



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

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS
(HANSARD)**

42 Elizabeth II

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



VOL. XLII No. 63 - 10 a.m., FRIDAY, MAY 14, 1993

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 |
| 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, Clif | 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 |
| GRAY, Avis | Crescentwood | Liberal |
| 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 |
| ORCHARD, Donald, Hon. | Pembina | PC |
| PALLISTER, Brian | Portage la Prairie | 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 |
| <i>Vacant</i> | Rossmere | |
| <i>Vacant</i> | Rupertsland | |

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, May 14, 1993

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Mr. Jerry Storle (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Kari Kennedy, Kim La Rocque, Sheryl Robertson and others requesting the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

* * *

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Errol Wilson, Walter Spence, Brenda Thomas and others requesting the Family Services minister (Mr. Gilleshammer) to consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

* * *

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of R.F. Smith, Leo Spitzke, Harry Bushmay and others requesting the Manitoba Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) to consider conducting a plebiscite of Manitoba farmers as soon as possible on the issue of removing barley from the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board.

* * *

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Katie Wipf, Jack Wipf, Ann Wipf and others requesting the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Ms. Wowchuk). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Canadian Wheat Board has played a vital role in the orderly marketing of Canadian wheat, barley and other grain products since its inception in 1935; and

WHEREAS the federal Minister of Agriculture is considering removing barley from the jurisdiction of the Wheat Board; and

WHEREAS this is another step towards dismantling the board; and

WHEREAS, as in the case with the removal of oats from the Wheat Board in 1989, there has been no consultation with the board of directors of the Wheat Board, with the 11-member advisory committee to the board or the producers themselves; and

WHEREAS the federal minister has said that there will be no plebiscite of farmers before the announcement is made.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Manitoba Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) to consider conducting a plebiscite of Manitoba farmers on this issue as soon as possible.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Hickes). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned citizens of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the United Nations has declared 1993 the International Year of the World's Indigenous People with the theme, "Indigenous People: a new partnership"; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has totally discontinued funding to all friendship centres; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has stated that these cuts mirror the federal cuts; and

WHEREAS the elimination of all funding to friendship centres will result in the loss of many jobs as well as the services and programs provided, such as: assistance to the elderly, the homeless, youth programming, the socially disadvantaged, families in crisis, education, recreation and cultural programming, housing relocation, fine options, counselling, court assistance, advocacy;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Family Services minister to consider restoring funding for the friendship centres in Manitoba.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mrs. Carstairs). It complies with the privileges and the practices of the House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk: The petition of the undersigned residents of the province of Manitoba humbly sheweth that:

WHEREAS the Misericordia General Hospital has served Winnipeg for over 95 years; and

WHEREAS the Misericordia General Hospital has a long record of dedication and service to its local community and the broader Winnipeg community; and

WHEREAS the Misericordia General Hospital is identified by the residents in the surrounding area as "their hospital"; and

WHEREAS the Misericordia Hospital plays an integral part in maintaining and promoting the health of the community; and

WHEREAS the Misericordia Hospital provides diverse services including emergency, ambulatory care, diagnostic and inpatient services, acute and chronic care which are vital to the community; and

WHEREAS the Misericordia Hospital is currently engaged in developing innovative and progressive community-based outreach programs; and

WHEREAS the Misericordia Hospital is ideally located to be within the "hub" of the health care delivery network for Winnipeg.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the government of Manitoba to consider keeping the Misericordia Hospital open as an acute care facility.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

Bill 34—The Public Schools Amendment (Francophone Schools Governance) Act

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the First Minister (Mr. Filmon), that Bill 34, The Public Schools Amendment (Francophone Schools Governance) Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques (gestion des écoles françaises), be introduced and that the same be now received and read a first time.

His Honour the Lieutenant-Governor, having been advised of the contents of this bill, recommends it to the House, and I would like to table the message.

Motion agreed to.

* (1005)

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 Elmdale Elementary School, sixty Grade 5 students under the direction of Ms. Sylvia Baker and Mr. Dave Driedger. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Driedger).

On behalf of all honourable members, I would like to welcome you here this morning.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

New Careers Program Funding Reduction—Cost Benefit

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Premier (Mr. Filmon).

Manitoba has had two very unique education and training programs over the last couple of decades to deal with the growing population of aboriginal people, and the high unemployment rate and the high poverty rate for aboriginal people.

Those programs have been ACCESS and New Careers, among other programs. The New Careers program was a program that was almost sacrificed by the Sterling Lyon task force on the economy. It was a vice-president of Great-West Life who recommended we get rid of it, and even Sterling Lyon said no to getting rid of the New Careers program or reducing the New Careers program

because he understood—even Sterling Lyon understood—that it had an 85 percent retention rate over two-year training programs, which was one of the most successful programs, and a 95 percent job success rate.

The government has cut \$1.7 million out of this program. Two years ago we used to have 360 people in that program. This year we are down to 210.

What is the cost benefit for our Manitoba economy, the cutbacks that have been approved at the Premier's level in the Estimates process? What are the cost benefits for the reductions that this Premier approved?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): The amount that the member has spoken about is not entirely correct. It does not relate entirely to the New Careers program. When we get to that budget line within the Estimates, I think he will see that a good portion of that reduction, over \$800,000 of it, relates to another vocational school program within this province.

Training Period Reduction

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I asked the minister and the Premier for a cost-benefit, results of the cutback that she has made. It has gone down \$1.7 million. The clients have gone down from '90-91, from 360 down to 210 in her own Estimates book.

We have also been informed that there may be a reduction in the time period allocated for trainees. I would like to ask the Premier, will there be a reduction in the training period, which has been two years for New Careers trainees?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): As I have answered in this House before, we have had to look at a number of reductions across government and this was a very difficult process for all ministries and for government as a whole. However, we were able to maintain a commitment to our New Careers program, and we also maintain a commitment to its community-based style.

Funding Reinstatement

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): There were tough decisions made. The Tories raised the amount of money ready for corporate orientation programs, which were traditionally paid by the

companies; they raised it in this year's budget by about \$1.5 million. They took the amount of money for—they went from \$3.5 million to over \$5 million in this budget. They took the money for aboriginal people, for underemployed people, for people in poverty, in New Careers training programs, the people who are the most vulnerable, that have had a high, 95 percent success ratio, and reduced that by almost the same amount of money, in fact, a little bit more, coincidentally, in this program.

We understand that the Minister of Education whimsically wrote a note to her staff, saying that she did not think there was any success in the New Careers program. On that whimsical statement alone, corporate orientation was improved by \$1.5 million, and aboriginal training and New Careers were reduced.

Will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) now do what Sterling Lyon did and intervene in the callous decisions of his government and reinstate the funding for New Careers program in the province of Manitoba?

* (1010)

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, as I said, this government has had to make a number of difficult decisions. We have looked very carefully at the Advanced Education and Skills Training portion of our department. We are now reorganizing that department; we have moved into our department programs which were previously in the Department of Family Services, which also look at community-based training. We also have literacy programs which also are community-based training. We have maintained a commitment to the style of programming that New Careers offered; we have also maintained a budget line for New Careers.

Let me remind the Leader of the Opposition that he said in 1989, cabinet ministers on a daily basis have to say no to people, have to say no again to people, and I respect that. It is the job that goes with the territory.

ACCESS Programs Exclusions

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, when the government in its Estimates cut 16 percent from the ACCESS programs, what this may mean is that at the Winnipeg Education Centre, for example, only those who have external funds, or who can find the fees in other ways, will be able to enter the program.

I want to ask the minister: Is it her intention to change this particular program so that it will exclude non-Status Indians and immigrant people and the inner-city poor, the people for whom it was in part originally designed?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, we have had to look at, again, a number of budget decisions also in the ACCESS area. But, as I have explained to the member before, the ACCESS program funding did flow partly through the federal government, and they have changed the way in which they are funding their students in the program.

We have maintained a commitment to ACCESS programs. We assisted students last year to make sure that they would be able to finish their programs. We are now working with the institutions to look at how we can perhaps reduce the administrative costs of the ACCESS programs to provide the greatest amount of support to students in the student support area.

Ms. Friesen: Mr. Speaker, the minister has not answered my question.

Is it her intention to exclude from this program people who are not funded through external sources?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, again, as I have said to the member, the ACCESS programming and the funding which flows from this government does cover two parts of support: one is support to students, and another is support to the administrative structure. So we are now looking to work with the institutions so that we can provide the greatest amount of support to students within the ACCESS program and maintain an intake.

Students' External Funding

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, will there be students taken into the ACCESS program this year who have any funding other than band funding?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, we are looking at the intakes into the ACCESS program at this time; we are looking also at the programs that those students are applying for. When we have all that information, I will be able to let the honourable member know.

ACCESS Programs Winnipeg Education Centre

Ms. Avls Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education has been speaking this morning about the ACCESS program at the Winnipeg Education Centre and speaks about the fact that there are ongoing discussions with her department.

Can the minister tell this House today, because we do have students who are waiting to see if they can get into this program, when can these students and when can the Winnipeg Education Centre expect an answer from her department as to the status of that program?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, we are working as quickly as possible with the institutions, and we will be letting the institutions know as quickly as possible. We understand the importance for students.

Ms. Gray: Mr. Speaker, the intake part of the program was to begin on May 3, so we are already behind schedule.

Could the minister be a little bit more specific? Can she tell us when we can expect an answer and when we can let students know about that particular program?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, again, I have said to the member, we will be letting the students know as quickly as possible. We are attempting to work with the institutions. We want to make sure that we have the greatest amount of money available to assist students into the program. That is why we are looking for administrative cost savings.

* (1015)

Alternative Funding

Ms. Avls Gray (Crescentwood): Mr. Speaker, I understand that the University of Manitoba will not be giving any money to this program and in fact they have not in the past.

Can the minister tell this House today: Is her department prepared to look at any type of funding for this particular program or is that definitely not an option?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, the member has been speaking about ACCESS programs and now she speaks about another program. Perhaps we will be

able to discuss in detail her concerns during the Estimates process.

Government Departments Service Co-ordination

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I would like to respond to a question taken as notice from the member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) on Tuesday.

Questions were raised regarding the Reid report and I would like to indicate, if one takes the time to comprehend the recommendations of Judge Norton, one would find that in fact he was addressing the co-ordination of information between Child and Family Services and other social agencies and police authorities, not co-ordination of services and information between departments of this government.

In any event, Mr. Speaker, I would indicate that we have taken a number of steps with the Reid report. We have centralized the Child and Family Services in Winnipeg to enable partners in the system to address system-wide issues more effectively. We have implemented a standard on the reporting of firearms and other weapons requiring Child and Family Services agencies to document and report the actual or potential use of weapons. We have implemented a Child and Family Services information system.

I would like to respond to the second part of the question, and I would like to table some documents today to show that there are some protocols between departments of government. The first document is the Manitoba Guidelines on Identifying and Reporting a Child in Need of Protection. The second document is a protocol entitled Transition Planning Process, which outlines the process for developing individual transition plans. The third document is a Referral Process to the Inter-departmental Crisis Resource Committee, and the fourth document is a Provincial Advisory Committee on Child Abuse.

I will table those documents now, Mr. Speaker.

Flin Flon/Creighton Crisis Centre Government Support

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Speaker, the cuts that this government have imposed on Manitobans across the province have targeted those people who

can least afford it, who need the support most, and that includes the Flin Flon Crisis Centre.

Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday I met with the chairperson of the Flin Flon/Creighton Crisis Centre board. He indicated that the board had met on Tuesday evening of this week and had come to a decision to reopen the crisis centre to operate as best they can to provide services to the women, children and abused families in crisis and in abusive situations in Flin Flon and region.

My question to the Minister of Family Services is: Will he now instruct his department to work with the Flin Flon/Creighton Crisis Centre board to ensure that the normal guidelines which shelters and crisis centres follow are in place as quickly as possible in Flin Flon?

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, I indicated a number of weeks ago that our staff are prepared to meet with the board of the crisis centre. A meeting had been set up a couple of weeks ago and was postponed because the audit that the centre was doing was not completed. We have had a request from the crisis centre board to have staff meet with them, and we will do that as soon as we can find a mutually agreeable time.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, the minister is trying to pretend that this meeting was to do something other than wind down the services.

My question to the Minister of Family Services is: Is the minister now conceding that the services are required and his department is now prepared to work with the people of Flin Flon, the city of Flin Flon, and the board to re-establish those services, and it will be supported by the minister's department?

Mr. Gillehammer: No, Mr. Speaker. What I have indicated and what I indicated a number of weeks ago is that staff from the department are prepared to meet with the board of the Flin Flon Crisis Centre.

The member attempts to portray this as a community without services. I have indicated in the past that services are provided through the Northern Women's Resource Centre, that we have a 24-hour crisis line, and we have the RCMP and volunteers who are prepared to transport people to The Pas shelter.

* (1020)

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) told representatives of Flin Flon city

council this decision was political. What I want today is a political decision on the part of the Minister of Family Services to reopen the centre, to fund the centre.

My question is: Will the Department of Family Services be providing per diems for women and children who use the centre after it is reopened? Will the department be providing per diems?

Mr. Gilleshammer: Mr. Speaker, I reject the preamble of the member for Flin Flon as being factually incorrect. What I have indicated is that staff from the department have been prepared and are prepared to meet with the centre board in Flin Flon.

Business Practices Act Amendments

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs.

Tower Funding, a company which charges advance fees of between \$120 and \$295 to find lenders for people with poor credit ratings, has been operating in this city for the last few months.

I would like to ask the minister: Will she agree to restore the unconscionable act section that this government removed from The Business Practices Act?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I should indicate, and the member knows this full well, that the wording of the BPA—his interpretation and my interpretation of the wording in the BPA differ slightly. I am backed in my support of that wording by the Manitoba Society of Seniors, the Better Business Bureau, the Retail Council of Canada, the CFIB, department officials, the Consumers' Association of Canada, the Manitoba Chamber, the Winnipeg Chamber, and a few other people.

I think that perhaps we have an act that fits the needs of those who have identified what they want to see in the act, and I am very pleased that we are able to do investigations under that act as we are at the moment.

Tower Funding Investigation

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Mr. Speaker, the proof is in the pudding. Only nine charges have been laid under that act.

Mr. Speaker, to the minister: Yesterday she said the police would do her job, but the police have said they may not be able to do it, because it is a borderline case.

My question to the minister is that she has sat on this case for over a month. Why has she sat on this case for over a month while consumers in this province are getting bilked?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): First of all, Mr. Speaker, we have not sat on this case for over a month. Our first complaint came to us some three weeks ago; we took immediate action and have been acting since that time.

The member's preamble is just as inaccurate today as it was yesterday when he said the police did not even know about it, and I do not even want today to comment on some of the preamble.

What I will say in terms of the BPA is that he is talking about the number of cases that have come to court. We have made it very, very clear since the beginning that one of the prime things we were hoping with the BPA is that we would be able to have hammers available that would enable us to settle some of these things without having to go to court.

I should indicate we are working on a daily basis with the BPA. Eighty percent of the things that come to our attention are successfully resolved through mediation, and we feel that we are having great success with it, and that success is confirmed by those who have had experience in working on that act with us, including the police.

Mr. Maloway: That answer is no more credible than it was yesterday, Mr. Speaker.

Business Practices Act Minister's Awareness

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): My final supplementary to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs is: Has she read the act and does she understand Sections 2(1), 2(3), 2(2) and Section 15?

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I helped write the act, so I have read it.

I would like to indicate that the act was drafted with the assistance of the Marketplace Advisory Group Committee composed of components of society from all walks of life.

I would also like to indicate that perhaps the member should read the act, because yesterday he referred to Section 15 when he should have been referring to Section 16.

* (1025)

Health Care System Reform Communication Strategy

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

Today is the first anniversary of the minister's Health Action Plan. We have supported, encouraged and backed the minister for the last year.

On page 3 of this action plan, it calls for participation of Manitobans and their families, but instead of involving Manitobans in this decision-making process, there has been a fear created in the minds of the public.

Since the action plan was introduced one year ago re health reform, we have produced two Health Reform Monitors and I will table those two health monitors.

My question is for the Minister of Health: This is a major plan. Can the minister now tell this House when he will introduce his own health monitor report to make sure that the public is not put under unnecessary fear because of some of the people who are narrow-minded who are spreading the false news about the health care reform in this province?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, when I woke up this morning, I knew there was something special about this day, but I had forgotten that it was the year anniversary of the introduction of the Health Action Plan.

Seriously, I very much appreciate the objective manner in which my honourable friend has approached health care reform in the province of Manitoba, because it has demonstrated that the reform and change in restructuring of the health care system that is happening in every single province from Newfoundland to British Columbia, regardless of political affiliation of the governing party, whether it be Liberals in New Brunswick, New Democrats in Ontario or Saskatchewan, Conservatives in Alberta, the process of change is ongoing.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what we have attempted to do as much as possible is to very much involve professionals in the public of Manitoba in terms of arriving at the decision-making process.

I will have to admit to my honourable friend that one of the difficulties, one of the flaws in the whole process of change, is the ability to provide information on process of change to the public at large. Mr. Speaker, we are attempting to resolve that.

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, it is a major plan, and the people of Manitoba want to know what is happening.

Can the minister now make a promise in this House that he will release the plan within a few weeks time, so that every stakeholder will know what is exactly going on?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I take my honourable friend's suggestion seriously, but here is the dilemma. I will be very direct with my honourable friends. Part of the communication strategy that we have considered is in terms of an update that would be available for fairly general mailing. I know that from my honourable friends—not my honourable friends in the second opposition party—I fully can hear the cries of despair from the New Democrats that we are propagandizing the process of health care reform, et cetera.

Being very conscious to that kind of criticism, we are attempting, Sir, to put out informational brochures in terms of the status of the changes that are happening to take away some of the inappropriate statements made from time to time, particularly by the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak), where he has misinformed the people of Manitoba about status of different changes, and to avoid confusion in the system.

* (1030)

Mr. Cheema: Mr. Speaker, to make the minister's point, will the minister now commit to have this independent monitor to make sure that some misinformation which is already being provided by some narrow interest groups is not given out?—because 1.1 million people are concerned more about health care than the political partisanship that we are playing in this House.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I hope we can develop mechanisms to offset that.

One of my honourable friend's legitimate concerns was in terms of a mechanism of reviewing the process to make sure that we did not miss legitimate operational difficulties in terms of the change. To date, I think the reliance on experts on

health care delivery in Manitoba has resolved most of those difficulties within the existing process.

I have been able to, as much as possible, rely on some of those leaders who have been taking on the initiatives of change to inform and to sort of take some of the wrong information, if that is the right phraseology, out of the change process. However, we are contemplating a wider communication process on health care reform, which, I hope, will resolve some of the other problems attached to the process of change.

Home Care Supply Program User Fees

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, I am certain the minister is aware of a concern raised whereby ostomy supplies are not available to people who depend on them and require them. I understand the specific matter raised at the minister's office and the Premier's Office yesterday may have been resolved.

My question to the minister is: Will he put in place a system at the Home Care Supply program so this does not reoccur, so that people who depend on these supplies will not be in a situation where they have to phone the Premier's Office to get some action?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Yes.

Mr. Chomlak: Mr. Speaker, I am happy to hear that affirmative answer from the minister for a change.

Future Status

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): My second question to the minister is: Will he give assurances to this House that that program, the Home Care Supply program, will continue, and that it is not on the chopping block?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Yes.

Health Care System Reform Communication Strategy

Mr. Dave Chomlak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, my final supplementary to the minister: Will he give assurances to this House that his communication strategy and press conference, which is one-way communication from the minister to the public, will change, and that when he has this massive communication strategy that he is contemplating, will he listen to what the people of Manitoba are saying regarding the shambles of many of the

initiatives he has announced in his health care reform plan?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I was really starting to think my honourable friend was trying to help the process to change, but that last comment of his was terribly offensive. The people in my ministry are people in Manitoba who recognize the necessity of change, that see change happening in Saskatchewan, Ontario, Alberta, New Brunswick, Quebec, Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, British Columbia, right across the length and breadth of this country.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reinforce to my honourable friend that the changes that we are making in the health care system are changes which are not out of step with our neighbouring provinces to the east and to the west. Yes, they are difficult decisions. Yes, from time to time they will require contributions from consumers of the services that they were not making before. But, Sir, that unfortunately is the reality of governing in any province in Canada today, facing the kind of fiscal realities we are.

I want to remind my honourable friend the New Democrat, when we left government in 1981, the interest bill annually was less than \$90 million. After Howard Pawley and his spending practices, it was—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Education System Clinician Funding

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Education likes to use terms like process, reform, concern, partners, continuum—ad nauseam and ad infinitum. The only thing that is a continuum with this minister is her answers in this House.

She has done this with education reform. She has done this with ACCESS program, bursaries, whenever she is questioned in this House, but since the minister in one enlightened moment during Estimates actually divulged that there was going to be a cut in funding for special needs kids as a result of the layoff of clinicians, I want to ask the minister today, in the light of this legislative Chamber, whether she will now come straight with the people of Manitoba and tell the people of Manitoba precisely how much money she is cutting from special needs kids as a result of the layoff of 66 clinicians in this province.

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, again, the clinician

services are moving from the employment of government to the direct employment of school divisions. Their employment is being provided for, the cost is being provided for through our funding formula where we have now allowed for a grant for the hiring of clinicians. As I explained to the honourable member during the Estimates process, that grant was actually increased with our new funding formula. Therefore, we fully expect that the services will be in place for special needs children.

In addition, Mr. Speaker, as I explained during the Estimates process, the school divisions are now hiring under the funding formula. We expect that there will be nine additional clinician positions available.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, she was given an opportunity, and I ask this minister how she can explain her statement, in light of what she said today, that there will be savings to government? Will the minister admit that the savings and the provision of maintenance of service will come only as a result of the offloading onto school divisions, in the additional cost to school divisions, not from this minister's grants?

Mrs. Vodrey: As I explained to the member, we have not reached all of the budget lines that deal with this through the school funding formula, but as I explained to the member, certain funding is available through the funding formula for clinicians. Then we also provide in our supplementary area of our school funding formula where there are additional expenses and needs.

Mr. Plohman: Mr. Speaker, she is back to her revolving answers again. I want to ask this minister: Will she now come clean with this House, come clean with the people of Manitoba, answer the questions straight? How much money has she cut from this program, and why is she offloading this onto the school divisions of Manitoba?

Mrs. Vodrey: As I explained to the member when we discussed this for the first time in Estimates and as we will be discussing it further, I know, when we look in detail at the funding to public schools, there is funding within the funding formula, but in addition, where necessary, there is also funding through the supplementary funding category of our school funding formula.

New Careers Program Funding Reduction Impact

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, the New Careers program has been one of the most successful programs provided by government in training in the last two decades. It has been described as a model for North America by an objective study. There is an extensive completion rate. In fact, employment rates, after three years in the New Careers program, range upwards of 80 per cent.

I just want to ask a very straightforward question to the minister again, because earlier in Question Period she did not answer very straightforward questions.

What is going to be the impact of the cuts that are taking place in New Careers and in particular the move to one-year training programs instead of the very successful model of two years? What is going to be the impact of the cuts?

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Education and Training): Part of the success of the New Careers program is that it does have a community-based source, and communities are able to identify some needs. They also provide some opportunity for people while they are studying to actually work in this area. It is a model that I have explained to the member.

This government has a commitment to, not only through our New Careers programming, but I have explained other programs which also manage with this same model of community-based commitment. We now have, and I can use the word again, a spectrum of programs now within the Advanced Education and Skills Training section of the Department of Education.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, we now have a spectrum of programs. St. John's-Ravenscourt does not get cut; corporate training does not get cut, but New Careers, training for aboriginal people gets cut. I do not care what the minister calls that.

I want to ask her to explain to the people of northern Manitoba in particular: What is going to be the impact of the cuts to New Careers?

Mrs. Vodrey: Again, as the member will know when he has an opportunity to look across our Estimates process for all departments, all departments have had to look at reductions. We have looked at reductions in addition across the Department of

Education. However, we have maintained funds for the New Careers program. In addition to that, we have now integrated it within the Advanced Education and Skills Training division of my department, where we are able to look at all of the programs available for Manitobans.

Mr. Ashton: I will try one more time, Mr. Speaker, because the fact is New Careers has been cut. I want to ask the minister, and she can perhaps explain why private school funding has not been cut and corporate training has not been cut, but I want to ask one very simple question.

What is going to be the impact of the cuts to the New Careers program on the students, on the people in northern Manitoba and across Manitoba? What impact will the cuts have?

Mrs. Vodrey: Mr. Speaker, I reject the member's preamble, and we will certainly have an opportunity to discuss the accusations he made in his preamble. He will see how very wrong he is during the Estimates process, and I will be glad to talk about the details.

In addition, as I have said to the member, we do have a commitment to the North if he is asking specifically about northern programs and opportunities for northern Manitobans. I discussed those at length yesterday in the Estimates process, as well, a number of opportunities and access points for northern Manitobans into programs of skill training, New Careers, being one program of skills training, and there are others within the Department of Education and Training.

* (1040)

Repap Manitoba Inc. Renegotiations

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, four years ago the government signed the Repap deal and made a promise to the people of Swan River of 250 jobs, a permanent chipper and a service centre. These promises have been broken as well as the minister's promise to renegotiate the cut area in the Repap area. People of Swan River want the cut area renegotiated so that they can attract industry.

Since this government is not interested in economic development in the Swan River area but the people of Swan River are, when is the cut area going to be renegotiated in the Swan River area?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I thank the member for the question. That is happening at this time. Again, it is one of several issues that are being renegotiated, and I should indicate that the government is attempting to free up some additional quota outside of the renegotiating area, Mr. Speaker, as a short-term interim measure. We have not been successful to this point in time, but discussions will continue, and indeed I will be meeting with senior people from Repap next week.

Forestry Industry—Swan River Meeting Request

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, will the minister then agree to meet with the people of Swan River to discuss this matter? They have people who are interested in coming into the area. Will he meet with them, and will he fulfill his promise? If he cannot fulfill the job promise, at least free up the cut area.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I feel no guilt with respect to meeting the community of Swan River. I have met the community two times a year for at least the last two to three years on this issue, and I will relay information to the community as quickly as I have information to relay.

Repap Manitoba Inc. Renegotiations

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Mr. Speaker, the minister says he has met with the people of Swan River, but nothing is happening. The cut area is not being renegotiated.

Why is area wood not being freed up to give to the local cutters when Repap is not using the wood? There is a surplus of wood, but you will not renegotiate the cut area so they can address the interest of other people and have some additional jobs in the area.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, let us bear in mind that if it were not for Repap taking so much of the wood fibre that they were, there probably would not be 50 or 60 jobs in the Swan River area right now. I, again, feel no pangs of guilt with respect to what the government has entered into with respect to Repap, but as I indicated, as soon as there is information that is hopefully favourable—again under contract, this is a cutting area that has been provided to Repap, and

to the extent that we can free up any additional cutting areas for local needs, we will do so.

Simplot Plant Future Status

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

On May 6, 1991, the minister said he was having very serious discussions on the future of Simplot, and I am quoting from Hansard: "Our department is in contact virtually almost daily. I get updates every few days. We are in very serious discussions with them on the future of their plant and what is happening in Saskatchewan and elsewhere I can undertake to clearly indicate to the honourable member for Brandon East that is a very serious matter."

Mr. Speaker, what I would like to know is, in view of the announcement that the plant is not going to proceed with the major renovation, can the minister advise whether he and his department are continuing to work with Simplot? Specifically, have they applied for any financial assistance for a scaled-down renovation of the plant?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, the short answer is yes. We are in ongoing contact with Simplot. They are looking at a scaled-down expansion of their facility. We are discussing aspects of potential provincial government involvement with them on those projects, and we will continue to do so.

The good news, Mr. Speaker, is that even though the new facility opened in Saskatchewan—and I am sure the honourable member for Brandon East reads his local paper in Brandon. There have been articles in the paper quoting members of the Simplot organization talking about the fact that early indications show that the Brandon plant is still holding its share of the market and Simplot has just finished its best April sales volume on record. Even with that kind of competition that has come on stream, Simplot is still doing well. Employment levels are being maintained.

We are in ongoing discussion with them in terms of a scaled-down expansion of their facility.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I am glad to hear that news. I hope it does have a long-term future in the city of Brandon, because it is the largest private employer in the city.

Manufacturing Industry Employment Decline

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I have a general question to ask to the Minister of Industry, specifically responsible for manufacturing.

Can this minister explain why Manitoba has declined in manufacturing under this government? In 1992, the level of shipments of manufacturing were down 6 percent from 1988 when this government took office. Today, we have only 47,000 people working in manufacturing. When this government took office we had 63,000. What is the explanation for this very serious decline in shipments and in people working in manufacturing?

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, as usual, the member for Brandon East is very selective in terms of the statistics he brings to this floor, as usual, always with a negative slant, never anything positive about all of the positive signs we see in Manitoba.

I want to remind him, during what is defined as the recession period in Manitoba, that when we talk about declines in manufacturing jobs, during that particular time, yes, there has been a 5.6 percent decline in Manitoba, but Canada's drop during that same time frame, 1990 to '92, is 10.6 percent. The province of Ontario, and we know what kind of a government is there, are 12.9 percent.

I would hope that he would finally realize it is not something unique to Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. It is happening all across Canada, all across the United States, throughout the world. Manitoba is faring reasonably well in relationship to what is happening elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, would you call Bill 22. I will give further instruction after that bill has been adjourned.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

Bill 22—The Public Sector Reduced Work Week and Compensation Management Act

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), Bill 22, The Public Sector Reduced Work Week and Compensation Management Act; Loi sur la

réduction de la semaine de travail et la gestion des salaires dans le secteur public, standing in the name of the honourable member for Wellington, who has 38 minutes remaining on that bill.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, when I began my remarks on Bill 22 several days ago, I was speaking about fairness and how the government in its throne speech and in its answers to questions in Question Period has talked extensively about how the tough decisions that it has made in every area of government in the province of Manitoba have been based on the principle of fairness, that every Manitoban will feel the pain of the decisions that have been made by this government, and that is only fair. Those are the comments and the statements that have been made in one way or another by virtually every member of the government bench specifically dealing with the budget and the economic situation facing Manitoba today.

Mr. Speaker, one of the basic premises of Bill 22 is blatantly unfair. As a matter of fact, the whole intent of Bill 22 is not to share the pain, is not to see that all Manitobans participate in the tough decisions that are being made across this country, but that certain few Manitobans have more than their fair share of pain.

This is all the more galling, Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that there are other Manitobans, particularly large profit-making corporations and very wealthy Manitobans who are not sharing equally in the pain of this government's decisions.

We do have in Bill 22 the recognition or the statement—although it is not clearly stated, it underlies everything that is in Bill 22 and everything that is being said by the government, all the cuts that are being made to social service agencies, to groups that speak out on behalf of those who have no other voice, the cuts that are being made to women and children in this province, the cuts that are being made to people who require health care needs in this province, the cuts that are being made to services in all areas of service in the northern part of this province, the cuts that are being made to services that deal specifically with people who live in the poorer parts of the cities and rural communities in this province.

* (1050)

All of these cuts are supposedly in the light of fairness. Mr. Speaker. They are blatantly unfair, and

they are seen nowhere more clearly than in the impact of Bill 22.

Let there be no mistake about it. The effect of Bill 22 will be a tax increase, a tax increase on one segment of our society, and that is the people who work in the public service for the people of Manitoba. This is a tax increase. It is a wage rollback, a wage cutback, a wage grab. It is an unfairly administered program, as much as we can tell, although the whole process of how it will be administered is also very unclear.

It is a tax and job layoffs, job reductions, benefit reductions that impact on the public service. Mr. Speaker, not only is it unfair because it does not spread the pain equally, it is unfair because it attacks the people who provide some of the most basic important services for the people of Manitoba.

Who are these public servants that are being talked about that are being targeted by this draconian, completely unfair, totally out-of-line piece of legislation? These are the public servants who provide the services that Manitobans need. Now, why do we have a public service, Mr. Speaker? We have a public service so that, ideally, the basic services, the basic needs of all Manitobans will be met. You go through the Estimates books in every single department of this government, and you see the work that public servants are doing. You see the work that civil servants are doing, and you see that in the vast majority of cases those jobs are jobs that are designed to level the playing field in our province.

The jobs in the public service were instituted and have been maintained because we as a society have seen that provision of social services, equality of access to good health and good education, and the right to bargain collectively are part of the social contract, the social fabric of our province. Public services are designed and have grown out of a recognition that not everyone in a society has equal access or equal ability to make the income necessary to provide for their basic needs. As part of the social contract that we have in Manitoba and throughout the western democracies, agreed to over the centuries, is the recognition that it is up to society as a whole to provide those services where individuals are unable to or cannot provide for themselves. That is the background and the basic reason for public servants.

Public servants are not, as this government and its cousins in Ottawa like to say, "at the public trough." Every time that statement is made or statements like that are made in this House and in the Houses of Parliament, it does a major disservice to the people who provide those essential programs to the people of Manitoba and to the people of Canada. It does a major disservice to the people of Canada who have, through the decades and the centuries, expanded upon the concept of public service to make Canada one of the best countries in the world to live in.

Mr. Speaker, according to some estimates, on some indicators, Canada—and the government likes to say this—is the best country in the world to live in. Well, it is overall, but when you factor in the services and the provision of programming for women, minorities and our aboriginal people, our ranking goes from first to eighth—not a very good record. However, the services that are provided for women, children, families, aboriginal peoples, people who have come newly to our country, people who are in social and economic and emotional stress, those services are largely provided in Canada and Manitoba by people in the public service.

So really this bill is a slap in the face of those dedicated people who provide those services, and who provide those services largely at wage and benefit packages that are below what they could get, in many cases, in the private sector.

Another myth that is perpetuated by this government and its Conservative cousins in Ottawa is that the public sector employees are all high-paid civil servants who sit in ivory towers and do nothing but push paper and earn an enormous pay cheque.

Mr. Speaker, the ministers on the government side of this House know that is not true. They work every day, as do all members of the House, with civil servants who do not just push paper, who do not just sit in their ivory towers and collect a big fat salary for doing nothing, who are not pigs at the public trough. The people who work for the civil service in this country and in this province are dedicated individuals, in this province particularly, many of whom work directly for the government and the members of the Legislative Assembly are paid very little.

One of the major implications of Bill 22, one of the most unfair elements in Bill 22 is the fact that the

reduction in workweek, the reduction in benefits, the reduction in pay is across the board. It does not matter if you are at the lowest end of the pay scale making \$18,000, \$19,000 or \$20,000 a year, you get the same 10 days off. That is what the government likes to call it, 10 days off. You get the same 10-day cut in your benefit package. You get the same 10-day cut in your salary package. You get the same 10 days without pay that the top deputy minister in the Province of Manitoba making well over \$120,000 gets.

That is a flat tax. That is a flat cut. It is probably the most unfair kind of tax that can be levelled on anyone. This government is choosing to level that most unfair kind of tax on the people that do its bidding. Bill 22 cuts the heart out of the civil service, which is designed to do the work and provide the programs that the government says are essential. The government says these programs are essential through the Estimates books, through the program and financial elements of the government.

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

They are saying, on the one hand, these programs are essential; we buy into the social contract. On the other hand, they are painting the public servants who provide these services as people who make too much money, who do too little work, and are saying, we are going to cut them back. They are not doing it fairly.

* (1100)

Madam Deputy Speaker, why is the government putting a bill like Bill 22 in place, which obliquely and openly says such negative things about the public service? I think it goes back to the fact that I think, in many ways, this government and certainly the government of Canada itself have, over the last nine years, besmirched the civil service, have made the concept of civil servants, public servants something to be less than applauded. That is because they really do not believe in their heart of hearts that government has a responsibility to provide those services.

As we have seen indications in the federal government's decisions to deregulate, to privatize, to give enormous grants to the private sector, at the same time they are cutting the services to the public sector. We see the same thing happening in the province of Manitoba, where the government is providing training grants to private business to do

what they should, by definition, do on their own, which is to train their employees.

They are providing enormous grants to those private, profit-making corporations and cutting back the programs that provide access and educational opportunities, educational upgrading, job training to the people who need that assistance most. As we have seen in the House today, as we see in the Department of Education's expenditures, very clearly the government does not feel that there is a need for a healthy, responsive, responsible public service. Everything they do and they say only exaggerates that feeling.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the civil service, the public servants are only one part of the public service component. The people who go through hiring through the Civil Service Commission, the people who are the employees of the government who are hired to do the government's bidding, that is one part of the equation. The other part of the equation is the government, and by that I mean the 57 members of the Legislative Assembly in Manitoba are the people who, either with the power to do it or the potential influence of opposition, make the decisions that lead and guide the jobs of the public servants in the province of Manitoba.

The two parts of that equation are in deep trouble in this province and this country as well. I think that Bill 22 is a sign of that. Why is that the case? Why are not only civil servants, public servants, but politicians in such disrepute in the country today as shown in the callous way that public servants are being handled in Bill 22?

Earlier this week, Madam Deputy Speaker, I spoke to a high school class in Morden and was talking about sharing with those students some information about the party that I represent and the philosophies and principles that we espouse. One of the questions that I was asked at the end of my remarks was which Prime Minister do you think has been the most influential in the history of Canada?

As a fairly new Canadian, my historical background in Canadian history is less full than others might be, but I said first I thought perhaps Lester Pearson because he was the one who I, as an American growing up in the '50s, had heard of, had known about, with the St. Lawrence Seaway and the Nobel Peace prize, et cetera. Then I said, no, I am going to change that answer. I am going to say that right now today in the country of Canada

the most influential Prime Minister in the history of Canada to my way of thinking has to be Brian Mulroney.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): You better tell us why.

Ms. Barrett: My honourable colleague the member for Burrows suggests that I explain my answer. I will explain why I think that is important and that is particularly important in light of Bill 22 that we are discussing today.

I say that Brian Mulroney is going to be the most influential Prime Minister in the history of Canada for a number of reasons, but as it relates specifically to Bill 22, what Brian Mulroney has done, Brian Mulroney and his cabinet members, such as Michael Wilson, Harvie Andre, Marcel Masse, Benoit Bouchard, Kim Campbell, Jean Charest, et cetera, et cetera, have done is they have almost single-handedly themselves led to the diminution of respect for the public service and particularly for the people in the public service who are politicians. We are all tarred with the same brush. People in Canada today say, you politicians are all alike. Do you know why they say it, Madam Deputy Speaker?—because of the overwhelming presence of Brian Mulroney and the Conservatives in Ottawa for the last nine years.

The things that man and his government have done to this country are incalculable in their impact—virtually all negative impact, I might add. But the importance of that for me, the importance I place on Brian Mulroney in this context, the reason for that in context of Bill 22, is that it means that because the public service as a whole, which is made up of the public servants and the political people who give them their direction, because that public service as a whole is in such disrepute throughout the country, that allows Bill 22 to be introduced.

It enables the public mood to be such that the government feels they can get away with it because people in Manitoba do not like public servants anyway. People in Manitoba think there is too much big government, and they think people who work for the public service are paid too much and do not do enough. That is why I spoke about Brian Mulroney and the incalculable devastation he and his philosophies have visited upon the country of Canada.

For a civil service and a public service to work properly there has to be a sense of trust between the public servants who are doing the bidding of the government of the day and the government itself, their employers, in the largest context.

Bill 22 destroys that basic trust which must be there. Bill 22 says that, in effect, collective bargaining processes that were undertaken in good faith mean nothing, that dialogue and negotiation mean nothing.

Other provinces have had the same kinds of financial difficulties that Manitoba has had. The major difference between what is happening in other provinces and what is happening in Manitoba is that in other provinces, most particularly British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Ontario, those decisions are being made in consultation through negotiation.

The negotiation, if you can call it that, Madam Deputy Speaker, that is being undertaken in the context of Bill 22 is after the fact. It is not a negotiation in the context of free collective bargaining, and the government is never going to accept that definition, but I am prepared to stand by that.

The government of Manitoba clearly did not think through the impact of Bill 22. Let me rephrase that. The charitable analysis of Bill 22 is that the government did not clearly think through the impact. The more realistic situation, I believe, is that the government did think through the impact of Bill 22 and they said, we do not care. Do you know why? Because the services that are being cut are services that impact most of people who have the least.

As the Deputy Premier (Mr. Downey) has said in public on several occasions, you did not vote right. The people who are affected by these cutbacks are the people who do not have any other options. If services provided by the Department of Family Services are not—[interjection] Madam Deputy Speaker, if the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) has such wonderful things to say on this bill, let him put them on record now. If he does not, let him listen to what I have to say.

The people who are affected most severely by the cutbacks, as I stated earlier, are the people who do not have alternatives. They are the people who cannot afford to go to private counselling services. They are the people who cannot afford to hire private lawyers. They are the people who need the

services that we as a community that believes in a social contract must provide. What this bill does is, it cuts the heart out of that social contract. It shows something very damaging, very petty and very mean-spirited about this government.

* (1110)

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would really like to talk a little bit about who the people are that are being cut back by Bill 22, what services are being cut back, just to put on record the fact that it is not high-paid public servants who are being adversely affected by this bill.

As a matter of fact, as I have stated, because it is a flat percentage reduction, the higher pay you have, the less impact it is going to have on you. This is exactly the same kind of tax that the government imposed when it began the harmonization process of the PST with the GST. It did not increase the sales tax across the board, which would have meant that, if you bought a luxury car or if you bought a fur coat or if you took advantage of an accountant who could help you with your taxes so you could take advantage of all the Tory-initiated tax loopholes, you would pay an extra percent or so on that service or those goods.

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

No, no, Mr. Acting Speaker, the government, in Bill 22 and in its decision to begin the harmonization process with the PST and the GST, chose to have the largest impact of those changes on the people who could least afford it. This same principle applies in Bill 22, and I am going to talk a bit about the impact that it is having on the people who are providing the service and then, time permitting, the services that will be affected.

Mr. Acting Speaker, one need only go to the parts of the Estimates of Expenditure of the Province of Manitoba for '93-94 that deal with Family Services, the third largest department in the government, to see, in black and white, the people who will be affected by Bill 22.

By definition, the services that are provided in Family Services are those that are provided to people who have either no internal or family or financial or social resources to deal with the problems that are facing them and are people who need services that society says we have an obligation to provide. Even this government has said in most cases, although it is making some major changes in the Education department, we still have

a responsibility to provide at least something for people who are unable, for a variety of reasons, to provide for themselves.

Mr. Acting Speaker, one of the largest components of the Department of Family Services is the Income Security division, and one of the reasons that it is actually one of the few growth industries in the province of Manitoba along with food banks—I guess I wonder parenthetically why the government does not talk about those success stories. The government talks about how we never say anything positive about growth in the province of Manitoba, well, we talk all the time about the two areas of growth, Income Security social assistance, a statutory requirement, and food banks, food banks which, by their definition, are an admission of failure.

In Income Security, Mr. Acting Speaker, the statement of objectives in Income Security is that the Income Maintenance Programs, of which social assistance is the major component: "Provide financial assistance to persons in need to ensure that no Manitoban lacks the basic necessities essential to health and well-being; provide for cost-sharing and regulation of municipal social assistance; and provide additional financial assistance to disabled social allowances recipients to help meet the costs associated with disability."

They also have another area called Regional Operations, and this is part of the department that deals with services outside the major cities, a recognition that the province of Manitoba does not have its population spread evenly but has a certain degree of difficulty with geographical components and the fact that two-thirds of the people live in the metropolitan Winnipeg area.

Under Regional Operations, the Department of Family Services provides: ". . . field resources to manage and deliver a comprehensive range of social services throughout Manitoba, including vocational rehabilitation, community living for the mentally handicapped, child and family services, child day care, family conciliation, children's special services, social allowances and emergency social services . . ."—including virtually all of the programs of the Department of Family Services provided in the regions through the Regional Operations component of the Income Security division.

Because Income Security itself, the social assistance, is a mandated statutory requirement, one could say: Well, why is this seen as a cutback?

What are the implications of Bill 22 on the provision of these services when they are mandated? Mr. Acting Speaker, the fact that you must provide funding for and assistance to anyone who is eligible for Income Security and social assistance is very different than the quality of services that are provided to those people. People in income security in the City of Winnipeg, for example, have had no salary increases for five years in many cases. They are operating on the same income that they have been dealing with for the last, parenthetically and coincidentally, I am sure, the same amount of time as this current government has been in power.

They have had no additional human resources put in place, virtually none, but they have had up to five additional programs given to them to implement. So, in effect, the people who are providing and delivering one of the most basic services that we as a society can give to the other people in our society, that assurance of basic income so that their basic needs can be met—the people who are charged with that enormously important job are being cut back by Bill 22 at the same time that they have been asked to implement a number of new programs.

What is the impact going to be on the people who are providing those services? Well, when you keep piling responsibilities on people without resources necessary to fulfill those responsibilities, we all know what happens. It is called burnout. It is called enormously increased levels of stress on an individual attempting to provide those services in what, by the way, is one of the stressful parts of government; it is enormously negative.

Those individuals are at the end of their rope anyway, because of the cuts and the changes that have taken place. Now they are being asked to do more with less—even more. They are being asked not only to provide more programs with fewer human resources, but they are being told that they will not have the number of days necessary to provide those services, but, by goodness, those services had better be provided.

Mr. Acting Speaker, sure the basic income services will be provided, because they are obligated to provide those services by law. When you talk about quality, it is gone, it will be gone, not that in Income Security offices the quality of working conditions or the quality of service provided, through no fault of the staff, I might add, has been all that high to begin with. It is a very, very difficult job to

perform. When you have been cut and cut and cut, it is even more difficult.

* (1120)

The impact on the people who are providing that service is going to be very negative. They are not going to be able to—it is a triage effect. Any counselling that might have been done in the past with a client who came in, any kind of social interaction, any kind of how are you, how are the kids, what is going on in your life, those sorts of nice elements of dialogue between people, there is no luxury left for that to happen.

People are going to be seen more and more as numbers. They are going to be seen more and more as cases. They are going to be seen more and more as problems, because the staff just do not have the time or the opportunity or the resources to deal with them as individuals and people. That is going to happen, and that is going to have a negative impact on the people who are coming for those services, as it has had a negative impact on the people who are providing those services.

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

Why is that important? Well, Madam Deputy Speaker, it is important because it is only through the human contact that you can find out what is going on in people's lives, that you can perhaps do some prevention. If a client comes in and there is no time to ask how she is or how her children are, there is no time to perhaps get some information about a crisis that is happening in her life and maybe be able to do something about alleviating that crisis before it becomes blown so big that then another statutory program such as the Justice system has to intervene or the Child and Family Services system.

That is an example, Madam Deputy Speaker, of the impact of Bill 22 on service provision in the province of Manitoba and on the service providers in the province of Manitoba, an impact that I think this government knew very well was going to happen. I think it is an impact that the government was—it was a price the government was willing to pay. I find that to be very sad. I find it to be very sad because it says to the people of Manitoba, and particularly to the people of Manitoba who are in the public service, we do not value you, we do not feel that what you are doing is important, we are not prepared to protect the services that you are providing. It says very, very clearly that we certainly

do not value the people who use the services that we provide as government in Manitoba.

Bill 22 is not even a bill in isolation. It is another in a continuum of activities that have been undertaken by this government to deal with the perceived problems facing the province. We have discussed in many venues and in debate on many bills, those kinds of things.

One other area I would like to briefly touch on is in the Department of Justice. The Department of Justice, in many ways like the Department of Family Services, provides mandated services, services that the government has no choice but to provide. In public prosecutions in the criminal justice system, in those kinds of areas, the government must provide basic services.

That again goes back to part of the social contract that not only do we provide people with the basic necessities such as food, shelter, clothing and up until recently basic educational facilities and programs, but we are also obligated to take on the role as government of ensuring that people have, to the best of our abilities, a safe community within which to live. And that is the role of the justice system.

Now, there are many public servants who work in the justice system, and they, like the people who work in Family Services, are being told, the roles you provide, the people you work for, the people you work with are not valuable to us.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I see that my time is coming to a close, and I would just like to end by saying this government talks about fairness, this government talks about equality of sharing of the pain, of needing to deal with problems that were by and large a result of Conservative financial and monetary and fiscal and social programming changes.

The province talks about it, but it does not act on it. The people of Manitoba are beginning, in large numbers, to realize that is the case. They are beginning to see this government from the Premier (Mr. Filmon) on down for what they are which is narrow, mean-spirited, neo-Conservative, people who do not care. They do not care because you can see it in the impact of Bill 22.

An Honourable Member: We do care.

Ms. Barrett: You do not care about all of the people of the province of Manitoba. Madam Deputy

Speaker, with those remarks, I will end my comments on Bill 22.

Madam Deputy Speaker: Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing in the name of the honourable member for Transcona (Mr. Reid)? [agreed]

Hon. Clayton Manness (Government House Leader): Madam Deputy Speaker, would you call for second reading Bill 32.

SECOND READINGS

Bill 32—The Social Allowances Amendment Act

Hon. Harold Gillehammer (Minister of Family Services): Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that Bill 32, The Social Allowances Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gillehammer: Madam Deputy Speaker, the purpose of this legislation is to amend the section of The Social Allowances Act that gives categorical eligibility to students. The Social Allowances Act specifies the categories of persons eligible for provincial social allowance.

The Social Allowances Program is intended as a last resort. It provides financial assistance for basic necessities such as food, clothing and shelter to the most vulnerable of Manitobans, sole-support parents, disabled persons, the elderly and persons in crisis shelters. Persons in need who do not fall into one of these categories may be assisted by a municipality.

Currently, the act also provides categorical eligibility for students who have insufficient resources to support themselves during their studies. These are primarily single students, 18 to 24 years of age, who are enrolled in secondary school programs. This legislation will delete the student category from The Social Allowances Act. Special provisions associated with the student category will also be repealed. The effective date of these amendments is July 1, 1993, to allow students presently enrolled in the program to finish their current year of study.

* (1130)

The elimination of the student category will affect those whose sole eligibility was based on their student status. In future, they will be asked to explore alternative options for self-support when developing their educational plans. These options may include part-time employment while attending school or periods of full-time employment to support periods of full-time school. In some cases, assistance may be available from family members. Those who continue to require social assistance may qualify for municipal assistance programs.

Sole-support parents and disabled parents who are taking educational programs may continue to receive assistance from the Social Allowances Program while they complete their studies.

For years, Manitoba has been the only province to provide categorical eligibility for students. However, given today's fiscal environment, our scarce resources must be targeted to those most in need, and the government can no longer afford to support this program. The termination of Student Social Allowances was a tough decision but one that was necessary during these challenging economic times.

With these brief remarks, I present this bill for second reading.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Lels (St. Johns): Madam Deputy Speaker, it is with a great deal of sadness that I begin the debate on Bill 32 and put on record some of the concerns of the New Democratic Party caucus with respect to this most unfortunate decision by the Manitoba Conservative provincial government.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this government has taken a number of various serious steps in the last number of months, has eliminated and cut back a number of programs that have been vital to families in this province, to our young people in Manitoba, to the vulnerable people of our society. It has been very difficult to keep on top of that string of very negative destructive decisions by this government. It is very hard to single out what among that list of destructive actions is most serious because all, in fact, are very serious, very hurtful, very destructive for the future of this province.

I believe, if there is one action that stands out on its own and symbolizes the callous disregard for the young people and the young families of this province, it is the elimination of the Student Social Allowances Program. Time and time again this

government has talked about building the future of the province. It has spoken about education as the key to opportunity for Manitobans in this province. It has urged Manitobans to train themselves, to educate themselves to contribute to this province, but behind that rhetoric we have seen nothing but an attack by this government on the very people willing and able to contribute to the future health and well-being of our society.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it has been said that the measure of any society is in the degree of equality and opportunity it provides for its most vulnerable members. It has been said that the measure of any government is in the degree of economic and social security it provides to even its most humble members. The question has been raised from across the way: Who made that quote? I have paraphrased the words of Tommy Douglas, whom members will know spoke out for years and years on behalf of all citizens in this country and particularly on behalf of the powerless, the most vulnerable, the weakest members in our community. I believe he enunciated for all of us a path, a direction for our responsibility, for our role as legislators here in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the decision by this government to eliminate the Student Social Allowances Program is the antithesis of responsible government. It is the antithesis of our primary responsibility as legislators to provide for even the most humble members in our midst. This government has used as its primary excuse for eliminating the Student Social Allowances Program that Manitoba had been the only province in this country to provide such a program. That is surely the weakest excuse of all.

Since when does it become appropriate, since when has it been acceptable to eliminate something on the basis of the good it did, to eliminate something that led the way in this country in terms of equalizing the conditions for people in our society in terms of creating the opportunities for all individuals to use their talents to make a difference in our society.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it used to be that we prided ourselves here in Manitoba for some of the innovative decisions that have been made over the years under a number of governments. It used to be that we held our heads high because we had made innovative inroads in the health care field, because

we had complemented medicare by including programs like Pharmacare and Home Care. It used to be that all of us in this Chamber and in Manitoba were proud to describe the wonderful inroads we had made in the area of child care. It used to give us a great deal of satisfaction when other provinces, other jurisdictions in this country and other jurisdictions outside of Canada turned to Manitoba to seek advice, to get information, to consult about the effectiveness of those programs leading the way.

Now, Madam Deputy Speaker, we are left, because of this government, to hang our heads in shame, to have to explain to the world that we have let those programs go by the by, that we have abdicated our responsibility and commitment to our citizens, that the opportunities for contributing are no longer there. It is probably one of the saddest days, certainly in this Legislature and, in recent times, in the province of Manitoba.

How do we explain to young people who have come to full recognition of the importance of education and training to better themselves and to better the whole community that one program, one innovative decision to make that a reality, is gone? How do we explain to young people who have recognized that it was wrong in their youth to leave school and try to make it without education and training and now, prepared to correct the error of their ways, to get that grounding, to get that basic education in order to be able to access good employment opportunities, care for their families and add to the economic well-being of our society as a whole?

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Student Social Allowances Program not only made a difference in people's lives in giving them tools to use their talents and contribute, to give them hope, faith and trust in the future, but it also made absolute economic sense. It was a cost-effective program. It meant spending a little money now by our government of the day to incur huge savings in the future. The program proved to be that effective. The statistics are there. The research is in; the analysis was done. The program did make a difference for the province from an economic point of view.

This program allowed young people, young families to be able to get basic education and get a job and make a difference. It kept those people from long-term social assistance. It stopped the cycle of welfare and poverty. It gave to Manitoba a body of

people committed to work for the good of our society.

And now, Madam Deputy Speaker, with one stroke of a pen in a two-line bill, this government has taken it all away and left hundreds of students enrolled in education opportunities because of the student allowance program high and dry.

It has left them without a means to carry on that education, and worse, it has taken hope away from a much broader group of people and young persons in our society. It has been one more stroke of the pen on top of many other decisions by this government that leave a whole generation without a lot of hope, without a lot of belief that there will be brighter days in the future.

* (1140)

We are dealing with a new phenomenon in Manitoba. We are not just dealing with a loss of hope by young people in Manitoba in the future; we are now dealing with a group of people in our society who not only have no hope for the future, they have no concept of future.

I wonder if members of the Conservative government have any appreciation of what that means and what that will mean for us down the road. If our hope for the future has no concept of future, where does that despair, where does that fear, where does that isolation, where does that disillusionment, where does that idleness—where does it lead us, Madam Deputy Speaker?

How can we have hundreds of thousands of young people living with frustration and fear and not pay some horrible consequence in the future? How can we have so many unemployed in this province? And the numbers are increasing daily. How can we have so many unemployed, underemployed or discouraged young people in this province and not pay some horrible price down the road?

Is there any correlation between those unemployment statistics, the elimination of programs like the Student Allowances Program that made a difference, the increasing number of individuals on assistance? Is there any correlation with all of that and the growing incidence in our society today of suicides among young people, of increasing gangs in our schools and in our communities, in increasing numbers of people turning to escape, whether it be through drugs or solvents or even cults, or may I add even white

supremacist groups, people with hatred towards others in our society?

Yes, Madam Deputy Speaker, there is a correlation. There is a trend, and it is worrisome indeed. Not only has this government contributed to those very worrisome trends in our midst, but it has also done something even more serious. It has, in fact, taken on the strategies of cults. It has tried, in the process, to pacify people, to calm people through brainwashing tactics, through misinformation, through untruths.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have noticed a most interesting development in this Chamber just in the last few months. This government has been very busy trying to rewrite history, reshape the facts and, in effect, is trying very hard to program us to believe something that really is not true.

Let me give a couple of examples, Madam Deputy Speaker. When we raise, in this Chamber, the extraordinary increase in the number of users of food banks and people who have to turn to food banks for their daily nutritional meal, what is the response of this government? The response from this government and particularly the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of this province is to suggest: Well, food banks are just here; it is just a matter of our life; they are here to stay; they are part of the system; they are part of normalcy. That is a prime example of brainwashing or an attempt to brainwash Manitobans by this government.

When we raise questions, Madam Deputy Speaker, about rising unemployment and increasing numbers of discouraged workers, the response from this government and from other Conservative governments in this country has been that a certain level of unemployment is acceptable, is the norm. We cannot expect in this day and age that everyone who is willing and able to work will find work, another attempt at programming Manitobans, at brainwashing Manitobans.

When we raised questions about the Student Social Allowances Program and talked about the harm this would create in the lives of young people and families in our community, the Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gillshammer) had the gall to suggest, had the audacity to state that these young people could just go back home. That is a type of programming and brainwashing that will not work. It does not hold water. It is an absolute misrepresentation of the facts.

It is an absolute distortion of reality and it cannot be tolerated, because what the government and what the Minister of Family Services did not say was that the Student Social Allowances Program is a means-tested program. People eligible for this program did not have the financial means, financial alternatives to get that education.

Madam Deputy Speaker, people who receive Student Social Allowances have no other options. They are there applying for this program and getting into the program because they do not have families to return to, because they do not have family situations where they should return to, because they do not have alternative financial resources, because they do not have any other option in terms of going back to school and getting that basic education except through the Student Social Allowances Program. For the Minister of Family Services to suggest these people can go back home is not only a total misrepresentation of his own program and how it works, it is also the most irresponsible suggestion I have yet heard coming out of anyone in this government.

* (1150)

The minister knows full well that many of these young persons are in the predicament they are in because of their family situations to begin with, because either the family did not have the economic means and the financial resources to help fund their children so they could go to school or because of the violence and domestic abuse and problems within the family unit itself, and for the minister to suggest for one minute, to imply for one second, that these young people go back to abusive family situations, to go back into a violent household is to me a criminal suggestion. It is absolutely irresponsible and a contradiction of every word in all the rhetoric this government has ever muttered about child abuse, about family violence, about domestic problems.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the brainwashing did not stop there. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) also contributed to this kind of attempt to program individuals and make them believe something that was not the case. The Premier was confronted by Shirley Neufeld, whom I have mentioned in this House on a number of occasions. Shirley Neufeld was a recipient of the Student Social Allowances Program, so is her husband—or I should say, so was her husband. They are a young married couple with a two-year-old daughter. Both those individuals

will be left in the cold by this government's stroke of a pen.

That family unit will change. Their goals and aspirations to improve themselves and make a decent life for their daughter have gone like the wind. And what was the Premier's response to Shirley Neufeld when she asked him, what is she supposed to do? The Premier's response, Madam Deputy Speaker, was that one of the two parents, one of the two students able to go to school because of the Student Social Allowances Program, would have to do something else, would have to stay at home, would have to stop going to school.

Maybe this is part of a master plan because we have heard mutterings from other ministers across the way, mutterings that imply that perhaps women really should return to the household, to the home, really should go back to their rightful place in our society of caring for children in the home and looking after the household.

I think we know that enough has been said from members across the way to tell us this government is living in the dinosaur age, has no idea of the family unit today, has no idea of the aspirations of women in our society.

For this government to turn to the Neufeld family with two young people, both under the age of 25, both of whom have decided to get it right, to go back to school—to follow the words of this government that said, go back to school and the path to opportunity is open wide—who believed in this government, only to find the whole dream taken away from them, to have the path, that opportunity closed, to be denied any possibility of improving themselves and providing for their family and contributing to our society.

What will happen to that family unit? One of them has to make that choice. Shirley or her husband will have to decide who is going to give up their aspirations, their dreams. One of them is going to have to find a job without basic education, and we know what that means. That means underemployment. That means low-paid, stressful working conditions. It means that if one of them wants to carry on with education and their dreams and aspirations, one of them has to go on social assistance through the city because, Madam Deputy Speaker, they will not be eligible for provincial assistance.

In order to carry on with their education, they have to do it on a part-time basis. They cannot take any more than a couple of courses at a time because they have to prove that they are looking for work. So one's dreams and aspirations are cut off completely; the other one, whoever it may be—and if they can swing it in terms of taking the couple of courses that would be permitted, living on city assistance and trying to find arrangements for care for their young daughter, if they can juggle all of that—is going to be left drawing out their dream, lengthening the process to get the education to the point where they get in an age category where their dreams even with that basic education may not be possible.

* (1200)

It is a Catch 22. It is an impossible situation. Never mind just the juggling of all those demands and interests, what does it do to that family unit? They are two young people both of whom have decided that they should go back to school, both of whom have abilities and both of whom, despite the demands of being parents and juggling child care arrangements and going to school and making ends meet, both of whom are left making a most difficult choice. Who is going to make that choice, and what is it going to mean for the family? Will the family survive? Will that family unit still be around in the next few years? Does this government not understand the kind of pressure it is placing already on young people and families under stress trying their very best to do good, to do what this government said, get an education and make a difference?

So not only does this government make a decision that puts at risk the family, but it also denies entirely what it said it wanted to accomplish; that was, young people should get an education, get trained and make a difference. We are only left to believe that this government would rather have young people on social assistance without avenues left to get the education to eventually break the welfare cycle. It can only mean this government is prepared to put at risk families in our community today.

The Neufelds, I want the members opposite to know, not only realized that education was necessary and took seriously the words of this government, but they also gave it their everything. Despite all the pressures of juggling all of their responsibilities, they studied hard and they both

have top grades. That is not an unusual situation in terms of that program.

As a rule, all young people who are recipients of the Student Social Allowances Program work hard, because not only do they want to get good grades because they have made that decision to get an education, but also, Madam Deputy Speaker—and this comes back to the point I raised earlier about the brainwashing attempts by the minister and this government. The program requires good grades. The program requires 100 percent attendance. The program requires commitment. The program requires output. The program requires results.

The Minister of Family Services (Mr. Gilleshammer) knows—although he will not say it at this point, now that they have made this fatal decision—that a student in this program cannot stay in the program if they have a poor attendance record or if they have poor grades. So here we have a program that has excelled like no other program around us. It has done exactly what it set out to do.

First of all, it says: You cannot enter the program unless you have no other financial economic resources to turn to for getting that education; you cannot enter that program if you have a family to go back to that will support you. You have to, Madam Deputy Speaker, in order to get into this program, be in absolute need with no other alternatives. Here we have a program that is targeted, is very specific to a group in society that is committed to getting an education but has no other option for getting that education.

It is, by all analysts in the field—social policy analysts, economic analysts, public administration analysts, theorists, text books, professors, academic institutions—this is an example of a program that works and should be supported because it is targeted and it does exactly what it set out to do, because, as I have just said, which is the second important point of the Student Social Allowances Program, the students must show commitment. They cannot slack off. They cannot get this money and then walk away from it. It is not a freebie. They have to work hard. They have to give it everything they have in order to stay in the program.

So the output, the result of this program, Madam Deputy Speaker, is hundreds of young people with a basic education, with the tools to be able to get into training programs or to get a job, which then

makes them employed persons in this province who pay income tax, who contribute back, both in terms of dollars, income tax dollars, and in terms of purchasing power and stimulating the economy and in terms of carrying out a worthwhile and necessary function in our society today.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Instead, Mr. Speaker, this government has chosen to say to those hundreds of students: Tough luck. Too bad if you reconsidered your previous decision not to stick with high school. Too bad if you have come to realize how fruitless it is to carry on in a meaningful way without a basic education. Too bad if you have some dreams and goals and aspirations. Too bad if you do not want to be on social assistance. Too bad if you really want to contribute to society and help contribute and pay for programs that other people in needy situations need. Too bad if you want to be full, participating, contributing members in our society. Too bad. You are on your own, and if you fall through the cracks, so be it.

And that is what they will do, Mr. Speaker. They will fall through the cracks because they do not have any other means to get that education; they do not have any other sensible, reasonable option to finish their high school, get into training or get into a job.

So what do they have left then? They fall through the cracks. They get into a vicious cycle of poverty. They get trapped on welfare. They cannot provide for their children. They cannot make ends meet, so they cannot provide the basic sustenance for family members. They cannot provide for themselves.

Is there any other outcome but frustration, hopelessness, despair, fear, alienation, isolation? No, there is not. And where does that take us? Where do you go when you are in the pit of despair, when you are at the end of the rope, when you see no hope and you have no concept of future? Where does it go? What does it mean?

It means turning to activities, options that only add to social costs in our society, that only add to pain and grief for themselves and for others. Yes, it means—and surely the members opposite can understand it—turning to solvents for escape; yes, it means turning to prostitution because it may mean the only way to make a living; yes, it means turning to cults; yes, it means turning to gangs.

I hold, we hold this government responsible for those despicable, deplorable trends and events in

our society today, and they must bear that responsibility and look back on this period with sadness and with regret.

I hope that it is not too late to convince this government to change its mind and to put back in place a program that has made a difference, not only for those individuals which this government may not care about, but for our economy and our society as a whole.

We are stronger for the Student Social Allowances Program, and I beg and implore this government to change its mind for the good of our young people and for the health of our future to come.

Ms. Marianne Cerilli (Radisson): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise to speak. This is a bill to eliminate the Student Social Allowances Program, and I am pleased to speak to this bill even though for a minute there I thought I was going to be talking about Sunday shopping. There is a relationship.

I spoke yesterday as well about this government's lack of attention given to the dire straits that young people are facing in our economy. This is another opportunity to talk about the cuts in education, the cuts in job creation for young people, but this program in particular that is being eliminated through this bill, I think, shows most clearly the shortsightedness of a Conservative government and their attitude to public services in the role of government.

From the years that I was working in youth services, I worked with a number of people who benefited from this type of program and worked with people who often came from families where they did not want to have the same kind of lifestyle as an adult that they grew up with as a young person. They looked for ways to free themselves from the poverty cycle and get off living on welfare. Those are the students who would have benefited from this kind of program, often students who had grown up in a family that was on welfare and they would have a chance to go to school, finish their education and to then have access hopefully to a job.

* (1210)

It just does not make sense that while we have a government that has over the last couple of years put more than a hundred million additional dollars into welfare that we would not be moving in the opposite direction and have some requirement for those individuals who are benefiting from an income

paid for from the public purse that they would have some requirement to further their education. This is something that occurs in other countries and when you ask most people, it only makes sense to them. There seems to be an attitude out there, this attitude that we cannot pay for some people to go to school because it is going to somehow be unfair to those people who are not being paid to go to school.

That is the attitude, I think, that is present with this bill. It does not appreciate the reality of poverty. It does not appreciate that it is not a choice that some people would have to rely on social allowance to pay for education. To have this kind of a bill coming from a government who at the same time is making education even less accessible by allowing costs to increase, by cutting bursary programs, by cutting other ACCESS programs, it just does not make sense that they are also eliminating this kind of opportunity.

I think there are a lot of people who are starting to feel quite hopeless and a lot of them are starting to think what is the point in getting an education, there are no jobs anyway. That is the message also from this kind of a bill. Why not just go on welfare? That is compounded in the economy that we have when we have the minimum wage maintained at such a low rate so that in some cases welfare has more of an income than working. That is very serious.

A lot of people are really questioning why it is that wages are still so low. We must realize, and people must realize, that having a low minimum wage and keeping wages down, the attitude that people have when there is high unemployment, that you are lucky to have a job, and people being afraid to make too many demands on an employer—all these things have an effect on keeping wages down. This fear that people have of not having work, in turn, does benefit employers and industry.

Social allowance has not kept up with the increase in taxes that we are faced to pay; even if you are on welfare, you are paying the GST and the provincial sales tax harmonization now. People are starting to really feel, I think, that they just cannot keep up.

As I go and talk to young people—I was at a school again this week—there are a lot of them that still want to hold on to the idea that they are ambitious and they want to work hard in school and better themselves and get out there. They have a lot of hope for the good work that they could do in their

career. I hate to see that we create and encourage this attitude that disregards the reality of poverty, which continues to blame individuals who are unemployed or on social allowance for the situation we are in, because that is living in a false reality. To think that there is a job out there right now for all those people who are on social allowance, unemployed, on workers compensation or UI just is not true.

To continue to pass legislation like this, which also blames people, trying to tell them that there are jobs out there, part-time jobs that they could have if they so choose to pay their own way through education, is lying, because the economy is failing and those jobs are not out there. We have a responsibility as a civilized society to try and provide some alternatives and programming and hope for people, and to not continue to give them this line that, if they only chose, they could be employed and could have a job that we would all like to have to provide for ourselves.

This kind of program that this bill eliminates encouraged people to aspire, encouraged people to try to develop skills and their education. To eliminate that kind of a program, I think, only encourages hopelessness and encourages people to despair.

As the member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) was saying when I entered the Chamber, it encourages the kind of desperation that comes from poverty when people are forced to make choices that they possibly would not otherwise make in turning to substance abuse, selling their bodies, and young people I worked with in the school system—I knew young people who found themselves in those kinds of situations and chose that kind of life and how difficult it was after that for them to get out of this situation and how programs like this that allowed them an alternative were so important. It is not recognizing that so many of the young people who find themselves in those kinds of situations often come from families where they could not rely on parents to support them and care for them.

* (1220)

This government is good at denial, good at denying the reality of people who come from those kinds of unfortunate backgrounds and who rely on a caring society to provide some kind of alternative. That is what this Student Social Allowances Program did. We often hear story after story of a young person who left school, had a rough time, and

then came back and through this program got another chance, got another chance at completing their education so that they could get on a path of a positive lifestyle.

It is sad when we hear the government use rhetoric like, this is a difficult choice. I would suggest that this government has not even begun to look at the difficult choices yet. We still see them continuing to create more and more of an elitist and classist society with the kind of economic policy and social policy that they practise. We see an emphasis more and more on the profit motive and more and more of turning over our economy and society to the highs and lows in the marketplace. We have seen the effect that has had on the increase in poverty in our province, which is now not only record high of child poverty, but of poverty for adults as well.

As I look to the future of what could happen if the North American Free Trade Agreement came in and of how programs such as this one would even be more difficult to implement, and I look at the future for young people even now who are in school and are trying to maintain some optimism toward the future, and as I learn more about what our country could become with the extension of NAFTA, realizing that it has nothing to do with trade anymore, it has to do with linking our economies north and south so that more and more the marketplace has control over our lives and over the setting of social policy where we try to create a more caring society.

It is interesting when I talk to university students about the elimination of the Student Social Allowances Program, and the logic that this government has used to try and defend this cut where they have said that this was a program unique to Manitoba and how that was a reason for them to cut the program, one of the students said to me, that is the lowest form of logic that there is. That goes to show that in their obsession with the bottom line this government has not fairly dealt with people. They have chosen to deal the harshest blow to people who have the least ability to stand up and fight back, who have the least voice.

The people, who the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says support the plan, are the people who are privileged, have monetary power, status, lead positions, powerful positions, who, I would say, have no compassion and no forward-looking vision of the kind of society or community that we can create.

We raised recently a report in the House that could provide some hope that there are solutions and there is hope. There are jobs that could be created by turning towards sustainable energy and water conservation policies. It is interesting that the minister of Hydro admitted that he had not seen that report. It seems like they are not looking really for opportunities to create employment.

We could have programs where these same students on social allowance could get training in colleges and then from there go on to create these new industries to make our community more healthy and more sustainable, but this government is choosing to continue to follow an old-style, out-dated approach to economic policy and social policy.

It just does not make sense that at the same time that they are pouring more and more money into welfare, to pour \$100 million more dollars into welfare, and at the same time eliminate this program that allows some of those welfare recipients to continue school, just does not make sense.

We have tried to get some explanation of that from the members opposite, and all that they can do is give us this rhetoric about difficult choices and how this is somehow going to help us balance the budget and rid ourselves of the deficit.

What will be interesting to see, as time goes on, how many of these students, these some 1,200 or so students that have benefited from this program each year, will continue to be on welfare.

Now I would say that some of them may find employment because I think that a number of the young people on this program tend to be young people who have a high standard for themselves. They have a desire to improve their life and improve themselves, and some of them may have to settle for some kind of low-skilled job.

But I think that the other thing that will happen, particularly these students will not forget what the government has done, and this will help them in developing analysis of what kind of economics this government chooses to practise, the kind of economics based on exploitation, exploitation of workers, where they would rather see people on welfare than going to school, where they would rather see people on welfare than in job creation programs

There were a number of programs similar to this one that took money from social allowance and put

it into training programs for young people, specifically single parents, particularly young people who are disabled, to train them in finishing their high school education and then having them placed in a workplace to get, in some cases, their first work experience. These are the programs that this government could be and should be expanding if they so choose.

This government continues to have only one solution to economic problems and that is to cut government programs that support our most disadvantaged members of our community and, at the same time, handing over larger and larger pots of money to the captains of industry and taking us further and further down this path of being held hostage to market forces and the powerful industries which are less and less Canadian-owned.

It is unfortunate that this government is not seeing the error and the way that this has not worked over the years. We have been waiting a long time for the great trickle-down to occur. All that we ever do is we have to give up more of our services whenever there is a Conservative government in power, and we never see the surge of industry that is going to come

to the province. We never see the huge increase in industrial development that is promised when we take these regressive measures when we have corporate taxes reduced. We never see the huge surge of increase of capital investment. All we ever see, Mr. Speaker, is a decrease in government revenues, which then are given over to the individual taxpayer to pay in greater and greater proportion of the general revenue to government.

It is interesting, when talking to young people about these kind of cuts to education programs, when you explain the disparity in where government revenue now comes from and how more of it used to come from industry and now it is given over to the individual taxpayer.

Mr. Speaker, I will look forward to continuing in this vein—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Radisson (Ms. Cerilli) will have 19 minutes remaining.

The hour being 12:30, the House now adjourns and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. Monday.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, May 14, 1993

CONTENTS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

Presenting Petitions

| | |
|--|------|
| Children's Dental Program | |
| Storie | 2968 |
| Dewar | 2968 |
| Restoration of Friendship Centre Funding | |
| Hickes | 2968 |
| Wheat Board Barley Marketing | |
| Wowchuk | 2968 |

Reading and Receiving Petitions

| | |
|---|------|
| Wheat Board Barley Marketing | |
| Wowchuk | 2968 |
| Restoration of Friendship Centre Funding | |
| Hickes | 2968 |
| Misericordia Hospital/Acute Care Facility | |
| Carstairs | 2969 |

Introduction of Bills

| | |
|---|------|
| Bill 34, Public Schools Amendment (Francophone Schools Governance) Act | |
| Vodrey | 2969 |

Oral Questions

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------|
| New Careers Program | |
| Doer; Vodrey | 2969 |
| ACCESS Programs | |
| Friesen; Vodrey; Gray | 2970 |
| Government Departments | |
| Gilleshammer | 2972 |
| Flin Flin/Creighton Crisis Centre | |
| Storie; Gilleshammer | 2972 |
| Business Practices Act | |
| Maloway; McIntosh | 2973 |

| | |
|------------------------------|------|
| Tower Funding | |
| Maloway; McIntosh | 2973 |
| Health Care System Reform | |
| Cheema; Orchard | 2974 |
| Home Care Supply Program | |
| Chomiak; Orchard | 2975 |
| Health Care System Reform | |
| Chomiak; Orchard | 2975 |
| Education System | |
| Plohman; Vodrey | 2975 |
| New Careers Program | |
| Ashton; Vodrey | 2976 |
| Repap Manitoba Inc. | |
| Wowchuk; Manness | 2977 |
| Forestry Industry—Swan River | |
| Wowchuk; Manness | 2977 |
| Simplot Plant | |
| L. Evans; Stefanson | 2978 |
| Manufacturing Industry | |
| L. Evans; Stefanson | 2978 |

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Debate on Second Readings

| | |
|---|------|
| Bill 22, Public Sector Reduced Work Week and Compensation Management Act | |
| Barrett | 2979 |

Second Readings

| | |
|--|------|
| Bill 32, Social Allowances Amendment Act | |
| Gilleshammer | 2985 |
| Wasylycia-Leis | 2985 |
| Cerilli | 2990 |