movie theatres in this province in the major centres, Mr. Speaker, without proper consideration of the concerns of projectionists. I ask the minister when he last met with the projectionists. I ask whether in fact he has met recently with the projectionists before bringing in this bill. Has the minister consulted? If he has met with the projectionists, what do they say about this bill? Why has the minister not addressed the concerns that they have expressed?

I read the lengthy history in terms of the situation here, and I go through the lengthy history the minister gave in the background of this bill. In each and every case, it is clear to my mind that the minister has not considered the concerns of the projectionists. He even went into detail in regard to the agreement of Local 299 of the International Alliance of Theatrical & Stage Employees Moving Picture Machine Operators in the United States and Canada in terms of providing competent, trained individuals. I find it interesting that he quotes quite extensively from the collective agreement. What I found most amazing, from his opening comments, he spent most of his comments reading a collective

agreement which talks about providing competent projectionists but not licensed projectionists.

Well, I do not think the minister is understanding what the projectionists themselves are saying. They are saying, particularly in the large movie theatres, particularly using the modern equipment, that a competent projectionist is a licensed projectionist. The minister has completely and absolutely missed the point. I can say, the minister in his opening remarks talked about working with the union to provide a certificate of proficiency to the current holders of that licensing agreement.

* (1100)

Mr. Speaker, the projectionists have rejected out of hand the proposal of the minister to come up with some sort of certificate, which they consider to be meaningless because they are now being essentially delicensed. They are delicensing the projectionists. That is not acceptable. So the minister has completely failed to take into account the concerns of the projectionists. There are indeed many licensed projectionists in major centres.

What possibly could be the reason for this bill? Well, Mr. Speaker, I would say this may come as no surprise to those who observed this government over the last four years and its predecessors. We have a business group saying, delicense them. We have the workers saying, that is not fair; it is not the proper, it is not the safe thing to do. So they have two sides here. They have a decision to make. They could have left a compromise in place that has worked fairly well for 10 years. They could have done what the Sterling Lyon government did, my predecessor, the member for Thompson, Ken MacMaster, the then-Minister of Labour did. They sat down, and they did not delicense projectionists. They worked out a compromise.

Mr. Speaker, again, this is like Bill 85 we will be debating later. This government, led by the member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon), who likes to hide from the reality of what he does is—[interjection] Oh, indeed, paddle canoes in election campaigns, go off to Rio for a couple of weeks and be the great environmentalist, go to the Premiers' meeting and be the great statesperson in terms of the Constitution, you know, the kinder, gentler Premier, I do not think so.

This is a Premier, Mr. Speaker, who, in the four years, has consistently, for five sessions in a row, rolled back labour legislation each and every

session. Whenever the Chamber of Commerce has said, Mr. Premier, we want you to jump to it and make sure you introduce a new bill affecting the working people, what does he say? He says, how high? He says, yes. He says what bill? You know, he is not happy with just one bill a session. He brought in Bill 85 this session. They could not stop with that, so they had to introduce Bill 42. Well, what a brave group of Tories they are.

There are probably a few dozen projectionists in this province. They have a union. They will fight back, Mr. Speaker, but this is not exactly going to kill them in an election, is it? There are probably no projectionists living in Tuxedo, so the Premier probably does not care in terms of that. In fact, they probably would not vote for him anyway, even if they did live in Tuxedo, after this particular bill. This big, brave Conservative government has said, aha, we have another labour group, big, bad labour, the projectionists, a few dozen projectionists.

Well, we will be watching in the next election on the obligatory attendance of the Conservative and Liberal Parties at the Chamber of Commerce. We will be watching the bidding war as the Conservative leaders and Liberal leaders go before the Chamber of Commerce and up the ante. [interjection] The payroll tax, labour legislation, they will be bidding for the support of the Chamber of Commerce. I am just wondering if maybe the Premier is not going to go in there and say: We sure showed them. We are a tough bunch. We stood down a few dozen projectionists. We pushed through this bill, and we delicensed them.

Well, I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. The labour movement can fight its own battles. Whenever the Tories launch an attack on labour, as they done, in an unprecedented way, the labour movement will fight back, and they will remember. But the projectionists, a few dozen projectionists? Do we want to be really spending the time of this Legislature dealing with a compromise that has been in place for a dozen years? Is that good public policy? I do not think so. I ask the question really, to this Conservative group across the way. Does it not bother any of them that the Sterling Lyon government—my God, the Sterling Lyon government, God knows it was one of the most right-wing governments in Manitoba history—is the only one-term government in Manitoba history.

Mr. Speaker, the Sterling Lyon government did not touch The Labour Relations Act. They came up

with a compromise that was quite satisfactory to the projectionists. In the four years they were in, they did not roll back labour legislation. I ask the question in terms of the Conservatives. Do they not have some difficulty with the direction this government is taking them, their front benches? The back benches—there must be some members of conscience on this side in labour matters in terms of matters affecting working people. Has it not dawned on them that the member for Tuxedo is more right-wing? Mark my words, I never thought I would be standing in this Legislature and saying something of this nature—more right-wing, more anti-labour, more slavish to the concerns of the Chamber of Commerce than Sterling Lyon. Sterling Lyon must have said no a few times. Has the Premier (Mr. Filmon) said no anytime the Chamber of Commerce has asked for a rollback of labour legislation? No, he has not, for five sessions in a row.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we are going to fight the fight on Bill 85 later on today, and we will fight it in committee and we will fight it again. I will tell you that it would have been easy just to stand up on this, because there are only a few dozen projectionists involved and say, what are we going to do? We have stopped them from bringing this in four years in a row. What can we do? I thought about that this morning when I was thinking about what I was going to say on this bill. But you know, the principle of this bill is the same principle as Bill 85. It may only affect a few dozen Manitobans, Bill 85 will affect many more. Final offer selection, the repeal of the public sector wage freeze bill last year affected a great number of Manitobans. The Workers Compensation bill brought in last year, the worst piece of Workers Compensation legislation in Manitoba history, that is affecting Manitoba workers.

We, in this party, do not judge issues on the basis of numbers. There may only be a few dozen projectionists, but it is wrong to delicense projectionists in this province. It is wrong to implement a kind of agenda that we have seen from this Conservative government for the last four years. Just because it is a union, just because it is part of the labour movement, just because they are working people asking to maintain the licensing that has been placed for decades does not mean that they should be subject to the targeted attacks of this government.

I found it ironic the other day when the Premier got up and rose in tribute to Duff Roblin. Indeed, all of us should pay tribute to Duff Roblin, Mr. Speaker. This government has done more to dismantle the legacy, not just of NDP governments in terms of labour relations, but of the Roblin Conservative government. They will not stop at anything. A \$4,000 scholarship to the labour college in Ottawa first brought in—when?—by Duff Roblin in 1963. Every government since the Weir government, the Schreyer government, the Lyon government, the Pawley government kept it. Which is the first government in history, since 1963, to say no to a \$4,000 labour college scholarship?

Well, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) puts his hand up. If the Premier (Mr. Filmon) was able to do so in this Chamber right now, I am sure he would put his hand up. It is this government, Mr. Speaker. You can run through what they have done.

The Unemployed Help Centre, well, they are a suspect again. They work closely with the labour movement. Oh, the Labour Education Centre, that was an early target. They were suspect. My God, they have a mandate for educating workers on labour issues, on workplace issues. It did not matter that a lot of business groups are relying on the service of the Labour Education Centre, Mr. Speaker. They were a target.

* (1110)

Well, they have gone through The Labour Relations Act, final offer selection has been killed. They went through The Workers Compensation Act and brought in some of the most negative changes that we have seen in decades. They have gone not only further than Sterling Lyon, who basically did not tamper with the labour relations legislation—and I mean that in a collective sense, the various bills affecting working people in terms of labour matters—they have gone further than that. They are not only more right-wing than Sterling Lyon, they are now dismantling their own legacy, the legacy of Duff Roblin.

So what I can say to the members opposite—

An Honourable Member: Yes, community colleges.

Mr. Ashton: Well, indeed the community colleges once again are an important area for many Manitobans.

But what I can say to the Conservatives is—you know, this reminds me of—there was talk earlier

today of the story, of course, of the emperor with no clothes, Mr. Speaker. You know, I do not think anybody in the Conservative caucus has realized exactly what has been going on. The Premier likes to create the image that he is a moderate. The spinners and the media handlers always find a way of keeping the Premier out of controversial issues.

Now the Premier has a habit—even if his handlers are trying to keep him out of the controversial issues—of jumping into them on occasion and revealing his true approach in this House. But you know, has anyone over there not understood the fact that this Premier is probably, in terms of record, the most right-wing Conservative Premier—more right wing than Sterling Lyon—in Manitoba history?

Well, the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld) applauds that. I know, for the member for Rossmere, he still has concerns. He would like to see a lot more dismantled in the labour legislation. We will talk about that on Bill 98. I am looking forward to his comments on Bill 98.

But, are all the Conservative caucus members happy with that, Mr. Speaker? Are they going to be happy when the truth about the Premier and his cabinet and his caucus starts to really sink in to the public of Manitoba?

An Honourable Member: A last place government.

Mr. Ashton: Oh, dead last in terms of economic performance. They know that already.

But in terms of this being the most right-wing government in Manitoba history that is dismantling the legacies of not only NDP governments but Conservative governments, well, Mr. Speaker, they are going to find increasingly that their true agenda is going to be known. When it comes to the big, brave Conservative government delicensing a few dozen projectionists, well, I am not impressed.

If this is what they talk about as being the big labour movement they rail against, the bogey man, the big labour movement, a few dozen projectionists. I know they would like to paint the labour movement as being responsible for all the problems in Canadian society. Is this the kind of thing that is going to solve it, delicensing of a few dozen projectionists?

(Mr. Jack Penner, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Acting Speaker, this government's sense of priorities is a twisted one. It is wrong to be introducing this kind of bill. It may only affect a few

dozen Manitobans. The principle is wrong, though. We will be fighting on the basis of that principle. We are going to be opposing this bill in second reading, in committee and on third reading, taking the true agenda of the Conservative Party on labour matters to the people of Manitoba.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Is the House ready for the question?

Some Honourable Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Agreed? No? All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): I believe the Yeas have it.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On division, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Acting Speaker, would you call second reading of Bill 101.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): I would call Bill 101, the Statute Law Amendment Act, 1992 (Loi de 1992 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives).

Point of Order

Mr. Ashton: Bill 101 is not on the Order Paper and would require leave, Mr. Acting Speaker, for second reading.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Is there leave to introduce Bill 101?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): There is leave.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 101—The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1992

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Acting Speaker, I believe I have leave of the House, and I would move,

seconded by the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that by leave Bill 101, The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1992 (Loi de 1992 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives), be now read a second time and referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. McCrae: As is customary near the end of a session—and I am assuming that we are getting near that point. I am not sure though, but it is customary for the government to introduce a Statute Law Amendment bill which deals with nonsubstantive changes to our statutes in Manitoba. I do this with Bill 101. The honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) just finished speaking about a bill which was withdrawn, this particular type of bill, in a previous session. The normal practice is to deal with issues of a nonsubstantive nature in this bill, which we are proposing to do this time. If I have not already done so, I would be happy to make available, to appropriate critics in the opposition parties, information about the changes that are involved in this bill.

The bill traditionally deals with spelling changes, numbering errors in our statutes. Sometimes legislation which is spent and no longer of any use—in other words, obsolete—is removed from the body of our statute law in its entirety. This bill deals with various acts of this Legislature, including The Animal Husbandry Act, The Communities Economic Development Fund Act, The Corporations Act, The Design Institute Act, The Education Administration Act, The Manitoba Employee Ownership Fund Corporation Act and on and on.

Without further comment, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would commend this bill to the attention and support of honourable members of this House so that it can be gone over in a little more detail in committee. Thank you.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Acting Speaker, I have a question for the minister. Will he be tabling an explanatory set of notes along with this, as is the case with The Statute Law (Taxation) legislation, for instance?

Mr. McCrae: As I said, Mr. Acting Speaker, having just distributed this bill with the leave of the House today, which was kindly given that I could introduce it for second reading, if I have not already done so, I would be happy to make explanations available to honourable members previous, I hope, to the time we get the matter to the committee.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Acting Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Hon. James McCrae (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Acting Speaker, I have been asked by my House leader to request that you call Bill 64.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 64—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), 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 Osborne.

* (1120)

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Acting Speaker, this bill is standing in my name on behalf of the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs).

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Acting Speaker, I rise today to speak on Bill 64, a bill which brings into place the position of a Child Advocate, a bill that we would like to be enthusiastically supporting. Unfortunately, it has been drawn in such a way that it does not meet all the needs and expectations of children living in our society.

What is the purpose of a Child Advocate's office? Well, the purpose of a Child Advocate's office would be for the protection of children. It would be for children who, having been let down within their family units and also let down by the system, would find an avenue whereby their needs could be adequately addressed. The purpose of a Child Advocate's office is to protect the most vulnerable in society, children, because they do not have the wherewithal to protect themselves.

From the moment of their birth until the time that they are 18 years of age, they do not have full legal rights. They rarely have any financial resources. They rarely have the capacity to hire lawyers on their own behalf. They rarely have the opportunity even to be heard.

Many of us have stood in line on frequent occasions at a simple thing like a store counter

waiting for service, to watch children, barely able to get their hands up to the counter, tapping their quarters on the counter wanting attention while others, adult-like, are serviced. It is a recognition that while we all pay lip service no matter what our political persuasion to the needs of children, we know that society somehow or other treats them as inferior creatures. It is only until they reach some magical age where they have money of their own, where they have capacity of their own, do we somehow or other fully respect their needs, their aspirations and their desires.

When I think of children's rights, I think back to an incident which occurred to me early in my teaching career. I was teaching a young girl. Her first name was Shirley. Shirley was a Metis child. At that time, Shirley lived at the Salvation Army Children's Village in Calgary. The Salvation Army Children's Village was kind of a big group home. There were many little cottages located on the site and each one had a substitute parent model, and these children lived there.

Shirley was a slow learner as defined by the school system, and she was in a class called 9-3, because in those days we streamlined, but they did it in a way that the 9-3 class was smaller and, therefore, you were able to give the students in that class more attention than the 9-1s who were essentially A, B students and bright and capable of performing at high academic levels. The 9-3 class had about 16 students in it, of which Shirley was one.

Well, Shirley had a lot of problems. There is no question about that. She did not know who her parents were. She did not know whether there was anybody out there who really cared about her, and she had learning difficulties.

One Friday night about quarter after five, I got a phone call from Shirley, saying, I am running away from the Children's Village. The question was, why and where do you think you are going? I mean, you are 14 years old; where do you think you are going? I am coming to you. I said, well, Shirley, come to me.

I immediately got off the phone and phoned the village and said, Shirley has just called. Shirley is going to come to me. When I have talked to her and, hopefully, resolved whatever difficulties she is having tonight, I will personally bring her back to the village. I was shocked when the person in charge

of the village said, no, we will send the police. I said, you do not need to send the police. I will bring her back to the village. No, we will send the police, she is a juvenile, and she has run away, and we will get the police to come and get her.

Within a half an hour, long before Shirley had arrived at my door, I heard the front door open. Now I lived in a street in Calgary where there is a lot of mixed housing. They could well have thought that this house was more than just a single-family residence. It was a big, old house in the lower section of Mount Royal, and in came two big, heavy-set police officers, who immediately charged me with harbouring a juvenile. I started to laugh because I thought the whole thing was unbelievable that I could be charged with harbouring a juvenile, particularly as the juvenile had not even arrived at the home at that particular point in time.

But, no, I was harbouring a juvenile. My husband came over the steps at this particular point in time and immediately identified himself as a member of the Alberta Bar. I have to suggest to you at the point the attitudes of the police officers changed dramatically because they now discovered that there was a lawyer in occupation of this particular home and perhaps they should use a little bit more caution in charging and making allegations of harbouring a fugitive from apparent justice in this particular situation.

The long and the short of it was that, following our conversation, they decided that they would leave. When Shirley arrived, I would contact them and inform them that she was with us. They would give me time to talk to her, and presumably we would be able to resolve this thing. So they left. Within 15 minutes, Shirley arrived.

At that point in time, we talked to Shirley and she was very upset. She did not want to return to the Children's Village. John and I made the determination that, if necessary, we would keep her for the night if that was acceptable to the village, and the police arrived. The police had been informed by the village that Shirley was to be taken to juvenile hall. Shirley had done nothing wrong, except to run away from the Children's Village. But she was to be put in the detention centre.

Police had said, no, that is not acceptable to them. They wanted her returned to the village. By this point, they realized this was really not a child with criminal intent. Shirley said she would rather go to

the detention centre. She did not want to go back to the village. They would not allow her to stay with me, so they took her to the detention centre.

She was left at the detention centre Friday, Saturday, Sunday. When I arrived in my classroom Monday morning at nine o'clock, she still was not there. I immediately contacted John and said, find out where this child is. He made calls and discovered that she was at the detention centre, and the Children's Village had no intention of getting her out.

He then made the appropriate calls as her acting solicitor and said, you will get her out of there. She arrived back in my classroom about 11:30 that morning.

That is why I believe in a Child Advocate. That is why I believe that somebody has to defend this child that the system was not prepared to defend. The system let her down, and they let her down badly, very badly. But those are not the only cases in which children are let down. Children are let down in divorce situations almost all the time when parents begin to fight among themselves and forget about the children. I had one of those situations in my own family, my sister and my brother-in-law fighting over two little kids nine and 10. The husband went in and took custody or grabbed custody of them, was going to spirit them away. I had to go with a bailiff to get the kids back. I got them back, and they continued to fight.

Every time the husband got custody of these children, he took them for psychological counselling. They had 15 psychological evaluations, 15 of them. The result, quite frankly, was that John and I said if you two are going to fight about these kids the way you are doing it, we are going to petition the court for custody. Right now, we think you are both unfit parents, because you do not seem to care enough about these kids. You seem to care more about the fighting that you are doing between each other.

* (1130)

So we will go to court, and we will ask for custody of Karen and John because we love them and we care about them, and we want to make sure they have some stability in their lives. Well, they smartened up, and they settled and they got a joint custody arrangement. It finally worked out, but children become the innocent victims of a system that does not protect their interests.

That is why when the minister announced he was going to introduce a Child Advocate bill, we were pleased. We thought, finally we are going to have something in place that will be able to act for the interests of children. Then we became dismayed, Mr. Acting Speaker, when we realized that this was going to become just another arm of the minister's department.

I have to express to the minister in the clearest possible terms why I think that is so wrong. If the system is letting down the youngsters, and I think we will all admit that youngsters do get let down by the system, then why would you have a Child Advocate who is to protect them from the system report to the same bureaucracy that has let them down? That is what is wrong with this system. It is what is wrong with the piece of legislation presently before us.

We all know how bureaucracies protect each other. We are well aware of that. So why would we put into force and effect a piece of legislation that will allow the bureaucracy to continue to protect itself. That is what I find so fundamentally wrong about having a Child Advocate's office report to the Minister of Family Services. It is not the minister I am concerned about. It is not one person at the top that concerns me.

It is the kind of situation that is going on right now at that inquest in Brandon where we are seeing that an inappropriate investigation went on in the Child and Family Services department. Now why did it go on? Why did they not ask the questions they needed to ask? Why did they not do the evaluations that needed to be done? The Ombudsman pointed out in spades in his letter that they did not do it. They did not ask the right questions. They did not involve themselves in the manner, to the degree that they should have.

What are we talking about here? We are not just talking about a tragic event in which a young 13-year-old boy commits suicide, because, let us be honest, we cannot do anything for Lester Desjarlais. He took his own life. He took the system into his own hands and said, I cannot cope with this system, I cannot live with this system, and he killed himself.

But there is another little child out there who at five years old walked into a classroom with a penis drawn on her body and with an accusation, Uncle Jimmy loves me. What are we doing for her? The system has done nothing for her to this point in time,

nothing. She has received no counselling, no support, nothing. The system has let this child down, tragically. That system that let her down is the department officials in Child and Family Services. That child needs an advocate. That child needs an advocate who does not report to the department of Child and Family Services.

Mr. Acting Speaker, several years ago in St. Norbert, just before I entered politics, I taught a young boy by the name of Lee St. Hilaire. Lee St. Hilaire was accused by his community of child abuse against his sister. I taught this boy for two years. I am no expert on identifying somebody who will abuse a child. I do not think any of us are. But after two years of working with the young man, he did not exhibit the kind of characteristics that I would have thought would have made him guilty of this offence. Those of you in the Chamber know that I was abused as a child so when people come to me and say they are innocent of that kind of offence, I have to say I do not take an unbiased attitude towards it. I bring my biases. I had difficulty resolving this one. Knowing this youngster, I really had problems.

I went to the minister—at that point, Muriel Smith—and I said, Muriel, I do not know whether this young boy is guilty or not, but I do not have a good feeling about it. I have serious problems. I know this youngster. I find it difficult to imagine that he would be guilty of such an offence. Would you investigate? Would you scratch the surface a little bit? Maybe this is a case of the innocent; scratch it a little bit. No. No. They would do nothing.

For those of you who may remember, this was a case in which his mother, Agnes, eventually went to the Supreme Court and had this young man's name removed from the Child Abuse Registry because it was never proven—never proven. Well that obviously was not enough for Lee St. Hilaire because two years ago Lee St. Hilaire shot himself to death. He committed suicide. Somehow or other the system let him down. Either he was guilty and could not live with the guilt, or else he was not guilty and could not deal with the system that had accused him and convicted him without a court of law. Whatever happened, he took his own life. We badly let him down. His mother needed to be able to access a child advocate's office to help him to resolve this difficulty, but I could not get the minister of the day to even open the investigation. Do we even take the word of a colleague in the Legislature

that this did not ring true, that maybe there was something we were not getting at, that we were not dealing with it appropriately and effectively? That is all I asked, a simple review.

So it is not the political persuasion of the minister that bothers me here one iota. I have no reason to believe that he will not advocate on behalf of children. I believe he will. I believe he shares the concerns. He has spent years in a classroom. He knows these issues intimately. But I am desperately concerned about a bureaucracy that is far too interested in protecting itself and not adequately interested in protecting children.

That is why I wanted a Child Advocate's office that would not report to this same bureaucracy. I wanted a child advocate's office that would be broad enough to do the investigation that it needed to do, broad enough to do what it could do to slap whoever's hands needed to be slapped to ensure that children were adequately protected in our society.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, we would love to give unqualified support to this bill because we think it is a modest step in the right direction, but we are very fearful that this modest step in the right direction may lead to a whole series of expectations that cannot be fulfilled.

* (1140)

If we put into place a Child Advocate's bill that reports to the minister and that Child Advocate is part of the whole bureaucracy that has failed to protect the child in the first place, what will happen? First of all, will children and/or their parents or guardians or supporters go to the Child Advocate? Will they trust the Child Advocate when they know it is not separate and apart from the ministry? Will they get the kind of cases they should get in the first instance? That we will not know. Secondly, will they get the kind of independent help and support that they require because it is part of the government department?

You know, there have been some discussions, I know, in the Conservative caucus about why it was that the Liberal Party did not support this bill. Let me make it very clear that nobody in the caucus supported the bill in its present form, but the one for which the opposition was the greatest was the member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) and the member for River Heights. Why? Because both of us have worked in the social service field. Both of us know

how children have fallen through the cracks. Both of us know about the need to ensure more adequate representation for them. Both of us knew that this bill was not going to meet all of the needs out there. It was not going to meet all of the expectations out there. It was not going to achieve what we wanted. But we will send it on to committee and we hope that the minister will listen clearly to the voices out there.

He knows that I have tabled any number of petitions, that I have a whole group more that, unfortunately, were not written in the type of format required for tabling in the Legislature. I think he has been sent copies of all of these: people indicating the need for the mandates office of the Child Advocate's office to be expanded to all settings that affect children—schools, child care centres, the justice system, health care, aboriginal and special needs children; the need for the Child Advocate to report directly to the Legislature; and the need for children to be given legal counsel when necessary.

Let us stop paying lip service to children; let us stop saying they are our most precious resource and yet not make legislation that ensures that they are protected as our most precious resource should be protected.

Let me end with this, Mr. Acting Speaker. Every now and then the Winnipeg Sun, in fact most Saturdays now—it used to be Sundays—does a profile on a Manitoban and it does a whole bunch of things. I know that a number of members of this Chamber have been profiled in that little thing.

One of the questions they ask frequently is, what is your most favourite possession? I read them and I am always deeply disturbed when somebody puts at the bottom "My most precious possession is my child or my children," because children are not a possession. Children are ours for short periods of time so we can educate them in our value system, so we can raise them with our beliefs and our social outlooks, but the most precious gift we can give a child, the most precious gift we can give them is their sense of themselves and what they are as human beings. That is the most precious gift we can give to a child, but we do not own them. We will never own them, and those who think they own them do not understand how very precious they are.

So, let us try and give to those very precious resources all that they need in our society to grow, to educate, to maximize their potential, to maximize all of their abilities, to teach them our values that

allow them to develop their own, and if some time in future their value system comes into conflict with ours, then we say, thank God I gave them the opportunity to become fully mature adults with a mind and will of their own, that I did treat them as a precious gift; I allowed them to be themselves.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): The question before the House is second reading of Bill 64. All those in favour, are we agreed to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 70—The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer), 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 loi), standing in the name of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway).

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to put a few remarks on the record.

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

Is there leave to have the bill remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway)?

An Honourable Member: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner): No. No leave.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to take the opportunity to put a few remarks on the record, a few comments on the record with regard to Bill 70, probably one of the more significant pieces of legislation that is before this Legislature in this particular session. It deals with, of course, the problem of the two-tier system which we have had historically in this province and which a couple of other provinces have, along with the province of Manitoba. I believe it is Nova Scotia and Ontario who also have a two-tier system.

It is a problem that has been with us. It is a problem that I attempted to deal with as a former minister. We were on the verge of dealing with it in 1988 just prior to the government changing, with various arrangements having been made to move

in a way that we believe would have been more equitable for people who are on welfare in this province, particularly in rural Manitoba. Unfortunately, the bill, in my view, does not deal adequately with the problems that we have in the two-tier system.

The two-tier system, Mr. Acting Speaker, is definitely very inequitable because what we have in Manitoba now is a totally unregulated system whereby you can get considerable variation in the rate of social assistance paid from one municipality to another and the way the various municipalities treat their people.

I have some figures here. They are a couple of years old, but they still are relevant for the point I want to make. Back in January of '87, the monthly social allowances rates, excluding shelter, varied very significantly. A single adult in Winnipeg in that year would obtain \$179 from municipal assistance, whereas in the R.M. of Woodlands you would only get \$72, less than half of what was paid in the city of Winnipeg. The R.M. of Minitonas paid \$92; the Village of Bowsman paid \$114; City of Portage la Prairie paid \$149. So there was a great variation in the amounts paid and some were totally inadequate.

It was also a system that was inaccessible to many people, inaccessible in the sense that some municipalities had no officials who could really deal with someone who wished to obtain welfare. They had no officials dealing with welfare cases day in and day out as in the case of the city of Winnipeg or the city of Brandon, for example. In many ways, the experience of going to the municipality was a very demeaning experience. In fact, it still is a demeaning experience in many ways, Mr. Acting Speaker, where the would-be applicant has to appear before the entire council in some instances and plead poverty and on bended knee ask for a few dollars. Frankly, this is absolutely and totally unacceptable. Unfortunately, this bill will do nothing, in my judgment, to address this question.

This matter of administrative deficiency is still left there before us. If this bill is passed, there are still people who are going to be forced to go through a very demeaning experience. The situation we have at the present time is also very inadequate because it forces migration. The story is often told of smaller municipalities advising their would-be social allowance recipient to simply move on to the city of Winnipeg, in particular, and often a one-way ticket was offered out of that municipality to anywhere,

usually the city of Winnipeg, in some cases the city of Brandon, and suggest to the person that they go on municipal welfare in the bigger municipalities. This is totally inadequate, Mr. Acting Speaker. It is unfair to the people who live in rural Manitoba who, for whatever reason, are forced to seek municipal welfare.

The other problem that we have at the present time and that this legislation does not deal with is the question of employment linkages. When we had planned to bring in more equity into the system in 1988, we were going to provide for a very large, very significant training program for people on welfare to get them off of welfare. There is nothing here that deals with the problem of retraining people or of training them to the point that they would have a better opportunity to seek employment. So there are no employment linkages in the past, and there is nothing that is going to be coming forward in the future as far as I can see.

The other problem that we have had historically and that this bill still does not deal with is it continues to be a levy on municipal taxpayers. It continues to be a levy on property taxes, and I believe in principle that is wrong. I believe social service, just as health is a social service in many ways, and the other child and family services that we have and other social security programs that we have that are paid for essentially by provinces and cost shared in many instances with the federal government should be paid for by the senior levels of government and not by municipalities.

* (1150)

The municipal ratepayers should not be required to finance services. They should be required to pay the basic local services that have to be provided by municipalities, whether it be road cleaning, garbage collection, fire protection, local police protection and so on. Yet this unfair system is going to carry on in spite of this legislation.

Mr. Acting Speaker, there are a lot of inequities. There are a lot of inadequacies in the system that we have that are simply not being addressed by this legislation. Ultimately, it is a serious problem because, unfortunately, we are experiencing a great deal of unemployment. The welfare numbers are rising because of high unemployment. We are well over 50,000, approaching 60,000 people on municipal welfare in this province. Admittedly, most of them are in the city of Winnipeg, but nevertheless

we have too many outside of the city of Winnipeg as well.

As I inferred, one of the main criticisms that I have of this legislation is that it does not deal with the problem of administrative approach. We are still going to have would-be recipients being forced to go before the whole council to plead their case. I do not think that is fair compared to what happens in the urban areas, where they go to an office, fill out the application, are interviewed by the welfare officials, social security officials and are dealt with in a private way, rather than doing what happens in many R.M.s, where you have to go before the whole council and people and explain your unfortunate circumstances. I just think that is a demeaning experience. Why should the people of rural Manitoba be forced to continue with this type of approach that is not in keeping with what happens to those people who live in the urban centres of Winnipeg, Brandon, Thompson and so on?

The other difficulty is—when I say that it does not deal with the administration side—that many municipalities simply do not have the administrative capacity. The local secretary-treasurer is busy with many other things and simply does not have time, in some instances, and does not have the expertise, in some instances, in dealing with welfare situations. I have talked to municipal councillors around the province about this, and I appreciate the problems that they have, too. They do not pretend to be experts, and they may only have one or two cases of people who may wish to seek welfare and they are not really attuned to dealing with it.

I am not saying that these are not good people on the councils. They are very understanding people, and people of rural Manitoba are very concerned people and tend to be very, very interested in their fellow man, fellow woman, and ensure that those people are not deprived in any way. But nevertheless we do have these problems.

Now, this problem of administrative approach that I referred to was dealt with by the Ryant committee. The Ryant Task Force on Social Assistance, which reported in September of 1983, points out very well, Mr. Acting Speaker, this problem of local administration. I will just quote a couple of sentences from that report, because it is very germane to the argument that I am making.

Local responsibility for the administration of social assistance is a double-edged sword—I am quoting

from page 44. It allows for the marshalling of community resources to assist those seen as deserving. It also allows for public castigation of those perceived as undeserving. We have seen indications of both. However, in Manitoba employable recipients most often seen as undeserving are vulnerable to local punitive action by the jurisdictional division of responsibility. Unfortunately, there is much evidence of punitiveness. Many municipalities offer assistance in the form of vouchers which identify recipients as untrustworthy or incompetent. As described earlier, some decide eligibility through public discussion, which humiliates applicants. Finally, representatives of many municipal assistance programs have openly described to us the ways in which the "undeserving" are subject to stricter eligibility requirements, the threat of liens, a more difficult application process, the offer of lower benefits and so on.

Then I quote another sentence on page 45. Many recipients classed as medically employable are not realistically employable at all. For example, there are many municipal recipients in their 50s or 60s with sporadic employment histories, limited education, few skills and long-standing alcohol problems who are classified as employable, despite the extremely low likelihood that they will obtain employment.

At any rate, Mr. Acting Speaker, there is this problem of administrative deficiency. I also refer to page 62 in the Ryant report where they discussed the stigmatization that goes along with the system that we have and which will not be corrected by this legislation.

Quote: Unfortunately, it is true in Manitoba that social assistance functions in a manner which often aggravates and reinforces stigmatization. Vouchers are used much more extensively than could be justified by the need to control the expenditures of those few recipients who have demonstrated serious irresponsibility. Many municipalities use vouchers for all recipients as a matter of course. Similarly, requirements for verification of declared resources identify recipients as such to financial institutions and employers, and they do so in a manner which communicates an attribution of untrustworthiness. Those investigated may find it difficult to maintain employment or deal with particular institutions in the future. They also occasion great embarrassment.

In addition, we have found that many recipients live in fear that they may be accused of wrongdoing for such normal activities as accepting gifts, having male friends visit them or economizing in order to obtain telephones. Indeed, many jurisdictions subtract the value of gifts from benefits and initiate embarrassing common-law investigations on the basis of a neighbour's report of a visiting boyfriend. Obtaining a telephone without permission is often interpreted as a violation of the rule that benefits must be used only for the basic needs for which they were intended.

If I can continue quoting here: Many recipients are demoralized by the fact that they must have permission in order to be able to buy sheets for their beds or to attend courses to which they have been accepted. They report feeling belittled and demeaned by the need to make these requests and more often so when they are denied. Many are embarrassed when they cannot share food or lodging with visiting family members for fear that they will be deemed to have received income in exchange. However, perhaps, the negative effects of stigmatization are almost alarming on the children of recipients.

We heard the following from one recipient, and I am quoting. This is from a recipient, Mr. Acting Speaker: I have already asked the welfare if I could have extra money to buy clothing for my children, and she says, okay, we can allow you a little bit more, but you will have to go to the secondhand and make sure that whatever you buy you have to bring to me the receipts. What child, especially a teenager, wants to go in secondhand all the time, because they know when they are dressed up with secondhand clothing, they do not look like the others who are walking on the street. They feel they are so rejected and ashamed of themselves.

* (1200)

Well, that is the end of a quote from a welfare recipient, and she goes on to explain how her son is often excluded from social and sports activities of his peers because of his visible welfare status. Just one last sentence here, one last paragraph: We conclude that the social assistance system in Manitoba provides support at the price of social and psychological impairment. The magnitude of the costs of these practices in dependency are unknown but, clearly, there is a cost to society in undermining the competence and self-sufficiency of recipients. Quite apart from the effect of

stigmatization on dependency, the processes described violate the right of any individual to be treated with dignity and respect. Unquote, and that is from page 63 of the Ryant report.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this sad situation will not be corrected, will continue to exist under the proposal in this legislation. As I said also, it does nothing about the one-way ticket phenomenon which causes migration to the larger centres.

I would also like to refer the minister and members of the Legislature to the committee that this government set up, the Social Assistance Review Committee, the SARC committee that was set up by the Honourable Charlotte Oleson when she was minister and which is the basis, I believe, of some of the legislation that we have.

I would note that ultimately we are talking about a relatively small amount of money outside of Winnipeg and Brandon, but particularly outside of Winnipeg. The SARC committee notes on page 20, and I will just quote this one paragraph: However, the cost of assistance and individual contributions to these costs varied greatly from municipality to municipality. In 1987 there were 36 municipalities and LGDs which did not incur any net assistance cost.

In other words, there were 36 municipalities in which there was no municipal welfare paid out. Some of the reasons were because the people were driven out of the municipalities and forced to go to Winnipeg, or Thompson perhaps, or Brandon.

Further quoting: A further 137 municipalities incurred costs of under \$10,000 and only 28 municipalities in Manitoba incurred costs of over \$10,000 after cost-sharing.

So what we are talking about, Mr. Acting Speaker, is not a great deal of money when you look at the amount being spent in the city of Winnipeg which is many, many tens of millions of dollars. We are talking about a relatively small group of recipients. What I am suggesting is that there is need, therefore, to be careful when we are bringing about these amendments to ensure that we bring about as equitable an approach as possible, that we bring about something that is closer to, in my judgment, what happens in the city of Winnipeg where you have professional staff dealing with municipal welfare recipients and where the rates are far more reasonable than you find in rural Manitoba.

Another complaint I have with the legislation is that there is no tie-in with training and employment programs. The minister makes no reference, I believe, in his introduction in this matter. I would point out that when we announced our approach to eliminating the two-tier system outside of the city of Winnipeg, we also announced a major Canada-Manitoba Agreement on Employability Enhancement for Social Assistance Recipients. We signed a two-year agreement in early 1987 and \$6 million was to be provided jointly by the two levels of government, and this money was directed specifically for training and employment of welfare recipients.

We got the federal government on side to co-operate with the Province of Manitoba to tie it in with this reform that we were about to institute at that time. So I say, it really is unfortunate that there is no initiative coming from this government to concentrate on providing training, education and skill improvement of people who are on municipal welfare, are deemed to be employable and who are not employed.

Now, I appreciate the fact that you can be trained infinitely and still not get a job if there is a recession or a depression, but that is another subject again. We are also concerned about that.

Nevertheless, there should be emphasis on training and employment programs for the unemployed people who are drawing municipal welfare, and that too has not been addressed by this legislation and even by the government in the lack of program announcements for this.

I say, Mr. Acting Speaker, it should not be a levy on municipal taxpayers, because municipal taxes should be for local services. Again, I would like to quote from the SARC report, the report prepared for this government where they make reference on page 23 to the fact that—maybe I would best quote the report, it is only one paragraph, to make the point: The committee noted that social assistance costs at the municipal level are financed through municipal property taxes, but does not believe that property taxes are the most appropriate mechanism for funding social assistance. Thus, the committee believes that the current overall municipal contribution to costs should not increase as a result of the introduction of regulation; nevertheless, the committee acknowledges that on an individual basis social assistance costs in some municipalities will

increase as a result of the introduction of consistent benefit levels and financial eligibility criteria.

So there, Mr. Acting Speaker, this committee also recognizes that this will be a burden on municipal property taxpayers that should not be.

Another problem I see, and that is this approach, where you are regulating municipalities into a standard rate of payment, requires the government to become a policeman, to become involved in the policing of the municipalities. I, for one, do not find that a suitable way to go. I do not like to see the government of Manitoba having to overlook, more than ever, over the shoulders of the municipal councillors, the municipal administrations in this province, to see that they are abiding by the regulations on welfare.

I read on page 11, where this is noted by the SARC committee, the Social Assistance Review Committee, quote: The committee also concluded that the financial eligibility criteria of the Municipal Assistance Program should be extensively regulated to ensure that eligibility is assessed in a consistent manner throughout the province. The committee noted that having one set of established rules to determine eligibility would also be more efficient as it would eliminate the need for municipalities to develop rules for handling situations which they infrequently encounter.

So, in effect, we are going to have the Province of Manitoba be required to hire staff or utilize staff in whatever way to ensure that the municipalities are abiding by all these regulations with regard to rates.

I believe there are other problems with this legislation, and I am trying to deal with this as expeditiously as I can, and that is the problem of penalizing those municipalities that wish to pay more than the provincial standards. I am thinking particularly of the City of Winnipeg where, from our reading of this legislation, the minister says, well, the legislation permits the municipalities to have flexibility. They can exceed the minimum standard, but the point is there does not seem to be any provision for this government to pay those municipalities, and I am really thinking of the City of Winnipeg. There may be one or two more as well, but it is essentially the City of Winnipeg who may be paying more for certain categories of social assistance than the province.

If that happens, the major financial impact of this legislation will be, therefore, to penalize the City of

Winnipeg and possibly some other cities, possibly Brandon, possibly Thompson, and maybe one or two others. The fact is that the province, it appears, will be establishing a standard which may raise a lot of rural municipalities to that standard but, nevertheless, will not meet the standards of the major urban centres where 90 percent or more of the welfare recipients happen to be.

* (1210)

In fact, Winnipeg alone, I believe, accounts for 85 percent of the welfare recipients. In fact, it is referred to in the appendix of the SARC report. It suggests that it has some cost estimate of the proposed reforms, but it is quite obvious from the information here that the major impact will be with regard to the City of Winnipeg, because the City of Winnipeg accounts for almost \$40 million out of \$44 million in gross assistance paid today to municipal welfare recipients; \$40 million out of the \$44 million is paid by the City of Winnipeg. Then the other cities pay \$2.6 million, and then the balance is paid by all other towns and villages in the province.

Let us face it. On the one hand, you might say there will be a few hundred welfare recipients in rural Manitoba who may benefit because the rates will go up there and this is fine. On the other hand, you are going to have 85 percent of present welfare recipients who are going to possibly be penalized in the future because this government will refuse to contribute to the City of Winnipeg to the extent that it can today under the existing legislation. Under the existing legislation it meets Winnipeg's costs in accordance with a formula.

As I read this legislation—and if we are wrong, we would be happy to be corrected over it. If I am wrong, then so be it, but it seems to us, Mr. Acting Speaker, that what we have got here is a very serious situation whereby the City of Winnipeg may be penalized. Therefore, the recipients in the City of Winnipeg will be penalized, because if the City of Winnipeg pays more than the levy or than the standard of the Province of Manitoba, it will be penalized. This is referred to in the legislation. In fact, Section 11(1) makes reference to "shareable cost of municipal assistance." So when we compare this—and I do not want to get into the details of the actual provisions of the bill—the way we read it, there is going to be a very, very serious negative impact on the city of Winnipeg.

So this, in my judgment, is the crux of the matter. On the one hand, it seems to be a step in the right

direction to say, well, we are going to bring the rural municipalities, small towns, villages, up to a certain defined provincial standard. That is fine, but as I said, it is still not going to deal with the major problem of inadequate administration where people have to go on bended knee to the local council and beg for welfare. That is still not going to be addressed. To me, that is a major problem.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I am summing up here. As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, the real problem in terms of finances will be in terms of the penalties that are going to be suffered by 85 percent of the welfare recipients in this province. In other words, this legislation is going to penalize 85 to 90 percent of welfare recipients in the province of Manitoba. This is punishing legislation. It is going to penalize, essentially those in the city of Winnipeg, to some extent in some of the other cities. That is what this legislation is going to do.

On the other hand, while it seemingly will raise the rates with a few people in rural Manitoba, it will still not address the major problem out there. It does not address the problem of the one-way ticket. It does not address that problem, because there is nothing in this legislation which forces a municipality. It requires the municipality, if they decide to pay out, to have to pay a certain standard, but there is nothing that says that they have to pay.

What if they suggest to the person who is on bended knee before the local council that that person would probably be far better off to go to Winnipeg or to Brandon, because they have a welfare department there that knows how to deal with these things? Therefore, they discourage the person. This has happened. There are actual living examples, many examples, where this has happened, where someone has gone, saying we cannot get work; we have no income; we need some help. There is provincial-federal legislation which says, by law, we are entitled to some income security, some income protection. Yet there is nothing in the law which forces the municipality to say, well, we are going to pay it out.

The municipality, presumably, if it decides to pay it out under this legislation will have to pay it out in accordance with a rate that is still to be established. We still do not know what these rates are going to be. Therefore, Mr. Speaker, you have the situation where you are still going to get in Manitoba, the

same inequitable situation of welfare being inaccessible to people in many parts of rural Manitoba. They are in the minority. They are only 15 percent of the total outside of Winnipeg, but still, it is going to be inaccessible to these people. There is nothing which says that their privacy is going to be respected. There is nothing in this which is going to remove the stigmatization that occurs in rural Manitoba, which was a major concern of the Ryant Report.

The Ryant committee, made up of some very excellent people, spent a year in studying this problem, who went around the province, who talked to municipalities, who talked to social service agencies, who talked to social welfare recipients. They say that we have a situation which aggravates and reinforces stigmatization. That was one of their major concerns. As I said, there is absolutely nothing in here, nothing in this regulation that has addressed that particular problem.

Mr. Speaker, in the report on page 68, in their conclusion on this subject, the Ryant commission says, and I am quoting: Our study of the social assistance system in Manitoba leads us to the conclusion that it closely conforms to the traditional approach. It is openly acknowledged to be a strictly last-resort defence against complete destitution. Eligibility is based upon stringent means testing. Recipients are categorized on the basis of their imputed employability. Those assessed as employable receive less generous treatment. Those assessed as unemployable are further subdivided into various categories based on personal characteristics.

Further, I read, Mr. Speaker, again on page 68: Discretion leads to unjustified variation into treatment. The social assistance system in Manitoba requires that employable recipients seek work but does not generate a sufficient supply of appropriate services to assist them in entering the labour market.

So, Mr. Speaker, these municipalities—I know in the old days, maybe in the Dirty Thirties or long back, there used to be such a thing as local assistance, and the municipality would give you some money for food maybe or a little bit of clothing, maybe help you pay your fuel bill and you would work for the town. But those opportunities are few and far between. I mean if that is possible, okay, but that is not the usual case. So these municipalities and these towns do not have the

ability to take the unemployed municipal recipient and say, okay, we have some training programs we are going to link you into, and we are hopefully going to assist you to get off of welfare. I mean that should be a major thrust of welfare reform. This was dealt with by the Ryant committee and is totally absent. The government is totally silent on this particular issue.

So, quoting again from the Ryant Report on page 68: Benefit levels provide for only the most basic of necessities, and assistant providers have a wide range of discretion in making decisions related to both eligibility and benefits. Discretion leads to unjustified variation in treatment. The social assistance system in Manitoba requires that employable recipients seek work but does not generate a sufficient supply of appropriate services to assist them in entering the labour market.

* (1220)

So this is the very point. We say, well, you have to go out and look for a job. Fine, if there are some jobs out there, but we do nothing, the government is doing nothing whatsoever to take on this responsibility of assisting them in entering the labour market. This was a major part of the initiative we had begun in late 1987, early 1988.

I read further from page 68 of the Ryant report: Similarly, disincentives to working, saving, and risk-taking are inherent in the system's treatment of assets-earning and expenditure decisions, and finally the system reinforces the demoralization and stigmatization of recipients through various of its procedures.

There is another reference in the report on page 68: The rationale that municipalities provide for the short-term income needs of employables and the province for the long-term needs of unemployables simply does not jibe with the facts. The jurisdictional division of responsibility has led to great disparities in eligibility and benefits. This variability has been exacerbated by the unreliable exercise of discretion in a system which allows much scope for its use.

What the Ryant report is saying, Mr. Speaker, is that there is no reason, there is no rationale for a two-tier system. There is no justification for having the municipalities involved with one category of so-called unemployed employables and the province taking on another category of presumably long-term recipients. As we know, many of the

so-called employables are really long-term unemployed employables. In fact, there is reference to many people who have various physical handicaps and really should not be classified as employable. There are people with social problems who should really be classified as unemployable as well.

What I want to know is why the Province of Manitoba has to be so backward. This legislation is backward legislation. This legislation is going to go backwards; it is going to penalize 85 percent of the welfare recipients in Manitoba. This is penalizing legislation. Under the guise of helping a couple of thousand in rural Manitoba—and God knows, goodness knows, they need help, and we should have higher rates—it does nothing for them accessing the welfare system. It does nothing to minimize stigmatization. It does nothing to remove this inequity.

What we have got is a situation where the City of Winnipeg is going to be in a real bind, if it is trying to maintain the standards that it has had to date. We are going to go backwards; we are going to water down; we are going to reduce welfare payments to the bulk of unemployed people in Manitoba.

I say, why do we not get with the rest of the country? I do not know whether members opposite realize, but out of 10 provinces, Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, New Brunswick, Quebec, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia have a one-tier system. The province is engaged in administering the welfare system in those provinces. The entire system is considered to be a responsibility of senior government, not of municipal governments, not of the municipal ratepayers, but of people who finance and provide for provincial and federal governments, who are much better equipped to deal with social programming.

We have health services provided by federal and provincial governments. We do not expect the municipalities to finance those. We have Child and Family Services, a major expenditure item, a major aspect of social security, a complex child and family service system. Do we expect the municipalities, the municipal taxpayers, to pay for that? We do not expect the municipal taxpayers to pay for that. Do we expect the municipal taxpayers to pay for pensions for retired people? We have a supplement for pensioners now, 55 Plus. It is the

province that pays for it. We do not say to the municipalities, well, we want you to pay a percentage of it. You have other pensions that are paid for totally by the federal government, and as I said, seven out of 10 Canadian provinces administer welfare, social assistance by a provincial department of community services or provincial department of welfare, or provincial department of social assistance, whatever that department happens to be called in that particular province.

For the life of me, I do not know why we do not take the opportunity now to join the bulk of the Canadian people, the bulk of the Canadian provinces who have seen fit to be fair to people who for whatever reason are in dire straits, for whatever reason need some financial assistance. Why can we not join the bulk of the country and engage in a progressive system whereby we have a system that minimizes stigmatization, whereby we have a system [interjection] I will wind up, Mr. Speaker.

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

An Honourable Member: Leave to finish his speech.

Mr. Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave for one minute just to wind up his speech? Leave? Okay.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I did not realize my time was up.

Mr. Speaker: Yes, the light was flashing.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I am sorry. I really regret—this was an opportunity to bring in real reform, and we are not doing it. We are going backwards, we are not going forward. I say, let us join the rest of the country. Let us join seven out of 10 provinces and be progressive. Let us look after the people who are in need, and let us do it in a way that we provide training for them and employment opportunities to help get them off welfare and do whatever else we have in order to improve the lot of those are less fortunate than many of us in this Legislature.

Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I rise as the critic for Family Services to close debate for our caucus on Bill 70. Many of our caucus members have spoken very eloquently on this issue. [interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Wellington has the floor.

Ms. Barrett: Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I would like first to answer the question that was raised. I think it was probably raised in a rhetorical manner by my colleague the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), but I think I have an answer for the member for Brandon East's question when he said at the end of his remarks, why do we not as a province join the seven out of 10 provinces in this country who have one-tier social assistance, paid for totally by the province that they are living in? Why do we not be progressive in that regard?

Mr. Speaker, an answer came to my mind, an answer that I believe the people of Manitoba are beginning to understand as they read and look at the implications of Bill 70, and that is that this is not meant in any way, shape or form to be reform. This is not reform. What this is, is a way of getting yet another offloading of provincial costs onto cities and municipalities in this province.

If we had not seen this happening in many other areas of our life in the province of Manitoba, I perhaps would not have said that, but, Mr. Speaker, it is true. The Premier (Mr. Fllmon) of the province of Manitoba, in about 80 percent of his responses to questions in this House on a range of issues, says that we have not raised personal income taxes. We have kept taxes low, and that is his response to every issue and question and concern that is raised in this House.

* (1230)

Mr. Speaker, the reality is, as the Premier himself said today, there is only one taxpayer in Manitoba. Now that taxpayer, and that is something that members on this side of the House, particularly the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), has tried to bring to the attention of the First Minister, and I believe he has finally listened to her, that we are only one taxpayer in this province, and the fact that the government has not raised personal income taxes is only one factor in that whole equation.

There has been immense offloading of taxes, of programs, of costs to all people in this province. Bill 70 is just another one of those cases. The impact of Bill 70 will be probably felt the most in the city of Winnipeg, because over 85 percent of the people on social assistance and welfare live in the city of Winnipeg. So, by definition, whatever regulations come out of this bill will have a major impact on the

city of Winnipeg and on the taxpayers and all residents of the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, I say probably, because we do not know. We do not know what the impact of this legislation is going to be, because the minister will not tell us what regulations are going to be put into place, at what level the welfare rates will be set. This is a unique situation where we are really being asked to vote for a pig in a poke. We do not know what the impact is going to be, but from past history from this government, we know it will not be good for the people of Manitoba.

What it will enable the government to do is to say, we have kept costs down; we have made a one-tier social assistance system. Mr. Speaker, the government of Manitoba is misleading, thinks that they are misleading, thinks that they are being able to pull the wool over the eyes of the people of Manitoba. We know that is not the case. The residents in Winnipeg, the residents in municipalities, those who pay taxes, those who are forced, through circumstances not of their own doing, to seek social assistance and welfare assistance, those who live in cities large and small, rural areas, northern areas in our province, and most particularly, those local and city officials who have been elected by their residents to provide services for the people whom they are responsible for, they, almost more than anybody except the recipients of social assistance, are feeling the brunt of the impacts of Bill 70 and other offloading that has taken place by this government.

(Mr. Jack Reimer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Well, I will not say what I would like to say because I would be ruled out of order, having checked Beauchesne. At any rate, another cruel twist, if you will, of the timing of Bill 70 is it will come into effect—if the government does not listen to the people of Manitoba and make some heavy amendments, this bill will come into effect at the worst time for Manitobans since the Depression. The economic situation in our province, which has been so ably put on the record by the member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) and other members of our caucus, shows very clearly how woefully inadequate is the current government, both federally and provincially. Job creation strategy, strategy for getting us out of this recession that is wending its way with very long-lasting effects, this government has no job creation strategy. It has not a single dollar for effective job creation strategy.

Mr. Acting Speaker, as the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) said today in his question, the unemployment rate for students in a time where tuition rates at all of the institutions of higher learning in this province have been forced to go up by upwards of 20 percent—the unemployment rate among students in this province is higher than it has ever been. The programs designed to assist those students with getting money in the summertime so that they can return to school in the fall have been cut in half from two years ago.

This government refuses to acknowledge that fact. It has a recorded message as its answer. It has done nothing except either negative programs or programs that just stand still. Mr. Acting Speaker, Bill 70 is the latest in that line of programs that not only do not do anything positive, but are going to have a major negative effect on all of the people in Manitoba.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the government, when it introduced Bill 70, said it was responding to the Social Assistance Review Committee report, otherwise known as SARC. This report was presented to the then-Minister of Family Services, the Honourable Charlotte Oleson, in July of 1989, almost three years ago. This report had some very good recommendations in it, to which, if the government had listened, we would probably have reform in its true sense.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Province of Manitoba has dealt basically with one part of one of the 12 recommendations of the social assistance review committee. It will, under regulation, standardize rates for social assistance throughout the province. What it has not done, Mr. Acting Speaker—and this is why we are saying it is nothing more than an offloading of its own obligations. It has not provided for any of the infrastructure necessary to implement that single-tier social assistance. It has not provided for any additional funding for those municipalities to be able, as long as they are still responsible for the administration of the social assistance program, to train municipal workers so that they can more effectively, efficiently and humanely provide this service to the people of Manitoba.

We have heard put on the record—and I know many of the members from the government benches, particularly those who are representing rural constituencies, have case examples in their own files of individuals who have been forced to go

publicly and ask for social assistance. That brings to mind the whole concept that I thought we in Canada had long outgrown, the punitive public humiliation of people who are in financial straits. I thought we had eliminated the workhouse concept. I thought we had eliminated the fact that if you could not pay your debts, you went to prison. I thought we had gone farther ahead, Mr. Acting Speaker, than to put people in the stocks and publicly humiliate them for a financial inability.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we certainly do not publicly humiliate the Reichmann brothers. We certainly did not publicly humiliate Mr. Campeau. We certainly did not publicly humiliate Garth Drabinsky. We certainly do not humiliate people at the top end of the economic scale when they make bad business decisions, which I think is a very small way of explaining what has happened to the Reichmann brothers, as one example. No, we do not humiliate them. We protect them. We protect them through our bankruptcy laws. We protect them through our telling them that the banks will help bail them out.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it certainly is capitalism for the poor and socialism for the rich. That is not exactly the way it is supposed to work in this country.

Mr. Acting Speaker, Bill 70 is just another continuation of the ideology that perpetuates that type of behaviour on the part of the federal and the provincial governments.

The province, if it had actually looked at the SARC recommendations and had begun to implement some of them—three years since they have had these recommendations—it would have, as well as standardizing the rates, put into effect, as I said earlier, the infrastructure that will help people who are being asked to deliver these services. It would have not only helped the municipalities by training them, but it would also have, as the SARC committee recommended, increased the funds available for employment-related initiatives targeted specifically to municipal social assistance recipients.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Well, Mr. Speaker, as we have said time and time again in this House over the last years and most particularly in this budget, this government not only does not target job-related programs, programs designed to assist people on assistance to get off assistance, to break the cycle of poverty, they not only do not increase those programs, they decrease

them. They have narrowed the safety net for municipalities. They have put in or will put in regulations under Bill 70 that will make it more difficult for people on social assistance to have help and assistance in getting off social assistance.

* (1240)

What Bill 70 does, Mr. Speaker, is it says it establishes a floor for funding for benefits for social assistance recipients, whether they be city, municipal or provincial. That in and of itself is not a bad thing, but what the government has not done is deal with Recommendation 4, which says that some flexibility should be allowed for municipalities to exceed the standards when necessary and to receive cost sharing on these additional expenditures.

What Bill 70 says is, here is the floor; you are required to pay these rates. We will cost-share at the same formula as we have in the past to this floor, and you, of course, are free to add to those benefits as you as a municipality or a city see necessary. Very nice, Mr. Speaker. What it does not allow for is any additional financial assistance from the province to enable those municipalities to do that.

Quite interestingly, the province can say we have established, in consultation, what the basic rate should be. We have also given the opportunity for municipalities to exceed those rates, where they feel local conditions warrant. As this government has stated, when it restructured the fees for daycares, when it destroyed the child and family service system in this province, and particularly in the city of Winnipeg, these agencies, these municipalities have the responsibility to make choices on how they are going to spend their money.

They are not only offloading the costs, they are offloading the responsibility in a way that is unconscionable, and it is a way that the people of Manitoba are beginning to realize is reform. The word, in the concept reform, being completely abrogated by this government, the word "reform" will leave a bad taste in people's mouths in Manitoba from here on in because it has been used in the health care system, it has been used in the education system, it has been used time and time again in the family services system as a cloak to cover nothing but cutting costs.

This government talks about how we in opposition have no plan, how we have no answers for these questions and issues that face the citizens of

Manitoba. Well, Mr. Speaker, the government has a plan. It is called, cut our costs and the devil take the people of Manitoba, because all we care about is saying we did not raise personal income taxes. Every person in this province who pays taxes knows that that is misleading, at the very least. Every citizen in this province who pays taxes pays an enormously increased tax burden from the municipal, the city and the school taxes that are as a direct result of offloading of responsibility from the province, as a direct result of offloading of responsibility from the federal government. I would like to echo the member for Brandon East's (Mr. Leonard Evans) comments, when he says, senior levels of government should pay for programs that all of us benefit from.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) wants to know who pays taxes. Nine percent of the revenue from the federal government—now gets from corporations. Billions and billions and billions of dollars are wasting away because the federal government refuses to close tax loopholes for large profit-making corporations; 88 percent of the revenue that comes to the federal government is paid for by individual taxpayers.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to close my remarks now. I am going to end my remarks. We have put on record a great many concerns that we have on Bill 70. We represent constituencies from throughout this province. We represent constituencies in the North. We represent constituencies in rural areas. We represent constituencies in the inner city. We represent constituencies of what are called the suburban areas of the city of Winnipeg. We have talked with people from all of our constituencies and all of the groups that are concerned with issues of social justice, and there is not a single person whom we have talked to, there is not a single person we represent who does not feel that this bill is an abomination and should never have seen the light of day. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is 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. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Member: No.

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Call in the members.

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

Yeas

Dacquay, Derkach, Downey, Driedger, Ducharme, Enns, Ernst, Filmon, Findlay, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Manness, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Neufeld, Orchard, Penner, Praznik, Reimer, Render, Rose, Vodrey.

Nays

Alcock, Ashton, Barrett, Carstairs, Cerilli, Cheema, Chomiak, Edwards, Dewar, Doer, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Hickes, Lamoureux, Maloway, Martindale, Plohman, Reid, Santos, Wasylcyia-Leis, Wowchuk.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 24, Nays 22.

Mr. Speaker: The motion is carried.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): I would like to put on the record that I was paired with the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery). If I would have voted, I would have voted against it.

Bill 78—The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (3)

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst), Bill 78, The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act (3); Loi no 3 modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg, standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I adjourned this on behalf of the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak).

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my remarks will be brief in reference to this bill, prior to my departure for a committee hearing in the other Chamber of this House.

I simply wish to reiterate our opposition to the bill. I have made my opposition quite known to the minister with respect to the decision by the government to eliminate the ability of community

committees to represent their community interests on variances and zoning matters. There is grave concern in my constituency and the community that I have the honour of representing to that aspect of the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I have made the point known in the House through Question Period. I know that the minister has been petitioned by residents of the area that I represent and has been contacted by many individuals to indicate certainly our concerns with respect to what I would view as an undemocratic move basically.

Mr. Speaker, the community interest must be represented on matters of this kind. The community interest should be paramount in matters of this kind, and what the provincial government is doing in this amendment is forever precluding and forever eliminating the ability of a community committee to deal with matters of variances. It has been a grave concern in the area I represent for some time.

There have been several instances where individuals have come into the community and wished to place in the community video arcades or adult video arcades, much to the opposition of the community. In one instance, the process put in place by the provincial government and by the city resulted in the video being allowed in. In another instance, Mr. Speaker, it was not accepted and in fact that matter is under appeal. But the present amendment as they exist will forever preclude the community committee, the local representatives of our community, from making a decision on a matter of this kind.

I can indicate that all indications have been given to me, as the member of the Legislature from that district, that residents in the area I represent strongly oppose that particular change. I will vigorously pursue their interests in order to ensure that the government understands our opposition and does not go ahead with this particular amendment.

* (1310)

I know, Mr. Speaker, that there are arguments on the other side that can be made and can be stated which point to the decision on matters of this kind; that is, specifically variances to be made by a central committee. But that does not change our basic opposition on a philosophical basis that when you are talking about disrupting the community, when you are talking about moving into the community to alter the nature of the community, when that

happens, the community wishes must be respected. Certainly, if this amendment goes through, the community committee that has those local representatives will not have the ability to make that decision.

Why do they need that ability, Mr. Speaker? They need that ability because they can be influenced like we can be influenced here by the wills and wishes of the electorate. By removing the responsibility from them, they will forever be precluded from having that responsibility and, therefore, we lose another aspect of accountability in our elected system.

We think this is a regressive step. It is not a progressive step. Any progressive, fair-minded individual would see that this step is a backward step. It is a step away from representation, not toward more community input, not toward more representation.

So I want to indicate on the record, as I indicated previously in this House, as I know that many of my constituents have and will continue to indicate, we are not in favour of the changes that allow for the community committee to be forever precluded from the decision-making process with respect to this particular bill. I am certain that this matter will be discussed extensively at the committee stage. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Mr. Speaker, this is a very important bill, and I am going to leave the biggest part of the bill for comment by my colleague the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) who will have some comments on the provisions with respect to French language services in the city.

However, Mr. Speaker, this bill also does other things. Most notably for me is the section dealing with the construction of commercial buildings over waterways in the city of Winnipeg. I want to take just a minute or two to recount the history of that provision.

In 1989, there was a threat of commercial construction over Omands Creek in my constituency, and the landowner had the piece of property immediately north of Portage Avenue across Omands Creek. Of course, owing to the rivers and streams legislation, the owner was not entitled to build, either to divert the water flow or in any way impede the water flow. That was the restriction. This developer came up with a design which, in effect, constructed a concrete platform

over the creek, thereby not diverting the flow, thereby not bringing into play any of the provisions of the rivers and streams legislation. On top of the platform was to be constructed an office building and a car wash.

Mr. Speaker, if you have ever had occasion to come to that part of the city just east of the Polo Park development, Omands Creek and the parkway along both sides of the creek is a very important green space for the residents in that area. It is a very densely populated area, and the residents were quite rightly incensed at the proposed building of a car wash and office building over the creek.

They made their voices heard to both myself and our Environment critic of the day, Mr. Taylor, the former MLA for Wolseley, and as a result of various discussions with City of Winnipeg officials, we were hopeful that the City of Winnipeg would be able to purchase the property and that there would be an amicable agreement and that last remaining part of the property that was privately held could be added to the already publicly owned green space, completing the Bluestem Park and Omands Creek Park green belt.

However, the negotiations between the City of Winnipeg and the private landowner failed. They were still a significant distance apart in terms of the asking price and the offering price. Mr. Speaker, it came to the point where it was clear, or at least it was probable that, from what I knew and what the member for Wolseley knew, construction would be beginning imminently. My colleague, the former member for Wolseley and I felt that we had to act quickly and decisively to attempt to head off that construction, which once started we felt would be very, very difficult to turn back.

As a result of that, an amendment was passed to The City of Winnipeg Act—I might add, against the wishes of the Minister of Urban Affairs at the time. The Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) currently was on that committee, and I recall him opposing this as well. However, they acceded to the bill going ahead to third reading and passing into law because, of course, that particular bill contained a lot of other things that they wanted to see put into law. The amendment was voted against by the government, but because it was a minority situation, the amendment passed and it became law.

The amendment was challenged by the private landowner. There was a court case; the court case

was unsuccessful and the law was upheld. I am very pleased today to stand in defence of that provision, which outright banned commercial construction over waterways in the city of Winnipeg. I have stood for that principle for at least four years now—[interjection] It is an important one for the city of Winnipeg.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) says it is not a principle. I believe it is a principle. It is a principle that we should not construct commercial developments over our waterways in the city of Winnipeg. That is a principle which I believe in and which I have fought for for many years. The Minister of Natural Resources may feel differently, and obviously his party does because they voted against it regularly. However, it is one that I believe in and let me say I have never—I have never—had from citizens of this city any criticism of that principle, and that the only people, resident in the city of Winnipeg, who have ever come to me and said they did not agree with that principle were sitting members of this Legislature in the Conservative caucus. Those were the only people who ever raised with me that this was not a progressive and good idea for the city of Winnipeg, to protect our natural habitats as they exist in the waterways.

Mr. Speaker, after the government was elected in a majority position in September 1990, they moved relatively quickly to delete that section of the act that had been passed just a year earlier when they were in a minority government. They gave the excuse that they were going to be sending this issue back to the city. As part of the Plan Winnipeg review, the city would have the right and they hoped the obligation to put into place some regulation of commercial construction over waterways.

They did not make any suggestion to the city in the legislation—and if they did otherwise, I do not know about it, but they made no suggestion that there should be a ban. In fact, the repeal of that section clearly connotes, I believe, to the City of Winnipeg that they would agree with commercial construction over waterways in the city of Winnipeg, and they wanted the City of Winnipeg to come up with the criteria that would be applied in achieving just that.

Now, what we have here today, Mr. Speaker, in this bill is in essence cleaning up what was attempted to be done a year ago by this government; that is, to make the city come up with

some procedure, some criteria, some by-law governing commercial construction over waterways. It is difficult for me to support this amendment except for the fact that it will at least force the City of Winnipeg to consider the issue, hopefully open this up to public debate through the Plan Winnipeg review and their own meetings and to confront the issue of commercial construction over waterways.

* (1320)

I will be using my best efforts and attempting to assist community individuals who are very, very interested in this issue, both in my area and around the city, to come forward to the city councillors of the day to impress upon them the importance of preserving our waterways in this city, unencumbered by commercial development over top of them.

Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the repeal of the initial section banning commercial construction was a regressive measure. This section, today, forcing the city to at least confront the issue and come up with their own decision as to what criteria should be applied is a bit better, a bit easier to swallow.

But, Mr. Speaker, the fact is, I believe the overwhelming majority of Winnipeggers, from my experience, support banning commercial construction over waterways in this city. That was brought home to me time and time again back in 1989 and 1990 when this issue was a very real issue in my community. In the 1990 election, it was brought home to me time and time again by residents of that area, how important that section was in giving them security that commercial construction would not occur over Omands Creek, and indeed, I recall the Real Estate News editor writing an editorial—hardly a left-wing newspaper—saying how progressive that section was, how important it was to preserve our waterways from the degradation of commercial construction over top of them.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, we have enough land in this province and in this city to build our office towers and our car washes somewhere other than over our waterways. Surely, we should be environmentally friendly enough to not put office towers and car washes, or allow commercial construction over our very few, very important waterways in this city. That is a principle which will prevail, I believe, in time.

I hope that the City of Winnipeg will do the right thing and go back to the ban that was in place for that brief year in 1989-90 when this government did not have the ability to ride roughshod, I believe, over the will of the people, but was forced to reconcile its agenda with that of the other two parties in a minority government. That resulted in this legislation. I believe it was progressive at the time. I believe the government made a mistake in repealing it.

I believe that it is still a mistake to send it back to the City of Winnipeg who are the people who have made mistakes consistently on this issue in the last 15 years, Mr. Speaker, who have tried to pave over Omands Creek three times. The City of Winnipeg has tried to do that. The whole point of that amendment was to take it out of the hands of the City of Winnipeg because, consistently, they showed that they like to pave over Omands Creek.

Now, Mr. Speaker, this minister has sent it back to the city. I hope that the City of Winnipeg will now do the right thing, in my view, and ban commercial construction over waterways. It is one thing to build a thoroughfare. It is one thing to build a bridge, where necessary, over a waterway. It is quite another to build an office tower and a car wash. The people of this city, I believe, do not support car washes and office towers over waterways.

As I say, I remind the government that no one, including the Real Estate News, editorials in other papers in the city, no one took issue with the importance and the timeliness of that amendment in 1989 banning commercial construction. I believe that today the support for that position is probably stronger than it was at that time.

Mr. Speaker, those are my comments on Bill 78. I will be pressing this issue at committee again. As I said earlier, the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry) will be speaking on the substantive portions with respect to French language services on behalf of our caucus. Thank you.

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I have a few comments that I would like to put on the record with respect to Bill 78, the amendment to The City of Winnipeg Act.

I note comments that the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) has made with respect to the environmental aspects of this bill and, of course, they reflect somewhat my concerns as well, that this bill would allow for that type of development to take place.

I also note the comments from the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) with respect to the impact that this bill will have on local communities, such as my own in Transcona, relating specifically to the powers of the city councillors who are elected by the communities at large and the impact that this bill is going to have on them.

I can relate back to an incident that happened in my own community of Transcona a few years back, where a particular X-rated video shop was interested in establishing a business operation in my own community, right in the heart of the community, only a few doors away from one of the very prominent churches in my community.

At that time, of course, the residents became very concerned about that type of a venture coming in and the impact that it would have on the minds of the young people in the community. At that time, the community was very successful in influencing the city councillor for the community of Transcona and having any permits or any business licences for that establishment withheld, so that business was not permitted to open the doors, even though it had been announced that they were going to do so.

What I see taking place in this Bill 78, Mr. Speaker, we are going to have—as has already been passed through this Legislature—a reduction to 15 councillors from the current level. We are going to see less access to the city councillors, and we are going to have fewer powers at the community committee level.

By this Bill 78 that we have before us here, we are not going to be able to appeal to our local councillor when we see decisions or businesses that are contrary to the wishes of the community coming before members of City Council for discussion and debate. What I see taking place that is going to, I think, impact upon my community in a large way is the fact that my city councillor, who would be able to now make those decisions to prohibit that type of business venture from establishing in the community because it is contrary to the wishes of the residents of the community, that power will be taken away from my city councillor. My city councillor will no longer be responsible or empowered to make that decision that is going to impact upon the lives of all of the people that we represent in Transcona. Contrary to what the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ernst) thinks, that is what we see taking place and how it is going to impact on us.

The standing committee is going to make decisions on these types of businesses that wish to establish in my community of Transcona. They are not people, in most cases, who are going to be from my community, and they are going to be making decisions that are going to impact or decide, and could decide, against the wishes of the residents of my community. They have no vested interest in making decisions for the people whom I represent or the people whom the councillor who is there now represents.

That is why I think, Mr. Speaker, that this bill is not a good piece of legislation in that respect. I think we need to have the local representatives, the local municipal officials responsible to and answerable to the residents of the community, but if we strip the powers away from them, they are not going to have that opportunity. The standing committee will make those decisions.

I believe, as we saw in the past where the decision was made not to allow that X-rated video shop to open in my community, that this business, should it come forward again to my community, will then probably stand a greater chance of establishing in the community against the wishes of the residents, because I do not think the opinion of the residents of Transcona have changed in that respect one bit. We are still a very family-oriented community, and we want it to remain that way. It is a good place to raise your family, but if we allow this legislation to go forward, it is going to take that power away from the city councillors, and I do not think that this is adequate or in the best wishes of the residents of my community.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I will conclude my remarks, and I look forward to the opportunity to listen to further debate on this and any comments that the minister who has introduced this bill may wish to make at the committee level. I look forward to that opportunity.

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Oui, Monsieur le président. Il me fait plaisir d'ajouter des commentaires sur la Loi no 3 modifiant la Loi sur la ville de Winnipeg. Je vais faire des commentaires surtout sur les services en français puisqu'il me fait toujours plaisir de m'adresser en français à la Chambre.

Premièrement, j'aimerais remercier le ministre de nous avoir reçus, de nous avoir donné ses commentaires, de nous donner un bref sur le projet de loi le 6 mai dernier. Et puis je sais qu'il a

rencontré aussi les gens de la communauté de Saint-Boniface en groupe. Aussi, ils ont exprimé leurs inquiétudes à l'égard du projet de loi, mais je crois que les rencontres ont été assez positives avec le ministre puisque, moi-même, en discutant avec le ministre ça a été assez positif tout au long. Alors, j'aimerais m'exprimer positivement sur ce projet de loi au point de vue de services en langue française. Cela ne veut pas dire que je suis complètement d'accord avec tout ce qu'il y a dans le projet de loi, mais la communauté a certainement eu l'occasion de s'exprimer avec le ministre en rencontre à un couple de reprises. Alors, j'en suis sûr, ils ont proposé des amendements au projet de loi, ils nous ont envoyé des copies des amendements. Et puis j'entends du ministre qu'il y aura certainement des amendements présentés lorsque le projet de loi sera remis au comité. Et puis, il a promis qu'on verra les amendements avant que ça aille au comité, alors on aura certainement une chance d'en discuter. Et puis, moi-même d'en discuter avec la communauté pour voir si on est satisfaits.

Je crois que l'inquiétude de la communauté, c'était plutôt l'application au point de vue des services qui vont être offerts dans les communautés où ils desirèrent avoir des services en français. Et puis, qu'il n'y avait pas d'échéancier comme tel décrit dans le projet de loi. Alors, c'est peut-être quelque chose qui doit être adressé.

* (1330)

D'autres inquiétudes, comme de raison, ont été bien exprimées, mais plutôt que de prendre du temps ici, le ministre a une copie de la lettre qui venait de la communauté. Moi aussi, avec les amendements mais quels amendements le ministre va accepter, je ne sais pas. On n'est pas là pour causer une controverse puisque cette loi, la Loi sur la ville de Winnipeg, est là quand même depuis vingt ans. C'était lentement depuis vingt ans. On aimerait voir l'application beaucoup plus rapide à ce moment-ci. Juste, par exemple, tout dernièrement un de mes concitoyens de Saint-Boniface faisait une demande pour des services à Saint-Boniface; il voulait faire une addition à sa propriété, et s'adressait en français au zonage de la ville. Il n'a pas pu recevoir les services en français à Saint-Boniface; ils l'ont référé à Winnipeg. Rendu à Winnipeg, il n'y a personne qui a pu lui donner les services en français. Il y a certainement une lacune dans ce département-là où il aurait dû recevoir les

services en français. C'est clair qu'on a droit à des services en français. Ces services en français, cela fait vingt ans dans la Loi sur la ville de Winnipeg, nous ont été promis. Les services en français, on les a depuis 1870, mais ils ont été enlevés au cours des années. Et ils nous ont été remis en 1972 dans l'application de la Loi no 3 sur la ville de Winnipeg. Alors, à ce moment-ci, ce qu'on veut c'est de la continuité et puis de l'avance régulière et avec un peu plus de vitesse dans notre communauté. Et, comme de raison, on va avoir de la controverse, mais ce n'est pas ça qu'on veut, on n'est pas là pour ça. On veut juste voir que les droits des francophones qui existent depuis 1870 dans la belle province du Manitoba, qu'on continue à les avoir. On est toujours fiers d'avoir l'occasion et même, on a des gens par exemple qui viennent dans la communauté de Saint-Boniface lorsqu'on a des activités comme le Festival du Voyageur. Les gens qui viennent là, on a des anglophones qui disent, ne parlez pas anglais, parlez français, on est ici pour entendre votre culture. C'est pareil lors de Folklorama au mois d'août lorsque les gens viennent dans la communauté. Ils veulent nous entendre parler français. Alors, les gens, les anglophones ne sont pas contre les francophones. On n'est pas là pour ça. Alors, en mettant en application les services en langue française, ça augmente juste, je crois, la culture et, comme francophones ce qu'on veut, c'est se faire servir en français là où c'est demandé. On ne dit pas de les avoir dans toute la ville de Winnipeg, ce n'est pas ça qu'on demande. On demande qu'on puisse les avoir pour servir nos francophones qui veulent les avoir, les services en français. Et puis le poste du coordonnateur, ça crée de l'emploi, c'est tout. Je suis sûr que la personne qui sera embauchée n'est pas nécessairement une nouvelle personne, on peut avoir quelqu'un déjà là dans le département de la ville de Winnipeg. Alors, les coûts, on en parle souvent, des gens vont mettre des coûts à ces services-là. Les coûts ne sont pas si exorbitants qu'on devrait avoir peur de les appliquer dans la ville de Winnipeg.

Alors, j'aimerais voir; je serai le dernier à parler sur le projet de loi ici. Et il y a certainement des discussions qui auront lieu en comité puis on ne sait pas s'il y aura des présentations, mais on sera fiers d'écouter et puis je sais que le ministre est là pour les entendre aussi. Il a démontré de la bonne volonté et je le remercie de l'appui qu'il nous a donné et j'espère voir une amélioration, et que

l'échéancier, l'application sera faite tout au long des prochaines années.

Et puis l'autre chose peut-être, c'est l'affaire qu'il doit y avoir un rapport qui sera remis au ministre. Une suggestion que je fais, c'est qu'au lieu de remettre le rapport juste au ministre, qu'il soit remis en Chambre ici afin que tous les députés voient ce que c'est, où on en est avec l'application des services en français.

Avec ceci, Monsieur le président, il me fait plaisir de dire, il nous fait plaisir d'envoyer ce projet de loi au comité. Je sais que j'ai l'appui du ministre des Ressources naturelles parce qu'il est fier de représenter la communauté de Saint-Laurent d'où je viens. Alors, avec ceci, avec l'appui du ministre des Ressources naturelles, je termine mes commentaires. Merci beaucoup, Monsieur le président.

[Translation]

Yes, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to add some comments on The City of Winnipeg Amendment Act. I will comment particularly on French language services since I am always pleased to be able to address the House in French.

First, I wish to thank the minister for having received us, having provided his comments, having given us a brief on this bill on May 6, and I know that he also met members of the St. Boniface community as a group, who expressed their concerns in regard to this bill, but I believe that the meetings with the minister were quite positive, because my discussions with him were positive throughout.

So I want to speak favourably on this bill as regards French language services. That does not mean I am fully in agreement with everything that is contained in the bill, but the community has certainly had the opportunity to express itself to the minister a couple of times, so I am sure that they have proposed changes to the bill. They have sent copies of the changes to us, and I hear from the minister that there certainly will be amendments presented when the bill goes to a committee. He has promised that we will see the amendments before it goes to committee, so we will certainly have the opportunity to discuss them, and I myself will have the opportunity to discuss them with the community to see whether they are satisfied.

I think that the concern of the community has to do more with the application of services that will be offered in the communities where they wish to

receive French language services. There was no time frame as such described in the bill, so this is perhaps something that has to be addressed.

Naturally enough, other concerns have been expressed, but rather than taking the time here, the minister has a copy of the letter from the community, as do I, with the changes. Which changes the minister is going to accept, I do not know. We are not here to create controversy because this act, The City of Winnipeg Act, has been around for twenty years. It has been slow, and we would like to see much more rapid implementation at this time.

Quite recently, just as an example, a fellow citizen of St. Boniface made a request for services in St. Boniface. He wanted to make an addition to his property and sought service in French from the city's zoning authority. He was not able to receive French services in St. Boniface; he was referred to Winnipeg. He came to Winnipeg and there was no one who was able to provide service to him in French. So there is certainly a gap there, in that department, where he should have received French services. It is clear that we have the right to French services. These services were promised to us twenty years ago in The City of Winnipeg Act. We have had French language services since 1870, but they were taken away over the years and were given back to us in 1972 in the implementation of The City of Winnipeg Act.

So what we want now in our community is continuity and an advance, a steady advance, with a little greater speed. Of course, there will be controversy, but that is not what we are here for. That is not what we want. We simply want the rights of Francophones, which have existed since 1870 in Manitoba, to continue. We are always proud to have the opportunity, in fact, we have people who come to the St. Boniface community when we hold activities such as the Festival du Voyageur. Among the people who come there, we have Anglophones who say, do not speak English; speak French; we are here to hear your culture. It is the same thing with Folklorama in August. When people come to the community, they want to hear French. So Anglophones are not against Francophones; they are not there for that. So implementing French language services simply enriches the culture.

What we want as Francophones is service in French where it is being requested. We are not asking that it be available throughout the city of Winnipeg. We are asking for services in French to

our Francophones who wish to have them. As for the position of the co-ordinator, it creates employment, that is all. I am sure that the person who will be hired is not necessarily a new person. There could already be somebody in place in a City of Winnipeg department. The costs are often referred to; people will attach a cost to these services. The costs are not so exorbitant that we should be afraid to implement them in the city of Winnipeg.

So I would like to see. I will be the last person to speak on this bill. There will certainly be discussions in committee. We do not know whether there will be presentations, but we will be proud to listen to them. I know that the minister is there to hear them also. He has shown good will, and I thank him for his support. I hope to see an improvement and a time frame, with implementation over the coming years.

The other thing perhaps is the matter of a report that is to be provided to the minister. A suggestion that I am making is that rather than having the report provided only to the minister, I suggest that it be provided to the House so that all members can see what the report is and where we are at with the implementation of French language services.

And with that, Mr. Speaker, I am happy to say that we are pleased to be sending this bill to the committee stage. I know that I have the support of the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) because he proudly represents the community of St. Laurent where I come from. So with that, with the support of the Minister of Natural Resources, I shall end my comments. Thank you very much.

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to put a few comments on the record about Bill 78 before it passes to committee.

There are three sections to this bill I think that are of significance to us. The first and perhaps the largest section of this bill deals with French language services in the city of Winnipeg. There are two other sections, one dealing very briefly with environmental issues, particularly waterways, in the city of Winnipeg, and a third issue dealing with the process at City Hall and the area of community committees. Both of the latter two do give us cause for concern.

The French language rights in the city of Winnipeg derived from the efforts in 1971 when Unicity was

incorporated and the attempt then to reflect the language practices of the old city of St. Boniface as it was incorporated into the new larger unicity of Winnipeg.

I understand what the minister's intent in this bill, is to clarify and simplify the intent of those French language provisions for the city, to provide some implementation procedures and to provide some elements of reporting to the province. I understand that there are some suggestions and some discussions that are taking place in the community and may well be represented at the hearings and that there may indeed be some revisions to this after discussion. We look forward to that discussion and to seeing the bill in committee on that basis.

The section dealing with the environmental issues of building over waterways, the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), across the creek from Wolseley, has dealt with the historical aspects of this and the way in which essentially this issue of building commercial buildings over waterways has been a stumbling block, I think, between the city and the province and certainly has been an area of great concern for the residence of those people who border on Omands Creek.

When the New Democrats were in government, Mr. Speaker, one of the, I think, very important things which came out of those discussions and community concern for the preservation of Omands Creek as a green space within the city was the setting aside of parts of the area north of Portage for what is now called Bluestem Park. It is not a park which is particularly well known to people outside of the Wolseley-St. James area, but it is one that is well known in that area and has been very well interpreted in terms of signage and the preservation of parts of the long grass prairie and is certainly used by cyclists and by walkers and used very well recreationally in that area.

I think the use of that park, the public pressure that there was for that park is an indication of the very strong concerns that people have in the western part of the city about Omands Creek and about the issue of building over Omands Creek.

The minister in this bill is proposing again to turn over responsibility, to insist upon the City of Winnipeg providing for regulations dealing with buildings over creeks. Now, in The City of Winnipeg Act, the actual definition of buildings is very large,

but in this case, the principle of the bill also includes the issue of commercial buildings over waterways.

We want to be very careful on this issue, Mr. Speaker. It is an area where there is great community concern. We want to ensure that the City of Winnipeg has public hearings throughout any consideration of changes to by-laws dealing with buildings in the sense of The City of Winnipeg Act, the very broad definition of buildings in the city's plans.

We want to make sure that the community is involved in those plans. We are particularly concerned about the transition to the City of Winnipeg authority here in the absence of any agreement between the city and the province over the overall use of waterways and the overall planning for the rivers and streams of the city.

* (1340)

We believe that there is a provincial role there. The province apparently has not yet been able to get the city to agree to any overall environmental plans, and we are very concerned about transferring the responsibility to the city at this stage without that overall planning context and agreement in place. That is one of the areas that concerns us, the issue of public hearings at every stage of by-laws and changes and amendments to that section of the act.

The third section that concerns us is the area dealing with community committees and the elimination of community committees from the appeal process on variance and conditional use, Mr. Speaker. It sounds perhaps like a very small matter, but I think the minister will find, and perhaps he has already heard, that there are some very strong community concerns about the reduction in democracy that we see is happening here.

Now the minister may argue that in fact there may be some reasonable arguments for having conditional variance and such uses decided by the standing committees of council. The argument for that would be that you do perhaps achieve some planning consistency in some areas of the city of Winnipeg.

The argument against it, of course, is what you lose is a very strong community participation. It seems to us at this time, when the provincial government has reduced the opportunities for community participation in the City of Winnipeg by its reduction of the number of councillors and the move to a sort of 15-member City Council, where

people are going to be in constituencies of 40,000 to 60,000 people, what we want to see—and it is a very important principle to us—we want to ensure that the greatest possible democracy remains at the local level, at the level of the community committee.

So in the absence of the old 29-member City Council and the relatively easy access that people had, particularly in the inner city, to their city councillors, we feel that this is a move in the wrong direction. As a matter of principle, we believe that community committees should be able to be the political appeal level for changes of this nature. I think that there will be people in the community who will be speaking on this. I want to emphasize that it is in the context of the reduction of democracy that we have seen as a result of the provincial action over the last number of years and the changes that they have brought to the City of Winnipeg.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude my remarks and look forward to some of the discussion in committee on this bill.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is the second reading of Bill 78, The City of Winnipeg Amendment (3); Loi no 3 modifiant la Loi sur la Ville de Winnipeg.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On division, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On division.

Bill 85—The Labour Relations Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik), Bill 85, The Labour Relations Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les relations du travail, standing in the name of the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk). Stand? Is there leave? No? Leave is—

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. It is agreed.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): I am very pleased to speak to Bill 85 today and continue on my remarks where I left off the other day. I now have the right bill.

What we have seen from Conservative governments and Conservative-oriented governments over the years has been an outright attack on working people and the achievements that they have made over the years. In fact, a watershed occurred, I believe, in the United States, in 1980, when Ronald Reagan came to power, when he fired the air traffic controllers and he signalled, by doing that, that it was a licence to attack unions and attack organized labour.

I think that management over the world had taken great heart in what Ronald Reagan had done and took direction from what Ronald Reagan had done. What we have seen over the last years, the ensuing years since that action, is a decline in union activity in the United States, particularly in the southern United States, and we see a decrease in workers' rights and workers' benefits, essentially aiming at the lowest common denominator.

The whole orientation of Conservative ideology and Conservative thought in the matter is to drive the economies into a lower wage environment, and the idea behind that is supposedly that they will develop a more competitive environment because of that. What they have not failed to realize is what will happen in an environment like that is we will have a situation as we have in Mexico and many Third World countries, where you have very few very rich people and a whole lot of poor people without benefits. They fail to take into account that when you have a large number of poor people in any society it leads to unrest in the society and disintegration of the society. In the end society pays for the ills that the system creates. Whatever political system it is, the ills that the system creates have to be paid for.

So we see a major folly in that approach of Conservative governments to take rights away from people, contribute to confrontation between management and workers by tampering with the rights, and we know, we can see over the years where this is heading and where this is leading us. Where it is leading us is into a poorer society. We are not becoming a richer society by making people poorer. That is what this government and this government's cousins in other jurisdictions are in

fact doing. They have a broadside attack on working people in the hopes of rolling back gains that were made over the years by unions and by organized workers.

What they are attempting to do is to get down with the right-to-work states, the Alabamas, the other southern states in the United States that have very few regulations. They want to roll back the clock, Mr. Speaker. They want to bring back the good old days where you had child labour, the good old days before a workers compensation system, where you had to sue the employer if you got sick and you probably would die before you collected anything from the employer, or certainly you starved before you got anything through the courts. What we see in perhaps a different version today is the same—[interjection] Yes, as my Leader said, it is the same ideology. It is just sort of maybe cloaked in different phrases and a little different environment, but when you strip it aside, when you take away the veil, you have the same old Tory philosophy of 100 years ago, the Adam Smith "pull yourself up by your bootstrap" philosophy and survival of the fittest.

* (1350)

We have seen what happens in societies where that philosophy has been allowed to develop. What happens is people are poor, and what eventually happens, and the Conservatives should realize this, is that revolutionary forces tend to develop and, ultimately, bloodshed results and overthrows of systems occur when political systems like that are allowed to promulgate themselves. That does not have a great effect on a government such as this because, once again, they are in lock step with their friends.

(Mr. Jack Reimer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Now, I might also mention at this point that there is a tie-in directly here with the Free Trade Agreement and the reduction in the elimination of borders. Ultimately, while a concept of reduced trade barriers and so on is a beneficial one throughout the world, the fact of the matter is, the reduction in trade barriers and the promotion of free trade, in a way, promotes consumption. After all, in this generation, there has been a revival, there has been a greater appreciation of a need to conserve diminishing resources in our society.

What the free trade deal, the Canada free trade deal and the NAFTA free trade deal and any other free trade deals you have around the world do, in

essence, is they run a counterbalance to conservation, because the whole thought of governments today seems to be consumption oriented.

The member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) will understand well that in the 1960s, a Conservative government or any government around, all they had to do was pave it, right, and that was the answer. The roads needed paving so they would pave a few roads before the election. The prevailing ideology of the day was expansion and consumption. Life would be better if you could just build more roads and have more, more, more.

We are now realizing that there is a limit to this consumption, that production and consumption for production and consumption's sakes are not necessarily where we should be headed. We are very late in the game recognizing that this is the case, that in fact there may be merit in encouraging reduction in consumption.

In fact, in Ontario, I believe, and in other areas, Ontario Hydro is building in incentives and offering incentives to people who conserve the power. I believe that there will have to be an incentive-based system put in place to encourage conservation of things such as petroleum, gasoline products and other products. That is where we are headed.

On the one hand, Conservative governments are tearing down the borders, promoting consumption and promoting more production, and at the same time, having to come to grips with limited resources in our society.

Mr. Acting Speaker, what we have—and David Suzuki is a major proponent of conservation activities in this country, but David Suzuki is prone to talk about the environmental time clock. He explains it in such a way that, because of the rapid increases in population, in fact, what we have is the time clock which is only a couple of minutes, this doomsday clock is only a couple of minutes before midnight, and because of the population pressures that are increasing at such a dramatic rate, the population is doubling in such short order, the pressures put on the environment and on the resources are going to lead us to an absolutely critical situation in very short order.

Governments are going to have to come to grips very soon with having to restructure society and look at more conservation. We do not do that by chopping down the rights of workers and trying to

bring Manitoba society to the lowest common denominator.

If you want to revisit doomsday, I remember a couple of years ago in this House when the Liberals were over here and we were over in the corner, I used to ask in speeches, I used to have quizzes about Liberal campaign promises and other things. I have gotten away from doing quizzes during speeches, and I miss them every once in a while.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

But perhaps it is time that we should be looking at a doomsday clock for this government. Perhaps we should borrow on the David Suzuki idea of a doomsday clock for the environment and perhaps settle on some sort of a timetable and a doomsday clock, a political doomsday clock for this government. I would like to know where we should start this doomsday clock. It seems to me that we should perhaps set this doomsday clock less than an hour anyway—let us say, for the sake of argument, 58 minutes from now. Let us agree in this House collectively that we have but 58 minutes before this government faces its political doomsday.

I am saying to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) that the clock is now at 58 minutes and ticking. As more speeches are made in this House, I will try to update, I will let you know where the doomsday clock moves to, as we progress. As my colleague the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) has pointed out, this government only has two years or two members, whichever comes first—whichever comes first. That is the warranty on this government—two years or two members—and I would not feel too comfortable.

We made that mistake, as I pointed out before. We felt a little too comfortable, took some chances we should not have. We have learned. So the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) is right, two members or two years, whatever comes first. That is the warranty on this government, and the doomsday clock is ticking.

It may be ticking in seconds today, but it may take a jump in minutes, and it can happen. It can happen very quick. It is initiatives like this. It is attacks on working people. It is attacks on working people like Bill 85, another one of the government's famous repeal bills that are going to move that doomsday clock toward its inevitable twelve o'clock positioning and the end of this government.

I guess we cannot be unhappy about that. In many respects, our criticism of this government may serve to bring them to their senses and be a little more realistic and reasonable than they are. I guess that would be counter to our long-term political interests because we certainly do not want to encourage them to be overly reasonable. This is not something that working people are going to take kindly to.

I expect to see a turnout at the committees over the next few days of people coming forward to oppose this action which once again is in keeping lock step with what the Chamber of Commerce wants. We have the communiqué, and I remember getting this last year from the Chamber of Commerce. Orders to the Conservative government, I am sure, were given at the time.

They say their mandate is to bring about changes in labour legislation that will improve the climate for business and investment in Manitoba. That is the body that is dictating what this government is doing in terms of labour legislation. This government is hell-bent on the path of rolling back whatever labour legislation they can get away with, to bring back the law of the jungle, but more importantly to keep in synch with what their business community wants.

* (1400)

After all, they are two years away from the election—[interjection] Two years or two members, the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) points out, and they have to now start to curry favour with that business community and make certain that those donations are there, that the monies are in place for the re-election campaign. They have no Ross Perots in their group, unless it is the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) who sees himself as a bit of a Ross Perot.

I would be worried if I were the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province. I would not want to get the member for Portage la Prairie too mad at me at this point because you never know, he might take a sheet from the United States political system and decide to run for Premier in the next election. As the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) points out, H. Ross Connery, and fortunately, he is not within earshot at the moment, or I am sure I would hear a very quick response from him. [interjection] No doubt I will. I would not want to encourage that.

I spent two hours with him on CJOB last week. Fortunately, he is not as up-to-snuff as he used to

be so I was able to whack him around pretty good on CJOB, and I had him on the ground—[interjection] Well, he was standing in for the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) who was well briefed on his car bill, and the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) was not quite as well briefed, so he did not have a chance.

Nevertheless, I did want to put the comments that I have on the record. I do not want to take up too much more time of the House because I know there are other members on our side who want to address this bill. With that, I think that I will now defer and desist and turn the floor over to the member for Thompson. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: The House has already granted leave for the honourable member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that this matter could remain standing in her name. Is the House ready to rescind that at this time?

An Honourable Member: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave? That is done.

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I would just like to take a few brief moments to add a few comments about this bill.

To have a healthy province, to have a healthy economy, we have to have a government that is committed to a healthy economy and a government that is committed to its people, a government that is committed to invest in the province. We also have to have a healthy labour force in the province.

In fact, we had a record of having a very good labour force, a stable labour force in Manitoba, but in the last few years, we have not had a government that is committed to the people of Manitoba, particularly when it comes to investing in our economy, creating jobs and keeping things going. We have also not had a government that has been prepared to support our work force in this province. Instead, we see a government that continues to attack our work force and bring in legislation that makes it more difficult for them to be organized.

There are many working people in this province who choose to be organized. Through organizations and unions, the standards for our working people in Manitoba and across this country have risen tremendously. If we look back at what the labour movement has done, all Manitobans and all Canadians have benefitted from it. What we see this government trying to do is unfair to the working

people, when they make efforts to make it more difficult for people to become organized.

As I say, Mr. Speaker, there are many groups that do not want to become organized. They are quite happy with things the way they are. At other times, there are groups that do want to have a union established, and I think it is unfair that government should be taking steps just to cave in to the business community, to the Chamber of Commerce, to make it more difficult for people to become organized.

Mr. Speaker, it is regrettable that the government should take steps that would lower the standards for people. I think that this government should have taken—not only this government, but other governments should take a stronger stand when we are fighting for our working people in this country, rather than trying to lower the standards of living and stepping in tune with the Americans and now the Mexicans, where the working conditions are much more difficult than they are here in Canada, where people are paid a much lower wage and live a much lower standard of living. This government, the Canadian government, should be going to those countries and working toward raising the standard of living for all people of the world rather than trying to compete with a much lower wage and bringing the level of Canadian employees and Manitoba employees down.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am very disappointed that this government is moving in that direction to lower the standard and to interfere with the labour relations. There are regulations that are put in place that would allow people to become organized when they choose to do so, but I think that it is improper that there should be interference and moves to make it more difficult for this type of organization.

We know that when groups become more organized, there is more strength for the people and the ability for them to have a better representation. I see no problem with that. We see no problem when the bankers join a banking association to have a stronger voice. We see no problem when other business groups—[interjection] That is right. Farmers have a group that they can organize themselves through to have a stronger voice. We have CAP. We have the farmers union groups. We have no problem with those people organizing. We do not put in strong regulations to make it more difficult for them to have an organization.

I see no reason why we should be making it more difficult for those people who are working. We all should have the ability. By organizing and having a united voice, we have a stronger voice. That is what people should be allowed to do. [interjection] The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) says we should be able to associate with whomever we want. That is true, but workers, if they want to organize, should be able to associate with their groups, and it should not be made more difficult, as these changes will make it more difficult. When you change the required compulsory vote from 55 to 65 percent, that also makes it more difficult for them to organize.

Mr. Speaker, again, I think that this government, any government, would have support if they were looking at raising the standards of people working and taking a strong voice to other countries to try to raise the standards of working conditions rather than trying to compete with those who are at a lower level and lowering the standards of where people are today. Our forefathers have done much work in this country, working within union movements to work for better conditions, and we would not want to see standards lowered.

So with that, Mr. Speaker, I will close my comments. We look forward to hearing presentations from committees but have to express our disappointment in a government that moves toward lowering the standards and interfering, making it more difficult for those people who do want to become unionized. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): I am in fact pleased to be able to speak on Bill 85—not pleased because of the contents of this bill. This is another part of the Conservative antilabour agenda that I talked about earlier today.

In fact, I will demonstrate today just how far the Conservative government is willing to go to implement that agenda, as evidenced in Bill 85. At the beginning of my comments—[interjection] Mr. Speaker, well, the Minister of Highways (Mr. Driedger) says why can I not just take the other speech and apply it? Because they still have not learned. They still keep bringing in bills like this year after year. Until they stop bringing in this antilabour legislation, we are going to have to stand here in our place and fight it.

* (1410)

Mr. Speaker, believe you me, we are going to fight any antilabour move on behalf on this government. They are going to have to sit here and hear speeches such as the one coming up, because the bottom line is that this bill is the bias and perception bill.

I am going to demonstrate in my comments today and document the fact that it is the "bias bill," because Conservatives in the 1990s still have not understood why people select to choose to represent themselves through a union. Conservatives in 1992 still do not understand that when working people say yes to a union, they mean yes—not maybe, not no. They mean yes.

They still have not understood that the working people of this province do not need the Conservative government to come in there and tell them how they are supposed to handle their own affairs. If they say yes to a union, they do not need any Conservative government advising them in any way, shape or form. They know how to make those decisions, and that is where I am going to start in terms of the bias.

I am going to talk about perception as well, because on what basis are they doing this, Mr. Speaker, apart from the bias? On what basis? Well, I have said earlier about the Chamber of Commerce agenda, and I have before me a communiqué from April 8, 1991. The headline, I think, is very forthright and honest on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce. The communiqué, by the way, is The Voice of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce.

It says: Chamber Tackles Labour Legislation. I will get into the details of this in a few minutes. But on what basis are they arguing for changes in labour legislation? It says here that they want to deal with the perception that Manitoba is an antibusiness province—the perception, Mr. Speaker. I want to deal with that, and I want to deal, as I go through the principles in this bill, with exactly what this bill is all about, where the push for this bill is coming from and why this bill is such bad legislation.

Let us start with the bias. In these few pages in the bill, the bias is very obvious, Mr. Speaker. It seems to me the Conservatives have an excuse for every time that a group of employees decides to select to have a union represent them in terms of matters related to collective bargaining, because you can read in between the lines here. They have

got 1,001 reasons why those employees said yes, but they did not really mean yes. That is the mentality of the Conservative party. Yes, they signed union cards, but they must have been coerced or misled, or they did not know what they were doing, and I will go through that.

Mr. Speaker, if you want to look at some of the provisions here in terms of information provided to an employee, this bill brings in a requirement that unions disclose the dues that are payable. You know, I took the time to research—[interjection] In fact, if the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) would care to listen for a second, he will understand. I took the time to research by looking at the union cards that many people sign, many unions use. You know, there are no ifs, ands or buts. That disclosure is there. Most unions currently disclose the union dues, because they know that the first question people are going to ask is: If I join a union, how much is it going to cost me?

So, Mr. Speaker, it is interesting that in this case, this section is being put in. There is no similar requirement on disclosure in terms of employees to disclose anything, even related to statements they can make, and I will get into that. There is no requirement of disclosure on the employer's side, but I am sure that there are some people in the Conservative caucus who still believe that most people do not know what they are doing when they are signing a union card, they do not know how much it is going to cost them.

I mean, what are they saying, that people do not know what they are doing? Are they questioning their ability to make that judgment? We are talking about workers who decide on which government is elected, federally and provincially, Mr. Speaker. Are they going to say that they did not know what they were doing? I do not think so. Even though we do not like this government and we do not think they would get re-elected if an election was held today, we do not say the people did not know what they were doing when they made the selection. Right or wrong, whether we agree with it, the people are always right. In this case, they have to understand, when working people say yes to a union, it is not because they did not know how much money they were going to pay in dues. They know. They ask those questions, and the union provides that information.

So let us start with that bias, Mr. Speaker. Well, let us go beyond that. Conservatives also like to

think that, well, if they put that in, there is still another problem, because currently in legislation in Manitoba, there is a prohibition on employers in terms of what they can say to employees. Where does that develop from? Why is it there? You know, the Conservatives have difficulty in understanding this whole concept.

If you are an employee, you can either bargain individually with your employer or you can bargain collectively. The only choice that is really involved in choosing a union is whether you want a union to represent you and your fellow workers on a collective basis. That is what unions are all about. That is what collective bargaining is about, Mr. Speaker. Indeed, there are many, many people who support the collective bargaining process.

Conservatives have trouble with that. They have a big difficulty. Indeed, the Chamber of Commerce has a big difficulty with the way in which employees make their decision. I want to use an analogy, Mr. Speaker, in this, because it is an important question here. The Chamber of Commerce has been very critical with the fact that we have very clear prohibitions in Manitoba against employers making statements and becoming involved in the choice of employees as to who represents them.

I want to use an analogy, because let us put it really down to what it really is, Mr. Speaker. Take free trade. We have a proposed free trade agreement with Mexico, the United States and Canada. If you want to take the Conservative argument and the Chamber of Commerce argument to the logical extension, we should allow the Americans and the Mexicans to come in, in the next election, and become involved in our elections. We should tell them to come in and advertise and use whatever force they can to get through a North American Free Trade Agreement because they are affected by it. It is the analogy.

An Honourable Member: That is right. That is what they did in the last federal election.

Mr. Ashton: Well, indeed, some of us feel that is essentially what happened when many of the multinational corporations poured in tens of millions of dollars to support free trade. When Conservatives opposite say that George Bush should have a say on the North American Free Trade Agreement or Salinas—I wish, Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) would listen for awhile. Would he say that George Bush and President Salinas in Mexico should be

guaranteed, under our Charter of Rights, the right to be able to say whether they agree with the North American Free Trade? Should they be allowed to become part of the election process here in Canada?

(Ms. Rosann Wowchuk, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

Madam Acting Speaker, I know your views on this matter. I know your views, you are a fair-minded individual.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Ashton: If you would like me to sit down so you can bring the House to order, I am sure I would be willing to oblige.

But let us look at the scenario in terms of collective bargaining. What did the Chamber of Commerce say? What does the Conservative party parrot now in Bill 85? They are saying that the employers should have a right, in fact, fairness, under the Charter of Rights, is what this talks about, to be able to participate in the employees' decision about who represents them at the bargaining table. On the one side, you have management, the business; on the other side, you have got the employees, represented either by a union or represented individually.

So what the Conservatives are saying is you allow the employer to sit on the one side of the table, but you also allow them to go and influence the vote on the other side. No one would suggest that on North American Free Trade and no one in their right mind in this province in 1992 should suggest we do the same in labour relations.

I understand that the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) does not understand the basic fairness issue of having employers having the ability to influence employees' decisions. Madam Acting Speaker, the Minister of Agriculture seems to have one rule of fairness per cap in agriculture producers and another for Manitoba workers.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Point of Order

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, you have all the experience in the Chair, I know, and I have trust in your ruling, but you know that it is wrong to impugn motives against anybody in this House and to suggest that my colleague the Minister of

Agriculture does not understand fairness is simply totally wrong and it is impugning—

* (1420)

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): There is absolutely no shred of evidence at all that the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) was not speaking totally in order in everything he said with the Minister of Agriculture. I would ask you to rule against the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), the sage member for Lakeside, the formerly sage member for Lakeside, who knows the rules or should know the rules after 26 years in this House, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: On the point of order raised, the honourable minister did not have a point of order.

Mr. Ashton: I want to read what the current legislation says: Every employer and employer's organization and every person acting on behalf of an employer and an employer's organization who participates in or interferes with the formation, selection or administration of a union or the representation of employees by a union that is the bargaining agent for the employees or contributes financial or other support to a union commits an unfair labour practice.

Mr. Speaker, what this does is ensure that employers remain neutral in the decision of the employees. The employers bargain, the employers relate either to the union, which represents all the employees, or to the employees individually. The employer has no more right in terms of influencing which union or if a union is selected by the employees than does Canada to have the direct outside interference of the United States or Mexico. Let us understand that. Employees have the right to bargain collectively, and employees have, in legislation currently, the right to do so without the interference or coercion of employers.

You know this goes back to the bias again. The Conservatives do not understand that employees say "yes" to a union because they mean yes. On this section the bias is, a lot of the Conservatives, the Chamber of Commerce, seem to have this idea that if the employers could only just say what they wanted to say, these poor employees, who do not know what they are doing, are going to say "no" to a union, Mr. Speaker. That is the mentality.

Mr. Speaker, employees vote in federal and provincial elections, and as I said earlier, no one

questions the ability of people to make the decision. Whether you like it or not, the public is always right. So why is this Conservative government adopting the mindset of some in the Chamber of Commerce—not all—who seem to figure that these same people who can pick governments, municipal, provincial and federal, cannot choose whether they want to be represented by a union or not?

That is what this section that the Chamber of Commerce has proposed, which is essentially—if you take the brief, and I have a copy of it available. I do not have to provide it to the Conservative members. I know they have already probably gone through this in great detail, Mr. Speaker, in the development of Bill 85, but if there are any other members of the House who have not seen it, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce suggested amendments to The Labour Relations Act—the blueprint, Mr. Speaker, for Bill 85. So you see what the problems are. [interjection]

I have heard some reference to the Conservatives being the farm team of the Chamber of Commerce. We certainly know they are bush league. I do not know about farm team. [interjection] The minister responsible for farm teams, Mr. Speaker.

But this bill is full of this kind of thing. There is a section in here on electioneering, on voting day, again. We have very clear legislation in terms of elections, The Elections Act, Manitoba. We have a federal act. But what is in this bill does not parallel that.

I want to tell you what this bill says, Mr. Speaker, because I want to put you, in your next campaign, in the position of having to live by this kind of legislation on election day. The current bill prohibits, on the day of election, distributing printed material or engaging in electioneering or other activity. I do not know what "or other activity" means on election day. By that definition I do not think you could do anything. I think if you were in an election you would have to leave town, Mr. Speaker, because of other activity. What is "other activity"?—saying hello to somebody on election day, saying, oh, by the way, do not forget today is election day?

Well, Mr. Speaker, if you take this to its logical conclusion, on election day we could do absolutely nothing. What does it include, driving people to the polls? Every party does that. Many seniors could

not get to the polls otherwise, many people without transportation.

Under this, Mr. Speaker, if you had to follow this in an election, you would not be able to drive people to the polls. It goes beyond that. We have restrictions within polling booths for elections. That makes sense. You do not want signs. You do not want people pushing people how to vote in a polling booth. But this talks not only about polling booths, this talks about the place of work.

Under this legislation, if someone goes and hands out a leaflet at the plant gate and says, oh, by the way, there is an election on today, do not forget to vote, that contravenes the act. It does not contravene The Elections Act. Under this, if someone, if a shop steward—and in fact, this applies also to business, and I think some businesses will fall into this trap. If a shop steward says, oh, by the way, do not forget today is the vote on whether we have a union or not, this says that this is an unfair labour practice. In fact, it does not even say that. Pardon me. If it said that, there might be some level of dispute, but based on this, I could see the entire certification proceedings being thrown out.

I ask you this, Mr. Speaker, would you consider it fair if someone in your campaign on election day did the terrible thing of driving someone to the polls, handing out a leaflet that said, by the way, today is an election day, or if someone in your campaign on election day talked to their neighbour and said, oh, do not forget to vote. Well, if you had to live under this legislation, you, Sir, would have been probably disqualified from serving in this House. That is how ridiculous this section of the legislation is.

Once again, it shows the biases of this government. They talk about democratic choice. They talk about democratic choice, but they will not even have the same provisions of The Election Act for elections in regards to The Labour Relations Act. They want one set of rules for provincial, municipal and federal elections, but when it comes to labour relations, they want a different set of rules, Mr. Speaker. That is not democratic and that is not fair.

Let us deal with the bias again. One of the main provisions of this bill that just shows the absolute undeniable fundamental bias of the Conservatives, is the provision that says you have to have 65 percent of employees sign a union card, Mr. Speaker—65 percent.

Mr. Speaker, let us talk about biases. Because of all these views that the Conservatives and the Chamber of Commerce has, somehow if people had said yes to a union, it was really a misunderstanding or they were misled or they were coerced or whatever reason. They deal with this in this bill by raising the requirement that currently says if you have 55 percent of employees say yes to a union by signing a union card, they then have the right to be recognized as being represented by that union. This bill says you have to have 65 percent.

Once again, the democratic principles of this party seem rather strange. If 64.9 percent of people said yes to a union, the Conservatives—well, this is the final chance to catch this here, they did not really mean it, Mr. Speaker, so they then have to have another election. That is the mentality of the Conservative party.

Indeed, with all the other changes, with employers saying what they want subject to the restriction not being coercive, and employers under this bill can say what they believe is a fact without ever having to represent it as that, without having to disclose it. They got one more chance to pull it back and persuade those poor employees who do not know what they are doing—this is the Conservative mentality—that they have another chance to say, well, yes, I signed a union card, but I did not really mean to do that.

Perhaps, in the meantime, they have been able to talk some sense into these employees, Mr. Speaker, in the traditional way, in organizing drives that some unscrupulous businesses always follow, just reminding them that the employer employs them, and if they end up signing a union card, the employer might have to, well, lay off because of financial circumstances.

If anybody doubts that happens, that is happening in 1992, even under existing legislation. It is going to happen a lot more if this government, under the Chamber of Commerce blueprint, is able to push through this kind of legislation—65 percent, Mr. Speaker. This bunch got in with a vote of 42 percent of the Manitoba electorate. I would—[interjection]

* (1430)

Well, the sound of one hand clapping. The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) is applauding himself. They probably would not get anywhere close to that if an election was held today.

Mr. Speaker, I would be quite happy, I suppose, if you want to be consistent, if the government would say now, they only got 42 percent last time, so they are going to put it to a requirement that they now have to go to a vote; 42 percent is not good enough, so they are going to put it to another election. This says 64.9 percent is not good enough, so then they have to go through another chance for the employees to be intimidated.

Well, that is the bias. It is the bias in this communication, and it is the bias of this government—[interjection] It is a bias against working people, as the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) points out.

Well, what is the sum, total, of all these little biases added up? What is it going to do? Is this just kind of a knee-jerk reaction? Is it—

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Ashton: Well, our Leader says, yes. To a certain extent, indeed it is.

But, you know, the interesting thing, Mr. Speaker, is—I remember the debates in 1984, for example, on first contract. Who can forget the advertisements in the paper about the dark cloud over Manitoba? This was going to be some terrible thing that was going to happen. What was the terrible thing? There were going to be provisions made under first contract to get a settlement without a lengthy and bitter strike—well, the dark cloud over Manitoba.

We have been watching to see if the Chamber of Commerce and the Conservatives were going to go after first contract. Well, they have done a number of things, but guess what? First contract is in here. It is still there. Why? Because it was working, Mr. Speaker. So that was a case of knee-jerk reaction that was wrong. But, you know, what is going to happen as a result of this bill is Machiavellian in the extreme.

You know, when you think about it, you do not have to worry about first contract if there is no contract. You do not have to worry about anything—final offer selection. You do not have to worry about any of the items they have gone after. If employees do not get to certify, Mr. Speaker, then you do not have to worry about any of the rest of it. If you are an employer and you do not want a union, and you do not want all the headaches that go with employees having the ability to have someone bargain for them and fight for their rights, what you do is you just make sure they do not unionize.

That is what this bill does. It is going to make it a lot tougher for people to certify, because of the provisions I have already mentioned and because of one other thing, because there is going to be a winner out of this. There is going to be one winner, no matter what happens; it is going to be the lawyers. It is going to be the lawyers because the cost of litigation surrounding The Labour Relations Act, under these provisions, is going to increase dramatically.

Is that accidental, Mr. Speaker? No, indeed. It is no accident. It is because what is going to happen is that many unions are not even going to be able to afford, even if the employees want to be represented by a union, or in a lot of cases are not going to be able to afford the cost of litigation.

If you want proof of that, Mr. Speaker, you look at British Columbia. You look at what happened in terms of the ski industry when the steelworkers had people signed up. They said yes to a union, and because of B.C. legislation, they required that go to a vote, similar to the provisions that will apply to anything less than 65 percent here. What happened was it allowed the employers to intimidate the employees; when a vote was finally taken, there was no representation by the union. It costs tens of thousands, and it costs up to \$100,000 in costs to the union, up to \$100,000. What this bill does is it does that again. It is going to use the costs of litigation as the final check on employees being able to say yes to a union. So it is Machiavellian. Yes it reflects the biases, and it is Machiavellian in the extreme.

I know some of the Conservatives will say, oh, no, no, I do not think like that. They are going to deny the biases. They are going to come up with all sorts of other arguments. You know one of the arguments they will come up with, Mr. Speaker, is going to be in terms of the business climate. This is where I get to the second part of my speech—perception.

The Chamber of Commerce says that labour legislation has created the perception that Manitoba is an antibusiness province. That is interesting. Who put out the ad on the dark cloud over Manitoba? Was it grassroots citizens? Was it the labour movement in 1984? It was the Chamber of Commerce. So wait a sec. The Chamber of Commerce for years has been trying to develop the perception of the fact that we have an antibusiness province, and now they are saying, oh, there is that

perception there. I think if anyone has created the perception, it is the Chamber of Commerce themselves—perception, not the reality—their own documents as the perception, not the reality.

Let us put that into another analogy. There was a time when there was a perception that the world was flat. If you were the Conservatives and there was a debate going on now as to whether the world is flat, we would probably be standing here saying, no, it is round, but the Conservatives would stand up, and they would say, there is a perception that the world is flat, so we are going to introduce an act that says the world is flat. That is the Conservative mentality. The Flat Earth Society of labour relations. I hope I have not offended anyone. Maybe there are some Conservatives who still believe the Earth is flat. Sometimes it takes them a while to come into the 20th and 21st Century.

The perception of this being an antibusiness province, Mr. Speaker, we have had one of the most harmonious records of labour records legislation in the country. We used to under the New Democratic Party. You know, in committee the other day, I asked the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) for the latest statistics, and in 1991, under this government, with this sort of new provincial order of labour relations, we had the highest strike rate in more than a decade. It was 20 times higher than the next highest rate in the last 10 years. You know what happened? The Minister of Labour—and I gave him credit at the time—came out with probably the most creative answer in Estimates. He said, well, if you take out the public sector strike, you take out the nurses strike, that is your middle-of-the-road year. My God, if we had the worst year in a decade and that is a middle-of-the-road year, what have we got in store for us if we have a bad year?

Let us think about it. This is under their jurisdiction. This is exactly because of their policies. This is not Inco in Thompson or HBM&S. It is not CN Rail negotiating a contract, not Bristol Aerospace. It is this government. So we did have one of the most harmonious records on labour relations. We no longer have that, Mr. Speaker, because of this Conservative government and what it is doing in terms of labour relations.

Well, I go further than that, Mr. Speaker, because we dealt with the bias, we have dealt with the perception. Let us get back to the reality, the reality of what drives this over and beyond that. What we have here is the ongoing struggle that working

people in this province have faced for more than a hundred years. The struggle is very straightforward, and it is represented in this bill.

You know, we are one of the few countries in the world where sections of business—not everyone, because there are progressive managers and there are progressive business people—who do not agree that it is positive to have people represented by a union. You know, even the Japanese, even the Europeans, even the biggest corporations in those countries will often request to have a union, because they find it is far better to sit down with a group that represents everyone and negotiate.

I tell you, Mr. Speaker, if you want proof of the failure of Canadian labour relations in that regard, you need only look at the fact that we have consistently had either the highest or the second highest rate of strikes in the world, days lost to strikes. I remember, in the 70s, people used to talk about the British disease and the strikes of that time.

* (1440)

I know people have looked to the dispute in Germany recently, and they look as if that is a high strike rate. In the 1970s, at the highest level of days lost to strikes in Britain, we had three times the days lost in Canada, three times than the case of Britain. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because Canadian strikes are often very bitter and they are often very lengthy. Many of those strikes have gone to the basis of the question, not of what the contract should be, but whether there is even a union whatsoever.

You look at the situation at CKND. They were not a new bargaining unit, but the bottom-line issue there was the attempt of CKND, of media moguls like Izzy Asper, to break the union. It went over eight months. [interjection] Well, we remember him here as Leader of the Liberal Party. We also look at the fact, during the eight months of the CKND strike, this government refused to step aside. They do on everything else, but they would not step aside when they were advertising and supporting CKND during the middle of one of the bitterest strikes in memory in Manitoba, the same thing they did on CKY.

The bottom line is we have one of the worst records on labour relations, because there are segments of the business community that will do anything to stop a union. I want to compare that to the fact that we have not the highest rate of representation of people by unions, not even the

second highest. We are higher than the Americans, but we have fewer people represented by unions than most European countries. So the strike rate has nothing to do with the number of people who are unionized. It has everything to do with the number of businesses that are trying to prevent people from having the opportunity to be represented by a union. That is what this government would prefer.

Mr. Speaker, this Conservative Party will never understand—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Ashton: Indeed, Mr. Speaker, that is the sad part. You know, this government brought in the Innovation Council, this government that talks occasionally about bringing business and labour and government together—although they will not even agree to suggestions that we put forward to have a summit to bring forward people. This government that makes the pretense on occasion of having co-operation, what it is doing with this bill is it is buying into the same psychology. The same mentality that has led us to have one of the highest strike rates in the world, one of the most adversarial systems of labour relations and, to my mind, a situation that probably more than anything else threatens our future attempts and ability to become competitive in this world.

At a time when business in Europe and business in Japan has learned that it is positive for working people to be represented by unions, this Conservative Party in Manitoba—and, yes, indeed, unfortunately, the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce—they still believe that it is better to have people not represented by a union, Mr. Speaker, at the bargaining table, subject far more to the whims of individual employers. The government has not learned the lessons of recent history.

So this is a bill about bias. It is a bill—[interjection] You know, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) talks about fairness. This bill is about a blueprint. It is about an election commitment. It is about an election payoff.

As I said, every election the Conservatives and Liberals go before the Chamber of Commerce, and it is just a question of how high they up the ante, Mr. Speaker, in terms of labour legislation and in terms of business taxes. It is just a question of upping the ante.

But, you know, the bias of the Conservatives has nothing to do with fairness. The perception of the Chamber of Commerce has nothing to do with fairness. The Machiavellian agenda that some have of keeping unions out, like they do in the United States in right-to-work states, Mr. Speaker, has nothing to do with fairness.

You know, I have a feeling this debate will continue, because as I said earlier this is the fifth session that the Filmon Conservative government has brought in an antilabour agenda. It is the fifth session in a row. I am beginning to wonder when the Chamber of Commerce is going to run out of briefs that the Conservatives are going to say yes to. We said earlier that the question seems to be how high they want to jump. Well, they have been jumping and jumping and jumping for four or five years. When are they going to stop? There has to be a break in this.

You know, we are in the worst situation economically in this province we have ever been in since the depression of the 1930s. [interjection] Well, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) says, not true. He obviously has not been up to northern Manitoba to talk to the communities. They are in the worst situation, Mr. Speaker, that they have been in in many years. He has not been in the rural communities which have been hard hit by the decline in terms of world prices. He has not been in the city of Winnipeg that is ending up now competing with St. John's, Newfoundland, as a city of depression, recession and unemployment.

They, Mr. Speaker, have to recognize this is the worst we have been in since the Great Depression. You know, there is always going to be an element of push and pull in labour relations in this country. Some might even call it industrial relations warfare. Being something of a pacifist myself, I hate to use that terminology, but you know, even in wars, they have cease-fires. We have had four years of all-out warfare on labour legislation and the labour movement, but I just want to say that we are in the worst economic situation and I want to appeal to the government. Can you not just for once say no to the Chamber of Commerce?

Can they not just for once say, we need to get everybody together to resolve the economic circumstances? We did it on the Constitution, Mr. Speaker, an all-party approach. Can we not pull it together in terms of the economy?

You know, Mr. Speaker, the fight will continue. When we form government again—as the member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) said earlier, all it will take is two years or two members opposite—I do not think I am giving away any secrets, and I hope our Leader will not take offence if I do that, but we can very easily roll back everything the other way. Bill 85 will become a footnote in history if we form government. I do not think I am giving away any secrets in that regard.

We can bring back a lot of the things the government has taken away. Indeed, I will make a prediction—we will probably do it. But, you know, in the two years or two months or whatever time it is before the next election, after four years plus of a tax on the labour movement in terms of labour legislation, of cuts to the Unemployed Help Centre, in terms of cuts to the Labour Education Centre, in terms of cuts to the \$4,000 scholarship to the Labour College which has been in place since 1963, in terms of the workers compensation cuts, could we not, from this government, have a cease-fire?

Could we not have from this government, Bill 85 put aside? Could we not have this government put out a hand of conciliation to the labour movement? Could we not have the government say, now is not the time for this kind of legislation? Could we not have the government pull everybody together and get us working together to solve the problems with the economy?

Mr. Speaker, I think we are kidding ourselves if we think there is going to be an easy recovery in this province. All the statistics in the world do not hide the fact that we are slipping in this province. I say this as a resident of a northern community who looks at the city of Winnipeg, in particular, and sees Winnipeg slipping, much of the manufacturing, industrial base slipping. I see the rural communities. I see dead communities and dying communities in northern Manitoba. I see it in rural communities.

This province is not going to be saved from a bounce-back, an economic recovery. We are in for some long-term problems in this province economically. The only way that we are going to get out of this is if we get rid of this kind of adversarial approach the Conservatives typify. If we are going to survive not only globally, but if we are going to survive in the context of Canada, Mr. Speaker, we do not need Bill 85. We do not need bias. We do not need perception. We need fairness for working

people, and that is why we will be opposing Bill 85 today on second reading and in committee and on third reading. Thank you.

* (1450)

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of words that I would like to put on the record with respect to Bill 85 and for different reasons, no doubt. I can say that we will be voting against Bill 85, and it is not as a direct result of consultations with a few individuals. It is, in fact, based on a number of talks and discussions and debates that we have had within our caucus. I wanted to briefly go over some of my thoughts and the Liberal Party caucus thoughts in terms of the union movement and how very important it is.

Before I go into the latter part of my speech when I want to caution those who follow what happened in the political atmosphere of the NDP versus the Conservatives and what they feel is in the best interests of the worker, at which point in time, Mr. Speaker, I will attempt to try to express that even though you might know not to trust the Conservatives, your worst enemy in many cases is the people who tend to believe that they in fact stand up for the workers and in fact they do not stand up for the workers, and I intend to comment on that.

Manitoba has played a crucial role in history in terms of the union movement. Many across Canada know of the 1919 strike and so forth. We all recognize, I believe, that there is a place and a role for the union movement. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I would argue that it is in the best interests of both the worker and the business person and management to have a very strong union movement and to do whatever possible to encourage that the union movement gains strength, that the unions do provide an essential role not only in Manitoba but in society as a whole, because not only does it represent just the worker, it represents many other different issues that have an impact on all aspects of our lives.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to make reference to The Labour Relations Act and before I do that, I am sure that everyone is well aware that the union movement was around a lot longer than The Labour Relations Act.

When The Labour Relations Act came into being, I was interested in the very first WHEREAS, and I want to read it for those whom I know have not read it: "WHEREAS it is in the public interest of the

Province of Manitoba to further harmonious relations between employers and employees by encouraging the practice and procedures of collective bargaining between employers and unions as freely designated representatives of the employees."

Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that this is a preamble that we feel very comfortable with in the Liberal caucus, and also would suggest to you that both the Conservative government and the previous NDP administration are in violation of that WHEREAS, and I say that with all seriousness. I believe that it does not matter if it is New Democrats or Conservatives who are in office, both parties feel obligated to bring forward legislation to cater to a few selected individuals, and to the Leader of the New Democratic Party, that is not silly.

I can recall Bernie Christophe jumping up saying: We win, when the member from the New Democratic Party led. I am going to go and talk in terms of some of the affiliation, and I do not expect the Leader of the New Democratic Party to listen to what I am saying, but I would expect him to listen to someone that he knows, in fact, participated in his caucus.

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

I will be accurate. They will be specific quotes in whichever the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) could not deny when he was sitting at the table when these assertions were being made. I will put on the record those quotes once again.

This bill, Mr. Acting Speaker, deals in principle by increasing the automatic vote from 55 to 65 percent for the certification, we feel is wrong, that it is not necessary, that there was absolutely no need to do it. Unfortunately, the government has decided to bring it in. I would suggest to you that I can appreciate the reason why they brought it in, and many of the comments made by the member for Thompson are, in fact, correct when he talks about the Chamber of Commerce—with the exception, of course, when he made reference to the Liberal Party. I might contest and debate that, but I will not choose this time to do it. But it is valid.

What type of a message is this government sending? Mr. Acting Speaker, whether it is a large working group or a small 10 or 12 work force, the government is sending the wrong message to those who want to further the cause of the union movement.

As I alluded to at the beginning, if all sides really and truly desire to have a union movement and efforts were put in that direction, everyone would win because I sincerely believe, as I pointed out, that both business and the worker win if they are given the opportunity to. Far too often, we see the political agenda taking over, and the real loser has been, unfortunately, the worker in the business.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the act also allows for the employer to make statements of fact during union certification. Again, I would concur with most of the remarks made by the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), that the message this government is sending out to the worker is in fact wrong, that—[interjection] and I can assure the Deputy Premier that this is not a coalition.

In fact, what we are trying to present is what I feel is absolutely essential for us to have, what The Labour Relations Act talks about having in its preamble. What the government has done with those two issues is, it has sent a message that is wrong. They have sent a wrong message.

* (1500)

So I wanted to talk in terms of—as I had mentioned, there are issues that come up with regard to The Labour Relations Act. We have always been of the opinion, Mr. Acting Speaker, that what should be required is, any legislation that comes through should have to go through the Labour Management Review Committee, as the government does, but the difference, I would suggest to you, that is important and that is needed is that recommendations should not be lopsided. You should not have labour saying this, business saying this and then accepting it as a recommendation. You need to have both labour and business representatives on the Labour Management Review Committee onside in order to call it a recommendation, in our opinion, from the review committee.

Mr. Acting Speaker, if you do not have that recommendation, I would suggest to you, whether it is an NDP administration or a Conservative administration, that it is a political decision. Whenever you get a political decision, there are two losers, the worker and the business person. Until the other two parties inside this Chamber realize that, we will continue to have debates of this nature. We will continue to have the NDP saying one thing when they are in opposition, doing another thing when they are in government. We will continue to

have the Conservatives condemning any sort of forward movement of the unions.

Now, having said that, I wanted to talk in terms of—as I said, most union members, most of our society knows the Conservatives' philosophy and where they come from when we talk about labour issues. Most know that. They know not to trust the Tories when it comes to dealing with labour relations. This bill, Mr. Acting Speaker, demonstrates that very clearly.

I want to warn the public, the workers if you will, not of the Conservatives because they are aware of that, but more so of the New Democratic Party. The New Democrats claim to represent the workers. You and I know, because you and I have had this discussion on numerous occasions, that in fact that is not true. [interjection] The Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) asks what my colleague has to say about the New Democrats. I can say it in two words by saying that they are morally bankrupt, I believe is how he likes to term it, to coin a phrase from the member for St. Boniface (Mr. Gaudry).

Given that we know what we do about the Conservatives, I do want to talk for the remainder of my speech with respect to the New Democratic Party. The reason why I want to do that is because I believe, as I have said on a number of occasions, that even though they claim to represent the worker, that there really and truly is only one political party inside this Chamber that represents the worker. Mr. Acting Speaker, you and I know which party that is. That is our own party. [interjection] For the member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), I am going to explain to her why I sincerely believe that. I could give her examples of the past administration, but she was not around when that past administration no doubt was here and was debating and bringing it forward.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the principle of this bill is talking about the certification, and the government is proposing to bring it from 55 percent to 65 percent. The NDP say no to that, and we too say no to that, but do you know what, the New Democratic Party will go around, and they will say 50 percent plus one is all we need in order to get certification. How do I know that?

Well, this is in fact what Premier Bob Rae talked about. Premier Bob wanted 50 percent plus one, and I quote from The Globe and Mail, where it says that Ontario softens on labour legislation, and it goes that the government initially had suggested in

a discussion document last November that a simple majority would be enough to clinch an automatic certification.

Well, they have backed off on that now. Now they take the position of the 55 percent. A large number of union leaders were disappointed in what they were promised prior to the NDP administration going into—while the NDP were in opposition.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Now, Mr. Speaker, the NDP in Manitoba might try to say, well, that is Ontario and we are in Manitoba. I made reference to the Leader of the New Democratic Party that I was going to quote from someone, whom no doubt he has had many conversations with. I want to quote from someone who introduced himself and basically said this is who he is.

I was a lawyer for the Manitoba Federation of Labour for many years. I was Labour critic for the New Democratic Party. I was on the committee which drafted The Labour Relations Act which provided for more free collective bargaining and took away many of the restrictions on free collective bargaining that existed before we came. I had the good fortune to be associated with people like Bob Russell, Jimmy James and other trade unionists whose names are legendary in this province.

This is a New Democrat, and the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) says that is right. Well, she might not necessarily agree with what else this particular person had to say. This individual was Sid Green. Sid Green came before committee and when he talked about the unions, and I should not even say the unions, when he talked about the union executive of a few selected individuals, this is what he had to say. They never got those laws. He was inferring that there were a number of laws that the unions were wanting from the NDP while the NDP were in opposition. They never got those laws, but they got some promises. They got promises from Howard Pawley, Muriel Smith, Jay Cowan that if you get off this free collective bargaining pitch, we will enact legislation which prohibits an employer from hiring people during the existence of a lawful strike, which I said could never happen, would never be and was totally contrary to the principles of the free collective bargaining—[interjection].

Yes, to the member from Radisson (Ms. Cerilli), that is right, antiscab legislation. That is what

Howard Pawley and company promised the union movement while he was in opposition.

It goes on after I had asked Mr. Green the question just to clarify it, the trade union movement was promised that there would be legislation that said that when there was a strike the employer was prohibited from hiring people. They were not promised it and the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) said, no, no, that is not true, from his seat in committee. Mr. Green said, as he was making his presentation, they were not promised it, quoting from the member for Thompson, and his response was, I was there when the promises were made. I heard them made; I heard them made directly. They were promised that—Mr. Ashton is shaking his head. I was in the room when the promises were made. I was there when they tried to extract similar promises from me and would not get them.

It is things of that nature no doubt that had Mr. Green leave the New Democratic Party, among other things no doubt. The New Democratic Party has demonstrated, on many occasions, that when they are in opposition they will do whatever is necessary in order to become the government of the day, even, Mr. Speaker, at the expense of the worker. Again, the reason why I say that is because we know where the government is on, on the worker and on unions. The big lie—I do not know if that is parliamentary? It is not? I withdraw it—is that the New Democratic Party is, in fact, the party that does not represent the worker. They manipulate the worker. They tell them that they represent them. They make promises to the worker. They make promises to them, and when they form government they break those promises. They cannot deny that. Not one of them can stand in their place to deny it.

That is not all. The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) in his speech talked about Izzy Asper and the Liberals and the Conservatives on CKND. Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the member for Thompson that I walked the picket line on CKND. I suppose they did not know that. I wonder if the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) walked the picket line of his workers when the NDP office was on strike. Did he walk the picket line? At one time I brought this up and I said no one from the New Democratic caucus walked that picket line. When I said that, I was told that it was not true. I asked which MLA, which one, walked the line. That was months ago. I have not heard one name. I was asked if I would walk—from one of the media

people—if I would walk the line. I said I would be more than happy to walk the line with the Leader of the New Democratic Party.

* (1510)

Mr. Speaker, I was interested in terms of why it is that they were on strike in the first place. What would cause individuals who work for the New Democratic Party to go on strike? You know what the issues were? It was on contracting out, something that the New Democratic Party while in opposition condemned at every opportunity they get. They condemn any form of contracting out. I had heard that one of the things that they wanted to contract out were the policy decisions or they had an annual general meeting coming up and they need to contract out the paperwork.

Another major issue, cuts to maternity benefits and threats to job security. These are the issues that the New Democratic Party fought hard for in opposition and fight today, but when it comes from within, when it comes to dealing with the people, the worker again, even in opposition, when it comes to the worker, they are abandoning them again. This time it is when they are in opposition. Usually they are with them when they are in opposition; they are only against them when they are in government.

Mr. Speaker, there were a number of news articles that were printed. I would not mind reading through a number of them, but I go through it and I notice—the member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) I know is really enjoying this, because he is now sitting beside me and biting on every word that I have to say. I shall read with him, and maybe he can suggest which one I should read, as long as he does not take the paper away from me. Well, this article is a real bad one. He just took the paper.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): We are happy to see the NDP are willing to bargain with their employees.

Mr. Lamoureux: Now, let us take another quote from that same article, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Plohman: Okay, my turn.

Mr. Lamoureux: NDP Leader—no, the paper disappears again—Gary Doer, who has often walked the picket line with striking unions in support of their cause, was out of the province, unavailable for comment.

This is what one of the workers had to say, one of the people who were walking the line: We do not believe we should be on this line. We are New

Democrats. But when the party does not live by its own policy, we have to stand and be counted—the local union president, Janice Ducharme.

You know, Mr. Speaker, that this worker really and truly just found out what the NDP party is all about.

Mr. Plohman: It is not NDP party—ND Party.

Mr. Lamoureux: ND Party, Mr. Speaker.

There are so many wonderful quotes. Unfortunately, I am not going to have the time.

But the thing that I am trying to get across is for the workers, for the union members, to be aware that we know where the Conservative Party is on labour laws, on unions and so forth, but they are being manipulated by the New Democratic Party. They are being manipulated in the worst way, because once they are in opposition—and I tell this, Mr. Speaker, to those leaders such as Susan Hart-Kulbaba, such as Bernie Christophe, such as Al Cerilli. When they are sitting down in the same room as the Leader of the New Democratic Party—

An Honourable Member: Al is retired.

Mr. Lamoureux: Al is retired, but I am sure that the Leader (Mr. Doer) still has contact with Mr. Cerilli.

When they are sitting around a table, Mr. Speaker, and the NDP party in opposition make promises, I will warn you now that they will not keep their promises. Those promises were made in the past. Those promises were broken in the past. If you believe that this is because it is a new Leader—it is not Howard Pawley—that the promises will become laws, look what is happening in the Province of Ontario, where the promises are once again being broken, maybe not to the same degree, in fact, that those promises were broken in the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I did want to conclude my remarks by once again saying that we feel it is essential, when we are talking about labour legislation, that the Labour Management Review Committee's recommendations that become law should be based on a consensus of both management and labour representations, Mr. Speaker, because only by having both union and business coming to an agreement on what is in the best interests of the worker and the business person, then and only then will we take out the politics from the Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party.

Mr. Speaker, having said that, we are prepared to allow the vote to occur but can indicate to you, we will not vote for this bill. We will not vote for this bill because this government is sending the wrong message, and it is just a bad bill.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 85, The Labour Relations Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les relations du travail. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

Mr. Speaker: The Yeas have it.

* (1520)

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

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

Yeas

* (1530)

Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Downey, Driedger, Ducharme, Enns, Ernst, Findlay, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Manness, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Neufeld, Orchard, Penner, Praznik, Reimer, Render, Rose, Vodrey.

Nays

Alcock, Ashton, Barrett, Carstairs, Cerilli, Cheema, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Gaudry, Hickes, Lamoureux, Maloway, Martindale, Plohman, Reid, Santos, Wasylycia-Leis, Wowchuk.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 24, Nays 22.

Mr. Speaker: The motion is accordingly carried.

Committee Changes

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations be amended as follows: River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) for St. James (Mr. Edwards). [Agreed]

House Business

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would ask the unanimous consent of the House to consider the following.

There have been discussions between House leaders, and I think you will find that there is unanimous consent for the following:

First of all, to permit the Standing Committees on Industrial Relations and Law Amendments to sit in the afternoon and the evening while the House is sitting. I am thinking specifically about Monday and Tuesday, next week.

Secondly, to transfer the Aboriginal Justice Initiatives Estimates from the committee room to the Chamber to be considered prior to all other Estimates still to be considered.

And, thirdly, to permit the House on Monday to sit beyond 10 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent of the House to permit the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations and Law Amendments to sit in the afternoon and the evening while the House is sitting on Monday and Tuesday. Is there leave? [Agreed]

Is there also leave to transfer the Aboriginal Justice Initiatives, the Estimates, from the committee room to the Chamber to be considered prior to all other Estimates still to be considered? Is there leave? [Agreed]

Is there also leave to permit the House to sit beyond 10 p.m., Monday. Is that agreed? [Agreed]

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I would like to make a number of committee announcements at this time.

I would like to refer a number of bills to committees. First of all, Bill 42 to Industrial Relations; Bill 64 to Law Amendments; Bill 70 to Law—I am going to change that, Mr. Speaker. Bill 64 also to Industrial Relations, and Bill 70 to Industrial Relations; Bill 78 to Law Amendments; and Bill 85, just having passed second reading, to Industrial Relations.

Mr. Speaker, the business of the House for Monday as announced previously, the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs sitting at 10 a.m. in the morning, to consider Bills 20, 34, 49, 82 and 79. Also the Standing the Committee on Economic Development sitting at 10 a.m., Monday morning, to consider Bills 9, 61, 62 and 84. In the afternoon, Monday, sitting at approximately 2:30, we will call the Committee of Industrial Relations at 2:30 to consider Bills 76, 42, 85, 64 and 70. That committee will also sit at 7 p.m., Monday evening, Industrial Relations, to consider those same bills.

In the afternoon, Law Amendments will sit again, proceeding at approximately 2:30 to consider Bill 78. In the evening, Law Amendments will also sit to consider again Bill 78 and Bill 98, should it pass this House on second reading later on this afternoon.

Mr. Speaker, those are the announcements for the work in hand on Monday. There will be certain of these committees that will not complete their work, obviously. There will be meetings called, therefore, in standing committee for Tuesday morning, and the House announcement will be made later Monday afternoon.

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

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I just want to make sure that the Monday evening sittings of the committees and indeed of the House will begin at 7 p.m.

Mr. Speaker: Yes.

* * *

Mr. Manness: Would you call Bill 92, please.

Bill 92—The Provincial Auditor's Amendment Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill 92, The Provincial Auditor's Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le vérificateur provincial, standing in the name of the honourable member for Osborne.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I understand the House would like to get on to consideration of Bill 98. This bill is a fairly straightforward piece of legislation. Let us let it get to committee, and we can deal with the questions there.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, obviously this bill is before us, as I understand the remarks of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), at the request of the Provincial Auditor and his staff to afford them certain protection from legal action by people outside government in the course of the auditor's staff carrying out their official duties. It seems to us that it is an appropriate move. I do not see that there is any difficulty with members of this House supporting this piece of legislation.

So, Mr. Speaker, with that, we are prepared to see it pass and go to committee. If there is any question

at that time—there may be, but unless the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) gets me inspired to making a speech about the role of the Provincial Auditor's office in the finances of this province, I think it is a positive move. It looks to be a positive move on the part of the Minister of Finance, so we would support it passing second reading and going to committee.

Mr. Speaker: The question before the House is second reading of Bill 92, The Provincial Auditor's Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le vérificateur provincial. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

* (1540)

Hon. James Downey (Acting Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call Bill 98, please.

Bill 98—The Manitoba Multiculturalism Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship (Mrs. Mitchelson), Bill 98, The Manitoba Multiculturalism Act; Loi sur le multiculturalisme au Manitoba, standing in the name of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux).

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I must say from the onset, I had somewhat anticipated a much longer speech, so I do not know if I will need all my speech material. I was somewhat prepared, but I have 10 minutes or maybe a bit less, and after all, it will be in committee and we will have more time to talk about it.

Mr. Speaker, I wanted to virtually comment on the principle of the bill in as short a fashion as possible. There are a number of things that the bill does not include. One of those things is the Manitoba Intercultural Council, something that I spoke at length at in my earlier comments. I am going to encourage the government not to rule out, including—especially after hearing presentations—not ruling out the idea of possibly including the Manitoba Intercultural Council in the multicultural act.

This is not something that is coming necessarily from the opposition, but it is coming from the minister

herself, when she reflects back on the commitment that she had given to this Chamber a year and a half ago or so, back in 1990, I believe it was, November or December of 1990, where she herself had said that there was a multicultural act that was going to be coming forward, that MIC would be a part of that act, because she did not want to deal with it in a piecemeal way. I can appreciate what the minister is saying when she talks about the MIC, the role of MIC and that a report is going to be done on MIC with recommendations coming back sometime in the fall.

Well, Mr. Speaker, this is something that could have been and should have been done, if the minister wanted to do it, much, much earlier. In fact, they knew that they had the bill, back when the government introduced it in the throne speech or made mention of it in the throne speech, so she has had ample opportunity. At the very least, what she could consider doing is incorporating into the act MIC in some fashion, thereby showing the commitment to the Manitoba Intercultural Council in a very strong way, because I believe she has indicated on the record in the past that she is committed to MIC even though sometimes her actions are contrary to what it is she is actually saying.

Mr. Speaker, we are concerned in terms of—we would have liked to have seen a few more things inside the multicultural act that would have made it a much more popular act from the community in the sense that they could look at and they could see more teeth to the act itself. There are things that are in the legislation that we have opposed. One of the major concerns that we have, as I have pointed out previously, is the Manitoba Grants Advisory Council being inside that piece of legislation.

There are other aspects of the proposed act that the minister has brought forward that we have some concern with but can be dealt with more so as reappointments or openings of competitions through the Civil Service and so forth, that would address some of those concerns. There is wording in terms of the outreach office. When you say that the minister "may" choose to decide to have this office or—obviously by using the word "may" the minister at the time can say no to it. One has to call into question why it is that it would be in there when it is using the terminology of "may," because whether it is there or not, the minister has the option on whether or not to have an office or not. If it is in

the legislation, Mr. Speaker, I would suggest to you that you should be taking out that particular word.

No doubt, Mr. Speaker, we will be hearing a number of presentations. The minister has indicated to myself that she would be listening to the presenters to hear what they have to say and that she would be in fact receptive to amendments. I will be taking the minister at her word in hopes that we will be able to make the act a better piece of legislation and then, in the future, if we are not able to get all of the amendments that we would like to see, that we would in fact be able to have a better act after out of the committee stage than we currently do going into the committee stage.

Again, Mr. Speaker, I want to conclude that the Liberal Party will be voting for this legislation. As I say, the reason why we will be voting for the legislation is because we do feel that there are certain aspects of it, in particular, Clause 2, that do make some ground, and for the sake of having that particular clause and some of the preamble and so forth, this is a bill that does need to pass.

I would recommend that we allow it to go to committee so that we can, hopefully, as I say, have it possibly amended. I know that there are at least two amendments that we will be bringing forward, one with respect to the MGAC, the other with respect to the MIC and, hopefully, we will be able to get some headway, as the minister has indicated to myself. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radlsson): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and put my comments on the record with respect to Bill 98, The Multiculturalism Act. I am quite concerned with a lot of the things that are happening with respect to the act. I want to start off by showing my disappointment for the way the act is brought in so late in the session, even though people in the community have been calling for this since the government brought in its policy early in its mandate. They have been calling for this, wondering why it is being brought in so late in the session.

It was promised in the throne speech. It has been promised before that, and now we are seeing it come before committee just before the summer holidays. There are already 30 people, over 30 people, registered to speak on this bill on Monday evening. People are concerned about what is in this legislation. They are concerned about what is not in this legislation, and they are concerned with the manner it is being handled.

A number of the glaring omissions I have outlined through questions to the government. We have seen a demonstration for a need for an affirmative action program for the Civil Service, and the boards and commissions in the government. This government has eliminated the Affirmative Action co-ordinator with the Civil Service. There has been demonstrated a decline in the number of visible minorities employed in the Civil Service. Yet the act does not give any guarantee that there is a commitment by this government to affirmative action policies. I think that is one of the most serious and glaring omissions.

I have the multicultural policy, as outlined by the government, here. One of the amendments I am going to be putting forth—and I am glad that the minister, during Estimates, agreed that this was a reasonable amendment. I question why it was overlooked, because the amendment I am going to make, Mr. Speaker, is going to come directly from the government's own policy which, since I have been in this House, the minister has wavered in the air innumerable times. I am going to take, directly, the words from that policy which talk about ensuring that government will ensure that multicultural nature of our society is reflected in the hiring practices and of appointments to the boards and commissions and other provincial offices so that these institutions are representative of the community.

* (1550)

Mr. Speaker, this is the act that is supposed to guarantee that. This is the act that is supposed to give the multicultural community in our province, all of us, some guarantee that government is going to be more sensitive and more aware of issues that will be inclusive of all people in the province. That is the reason for this act.

The minister has gone on record making comments that she does not know if this act can cross all of the government's agencies. Well, this is not intended to be an act to just enshrine the agencies that this particular government has created. This is an act that will live on beyond this government. This is an act that is supposed to do just what the minister thinks it cannot, that it is supposed to be an umbrella for all government agencies to ensure that all government is going to live up to multicultural policies.

So I am going to put forward this amendment. As I said, it will not draw from anything other than the policy that this government has already espoused

and already put forward to the community as the government's policy for the province.

I will have to have some very good reasons for why this should not be included in this act. I think the section on multicultural policy that is in the act is fairly weak, and I hope that both the Liberals and the government will support this kind of an amendment.

The other thing that I think is very important about this act and has also raised a lot of concern is the way that the government has ignored the existing organization that has legislation of this province, and that is the Manitoba Intercultural Council. There have been concerns expressed about the handling of consultation with the Intercultural Council.

There are concerns that a number of the recommendations that they made, some of them about the cabinet committee in government—why is that not enshrined in this legislation? Why is there no mention of contract compliance in this legislation? Other recommendations including heritage language—there is some language in part of the bill about heritage language, but the section of the policy that the government espouses that recognizes the government's responsibility to ensure funding for heritage language is not as strongly worded in this policy as it could be. That is the kind of thing that people want in this act, to show that this truly is an act that is going to give people the legal recognition that they have the right to practise and promote their cultures, their cultures that are different from the mainstream culture here in Manitoba.

One of the other things that people are concerned about with respect to this act is that it is enshrining the current agency that authorizes and distributes grants in the province, that it is not including the Intercultural Council in the act. It is enshrining the secretariat, and it is going to even more legitimize it. The secretariat is taking some primacy in the government's dealing with multiculturalism, and that has happened at the expense of the grants and community support from the government.

We have seen a definite trend under this government in multicultural policy to take money that was going to the communities to run programs to show that they support all those grassroots community organizations. They have taken the money from those organizations, and they have funnelled it into creating positions that, quite frankly,

they have filled with their political friends. That is something that is a concern for me and for a number of other people in the community, and that is what I refer to as partially the way that they have politicized and bureaucratized multicultural services in the province.

They have done this at the expense of programs like the Community Places Program. That was there to fund organizations, to develop facilities in the community where they could house their operations, have offices and ensure that they had a place in the community to operate from. The other program that I mentioned that has seen the effect of this trend of taking money from the community and putting it into the bureaucracy is in heritage language programs. There are other programs like the Oral History Program which was cut under the last budget of this government which, again, gave money directly to the community so that they could develop programs.

Another example of where this trend has happened is with the Immigrant Access Centre, where there has been a trend to focus on government agencies, away from dealing with the communities and ensuring that there is contact with the grassroots in the community.

I am not saying that perhaps we do not need some of the services that the government has put in place. They have created some positions in the Civil Service that I think are quite valuable. What we are objecting to is that this has happened at the expense of the funds going directly to community organizations.

Mr. Speaker, there are a number of other comments that I would like to make with respect to multiculturalism and this act, the way that the government has been handling a lot of the concerns that are raised, but I will just say that I am looking forward to Monday night when this bill will be before the committee. We will be listening to all the viewpoints presented, and I am sure there will be a variety of views presented. We will listen, and as I said, we will be proposing some amendments which I have developed in consultation with people in the community and from my own analysis of what is needed in multicultural legislation for the province. With that, I will conclude my comments and thank you very much.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill 98, The Manitoba Multiculturalism Act; Loi sur le

multiculturalisme au Manitoba. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. All those in favour of the motion, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Mr. Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay. In my opinion, the Yeas have it.

Mr. Lamoureux: Mr. Speaker, I would ask for Yeas and Nays, please.

Mr. Speaker: A recorded vote has been requested. Call in the members.

Does the honourable member for Inkster have support? All those in support of the honourable member for Inkster will please rise.

According to our rules on division, Yeas and Nays shall not be entered into Votes and Proceedings unless demanded by not less than four members, and I would ask the four members to please stand and indicate their support.

The support is indeed there. A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members. The question before the House is second reading of Bill 98, The Manitoba Multiculturalism Act; Loi sur le multiculturalisme au Manitoba.

A Standing Vote was taken, the result being as follows:

Yeas

Alcock, Ashton, Barrett, Carstairs, Cerilli, Cheema, Chomiak, Cummings, Dacquay, Derkach, Dewar, Doer, Downey, Driedger, Ducharme, Edwards, Enns, Ernst, Evans, C., Evans, L.S., Findlay, Friesen, Gaudry, Gilleshammer, Helwer, Hickes, Lamoureux, Maloway, Martindale, McAlpine, McCrae, McIntosh, Mitchelson, Orchard, Penner, Praznik, Reid, Reimer, Render, Rose, Santos, Vodrey, Wasylycia-Leis, Wowchuk

Nays

Nil

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 44, Nays 0.

Mr. Speaker: The motion is accordingly carried.

Committee Changes

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Before adjourning the House, I will recognize the honourable member for Gimli with his committee changes.

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 Municipal Affairs be amended as follows: The member for Springfield (Mr. Findlay) for the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer); the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) for the member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld). [Agreed]

I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations for the Monday, 2:30 p.m. sitting be amended as follows: The member for Rossmere (Mr. Neufeld) for the member for Seine River (Mrs. Dacquay); the member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) for the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson); the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) for the member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst). [Agreed]

I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments for the Monday, 2:30 p.m. sitting be amended as follows: The member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) for the member for Brandon West (Mr. McCrae); the member for River East (Mrs. Mitchelson) for the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard). [Agreed]

* * *

Mr. Speaker: The hour being after 4 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m., Monday.

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

Friday, June 19, 1992

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