

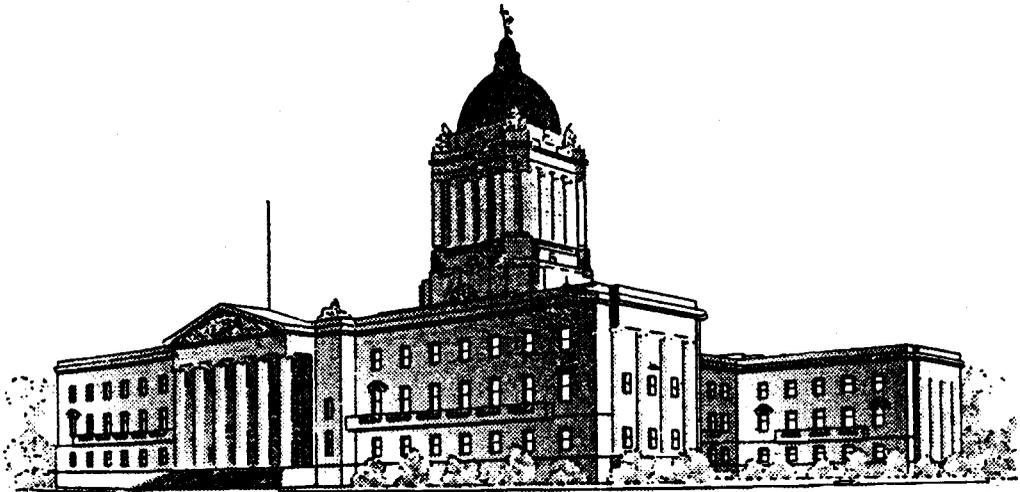


Sixth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature
of the
Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

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Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Fifth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

<u>Name</u>	<u>Constituency</u>	<u>Party</u>
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	NDP
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	NDP
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	NDP
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	NDP
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	NDP
DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	P.C.
DUCHARME, Gerald, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
EDWARDS, Paul	St. James	Lib.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	NDP
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	NDP
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	NDP
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
GRAY, Avis	Crescentwood	Lib.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	NDP
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	NDP
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	NDP
MANNES, Clayton, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	NDP
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCORMICK, Norma	Osborne	Lib.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
ORCHARD, Donald, Hon.	Pembina	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PLOHMAN, John	Dauphin	NDP
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	NDP
REIMER, Jack	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertland	NDP
ROCAN, Denis, Hon.	Gladstone	P.C.
ROSE, Bob	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	NDP
SHELLENBERG, Harry	Rossmere	NDP
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	NDP
<i>Vacant</i>	River Heights	
<i>Vacant</i>	Flin Flon	

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 15, 1994

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Physical Education in Schools

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Pam Fitzpatrick, Terri Grant, E. Bzikof and others, urging the Minister responsible for Education (Mr. Manness) to consider reinstating physical education as a compulsory core subject area.

Improvement of Highway 391

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Kenneth Ross, Hazel Fayant, Marlene Hrabriuk and others, requesting the government of Manitoba to consider reviewing the state of Highway 391 with a view towards improving the condition and safety of the road.

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Children's Dental Program

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Reid). It complies with the privileges and the practices of this House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: The Clerk will read.

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

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993/94 budget.

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Dewar). It complies with the privileges and the practices of this House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

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

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health

care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993/94 budget.

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Ms. Cerilli). It complies with the privileges and the practices of this House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

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

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS several studies have pointed out the cost savings of preventative and treatment health care programs such as the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been

recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 55 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care reform.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

* (1335)

Housing Authorities Voluntary Boards

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

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

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

WHEREAS thousands of Manitobans depend upon public housing as affordable housing geared to their income for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS these units are particularly important for thousands of low income seniors and single parents; and

WHEREAS the provincial government upon the request of the federal Liberal government has increased without notice the rent payable for tenants; and

WHEREAS the federal Liberal government has eliminated all funding for new public housing; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has abolished the voluntary boards of public housing authorities and made other cuts to the public housing program in this province.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly request the Minister responsible for Housing to consider cancelling the recent unilateral rent hikes and restoring the voluntary boards of the housing authorities.

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Martindale). It complies with the privileges and the practices of this House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

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

WHEREAS thousands of Manitobans depend upon public housing as affordable housing geared to their income for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS these units are particularly important for thousands of low income seniors and single parents; and

WHEREAS the provincial government upon the request of the federal Liberal government has increased without notice the rent payable for tenants; and

WHEREAS the federal Liberal government has eliminated all funding for new public housing; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has abolished the voluntary boards of public housing

authorities and made other cuts to the public housing program in this province.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly request the Minister responsible for Housing to consider cancelling the recent unilateral rent hikes and restoring the voluntary boards of the housing authorities.

Physical Education in Schools

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

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: The Clerk will read.

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

THAT in July 1994, the Minister of Education introduced an action plan entitled *Renewing Education: New Directions*;

THAT this report will make physical education an optional course in Grades 9 to 12;

THAT the physical education curriculum should be regularly reviewed to ensure that it meets the needs of students;

THAT the government is failing to recognize the benefits of physical education such as improved physical fitness, more active lifestyles, health promotion, self-discipline, skill development, stress reduction, strengthened peer relationships, weight regulation, stronger bones, reduced risk of health diseases and improved self-confidence.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister responsible for Education to consider reinstating physical education as a compulsory core subject area.

Housing Authorities Voluntary Boards

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Robinson). It complies with the privileges and the practices of this House and complies with the rules (by leave). Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Mr. Speaker: Dispense.

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

WHEREAS thousands of Manitobans depend upon public housing as affordable housing geared to their income for themselves and their families; and

WHEREAS these units are particularly important for thousands of low income seniors and single parents; and

WHEREAS the provincial government upon the request of the federal Liberal government has increased without notice the rent payable for tenants; and

WHEREAS the federal Liberal government has eliminated all funding for new public housing; and

WHEREAS the provincial government has abolished the voluntary boards of public housing authorities and made other cuts to the public housing program in this province.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly request the Minister responsible for Housing to consider cancelling the recent unilateral rent hikes and restoring the voluntary boards of the housing authorities.

Improvement of Highway 391

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Ashton). It complies with the privileges and the practices of this House

and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Mr. Speaker: The Clerk will read.

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

WHEREAS the state of Highway 391 is becoming increasingly unsafe; and

WHEREAS due to the poor condition of the road there have been numerous accidents; and

WHEREAS the condition of the road between Thompson and Nelson House is not only making travel dangerous but costly due to frequent damage to vehicles; and

WHEREAS this road is of vital importance to residents who must use the road.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislature of the Province of Manitoba may be pleased to request that the government of Manitoba consider reviewing the state of Highway 391 with a view towards improving the condition and safety of the road.

Handi-Transit

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

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

The Manitoba government has decreased funding to the City of Winnipeg Transit budget by \$300,000; and

At the same time the City of Winnipeg has increased funding to Handi-Transit by \$430,000; and

The Filmon government has refused to provide the City of Winnipeg with sufficient funding to maintain Handi-Transit service; and

As a result of the province's refusal to cost-share with the city for Handi-Transit services, Handi-Transit has cut back on approximately 42,000 trips per year; and

Over 10,000 disabled Manitobans rely upon Handi-Transit as their primary means of transportation; and

Handi-Transit operators are now turning down over 200 ride requests per day; and

This lack of transportation will result in many disabled Manitobans losing their independence and dignity and being forced to be institutionalized at far higher costs to the taxpayers of this province; and

The Filmon government has refused to even send a representative of the government to sit on the Handi-Transit Task Force committee.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly will urge the Minister of Urban Affairs to consider working with the City of Winnipeg and the disabled to develop a long-term plan to maintain Handi-Transit service and ensure that disabled Manitobans will continue to have access to Handi-Transit service.

Physical Education in Schools

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

WHEREAS the proposed changes to the Manitoba curriculum would have no physical education required for students after Grade 8; and

WHEREAS the social, intellectual, emotional and physical benefits of physical education have been proven through extensive research; and,

WHEREAS requiring physical education for high school sends a message that physical activity is important for life and encourages high school students to make life choices to stay active and it fits into a preventative health strategy; and,

WHEREAS many parents, students, medical professionals and educators, health and recreation specialists are urging that physical education be increased in schools.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Education to consider maintaining physical education as part of the core curriculum from kindergarten to senior high.

Children's Dental Program

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member (Mr. Clif Evans). It complies with the privileges and practices of this House and complies with the rules. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read? Dispense.

WHEREAS Manitoba has the highest rate of child poverty in the country; and

WHEREAS over 55,000 children depend upon the Children's Dental Program; and

WHEREAS the Children's Dental Program has been in effect for 17 years and has been recognized as extremely cost-effective and critical for many families in isolated communities; and

WHEREAS the provincial government did not consult the users of the program or the providers before announcing plans to eliminate 44 of the 49 dentists, nurses and assistants providing this service; and

WHEREAS preventative health care is an essential component of health care form;

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba may be pleased to request the Minister of Health

consider restoring the Children's Dental Program to the level it was prior to the 1993-94 budget.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege of tabling the Annual Report for the year 1993-94 of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, it is my privilege to table the Annual Report for 1993-94 of the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Pharmaceuticals Institution Costs

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

Consumers, health care systems and now potentially hospitals have been affected by changing drug policies and exorbitant raises in prices to people across Canada.

We have heard today that there are further problems in the drug industry in terms of prices for our health care system in Manitoba. Prices have been quoted to be doubling in our hospitals to have a potential impact at the Health Sciences Centre of close to \$1 million over the long term in terms of prices to our health care system.

A lot of people want to know why these drug companies are making profits the way they are, and what is the impact of changes in drug pricing at the Health Sciences Centre on top of the cuts the government has made and at other health care facilities across Manitoba.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that the member opposite recalls that this administration, I believe with the support of his party, opposed the federal government's introduction and passage of Bill C-91, I believe it

was, the drug patent protection act. That act we clearly—and, in fact, the former Minister of Health the member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) and the Minister of Finance both made presentations in Ottawa to the federal government, clearly putting on the record our opposition to that legislation passing.

It is my recollection that the federal Liberal Party, in running for office, said that they would review with a view to cancelling that bill.

That, of course, ultimately, is the kind of action that would help solve the problem that the Leader of the Opposition raises, but, of course, we see no initiative on the part of that federal Liberal government, and, of course, we see not a whimper of support from the provincial Liberal Party for that, despite the fact that, at the time, when it was a Conservative government involved, they were only too willing to criticize that bill.

Today, of course, they remain silent on the issue, Mr. Speaker.

* (1340)

Mr. Doer: We, of course, agree with the Premier on C-91, but what we are dealing with here is an additional problem in terms of drug pricing and potentially shafting the health care system in Manitoba and continuing to deal with, we think, indefensible profits at the expense of our health care system.

It is quoted at the Health Sciences Centre that a generic drug company will be raising one medication, potentially one medication, from 4.10 a hundred to 10.33 a hundred, Mr. Speaker, and apparently they are doing so to have a situation where the hospital sector will have to pay the same prices as the private sector.

Now, the companies, the private generic companies, are saying that this is in part due to, quote, governments generically. I would like to ask the government, what is the impact going to be on our health care budgets, which are already being cut by this provincial government?

What will be the cost and what is the strategy of the provincial government to deal with this change in pricing from the institutional health care costs to the so-called private sector.

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the hospitals, of course, have not measured that yet. The tendering system is still in effect, and they will be putting out proposals for the various drugs that they require.

I will say this, that governments, when he says "generically," are responsible in some way for the increase in prices, this government has put no increases of cost on drug manufacturers in this province or on any other businesses in this province.

This government has kept taxes down. This government has done everything possible to maintain an environment in which corporations and individuals are better off because of our ability to spend less and keep taxes down, Mr. Speaker, so certainly that comment would not apply to this administration.

Mr. Doer: The term "governments" is being utilized by the private generic firms to justify their changes in prices to almost more than double the prices of drugs to hospitals, Mr. Speaker, to allegedly bring them in line with the alleged private sector, but people out there believe, whether it is the generic drugs or the pricing of the patent drugs that have had profits go up by 14 percent, that they are, at the end of the day, the ones paying for it, both in terms of medicare costs, which will go up \$7 billion, and now in terms of costs at the hospital, Health Sciences Centre, that is quoted to be \$1 million.

The Premier did not answer the question. What is the strategy to deal with these changing prices, and how will this government ensure the drug companies are not just using this to increase their profits at the expense of the health care system here in Manitoba, Mr. Speaker?

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, a major part of a strategy would include

the assistance of the Leader of the Opposition and the assistance of the Leader of the third party in this House to address the issue addressed by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) in the first answer he gave, that is, to ask our federal counterparts to do what they said they would do. They have not done it, and now we see the threats that the honourable member is raising today in the House and quite legitimately so.

We do need his assistance in working with our colleague from the third party and the federal government to keep their promises. If they did that, that would go some distance.

In the meantime, hospitals are under the same pressure that they have been under each and every year and so are governments right across this country. The western provinces have still been able to retain a Pharmacare program for people under the age of 65, Manitoba being one of them. Our benefits here are on a par or better than those in other provinces.

You can see by looking to the east of us what could happen if we do not get the co-operation of the honourable Leader of the third party here today, as well as his colleagues in Ottawa to address this problem.

* (1345)

Health Care System House Calls

Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, every time the government cuts health programs, they promise to replace it with something in the community. There is a real need in the community for visiting doctor services. What steps will this government take to replace the services provided by Envoy to those people in the community who need the service?

To that end, I will table a letter that the minister has from the Manitoba League of the Physically Handicapped saying there is a real need for these people and others in the community for visiting doctor services.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, contrary to what the honourable member suggests, the house call has been, remains and will be a feature of the health care system in Manitoba. Special call fees claimed for visits made to a patient's home, when more than 10 percent of the physician's total payment, is what we have been talking about. That is what raises the honourable member's question.

I hope the honourable member joins with the hundreds—no, thousands of Manitobans who have been reminding me that every area of the inappropriate use of the health care system ought to be addressed. Surely the honourable member is not saying that a physician ought to be able to bill \$25.50 in addition to whatever other services he or she provides for some of the kinds of cases that we have been discussing the last few days.

The ability for the house call is still there. Indeed, I challenge physicians in this province to carry on with that part of their practice. No one is intended by this policy in any way to be put to any hardship.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, the minister totally missed the point of the question.

The fact is, physicians have always had the opportunity to make house calls. The minister knows that a lot do not and most do not, and the emergency wards are generally full of people because they are told to go to an emergency ward.

My question to the minister is, will he guarantee today that those individuals who cannot attend an emergency ward or who cannot attend at a doctor because of physical or other reasons or who have difficulty will have access to a visiting physician or other resource service in their homes to take care of them?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, it is not expected that this policy, which has been put into effect by the Manitoba Medical Association, would take from anyone the opportunity to have a house call, should that be required.

I think what the Manitoba Medical Association is addressing, on behalf of their membership, are issues that relate to possible inappropriate use of the system. I do not think the honourable member wants to defend the inappropriate use of our system. I certainly do not, because there are too many people in Manitoba who need our system and too many doctors in Manitoba who want to use the system fairly.

Mr. Chomiak: Mr. Speaker, again, the minister did not answer the question. That must be 21 times in the last week he has failed to answer a question. He rivals the record of his predecessor in that position.

My final supplementary to the minister: Given that the minister is prepared to give \$100 million to the Royal Bank of Canada for computers, will the minister look at service-at-home care or hiring some doctors on salary through Public Health to provide a home service for people who cannot attend at the office?

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, the approach taken by the honourable member in his question hardly even deserves a response. In spite of the tactics used by the honourable member, the people of Manitoba are entitled to responses, and that is what I propose to give.

I am quite happy to debate and discuss the public health information system that we announced a couple of days ago with the honourable member. I have offered him a briefing. He has not taken me up on that, with respect to the kinds of benefits we can achieve there.

The honourable member mentioned the Home Care program. I was very pleased today to join with a number of individuals and organizations in announcing the enhancement and the expansion of our self-managed Home Care program.

On this particular day, Mr. Speaker, it might be appropriate, indeed, to call attention to my predecessor. Many disabled people in Manitoba say to me, I hope you will thank Mr. Orchard—sorry, I hope you will thank the Minister of Energy

for having begun the self-managed Home Care program. On their behalf today, I would like to thank my predecessor for pioneering that particular program in Manitoba.

* (1350)

School Boundaries Review Release

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Premier.

Today at one o'clock, it is our understanding from speaking to Mr. Backman, who is the executive director of the Boundaries Review Commission, that five copies of the completed boundary review report have been handed or are currently in the process of being handed to the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness), and from there, it is our understanding that they will be translated prior to public release.

My question for the Premier: When can we expect to have public access to that report, given that the former Minister of Education released a report back some years ago on education legislation reform, and unfortunately, it took 16 weeks apparently to translate 65 pages.

This is a 200-page report. I assume that we will have that report, and the school boards will have that report, in far better time than that. I wonder if the Premier can indicate when that will be completed.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, certainly we will want to make that report public as soon as it is reasonable to do so. I will have to check and see what is the expected time for translation.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, secondly, for the Premier and on the same topic, school boards are currently planning their budgets for the coming fiscal year, and there is some significant degree of concern about the impact of this report on that current fiscal year. The Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) spoke to the Association of School Trustees recently.

My question for the Premier: Can he indicate whether or not this report will, in fact, have any impact on school boards for the next fiscal year, or can they continue to plan as in the normal course, not having the fear that this report will, in fact, jeopardize any of their plans for the coming fiscal year?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, not having access to the report, I cannot anticipate whether it will or will not.

Mining Industry Status Report

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): I am going to beg your indulgence, Mr. Speaker, and shift gears slightly on this question. I want to ask the Minister of Energy and Mines a question. He has been here, and we have not yet asked him a question in this brief time, and I do want to offer him that opportunity. We have not agreed on a lot of things—perhaps nothing—in the time that I have been in the House, but I want to ask him to outline for us, if he will, the current state of the mining industry in Manitoba.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Energy and Mines): Ah, Mr. Speaker, I wish I could quote Shakespeare. Where do I begin? That is a very good suggestion. I want to thank members of the House. Some of them have been here for the almost 18 years that I have been here, and I want to thank them for a lot of very interesting times that I think I will reflect on very generously over the next ensuing years.

I was going to offer to my honourable friend the Liberal Leader a rhetorical response, which might have been accused of being rather quick-tongued and vociferous by observers who may be here and presently observing, and I shall not do that, Sir. It would be contrary to my gentlemanly disposition at this time of year.

* (1355)

My honourable friend and I may not, as he has indicated, agree necessarily on too many areas and too many policies, but I think the one thing my honourable friend and indeed all members of the

House will agree on is that the mining industry is being revitalized in Manitoba, not by government and not by writ of government, but by opportunity of investment through the changes in taxation policy legislation. It is a remarkable recovery of a very key and important industry to the province of Manitoba, a key and important industry to the two very significant and major communities of Flin Flon and of Thompson.

I think it speaks volumes as to the opportunity that this industry represents to all Manitobans, when Hudson Bay is able to announce, because of renewed exploration efforts, the first new mine of nickel and copper in the province of Manitoba in the last 15 to 20 years, and, similarly, INCO with their major announcement of the deep pipe discovery.

Those are good signs for the province of Manitoba, and I am sure all members here would welcome the investment that is going to flow from those two discoveries, indeed from the potential of Falconbridge entering a major discovery and a very unique opportunity that Manitobans have.

I think not everyone understands the opportunity of the deposit of titanium at Cross Lake, where for the first time in the history of Canada, we may have aboriginals as full partners in the mining industry, and I think that would be a remarkable first step.

Highway Construction Projects Northern Manitoba

Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, in the North, tourism, economic development, efficient transportation of products and goods are all issues that have province-wide implication. The state of northern roads is no longer an economic issue, but it has become a very serious health and safety issue, an issue much like the ducks in Oak Hammock Marsh in whose health and safety the Minister of Highways seems to place a high priority.

Paving the road to Oak Hammock Marsh, in my mind, does not have province-wide implication,

and yet the minister always tells us that he has to look after all of Manitoba.

Will the minister now take the same concern about dusty roads to his 1995 capital project plans for roads in northern Manitoba?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, in the process of developing the programs in the past and for '95 and the years forward, the answer is obviously, yes. We have projects that we have completed in the last two years, projects planned for '95 and projects planned for the years beyond, in consultation with community members for the roads in the North that the member is referring to, to try to maximize the use of scarce dollars and to put safe roads in place for all Manitobans.

I know that the member would like to see us do it faster than is going to be fiscally feasible, but the citizens of Manitoba, Sir, have also told us, we must not increase taxes; we must spend responsibly.

I have to admit that I can only do about one-sixth or one-seventh of the projects that need to be done, but I can guarantee to you, Sir, that my department is meeting with members of the North, with the community leaders, to try to determine where the areas of priority are and what standards we can achieve in the next few years to meet the objectives that you want.

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, if the number of ducks and geese in the area, and not people, is one criteria that would enhance your chance of getting your roads fixed, will the minister now use that same logic and criteria but remember that there are people there too, and proceed immediately, now, to allocate at least 25 percent of the Highways budget for northern Manitoba, because it needs a lot of catching up?

Mr. Findlay: Well, Mr. Speaker, I can confirm to the member that pretty well every region of the province would make the same request. I am sorry. You know, you have 3 percent of the traffic, and you ask for 25 percent of the budget.

I do not care what grouping you want to talk about, whether it is the Union of Manitoba Municipalities or tourism groups or regional development groups, all want more money spent on highways. We spend a lot of money per kilometre of highway in this province compared to any other area of the country.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is an appropriate time to mention to the House that although we have worked hard, and my previous minister on this side of the House worked very hard, for the National Highways Program—we have worked together as the four western provinces and two territories to ask the federal government to make a commitment towards a National Highways Program. I can tell the House that today we received a letter about an hour ago that said no to putting federal dollars, which they collect 4.5 billion of gas tax dollars across this country, and they do not want to spend it back on the highway system. That is the Liberal government of Canada.

* (1400)

Mr. Lathlin: Mr. Speaker, the Finance minister (Mr. Stefanson) has been going around holding pre-budget consultation meetings. He was in The Pas and I went there to listen to him. I heard people urging him in The Pas to spend more money on northern roads. It says right here. I do not see ducks here telling the minister to spend more money on a road to Oak Hammock Marsh.

Will the Finance minister now make the decision that we have a crisis situation in northern Manitoba in terms of the condition of the roads and allocate at least 25 percent of the Highways budget for northern Manitoba?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, again, I will confirm for the member that the request he mentions about people at the Minister of Finance's meetings talking about highways, it is the highest priority everywhere. The minister found out that 99 percent said, do not increase taxes, and when he asked, department by department, where the extra expenditure should be, every region raised highways—every region. So what he asked for is

being asked by everybody, and in the process of making decisions, in the interest of fairness, we have to make decisions that reflect all the province.

I have already committed to that member and to that region significant consultation with the communities to try to determine where the priorities are, how we can use scarce dollars to maximize road safety and road driving experience for the citizens of north, south and all of Manitoba, particularly the commercial people and the tourism industry.

Oak Hammock Marsh

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I took as notice a question yesterday from the member for Osborne (Ms. McCormick). Could I respond at this time?

Mr. Speaker: You sure can.

Mr. Findlay: The member for Osborne asked about whether the process we are doing at Oak Hammock Marsh on a four-kilometre stretch of road is the appropriate one.

I want to tell the member that some analysis was done, and the traffic count there is an average of 400 vehicles per day. On the Thanksgiving weekend in 1993, there were 2,000 vehicles on the Sunday and over 2,000 vehicles on the Monday—high use. It is a road of—we will call it for lack of a better term—substandard for that kind of traffic —[interjection]

Mr. Speaker: Respond to your question from the other day, sir.

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, that road needs to be upgraded. It needs to be graded and gravelled before you put any surface on. The grading and graveling will cost about \$350,000; then you look at surface. The AST surface that is being proposed by the department is an additional \$350,000, and it will last for 20 years.

The process the member talked about to treat the gravel and grade it and then re-treat it every year

costs about \$60,000 a year, so in six years you have already spent the \$360,000, so you are net ahead to do the AST surface to that road for that volume of traffic.

With regard to the number of people visiting which the member made a misrepresentation on, DU said that over five years, the attendance will get up to 210,000. She said they did not achieve that. In year one, 100,000; in year two, 150,000. Now, we have three more years to get to the 210,000.

So I can guarantee to the member that the citizens of Manitoba want to use that as a tourist region, and we will fix the road to accommodate that.

Highway Construction Projects PTH 220

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, last week, we learned that the Minister of Highways jumped queue and spent nearly \$2 million to repave a highway in his constituency.

Now this minister is going to spend nearly \$1 million to pave Provincial Road 220 from Highway 67 into the Oak Hammock centre.

My question for the Minister of Highways and Transportation is, can he explain why he is going to pave 8.2 kilometres of Provincial Road 220 south of Provincial Trunk Highway 67, when that road does not currently serve the Oak Hammock Marsh?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, I have just given the member the information on the four kilometres to Oak Hammock Marsh—\$700,000 to do the grade, gravel, land acquisition and AST that is needed to bring that road up to an adequate standard.

The standard used for paving or for ASTing is over 300 vehicles per day, and I have already told the member, in answer to a previous question, that the volume is over 400.

With regard to the other section the member is asking about, I will bring that back to the House tomorrow.

Mr. Reid: Oak Hammock Marsh is currently served by Highways 7, 8 and 67, Mr. Speaker, all paved surfaces.

Will this minister explain why he is going to spend nearly \$2 million on this 8.2-kilometre piece of road in addition to the \$1-million road to Oak Hammock centre, when there are no major communities along this route and while northern residents are forced to travel on substandard, dangerous roads?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, I have heard members opposite talk about tourism—we have to do things to promote tourism. They have talked about education—we have to help our young people understand wildlife. They have talked about the environment.

All of that is encompassed in Oak Hammock Marsh, where I have said up to 2,000 vehicles a day on long weekends when people want to go to the country and educate their young people, as schools take tours up there. That member is doing a discredit to rural Manitoba. He is doing a discredit to the educational institutions, and he is certainly doing a discredit to the wildlife that we can exhibit to our young people in this province.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, I will table or send a copy of this provincial road map over to the minister, so he knows that the road which I am talking about does not currently serve the Oak Hammock Marsh. That is served by paved services that are already in existence.

Can the Minister of Highways justify spending \$2 million on a road in his constituency plus another \$3 million on Provincial Road 220, when his department cut the winter road contract with Norwin construction by 50 percent?

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, that member should do a little homework. Highway 15 is a two-lane road that runs 6,800 vehicles per day. I challenge

him to find another two-lane stretch of road that is that busy in the province of Manitoba. We will run 11,000 vehicles on No. 1 east and west. It is a four-lane road.

Mr. Speaker, there have been a number of accidents there. There is high community interest for safety on that road. That road might have been four-laned in the future if we knew a decision on the Reddit subdivision for CN, if they are going to abandon that line.

In the current period of time, I want to improve the safety. That member probably does not realize there were two deaths on that road last week—serious deaths, so it is responsible for this department, this minister and this government to upgrade roads to try to protect public safety where the volumes warrant it.

Urban Aboriginal Strategy Status Report

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Native Affairs.

In 1989, this government came out with an Urban Aboriginal Strategy. In the 1991 budget, the aboriginal development budget was underspent by \$270,000, which was absorbed back into the government coffers.

In 1992, the former Minister of Native Affairs said during the Estimates process that he was not satisfied with the situation, that they should have done more things. He reiterated these concerns in 1993.

Within its first year, the federal Liberal government was able to come up with the head-start program for urban native people.

My question for the Minister responsible for Native Affairs, why have we had no progress from this provincial government on aboriginal concerns?

* (1410)

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for Native Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the

member for St. Boniface for this question. He mentions some very small amounts of money that his federal Liberal colleagues have put into aboriginal issues in this province, but let us not forget that the current federal Liberal government that wants to somehow pretend that they have this great concern has carried on with the policy of the previous government not to provide funding for status aboriginal people off reserve, and that has cost the taxpayers of the province of Manitoba nearly \$60 million.

Let us not forget, as well, that I have not seen the federal Liberal government come back in to a number of the educational programs that were reduced. Their contribution has been paltry compared to withdrawals of funding that have taken place over the last number of years.

Urban Aboriginal Self-Government Status Report

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): In 1992, the Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg gave this government its urban aboriginal self-government proposal. What has this government done since it has received this document two years ago?

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister responsible for Native Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer this. Obviously, this is an area where we can have a very long and detailed discussion, and the format of Question Period limits that, no doubt.

But I have to tell the member for St. Boniface that, obviously, a lot of things are happening in the aboriginal community today because there are a lot of processes that are underway. Obviously, the signing a week or so ago of an agreement between the federal government and the Manitoba chiefs is part of that evolutionary process.

To be quite blunt to the member, we as a government have done many things in terms of just backfilling the costs that we have had to make up for withdrawals of federal support that the people of Manitoba used to receive and that Mr. Chretien has acknowledged and supports now by his actions.

So, quite frankly, Mr. Speaker, I think it is unfair to ask, while we are trying to backfill all these particular areas, that we can come up with new dollars to spend in these particular areas.

Tourism Bilingual Documents

Mr. Neil Gaudry (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, I have a short question to the First Minister. Yesterday, he sort of indicated that he would like more questions from the Liberals. First of all, I would like to congratulate him for what he has done for bilingualism and French services so far.

But to my surprise, this week I got a call from one Manitoban who indicated that his wife, a school teacher in an immersion program, requested from the Department of Tourism that they wanted some standard forms for the school. It was indicated to them that it was a year that they did not have the documents, but they would be available sometime next year.

Why, to the First Minister, have these documents not been available, especially when they promote tourism and bilingualism together?

Mr. Speaker: I thank the honourable member for St. Boniface with that new question.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I thank the member opposite for his comments.

I know that he attended the conference a week ago Saturday in which the bilingual municipalities and the Francophone chambers of commerce in Manitoba had a first-ever major economic development conference which flowed from a breakfast meeting which cabinet held with the Francophone chambers of commerce in Manitoba earlier this year.

That was, I think, a substantial success and, in fact, we are funding, through the Canada-Manitoba Agreement, the Canada-Manitoba Community Agreement on French Language Services, services to those municipalities. We, of course, emphasized for them the strength that it

gives us to be able to promote call centres, for instance, in Manitoba to have the bilingual capability that we do have for all areas of economic development in our province. Certainly, many of the things, such as the bilingual signs that are on our roadways, are designed as a tourist attraction for bilingual service to people in communities throughout Manitoba.

The specifics of his question with respect to a particular form in the Department of Tourism is something I cannot answer off the top of my head, so I will have to take that as notice and bring him back further information.

Parent Advisory Council Teacher Representation

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): I have a question for the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) or the Premier.

Trustees, superintendents, principals and parents have great concerns about the new guidelines which give teachers only very little representation on the Parent Advisory Council. Mr. Speaker, it is a teacher that is the main caregiver. It is a teacher that is the main link between home and school. It is a teacher who has professional expertise to offer.

Mr. Speaker, why is the minister not giving teachers meaningful representation on the Parent Advisory Council?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, it appears as though what the member opposite is saying is that we should not have parents involved, that in terms of a Parent Advisory Council, all we want to do is have teachers advise the teachers.

That would not make sense, so what we have done is to try and ensure, because I do not believe that there have been any studies, any credible studies, that have not demonstrated that children learn better when their parents are involved in the process of their education and are fully supportive of and involved in the school system.

That is the whole concept of Parent Advisory Councils. As a teacher, I would think he should understand that, that it is absolutely imperative and certainly a great benefit to teachers and to the schools, themselves, to have the parents fully involved with the process. That is the whole concept of the Parent Advisory Councils, Mr. Speaker.

Education System Suspension Policy

Mr. Harry Schellenberg (Rossmere): We want to develop a partnership with trust and co-operation, not a power struggle.

It is obvious that this government has declared war on teachers, and the morale of teachers is at an all-time low in this province.

Mr. Speaker, the minister wants to pass legislation which gives teachers the authority to suspend disruptive students. Suspending students is always a traumatic experience.

Why does the minister not give his powerful parent advisory council the authority to suspend students?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I do not think that I have heard more foolishness in a long, long time than suggesting that we ought to give the parent advisory council, which is not in the school, which is not dealing with the children, which is not dealing with their problems on a day-to-day basis in their classes, the power to suspend.

Mr. Speaker, the concept is, the people who are on the firing line, the people whose jobs are being impacted by the behaviour of the specific individual in the classroom are the ones who have to make the judgement, whether or not to sacrifice the needs of 25 students in favour of having one disruptive student disrupt the efforts of an entire classroom.

That is the kind of thing that many, many people have asked us to address. That is something that teachers have asked us to address, Mr. Speaker, and having the power and the authority I do not

accept, as he does, and I think it is a terrible commentary that he is making on teachers, to automatically assume that teachers will abuse that power, that teachers will use it inappropriately. What a terrible thing to say about teachers. He ought to be ashamed.

Mr. Schellenberg: I am embarrassed for the Premier. Teachers do not want this power.

Mr. Speaker, does the minister not have faith in the present system, where trustees, superintendents and principals are responsible for the overall discipline in our schools?

Mr. Filmon: Now, we really see how out of touch New Democrats are, when he comes and makes a statement like that, that is absolutely contrary to the position on the record of the president of the Manitoba Teachers' Society who said that teachers welcomed that initiative.

I cannot believe it. Perhaps, Mr. Speaker, he has been in the Legislature too long and has not been out there listening to and talking with people in his old profession.

Northern Manitoba Hydro Rates—Equalization

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertstland): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Hydro.

It is well known that most of the hydro power in this province comes from northern Manitoba, and northern residents continue to pay higher hydro rates. Before the minister retires from office, will he try and get cabinet to equalize hydro rates, as was promised two years ago?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend errs in his preamble. Residents of northern Manitoba pay the same rates as southerners do for communities of similar size. That system existed when my honourable friend's party governed and was not changed.

I think it reflects two principles, adequately reflecting cost of service, No. 1, a principle embraced by the New Democrats when they governed this province, and, secondly, a principle where northern Manitobans ought not to pay more or less than southern Manitobans in communities of the same size.

Power Outages

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland): Mr. Speaker, northerners do not just pay more for hydro, they also face more power outages. I have raised this issue with the minister in a letter I sent to him on September 19, 1994.

The minister will recall I asked him back in September what could be done to reduce these outages, given that these outages continue to be a major problem in many communities, such as Little Grand Rapids, which I would like to report to this House that on December 11, this past weekend, they had no power from 5 a.m. to 3 p.m. that day.

When can these residents expect to see these problems solved in the future?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Hydro Act): Mr. Speaker, again, I want honourable members to know that my honourable friend erred in his preamble, saying that northerners pay more for electricity than southerners. That is not accurate, Sir.

Secondly, I want to point out to my honourable friend that from time to time, the power system is out, but I want to also remind my honourable friend that the Manitoba Hydro system has the highest reliability of any utility providing electric service in Canada, an exemplary record that serves all of Manitoba in that fashion and is a significant tribute to the many men and women who provide that electric service to Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I remind my honourable friend that what he is asking for from opposition, his party did not deliver in government. He might reflect on that.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

* (1420)

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Transportation Infrastructure

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin), that under Rule 27.1, that the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the condition and future transportation infrastructure in northern Manitoba due to federal government cutbacks to airports and rail infrastructure and provincial government cutbacks to northern highways.

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing the honourable member for Thompson, I believe I should remind all honourable members again that under our Rule 27.(2) the mover of a motion on a matter of urgent public importance and one member of each of the other parties in the House is allowed not more than five minutes to explain the urgency of debating the matter immediately.

Mr. Ashton: Mr. Speaker, nothing is more important to northern Manitobans than our transportation infrastructure. On a daily basis we see it under attack. We see it under attack from a minister in this government who suggests that the only criteria for fixing up roads should be volume.

We have seen under this government that the expenditures on northern highways construction has gone from between 15 percent and 20 percent of the budget to 4.8 percent.

We have seen a minister who takes letters, giving a long-term commitment to surfacing highways in northern Manitoba and personally strokes out any long-term commitment. We see on a daily basis with the answers of this minister that in this province, to get roads fixed, it seems you have to be in the minister's constituency or you have to have a lot of ducks.

We say it is urgent that we get highways for people, Mr. Speaker. There are at least 80,000 to 90,000 Manitobans—we probably have most of the ducks too, if you want to use that argument—in northern Manitoba. We are 8 percent of the population.

The minister says we have 3 percent of the traffic. Has he looked at the highways map, Mr. Speaker? The highways map shows that a lot of northern communities do not have roads, so we cannot exactly drive a lot.

But you look at the condition of our roads. They are in terrible shape. Just ask the former Minister of Highways about 373, 280 and 391.

Why do we need to deal with that today? Because this may be one of the last opportunities to deal with this before the government makes yet again a decision in terms of Estimates that shafts northern Manitoba. We are not going to stand idly by while they do that, so we have to debate that.

Not only that, the minister himself indicated just a short time ago that now the federal government is indicating it has no commitment to a National Highways Program.

It goes beyond the cuts that we are also faced with that have urgent implications for northern Manitoba. Just today, Mr. Speaker, I have received further information on the federal government's wholesale slaughter of the transportation infrastructure of this country.

I have a list which I can table of some of what they call modernization which will have a drastic impact on airports in northern Manitoba and rural Manitoba, whether it be in Thompson, whether it be in The Pas, whether it be in Lynn Lake, Norway House, Gillam, Island Lake, there are many airports that will be affected. There are drastic consequences if we do not deal with those—I will table a copy for all members, a copy which I received today—drastic consequences that we could see from the commercialization, the privatization of the air navigation systems in this country that could affect the margin of safety for many northern and rural Manitobans.

This is an urgent matter, Mr. Speaker, because these cuts are going to destroy the Department of Transport and the kind of safety standards we have worked hard for in this country.

The federal Liberal government is looking at making these decisions over the matter of the next number of days at the departmental level. They are looking—and the schedule is, by the 12th of December which has already gone by, a briefing to the minister. There is a steering committee in place, the ministerial decision by the 20th of January. There will be a cabinet decision in January or February, and there will be a budget decision in February of 1995.

Once again, the same lack of logic. The federal Minister of Transport has suggested that there is some problem in Canada because we have 90 percent of the air traffic going through 10 percent of the airports.

Well, Mr. Speaker, what would happen to this county if we followed that logic and we shut down rural and northern airports. I would be interested to see how this province and this country would do without the wealth of companies like Inco, of HBM&S, of Repap in northern communities and much of the rural economy that contributes to the welfare? This is important to northern Manitobans.

As my colleague the member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) pointed out before, we are getting desperate in terms of the conditions of our roads in northern Manitoba. We are seeing the destruction of our infrastructure, whether it be the rail line, whether it be airports. We, in the New Democratic Party, we stand for fairness for all regions of this province, all regions of this country. That is why we urge all members of this House to join with us to discuss this so that we can get some fairness for northern roads, fairness for northern airports and fairness for our rail system from the federal Liberal and the provincial Conservative governments.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):
Mr. Speaker, someone from the opposite side

explained priorities, and obviously, the members in the opposition party do not have their priorities very straight. They had nine days to raise this as a matter of urgent public importance. They did not. They had an opportunity for eight days of debate during the Throne Speech Debate at which every single member of their caucus could well have raised that issue again and again. They did not.

So I think what we are really seeing here is a party flush with their own self-importance over a small item that occurred the other evening, by delaying a vote, wants to come back into the House, they say, to work, but they had a matter of urgent public importance yesterday. To show you how hard they wanted to work, when they challenged your ruling, they walked out of the House for half an hour. They were not prepared to work. All they are prepared to do is play games in this House, have some kind of game playing across the way that has nothing to do with working in this House, but rather try to enhance their own political image.

I do not believe for a minute, Mr. Speaker, that they have a matter of urgent public importance. This matter is clearly out of order.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Second Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, let me start off by indicating that much of the preamble that the NDP House leader put on the record with respect to this particular issue, I would disagree with I must say right upfront. It does address some very serious issues in terms of northern roads and the transportation infrastructure and so forth. I think there is a sense of urgency. [interjection] I am supporting your motion, so you should be supportive of what I am saying, at least in part.

Mr. Speaker, I do believe that we are looking at possibly coming back some time in, no doubt, the month of March unless the government comes forward with some other date. Yesterday I alluded to reasons as to why it is that we do not have too much left on the agenda that we could deal with an issue of this particular nature.

When we look at the winter roads and the importance of the winter roads to northern Manitoba, it might be an opportune time for a number of members of the Legislature to get up to express their thoughts, not only on issues such as the winter roads, but other roads, local airports.

I think there are some valid arguments on all sides that could be expressed and might be beneficial for this government and possibly even for the government in Ottawa to take into consideration when they are coming down with their plans with the transportation industry. In fact, Mr. Speaker, if I was the drafter of this particular motion, I might have even expanded it to include the transportation industry as a whole because there are some concerns that we have. We all recognize the importance of our rail, airlines and so forth. Thank you.

* (1430)

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank all honourable members for their advice as to whether or not the motion proposed by the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) should be debated today.

In accordance with our Rule 27.(1), I did receive notice of the proposed motion. I had some difficulty deciding whether or not the motion discusses only one matter as is required by our Rule 27.(5)(a). I am now satisfied that the broad subject matter of the motion is the condition and future of the transportation infrastructure in northern Manitoba.

According to our Rule 27 and Beauchesne Citations 389 and 390, there are two conditions which must be met in order for a matter of urgent public importance to be proceeded with.

They are: a) the subject matter must be so pressing that the ordinary opportunities for debate will not allow it to be brought on early enough; and b) it must be shown that the public interest will suffer if the matter is not considered immediately.

I acknowledge that the subject matter of the honourable member's motion is important. However, I am not satisfied that the conditions which I have just set out have been met.

Therefore, I am ruling that the motion is out of order as a matter of urgent public importance.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader):
Mr. Speaker, I challenge your ruling.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been challenged.

Voice Vote

Mr. Speaker: Shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour, please say yea.

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

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

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

Formal Vote

Mr. Ashton: Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: A recorded vote having been requested, call in the members.

The question before the House is, shall the ruling of the Chair be sustained? All those in favour of the motion will please rise.

Division

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

Yeas

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

Nays

Ashton, Barrett, Cerilli, Chomiak, Dewar, Doer, Edwards, Evans (Brandon East), Evans (Interlake), Friesen, Gaudry, Gray, Hickes, Kowalski, Lamoureux, Lathlin, Mackintosh, Maloway, Martindale, McCormick, Plohman, Reid, Robinson, Santos, Schellenberg.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas 28, Nays 25.

Mr. Speaker: The ruling of the Chair has been sustained.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader):
Mr. Speaker, would you please call Resolution 70?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Prior to calling Resolution 70, I think it would be helpful if I tell members that notwithstanding subrules 1 and 2, speeches during the private members' hour or during debate on a private members' order called by the government pursuant to subrule 20(2) shall be limited to 15 minutes.

Res. 70—CFB Winnipeg

Mr. Gerry McAlpine (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Urban Affairs and Housing (Mrs. McIntosh), that

WHEREAS CFB Winnipeg and Air Command Headquarters serve a vital role in Canada's military; and

WHEREAS the Canadian Armed Forces employ more than 2,400 military and another 1,300 civilian personnel; and

WHEREAS the base and its personnel inject approximately \$122 million into the Manitoba economy annually; and

WHEREAS Winnipeg's central location and low cost of living make the setting ideal for military operational headquarters; and

WHEREAS CFB Winnipeg contributes to the federal and provincial tax base as well as an annual grant of \$6 million in lieu of taxes to the City of Winnipeg; and

WHEREAS the federal government is currently considering the future of existing military installations.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba send a strong and united message to the federal Minister of Defence that CFB Winnipeg and Air Command Headquarters be maintained.

Motion presented.

Mr. McAlpine: Mr. Speaker, everybody in this House knows that yesterday I rose to seek leave of this Chamber to bring forward Resolution 70, CFB Winnipeg, for debate. It was the first opportunity for Private Members' Business this session.

On December 6, Mr. Speaker, I served notice to all members of the House that I would seek their leave to debate this matter at the first opportunity. Hansard will show that I rose before Private Members' Business commenced yesterday and sought leave to bring this matter forward. The Liberal House leader, before his party denied leave, then impugned motives and made comments that I take personally. He stated that he would deny leave because I was not sincere.

Mr. Speaker, I was duly elected to serve the people of Sturgeon Creek, which includes the Air Command Headquarters in Winnipeg. I also believe that all members of this House are honourable members and wish to serve their constituents. In trying to serve my constituents by discussing a matter that is of great importance to the people of Sturgeon Creek, to St. James and the surrounding area, including the entire province of Manitoba, I felt this matter deserved urgent attention, Mr. Speaker.

The Liberal House leader questions my integrity when I try to serve my constituents. He should try

to impress upon the honourable member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) and his friend, Mr. Harvard, the federal Liberal representing Winnipeg-St. James, how important this issue is for Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards), without having first-hand knowledge of the proceedings in the Chamber yesterday, then proceeded to do a radio interview and further cast aspersions on me, the member for Sturgeon Creek.

The Liberal Leader told CJOB this morning, and I quote: Mr. McAlpine's motion came late in the day and interrupted the motion of Mr. Kowalski, the MLA for The Maples. Mr. McAlpine just got up and essentially had the press release in his hand and ready to go, slamming us before he got up to make the motion. So it was an entirely concocted thing. He was erroneous. He had enormous opportunities as a government member to stand up in Question Period, to put it on the Order Paper in a proper fashion. He just chose to make a show and a spectacle of himself, and that was the whole point behind this.

He also went on to accuse me of using every opportunity to be political. Mr. Speaker, I resent those remarks from the member for St. James, who should be representing his constituents who work at the base. If he chooses to do otherwise, he should do the honourable thing.

The point of seeking leave was to serve my constituents on this important issue, the important issue of the Air Command Headquarters in Sturgeon Creek, serving all of Manitoba, serving all residents of this country. I was elected to do, and will continue to do, the best in my ability to do this.

* (1530)

The Liberal Leader also stated falsely that the matter was not on the Order Paper in the proper fashion. All members have the opportunity to place resolutions on the Order Paper at the beginning of this session. I did so. Through the luck of the draw, this urgent matter was unfortunately given 70th spot.

Seeking leave to move a matter up for discussion because it is dated or urgent is not an unusual occurrence. I asked to have the matter raised earlier because, by the time he would have gotten to the resolution under normal circumstances, it may be too late to present those cuts by the federal Liberals of many Air Command jobs there in Winnipeg by transferring them to Ottawa.

The Leader of the third party's comments about the press release are upsetting only because of the fact of what this represents to the people of Manitoba, Mr. Speaker. I received yesterday, from 17 Wing headquarters in Winnipeg, the statistics as of December 14, 1994. The size of this facility includes 2,977 acres, 114 buildings, 883 married quarters, personnel—you must understand that this includes all of CFB Winnipeg—but personnel on the base, over 4,000 people; 3,000 military and 1,000 civilian.

This is an integral part of our economy here in Manitoba and the economic impact that this has on Sturgeon Creek and the other constituencies that border Sturgeon Creek, including the constituency of Winnipeg-St. James, which Mr. Harvard represents, is significant.

I would urge that all members unite together in this Chamber and deal with this important issue in an honourable way and not try to bring aspersions on the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) that I am making this a political issue. This is far too important an issue to make this a political issue. These are lives that are being affected in Sturgeon Creek, and simply to transfer the Air Command Headquarters from Winnipeg—we have the state-of-the-art facility that was built only recently at CFB Winnipeg representing all matters across this country and international issues. To simply transfer this facility and the personnel along with it to Ottawa is a terrible, terrible mistake, Mr. Speaker.

I will stand up, unlike the honourable member for St. James, in representing the people of Sturgeon Creek on this very important issue, and I will stand up without the assistance of the

honourable member for Winnipeg-St. James, Mr. Harvard. Mr. Harvard has had opportunity a number of times to approach me on this issue. He knows my concern over this issue but has been absent by his silence.

Mr. Speaker, I think this is a terrible issue because it affects the lives of so many people who love and live in this area of Sturgeon Creek. Members on this side of the House, including the honourable member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), have people working on the base; the honourable member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh), the honourable member for Kirkfield (Mr. Stefanson), the honourable member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst). Being in real estate, I know that a lot of these people live within the boundaries of these constituencies.

I think that we also have to come together to address this very important issue before it is too late. That is my urgency. My urgency is to impress upon the Minister of Defence before the cuts are made, because when the cuts are made or the transfers are implemented, it is far too late.

Mr. Speaker, the honourable member for St. James suggests that he does not have enough information to debate this issue. He said that on CJOB this morning. I think that the honourable member should take it upon himself—I mean, it is his responsibility to represent the people, and if he does not have the information, then he should seek it out. If he would want my assistance in writing his script for him, I will give him every co-operation to do that. I think that he should take the responsible action and be in touch with his Liberal colleague, the Minister of Defence in Ottawa, Mr. David Collenette, whom I wrote to on the 14th of November but yet have not had a reply.

An Honourable Member: Has the member for St. James written?

Mr. McAlpine: I do not know whether the member for St. James has taken the responsible position and written. I have not seen anything from the member for Winnipeg-St. James, Mr. Harvard. I have not seen anything going forward

from there. He is taking the position that he does not know whether—in Liberal fashion, he cannot seem to make up his mind on this issue.

I do not think the member for St. James, the Leader of the Liberal Party, has yet made up his mind, because he maintains, in talking to CKND TV, that he is not in a position, that he felt that there should be—it is important, I think, not to be entirely partisan and political, but it is to deal with these things in a reasonable and rational way. I am just trying to find, Mr. Speaker, the quotes Mr. Edwards had in the media. Rather than waste my time on that, I will address the other issues.

I have been active on this issue all the way through. I issued news releases on this matter December 2, following the release of the white paper when it first came out. I have heard nothing from the member for St. James who is adjacent to the constituency of Sturgeon Creek. Mr. Speaker, I would invite the member for St. James to work on this issue. I would ask him to consult with the member for Winnipeg-St. James, because we have to go united on this in the interests of representing our respective constituencies.

I would ask every member of the Liberal Party because these are supposedly the friends that they have in Ottawa. Regardless of whether they agree with what the Liberal government is doing in Ottawa or whether they disagree, I think that they still should represent the people in Manitoba. Rather than falling in line with their Liberal friends, do the honourable thing.

I will stand up for the people in Sturgeon Creek on this issue. I will work with anybody in the interests of the Air Command, jobs for Manitoba. I will work to maintain the Air Command Headquarters here in Manitoba. To ensure that the jobs and the Air Command Headquarters, with the economic impact that this has on Manitoba and everybody in Manitoba, all our lives, I will stand up and speak for them, on behalf of them. I urge everybody to participate in this very, very urgent economic issue in Manitoba. Thank you.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):
Mr. Speaker, I would like to put a few comments on the record.

First of all, I think a resolution of this nature should not be ambiguous. It should be very clear that we want to maintain CFB and the Air Command Headquarters in Winnipeg, not just be maintained. I would suggest to the member opposite that we should not have ambiguity in a resolution like this, because you can keep the CFB in Winnipeg and you could maintain the air headquarters in Ottawa and that would be consistent with the resolution we are passing in this Legislature. Just reading the resolution, I would suggest that if we want to send a clear message as a House, we should do so in a clear way.

* (1540)

Mr. Speaker, I have raised this question in the House. We all have our own interests politically. We do too, and I want to be straight up about that, but I think if we go too far over the edge and make it so transparent that our goals are not economic but may be a bit partisan, we will lose our cause. We have a good cause. There is no question in this House—we raise it in this House because we believe that the air headquarters should be not maintained but remain in Winnipeg, in Manitoba.

It is consistent with our vision that says there is more to this country than Ottawa and Hull. We do not want to see Air Command and Sea Command and Land Command all in the Ottawa-Hull area. We think that these jobs must be maintained outside of the traditional triangle or the traditional Ottawa capital area, so I think it is important to speak as one voice.

We will support the resolution. I think we should be strong about the federal Liberal government—this is two reports that have come out—but we cannot be so obviously transparent that we lose our sincerity because sincerity is also part of the debate.

I say that, Mr. Speaker, with a great deal of conviction. We are concerned on this side about the whole aerospace industry and the air command industry in Manitoba. It is a real important issue to us because there have been commitments made to the people of Canada, to the people of Manitoba that have been contained in the documents before the federal election that I believe have been broken. I think we should say that on top of this resolution.

When I read the red book, it says that there will be a military conversion strategy to deal with changes that are going to be made to military decisions in Canada. When one looks at the proposal on the Air Command in the city of Winnipeg, when one looks at Bristol, when one looks at Boeing, when one looks at the corporation, Standard Aero, I think that promises have been broken. It was very fair to say to people, yes, if we are elected, we are going to cancel this contract; but, when you also say to people that we are going to put other jobs in place as a conversion strategy from military contracts to nonmilitary contracts or civilian contracts, I believe that it is important to have the second shoe on this policy, which, I think, is not there in terms of the federal government.

We have raised this issue. This is a very big payroll in Manitoba, and I am extremely disappointed that some members of the federal Liberal caucus that reside and represent those constituencies have not made it a clear issue, Mr. Speaker, about where they stand. I know there is a bit of regional thinking on military decisions, but it really comes back to the fundamental vision of Canada. Do we want a country with all our resources, as I say, in the Ottawa-Hull area, or do we want to have these kinds of head office jobs outside of the Ottawa-Hull area in places like Manitoba, in places like Winnipeg?

They also provide those jobs. The direct military jobs also provide a number of civilian jobs and provide a very, very positive payroll to the province of Manitoba and the city of Winnipeg. We cannot lose any more good-paying, high-quality jobs in this city. Whether it is at CN

or whether it is at the Air Command Headquarters or whether it is other decisions dealing with Manitoba jobs, we cannot afford to lose them, and we have to stand as one voice in this House on a resolution of this nature.

We, as I say, have raised this issue before in the House. There have been promises made about military decisions. There would be task forces and committees to report on the military in Canada. To some degree, we see some of this action, you know, some of the parallels in Canada now of the United States, where they have committees that report to the legislative bodies to take some of the politics out of regional decisions. I do not know whether you could ever do that in this country, whether you close Portage base with the former government, whether you close the air headquarters as proposed by this government. Regional jobs and high-quality jobs and good-paying jobs mean a lot to our communities and should mean a lot to the whole federal caucus at Ottawa.

We have discussed this issue with our member of Parliament. We do not have very many from Manitoba, I regret to say, but I am pleased that I was able to outpredict the Premier in our membership in the federal House of Commons. I thought we would have double the members that he would have after his support of Kim Campbell in the last federal election. I did not think it would be one-nothing. I have to admit that, Mr. Speaker.

It is important that we all speak with one voice, but it is also very important that we have a strategy. When I asked this question on Day One in this Chamber, we asked the provincial government, the provincial Premier, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism to have a strategy, because we had not one, but two reports recommending the centralization, the Ottawa centralization of the Air Command Headquarters in the Ottawa-Hull area.

We should be working with Nova Scotia in terms of the decision on the sea headquarters, the navy headquarters. We should be working with a number of other people all across western Canada.

We should not have what we had in the CF-18 debate, where Conservatives acted like Conservatives and New Democrats acted like New Democrats and nobody acted like western Canadians. I thought it was disgusting when Grant Devine supported Brian Mulroney when the CF-18, against all merit, was not given to the province of Manitoba but was awarded to the province of Quebec. It was a disgrace that western Canadians did not stand up together against that project.

I recall the former Premier of Alberta, Don Getty, also supporting Brian Mulroney. Being a Tory came before being a western Canadian, and I thought that was absolutely wrong in terms of making decisions in this country. The lowest bid, the best quality aerospace industry in Manitoba being enhanced, and we lost it, which was announced cynically after the Saskatchewan election in 1986. We lost it to an inferior bid at a higher cost because of the dynamics of Quebec wanting an aerospace industry.

Western Canada has to speak as one voice, and it has to put partisan politics aside to make sure that we get our fair share of procurement in Canada. We represent 28 percent of the population, and when the Mulroney government and the Campbell government left office, we were down to about 12 percent of the purchasing in Canada. Now we can bash the Liberals today and we can bash Kim Campbell yesterday and we can bash somebody else before—you cannot bash New Democrats; they have not been in office—but I think it is safe to say that western Canadians have to stand up across party lines. We do not want excessive procurement. We do not want patronage and pork and all these other things. We just want fair treatment and fair treatment for jobs in terms of the federal decision making in Canada. That is all we are asking for. I believe this is consistent with the resolution that has been placed forward by the member here today.

We have two reports we have to deal with. We have the Senate parliamentary committee. Now where are the senators on this issue? We do not have any senators. We do not have very many

members of Parliament, but we do not have any senators, I can guarantee you that. Where are the parties speaking? Where are the senators from western Canada? Where are the senators from Atlantic Canada? What are they doing on this issue? Are they standing up for their regions or are they forgetting where they come from?

* (1550)

We believe that the parliamentary committee, the Senate committee, the federal-provincial committee should be dealing with this issue in a much fairer way. Why did they come up with this recommendation?

Then we have the paper itself from the federal government, the white paper which was released December 1, which caught us by surprise because we were told by the business community, Winnipeg 2000, with all its objective information about the previous government from the now-Minister of Finance, that this document would come forward on December 12 or 15. So we were a bit pre-empted by the announcement, but we felt it was necessary to raise this question in the House at the beginning.

The question is, what are we going to do about it? How are we going to deal with this issue? What strategy do we have on the Air Command base beyond blaming the federal government? How are we going to change the decision moving into the February budget and the budget in the years after that? How are we going to deal with the jobs at Bristol? How are we going to deal with the jobs at Boeing? How are we going to deal with the jobs at Standard Aero, because we are losing hundreds of jobs, actually for a number of years, but most particularly recently with the last couple of federal budgets we are losing lots of very good jobs in our communities.

What is our strategy to deal with that? Do we have a proposal on the military conversion proposal in the red book? I have asked this government, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), where is our strategy, where is the position paper? The minister of

social services presented us a document yesterday. Why do we not have a document on the Air Command, Boeing, Bristol, Standard Aero, the aerospace industry in Manitoba, that includes the Air Command? Why do we not have that strategy before this House? Why do we not have a ministerial statement from the government dealing with this issue? Why do we not have a debate on this issue that is beyond really the reactive stage into a much more aggressive alternative stage?

I do not want to go through what we went through in Portage. I was a member of that delegation that went down to Ottawa. I recall the horror that the former member for Portage had to go through when the former member of Parliament from Winnipeg-South said wave a white flag and surrender and started negotiating a consolation prize before we even got into the meeting with the federal minister McKnight and federal minister Epp at that time. We did not want to surrender. We wanted to have a co-ordinated approach to making sure that air base or the training base, which was a very good program, cost-effective program, was not going to be shut down for political reasons, which ultimately happened. We need to do something more than that now. I do not want to wait until the federal budget. We have the warning signal out. We have lost hundreds of jobs already in the aerospace industry and we got to have a strategy more than: it is your fault, it is your fault. We have to have a better strategy.

Those 12 federal Liberal M.P.s, why do we not call them to a meeting in a parliamentary committee in the Chamber? Why do we not invite them all down here to say, what are you going to do about it and how can we work with you, along with the other two M.P.s in the Chamber? There is just one idea. What are we going to propose to them?

Should we not write a brief about Boeing, Bristol and Standard Aero and the Air Command? Should we not all look at that ahead of time and say, yes, we sign on to this? This is the air conversion policy or the military conversion policy that we have here in Manitoba and we are all agreed to that.

Let us do something beyond—I agree with passing this resolution, but let us do something before February. I do not want to sit in the hallway and say, oh, they cut those jobs, you get five seconds on television and you lose 700 jobs in Winnipeg. I do not want to do that. I am getting tired of doing that. You know, I think we are all getting tired of that.

I support the resolution. I think it should be clear that the Command headquarters be maintained in Manitoba because there are two things, CFB is different than the Air Command—and be maintained should not be ambiguous. I do not want a federal minister to stand up and say, oh, we met the resolution. Look at it. I think we should make our language clear and we should go forward with a comprehensive economic strategy that includes the conversion strategy and includes the Air Command as part of our quality of life in Manitoba.

As I say, whether it is the airport privatization program which is going to cut the airports in northern remote Manitoba or whether it is this, it is a totally different vision than we have here in Manitoba. We do not want to go from three terminals in Toronto to four terminals because they have a higher population. We do not want to go for all Command and head offices to go from western Canada and from Atlantic Canada to Ottawa-Hull. That is why we can support this resolution, but let us work further than that to get this thing done and stop the decision. Thank you.

Mr. Paul Edwards (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise today and speak on this resolution, No. 70, moved by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) and brought forward by the government House leader, and I might say at the outset, in a proper fashion.

Our objection yesterday and that of the House leader was in no way aimed at the substance of this and I made that clear in the interview that the member read from earlier. What was objectionable was the very politicized fashion in which it was initially brought to the fore. Having

been brought now to the floor of this Chamber in a proper fashion, and I want to commend the member for bringing it back in the proper fashion, he has, I think, brought it to the floor, Mr. Speaker, and I certainly do not object to the timeliness of this. It is an extremely important issue.

Let me say at the outset of my comments that I have some concerns about the ambiguity, and I am going to speak briefly on that, but I certainly support this resolution as it stands, which indicates very clearly that all parties, all members of this Assembly, seek to have Air Command Headquarters and CFB Winnipeg maintained.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I believe, and as the Leader of the opposition party (Mr. Doer) suggested in Winnipeg, I would go further and really, of course, in that paper that was initially drafted, all military installations, all defence spending was considered.

I am surprised that members on the opposite side, the government side, do not also recognize that we have a major military installation outside the city of Winnipeg in Shilo, which I think also should have been included in this and that what we should have been talking about was that the defence spending in this province should have been all-inclusive rather than taking a very narrow approach which is completely restricted by the Perimeter Highway.

The reality is, every Canadian who has taken the time to read the report put forward by Mr. Collenette will understand that all defence spending in this country has been reviewed. It is a paper that has come forward for members of Parliament, members of the Senate to consider. It is a paper which puts forward options, puts forward some recommendations.

But let no one misunderstand, as no one does in this country, that in attempting to reach spending targets where 3 percent of gross domestic product is the annual deficit, which was a commitment in the red book, and that is a commitment which is important I think to all Canadians and certainly should be important to this government, given its

talk about deficit reduction, that that commitment must be met.

Every single expenditure of government at the federal level, and I dare say it should be happening at the provincial level, should be reviewed and assessed as to whether or not it meets the highest priority for every single taxation dollar that we have in this country.

Let me say, having indicated that about the resolution itself, that the pious self-righteousness of the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) is objectionable, Mr. Speaker. He takes what is a truly important issue for all Manitobans and by his actions yesterday and again I think by his words today, and I take objection to them, takes what is an unreasonable and, I think, unproductive, partisan approach.

Let me just point out that unfortunately, and the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) pointed out that there were two committees, it was a joint committee with two co-chairpersons, one from the Senate and one from the House of Commons. It was the report of a special joint committee.

On the Senate portion of that committee the majority were Conservative senators. Senator Michael Forrestall, Senator Michael Meighen, Senator John Sylvain are Conservative senators. They are the majority of the senate committee.

And, as if that was not enough, this report from the Senate was unanimous. There was not one dissenter and the majority of that committee was Conservative. Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

* (1600)

Point of Order

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, a point of order. I think we have another resolution we can pass in here to abolish the Senate. I think we are going to get support from the—

Mr. Speaker: The honourable member does not have a point of order.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, I am sure it is a matter of a lot of regret to the Leader of the Opposition that there are no NDP senators in this list. It is interesting to note that the NDP will stand up and consistently talk about the need to preserve a military establishment, have how many, maybe dozens of resolutions on their books calling for the abolishment of all militarization. So there is a bit of a hypocrisy in the opposition benches on this.

The reality is that it is important to depoliticize this issue and to not make a partisan issue out of it. Mr. Speaker, for that reason I want to suggest that as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) has indicated, which is that we need a unified position as there was on the issue of Churchill in the past, as there has been on the issue of Portage la Prairie in the past, there should be again. I have no objection to that, and I am more than happy to participate on behalf of our party in that effort any time, today, tomorrow, two weeks ago. I am ready to participate in any way that the government and the opposition parties can get together to decide to make the message known.

Within the framework of reducing government expenditures the key factor for all Canadians including Manitobans must be fairness. The federal government is going to have to spend less. The Conservative Party in the last election and the Reform Party and the Bloc Quebecois and the federal Liberal Party all said we need to deal with the deficit. They all said that. That is what they said. The only thing we are talking about here is how that is done.

Canadians understand and I believe accept that we must have a financially, fiscally sustainable form of government. Part of that, a large part of that must be a reduction of the expenditure levels. So, Mr. Speaker, the key question that comes for any government, be it this provincial government or the federal government, is where do you cut, how much do you cut and that is the test of government today, fairness in cutting. You define your priorities by where you cut and you define your right to govern by the fairness and the priorities that you set.

So there is no question that in this country there is going to be a reduction in expenditure on defence initiatives. That is reality. Every Canadian knows that. What we are asking for and have a right to ask for as with every other province—and believe me, this same debate will be happening if it has not already in all 10 provinces and in both the territories and that is obvious because defence spending is done in every territory and in every province. So the issue becomes fairness, making sure that Manitoba is treated fairly and gets our position across. I am pleased to participate in any discussion which has that as a goal, but let not government members make this partisan approach to this issue. It is time that we buried that, Mr. Speaker, and moved forward in a progressive and in a co-operative fashion and in partnership. If the public is cynical about politicians it is because of actions that politicize very important issues for all Manitobans.

Mr. Speaker, if the member had done his homework and had sought not to make this a partisan issue, he would not have stood up yesterday and proved what his true intentions were as he fired out a press release the moment that he stood up and improperly, in terms of the rules of this Chamber, interrupted another very important resolution. There are many dozens of resolutions, all of which have importance. He should have spoken to his House leader, as he has obviously learned that he needed to do, and have this raised in the proper fashion, because we are very happy to—[interjection] Well, private members' hour. A system of draws for resolutions was put in place by this government.

An Honourable Member: That is right, because they did not like being outdone by the Liberals.

Mr. Edwards: Well, the Speaker put it in place, and the truth is that it came as No. 70. The member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) has every tool that every member of this Legislative Assembly has—through a question in Question Period, through a Matter of Urgent Public Importance which any member can bring forward, through the very avenue that he used today. But no, yesterday he chose to politicize it, and that I

object to. He did it obviously without doing his homework. He sought in his press release to politicize this. He threw in all of the insults of a federal Liberal government, not even recognizing that the majority of the Senate committee was from his own party.

That shows the level of piety and of self-righteousness of this member. I think he should have taken a lesson from the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) who used to be quite pious on these issues in the last session and since then has had a bit of a decline since his own newspaper put forward a headline that he was defending perks.

That is the reality. The reality is that to take the self-righteous tone that members do from that government—what goes around comes around, Mr. Speaker. It is high time that this Legislative Assembly, all 57 members, did what was in the best interests of all Manitobans. That is our challenge and our duty, and the people of this province expect nothing less.

So, Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this amendment. I believe it could have been drafted better, but in the interests of making sure that this passes and in evidencing my desire to participate in a common effort, I want to leave it as it is with those comments on the record about my concerns which go beyond this city and around this province and my desire to participate in a unified effort, and I want speedy passage of this because I would like to see a unified action on this.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I simply have to respond to one of the most sanctimonious, self-righteous, puffed-up speeches that I have heard in this Assembly since I came through the door here over four years ago, and I am not speaking about the speech given by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), who made a very good speech, who made some excellent points. I found myself thinking, gee, you know, I tell you the Leader of the NDP is making some good points and I agree with him.

Then the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards) got up and for the first time since she left I wished with all my heart that Sharon Carstairs was back. At least Sharon Carstairs had guts. At least she did try very hard in certain instances to be nonpartisan. This little fellow got up, Mr. Speaker, and he then said that—he counted out the number of Conservative senators, the number of Liberal senators, and then accused the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) of referring to the federal government as a Liberal government, which it is.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I hesitate to— [interjection] Order, please. [interjection] No, we refer to all honourable members as honourable members.

Mrs. McIntosh: I am sorry, Mr. Speaker. I could not hear you because people were making noise.

Mr. Speaker: Okay. We simply ask the honourable minister that we refer to all honourable members as honourable members.

Mrs. McIntosh: Okay. This honourable member who represents St. James (Mr. Edwards), who was elected to represent St. James—perhaps that is a more accurate way of putting it—condemned the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) for referring to the federal government as the federal Liberal government and said that was partisan, and then proceeded to count up the number of Conservative senators who sit in the Senate versus the number of Liberal senators who sit in the Senate and said that was very important that we note the number of Conservative senators.

The point we are trying to make, Mr. Speaker, is that we do not care if it is a federal Liberal government or a federal Conservative government or a federal Reform government or if it is the Bloc Québécois. What we want is a government that will recognize that the Air Command base, in whatever form it is ultimately to exist, should be located here in Winnipeg, and we do not care if it was Conservative senators or Liberal senators. We made that clear as a government when we took on the federal government, which was then the

federal Conservative government over the CF-18s. We made sure when we went over Portage la Prairie, when we talked about Kapyong.

* (1610)

We are now talking about Air Command, the Air Command base which was put here many, many years ago for very good reasons—those good reasons still exist. My father was career military. I was an air force brat. I can remember all the background I had in being exposed to the air force, and I can tell you that my father was a flight instructor before and during the war and the pilots for that Second World War were trained here in Manitoba.

Why? Because this is the best place, the very best place for weather conditions, for geographical conditions, for topography, for central time zone, and would-be pilots were sent here. I hope the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) is listening. He is turning his chair around again like he did during the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) speech the other day, so he does not have to be seen to be listening, but perhaps he will read Hansard. He is laughing at this because he thinks this is funny that since the time of the Second World War this province has been the place to train pilots, to have all sense of Air Command work done.

We have more hours of sunshine. We have less fog. We have flat land. We have good air quality conditions. All of those things make this a very key, strategic location, which is why Air Command was brought here in the first place, and the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), who is pretending not to listen, is talking to his colleagues because he does not really care about this topic enough to listen. The member for St. James uses his whole speech to talk about the need to be good with money in Ottawa as if we did not understand that. We had known for a long time the need to be wise with money in Ottawa. He now understands the need to be wise with money in Ottawa. He still does not understand the need to be wise with money here in Manitoba, but he now understands the need to be wise with money in Ottawa. Well, hallelujah, good for him.

Does he understand the need to maintain the facilities we have got here at Air Command, not necessarily with Air Command if the air force has some other need? But we have buildings here. We have facilities here that can be well utilized by the armed forces, and to have them be empty is a crime. The member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) outlined all of the economic impacts. He outlined all of the things that happen in Winnipeg and in Manitoba because that is located here.

I am much more familiar than that member is with the Department of National Defence, with the Report of the Joint Committee on Defence and the recently released white paper on Defence, and I understand the need to streamline command, and I understand the need to streamline control.

I understand what Air Command does. I understand what Search and Rescue does. I understand what happens with that air base, and I know there have to be economies made, but I also know that there could be a compelling case made for retention of the headquarters facility and personnel in Winnipeg, if not as Air Command Headquarters, then certainly as a consolidated headquarters for other components of the air force. That facility as well, Mr. Speaker, would be an ideal location for a joint navy, army, air force headquarters if the recommendation of the joint parliamentary committee advocating a western regional command were accepted.

I would be pleased to share those ideas with the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) now that his advisors last night told him he better come on stream if he does not want to lose support in the polls, because his position before this was to say, oh, well, you know, we all kind of have to understand how these things happen. We understand how these things happen.

The Leader of the NDP (Mr. Doer) understands. The Leader of the Tories (Mr. Filmon) understands. We all understand, and now the Leader of the Liberal Party has been told that he better understand as well. If he wants to impute motives to the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr.

McAlpine), which is an insult—the member for Sturgeon Creek is fighting to keep Air Command personnel in Winnipeg—his constituency. The member for St. James is saying that he is being partisan because he wants to help his constituents, his constituency, this city and this province. What are we here for if not to do that?

The Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer)—and you know, Mr. Speaker, we do not always agree; in fact, we hardly ever agree—but the Leader of the Opposition has been clear on this since the very beginning, where he stands on this issue. At the last minute, after a month we have been waiting for a reply from the federal Minister of Defence, a full month, suddenly the Leader of the provincial party, the Liberal Party, has been advised he had better be appearing to come onside.

I tell you, I suspect motives just as he suspects motives. I am pleased he is going to work together. He does not want me to talk anymore. I can quite understand why he does not. I am telling you I have never heard such sanctimonious self-righteous—the guy needs a separate vehicle to drive his ego around.

Mr. Speaker, our government believes in working co-operatively with the federal government whenever we can, and we have worked co-operatively with the federal government on the infrastructure program, on the Winnipeg Development Agreement, on the North Portage-Forks merger. We have worked with the federal government co-operatively, and we will work with them where we can, and we will fight for Manitoba where we must, regardless of the political stripe of the government in Ottawa. This time it happens to be the Liberals.

This time I have a feeling—it is just a feeling, I may be wrong—but why do I have this feeling that if it were Brian Mulroney still as Prime Minister it would not have taken the Leader of the Liberal Party this long to figure out where he sort of, almost, nearly, kind of stands on this issue?

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

This is a very important issue to me because this affects people who live in my constituency. This is the background from which I came, this is the milieu in which I live, this is the type of thing that my M.P. during a couple of elections ago when he was fighting against George Minaker—and I happen to know and I liked my M.P. We get along very well, we have been friends for many years, and we worked co-operatively on many things.

But it has been a great disappointment, because on the CF-18, my M.P. at the time, Mr. Harvard, said that if his government ever tried to take away from Manitoba something as critical to our air space, to our aerospace industry, our military interventions, and all of the things we do in Manitoba, that he would stand up to his caucus and resign if necessary—and he has not. He has not resigned; he has not stood up to his caucus. He is my friend; he is my Liberal M.P.

I am sorry I have to refer to his partisan nature, which will get the Leader of the Liberal Party here talking about how many angels dance on the head of a pin again and how many Conservatives sit in the Senate, but my Liberal MP has not resigned. He has not resigned. I have not heard him stand up to his caucus on it, but it is okay, Mr. Acting Speaker. My M.P. does not have to stand up to his caucus because the Leader of the Liberal Party here will do it for him along with the Leader of the NDP and our own Leader and our whole caucus.

We want the streamlining and the control and the efficiencies to be put in place with the Canadian Armed Forces and we want a strong military presence, a strong Air Command, a strong search and rescue. We want our facilities used here in Winnipeg, chosen for good reasons many years ago.

Those reasons are still good; they are still relevant today, and I applaud the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) for his sincere motivation, for his high integrity, for his willingness to come forward for his constituents and work hard on their behalf, for following all the proper rules in this House, for bringing forward

requests to this House in a proper fashion, to be rejected also in a proper fashion by those who did not wish him to exercise the request that he properly put forward. I think he has been insulted by the member for St. James in a most unfair way that if it does not impute motives it comes as close to imputing motives as is possible to come in this House.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, I hope that all members will join us in fighting for this cause. I am delighted that the Leader of the Liberal Party has changed his mind because of something that was said to him last night, and I look forward to him putting his money where his mouth is, literally, and fighting hard to help us with this extremely important measure.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Acting Speaker, I just want to put a few words on the record and congratulate the member for Sturgeon Creek for bringing this resolution forward to enable all members of this Legislature to debate this very important and very urgent matter. We all know that jobs are very precious in our province, and we all understand that the air force, the Air Command, has played a very significant role in Manitoba for many years. I think the resolution makes a point of us sending a strong and united message to the federal Minister of Defence that we stand together.

* (1620)

I wanted to remind all members that this problem arose a few years ago with the proposed or threatened closure of CFB Shilo, and we stood together—Reg Alcock from the Liberals, the Minister of Health, myself, city officials, union representatives. Together we went to Ottawa, not once but twice, and this was going to be my suggestion. In fact, the main reason I wanted to come up and enter the debate just for a few minutes was to make that suggestion, that there be an all-party committee of the Legislature go to Ottawa and speak to the appropriate officials, not only the minister, but I would suggest other caucuses, other political parties in the House, because that is exactly what the committee did.

You could ask the Minister of Health. He was not very popular, I must say, with the government caucus when we arrived. Words were flying pretty fast and furious at that particular meeting of the government caucus with Mr. Epp and Mr. Mayer and a few others, and Mr. Lee Clark who was then the member for Brandon-Souris.

We did meet with the Liberal caucus, the Defence critic, a Mr. Pagtakhan who is a Liberal member from this area. We met with the NDP caucus, Audrey McLaughlin and so on. I suggest that this would be a very productive way to proceed, to advise everyone in Ottawa, all the political groups, that we want to maintain this base, this facility, this program, this military program in Manitoba. I think we were successful. We were successful because the base remains open.

I have some concerns about Shilo, though, because in July the Conference of Defence Associations recommended that Shilo be closed along with 12 other facilities. Although the conference has no official status and has no direct connection with the government, nevertheless it is a rather ominous type of report, and I think we have to stand on guard with regard to Shilo as well. Of course, we all appreciate and know that the German army has signed a long-term agreement with the federal government so that we believe that—

An Honourable Member: With the Conservative government.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Yes, the previous government. Right. No problem. They signed the agreement when the Mulroney government was in power, and the fact is that there is some basis there for the Shilo operation to continue, although there are the two elements there. There is the German training component and there is the Canadian component. Nevertheless, I would argue that for practical military reasons Shilo should be maintained. Of course, there are good economic reasons. If they want to close bases we can think of many other parts of the country, and we have often referred to Downsview in Toronto, other

areas in the country where they do not have the problem of jobs, they do not have the problem of economic growth.

So I think that we have to work together, Mr. Acting Speaker, in a nonpartisan fashion to lobby the federal government and the other federal parties in Ottawa. I would seriously leave that suggestion with you. The government, I would suggest, would have to take the initiative and make the arrangements, but I think that this could be arranged very quickly and easily and could be very effective in addition to this resolution.

So with those few words, Mr. Acting Speaker, again, I congratulate the member for his initiative in bringing forward this important issue. Thank you.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is with a great deal of pleasure that I stand to support the motion of the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine). This is an issue, as was touched on earlier, of fairness and of balance, and my concern with the white paper presented by the federal government is that it does not reflect either one of those very important elements. I think it is, certainly what I have seen of this issue, affecting Manitoba in a very disproportionate fashion, and what is most concerning is the suggestion to consider a relocation of Air Command and some 700 positions from Winnipeg, Manitoba, to Ottawa or elsewhere in Canada.

I think everybody who knows our province knows that this is a cost-effective location. It has quality personnel, quality labour force and an outstanding location. It has the appropriate geographic location and has all of the good, sound business reasons for those kinds of operations. That kind of an entity should be housed right here in Winnipeg, and one cannot begin to understand what the rationale or the reasoning would be or why the Liberal government would be considering transferring that important function from here in Winnipeg to Ottawa, Mr. Speaker.

The issue is one of fairness, and when you look at what has happened in Manitoba in terms of defence spending and the aerospace industry over the last several years, we certainly have had our fair share of bad news as it relates to that industry. We have had some base closures over the year and the adjustments that have occurred as a result of that. We had the newly elected Liberal government cancelling the EH-101 helicopter contract that was going to result in hundreds of millions of dollars, hundreds of jobs, all kinds of research and development occurring right here in Manitoba.

So if you look at the track record of contributing to reductions of federal government expenditures in the area of defence and aerospace, I would suggest, Mr. Speaker, that Manitoba has contributed more than their fair share. That is what is most offensive about this recommendation and this suggestion that is coming from this Defence white paper, and that is why I am pleased that everybody in this House seems to recognize that and that there is the support of the NDP and there is the support of the provincial Liberals in terms of the motion brought forward by our member for Sturgeon Creek.

I also feel for the employees themselves, to be put through this kind of a process and this kind of uncertainty with the dropping of a white paper at the beginning of December and saying well, wait for the budget, wait for the three months for the budget until Mr. Martin brings that down, and all of the uncertainty that is creating for those employees, for their families, for their children, the members of their families. I think it has been in an unfair fashion that the federal government has dealt with this entire issue in terms of dealing with those people who are long-term committed employees of the Department of Defence and of the federal government here in Canada.

I also am surprised and disappointed by the silence, by and large, from the federal members of Parliament, particularly the federal Liberal members of Parliament, and particularly my own member of Parliament who on previous issues when it came to defence spending reductions and

contracts like the CF-18 contract was extremely outspoken and talked about the hypocrisy of the local member of the day not standing up and defending the employees that lived in that constituency. Today that member of Parliament is silent. We do not hear from him, we do not hear his views on this issue, and that is of extreme disappointment, Mr. Speaker, as it is from all federal members of Parliament who are sitting silent on this issue.

Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Finance, I recognize that provincial governments right across Canada, the federal government, are dealing with their expenditures, and they are finding ways to reduce their expenditures, but I think the fundamental principle is one of fairness, is one of balance, and of what I have seen of this white paper that is sorely lacking in terms of the significant reductions that are being looked for here in Manitoba. When you look at the economic impact that the member for Sturgeon Creek talked about, some 3,000 military personnel, some 1,000 civilian positions, an estimated payroll of \$35 million, operations and maintenance costs of \$5 million, incredible contribution to the economy of Manitoba and something that is extremely important to the economy of Manitoba.

Just in closing, I do want to say, I cannot resist making a comment about the comments from the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mr. Edwards) because here for the first time now we have him standing before us defending the need to reduce expenses, defending the federal government and the cuts they are proposing and on and on. I have sat here now for over four years, Mr. Speaker, and when we have had to deal with very difficult issues around expenditure reductions, as every provincial government in Canada is, and as this federal Liberal government finally is recognizing what needs to be done, we do not get any suggestions from the Liberal Party or the Leader of the Liberal Party.

All we ever get from the Leader of the Liberal Party is spend more, spend more, spend more. That has been his solution. To have him here today stand before us and defend federal Liberal

cuts when he has been silent for all these years in terms of the tough decisions that we are making here in Manitoba borders on hypocrisy.

With those comments, I support this motion. It is gratifying to see that all members of this Chamber will support this motion.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity, if I could, to put a word or two on the record with respect to this issue. Not having had the chance during the throne speech debate to participate, it was this opportunity to say how important I think Air Command is to Winnipeg, particularly the economic benefit that we get from that facility and the people who work there.

Mr. Speaker, we all have to recognize in this business that from time to time we have to take positions at odds with other members of our party, be it in another province or be it at a federal level. I certainly was roundly criticized by my own party in 1987, when I stood up to Brian Mulroney and that government when they took away the CF-18 contract from Manitoba. I and four or five of my other colleagues were roundly criticized by the federal Conservatives in Ottawa, by Conservatives here that support both the federal and provincial parties but took the situation—[interjection]

Mr. Speaker, I did not interrupt the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) when he was speaking. I would ask for the same courtesy. This is an important issue.

* (1630)

We all have to collectively look at ourselves and say, there are issues from time to time that are nonpartisan. There are issues that need to be dealt with, as the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) said this afternoon, as western Canadians, as Manitobans. Those issues are important to us. The jobs are important to us. The economic benefit is important to all of us, and it matters not what government is in power or what party sits in the opposition benches because, Mr. Speaker, it is

important to our economy as a whole and the people who live here, the benefits that they get out of that kind of economic impact on our province.

There was an eminent philosopher, now a member of the Court of Queen's Bench, once said: You can choose your friends, but you cannot choose your relatives. From time to time we have to recognize that collectively, if a political party of the same stripe happens to be in another level of government or a different government where the interests of Manitobans are not being served, we have to stand up to them. We have to say, you are wrong. We have to say, you have to be fair.

We have fought issues on the basis of the closure of Shilo, the closure of CFB Portage la Prairie, and we went collectively as members of this Legislature on those issues. We went as one, not as three separate parties—not as Liberals, not as New Democrats, and not as Conservatives—but as one group of Manitobans, legislators in this province trying to preserve what we felt was a reasonable fair share of the military spending in this country.

So, Mr. Speaker, I fully support the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine) in his efforts to try and bring this matter to the public eye, to raise the matter before the House of Commons, before the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Defence, who have to deal with very tough issues. I understand that, but at the same time we have to look at what is happening with the entire Canadian military. What is the plan with respect to the Canadian military as a whole? Do we lessen, do we weaken, do we reduce our military to next to nothing and have a toy army, as it were? I do not think so. I think this country was founded on the basis of—Canada has never started a war. We have finished a few on behalf of our allies, but we have never started one. Yet we have tried to maintain a reasonably competent, efficient military in this country, and that I think is at risk.

It is at risk because people think, oh, the cold war is over. Yet what you have is a different government in place, a lot less stable, quite frankly, than the ones that were there before. You

have the same missiles, the same tanks, the same airplanes, and the same armies in place in all of those countries where we were once quite worried that we may have to wage a war.

Mr. Speaker, with less stable governments and all the hardware and the military in place, we have just as much, maybe more, to worry about than we had before. Until those situations stabilize, until those economies and democratic governments stabilize, we still have much to worry about, and we still should maintain a reasonable, efficient armed forces in this country in order to be able to preserve, at least in part, our own sovereignty.

We talked a lot about sovereignty during the Free Trade debate, the fact that we were going to lose our sovereignty somehow during that debate. But the fact of the matter is, if we give up, if we do away with our armed forces or virtually all of our armed forces, we may as well give up, because we will lose our sovereignty at some point or other. I think that is important and there needs to be a strong signal given that we are not prepared to do that. This country has defended itself, defended its allies for many, many years since its existence. I do not think we ought to give it up simply for the sake of a budget trend in Ottawa, regardless of the political party that is there.

I do not particularly want to lay blame or politics on someone, but the fact of the matter is we know we have overspent in this country, we know we have huge deficits to deal with. As a matter of fact, we must choose our priorities, and those priorities I think should include a reasonably strong military. Thank you.

Mr. Brian Pallister (Portage la Prairie): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity as well to add my comments in support of the resolution by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine). I applaud his sincerity in working for the best interests of his constituents.

I want to just also add though that in terms of the provincial effect of the white paper, mention has been made of Shilo. Portage la Prairie will also be affected by this paper, and I invite

members who are interested in learning more about the impact that my constituency has felt as a result of defence cutbacks and may well feel as a result of further cutbacks, I am happy to make information available to you.

I invite you to learn more about the situation that may impact on Portage la Prairie because it is a major one.

Portage, as you know, has been profoundly affected by recent changes at CFB Southport. We are the home of the first privatized flight training that our Department of National Defence has undertaken, and a very successful undertaking by most accounts. So I certainly hope that the success of that shrub that has been planted is not jeopardized by seeing it pulled out so that one could inspect the roots. I am afraid that is what we may see forthcoming in the months ahead. I certainly hope not, and I have offered my encouragement and support to our member, Jon Gerrard, and to others in our community certainly to develop a co-operative approach to becoming informed in dealing with this issue in a proactive way.

Once again, I want to offer all members the opportunity to learn more about the impact that issues around this resolution and around the larger issue of defence expenditure, how they will impact on Manitoba as a whole.

While I am given the opportunity, I do want to respond to comments by the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards). The member for St. James held up a photocopy of an article from the local Portage paper, the Daily Graphic, in which the headline I believe reads something along the lines of, MLA defends perks. The perks which are discussed in that article principally are one, and that so-called perk is the rural residence allowance, approximately \$16,000 paid to members from outside the Perimeter Highway who are forced to relocate to the city of Winnipeg because that is where this building is.

I have to question why the member would raise that in the House as he has done once before. I

understand that the Liberal Party does not have rural members, I do understand that. I do understand though that the member has alluded to my speaking out on the pension, on the MLAs' pension, and I did and I believe that was the right thing to do. I did that on the basis of my principles and my beliefs that it was the right thing to do, just as I will defend the rural residence allowance as being the right thing for representatives and good representation from outside the Perimeter Highway in this province. I defended it, and I will continue to defend it as being a key aspect of providing good representation to rural Manitobans at the provincial level.

I do not think it is fair, and I can only assume, I do not know the member for St. James' opinion or his position on the issue of second residence allowance, but I do endorse and support the recommendation of the independent panel on pensions and so-called perks which made the recommendation that that benefit continue, albeit in a different form.

I can only assume that the member raising this issue in the House repeatedly reveals his opposition to that recommendation by that panel. Otherwise, why would he attack me for defending the recommendation? I can only assume that he is opposed to that recommendation.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Edwards: Recognizing that the member is significantly off topic of the resolution but nevertheless has raised a concern and, I think, imputed motives to me, Mr. Speaker. In terms of why I would have raised this, I simply want to indicate that my only point in the speech, if the member reflects on the record, was that when someone seeks headlines, sometimes those headlines have a way of coming back on that person and that the self-righteousness of the member's approach to generally payment of MLAs does come around to haunt you. I do not suggest that he should not have received that money.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order. That is clearly a dispute over the facts.

Also, on the point the honourable member did make, the honourable member for Portage la Prairie, sir, what is before the House at this time is Resolution 70, CFB Winnipeg.

* * *

* (1640)

Mr. Pallister: Precisely, Mr. Speaker, and I am getting to my roundabout point on this issue as it relates to this motion.

The fact of the matter is that there is a centralist attitude that inhabits the Liberal Party. It has been there for a long time. It continues to be there. It was revealed in the comments of the former Leader in terms of Grow Bonds and the lack of skill and the lack of acumen that she believed that rural Manitobans have in dealing with this issue. It is there now in the form of the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), who does not understand that the members who live outside the Perimeter Highway do not get to go home and cuddle their children at night or read them a book. They do not get to just go home for their dinner. They get to live apart from their families. They get to live apart from the friends and people whom they associate with in their home communities and they do that with a desire to serve their constituents in this Chamber.

They do it on the basis of principle. They do not do it on the basis of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Point of Order

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, the member is really imputing further motives in terms of saying that I do not understand the sacrifices of rural Manitobans. That is just silliness.

I stood up today in the House and said in the hallway about another member who is retiring,

specifically mentioned the cost to his family of serving here for 18 years. I understand that. What I do not understand and accept is the self-righteousness of the member.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order.

* * *

Mr. Pallister: Mr. Speaker, once again the thickness of the skin of the member is revealed in his attempts constantly to interrupt my comments.

As I have said, I think it is important to understand, and I have tried to clarify my position to the members of this House on why I took that position on the issue of pension and why I proposed the changes and believe the changes were the right thing to do.

I have tried to explain to the member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) why I defend the second residence allowance, which he obviously opposes. I think it is important for us to understand in this House that we must stand up for principles we believe in, that that is vitally important. Certainly, of all the members who might criticize my position on that issue, Mr. Speaker, the member for St. James might well be the least qualified to do that. The member for St. James might well have the least foundation upon which to stand while attacking so-called self-righteous behaviour, a privilege on the part of other members—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Portage la Prairie, sir, I will ask you now to be relevant to the resolution which is before the House, CFB Winnipeg.

Mr. Pallister: In closing, I just want to say that I invite members once again to learn more about the impact to my community of these changes. I think it is a very important and significant issue. I am pleased to hear of the willingness to cooperate. I thank the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) for his comments, which I believe to be sincere, and I look forward to seeing the unanimous support of the House in terms of support for this resolution. Thanks once again.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the resolution?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: That is agreed and so ordered.

Is it the will of the House to call it five o'clock? Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 5 p.m., time for Private Members' Business.

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 208—The Limitation of Actions Amendment Act

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that Bill 208, The Limitation of Actions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la prescription, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, The Limitation Act that I have brought forward and that is supported by my caucus and, I would hope, is supported by all members in the Legislature would amend The Limitation Act in order to remove barriers to civil suits by victims of assault which took place in a relationship of trust or dependency.

Basically, Mr. Speaker, what this amendment to The Limitation Act is designed to do is to allow victims of assault in a relationship such as that of an intimate nature, such as a spouse or a parent or a guardian or a doctor or a therapist, to come to a civil action.

In many cases, people do not remember the assault that took place until many years later, in some instances, decades after the assault took place. There have been many cases in the media and many cases that counsellors and therapists have documented where a child, for example, has

been assaulted by a parent or a guardian or someone in a position of trust and they have psychologically suppressed that incident or series of incidents, very legitimately, until sometimes they are in their 30s or 40s or even later, when something happens to trigger the memory of that assault. It is far too late in the criminal court system to take the abuser or the perpetrator of that assault to criminal court. Under the amendment that we are proposing today, the victim of that assault would have recourse to the civil court to try and get damages for the pain and suffering that the assault engendered, whether it was last year, two years ago or 30 years ago.

This legislation that we are proposing is based on legislation that has recently been introduced in 1992 in the province of Ontario. It was legislation that the Supreme Court of Canada said was excellent legislation, in their determinations, and was the kind of legislation that all provinces should undertake to implement. Through this private members' bill, we are attempting to bring that forward, and we hope that the Legislature as a whole will support this legislation.

As I have stated in particular, there are two elements to this piece of legislation. They both deal with assault. The definition of assault has two components in this amendment to The Limitation Act: one, in the case of sexual assault, there are no time limits for the victim to take the perpetrator or alleged perpetrator, I should say, to court—[interjection]

I apologize, Mr. Speaker. I just got a suggestion from my Leader (Mr. Doer) as to how to handle my cough, which I hope to be able to take, but I cannot do in this Chamber.

In cases of sexual assault, our bill would remove all time limits to pursuing a suit in the civil court, and this is, as I have stated earlier, because in many cases of sexual assault, particularly childhood sexual assault, the victim has repressed what happened or is not able, either psychologically or in some cases because they still remain in a position of powerlessness vis-à-vis the abuser, to bring action as quickly as they need to

in order to get action under the criminal justice system.

* (1650)

So we are saying that in these cases there would be no time limit on a victim being able to take an alleged abuser to court.

We all know cases, or I certainly know cases, of particularly women, that we have seen in the media where for example Mount Cashel, the orphanage from Newfoundland, or other cases throughout the country in North America that have recently come to light, where individuals, mostly young people, have waited 15, 20, 25 years before they were able to bring their concerns forward.

This amendment would enable those individuals to have their day in court—civil court, but their day in court.

The second area of change in The Limitation Act is for other kinds of assault that are perpetrated on someone who is in a position of powerlessness. Again, I must remind the members that in all cases the amendment to The Limitation Act only deals with cases of assault in a situation of dependency. This is not a case where it is an assault perpetrated between people who have theoretically equal standing. It is in cases where the assaulter is in a position of power or authority over the assaultee.

The second group that we are requesting change to The Limitation Act are other kinds of assault, for example, domestic violence, where theoretically the individuals, the spouses, are equal in power but in actuality there has been an assault that has taken place.

Again, we now have said that there does need to be an acceptance on the part of society that in these cases, because there is an actuality of power differential, there needs to be an extension of limitations so that individuals can come forward to the civil court and take their alleged assaulter to court. But we have said in this legislation that, unlike sexual assault where there should be no statute of limitations because we do not know how

long it will take for an individual to remember, in some cases, the assault that occurred, in other cases of assault involving relationships of trust or dependency, there would be a limitation of 30 years.

Take the case of domestic assault. We all know situations where women—because the vast majority of these cases are women being assaulted by their male partners—have for very many reasons stayed in the relationship for a very long period of time and only after a long period of time have they said I want to leave the relationship and I want to try and make a new life for myself. Oftentimes, they might actually leave the relationship, but then at some future point feel strong enough to be able to say not only did I leave this relationship, but the person who assaulted me should be made to pay for his actions. That is why this amendment says that in that case or in other cases of dependency or trust, other than sexual assault, there should be a period of up to 30 years for the victim to be able to take the perpetrator to civil court.

We are suggesting that this piece of legislation would define intimacy in a very large—and very broadly defined and would cover such relationships as a patient to a doctor, parishioner to a minister or a priest or a rabbi, a student to a teacher, a child to a child care provider, a person with physical or mental disabilities, a relationship to a person who is giving them care and it would apply—and I think this is a very important part—equally to male and female victims because we know that assault in these cases does not just relate to a male assault on a female victim, but as I have stated in many cases it is a male assault on a male victim or it can be cases of a female abusing a male or a female.

So we are asking for a broadening of a definition of assault, and we are saying that in cases of sexual assault the victim should be able to take the perpetrator to civil court at any time. There should be absolutely no time limitation on that. In the case of other kinds of assault in a relationship of dependency or trust, there should be a time limit of 30 years.

As I stated at the beginning, Mr. Speaker, this piece of legislation is based on legislation that has been in the province of Ontario for two years and has worked very well, and the Supreme Court highly recommends it. So I would end by recommending the House pass this piece of legislation through to committee so that we can talk to members of the public and, hopefully, see this enacted before the end of this session.

With those few words, I would recommend this piece of legislation to the House.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings), that debate be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Mr. Speaker: I understand we are not proceeding with Bill 209. Are we proceeding with Bill 209? OK.

Bill 209—The Donation of Food Act

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 209, The Donation of Food Act (Loi sur le don d'aliments), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Ms. Barrett: Mr. Speaker, I will speak very briefly on this piece of legislation.

I spoke yesterday in the House on the very similar bill that has been introduced by the government—[interjection] Yes, as one of my colleagues says, a bill that was xeroxed by the provincial government.

That aside, I spoke in favour of the bill that was presented by the provincial government, and I would like to speak in favour of this bill, which is virtually identical to that piece of legislation and

recommend that either one or the other of these bills be passed through to committee and that we hear the people of Manitoba on this piece of legislation and hopefully pass it by the end of this session.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that at least one of my caucus colleagues would like to speak on this bill, in addition to myself.

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to support this bill from my colleague the member for Wellington. It was a good idea, which I believe originally initiated at Winnipeg Harvest. They recommended that the Legislature pass this kind of legislation. We are pleased to introduce a bill in order to do so.

The basic purpose of this bill is to limit the liability of donors who donate food, limit their liability for damages that may result from injury or death caused by the consumption of the food, unless the food, of course, is in an unsafe condition when it is donated.

For better or for worse, we have a rather large food bank industry in Canada, including in Manitoba. A great many of my constituents feel compelled to use the many food bank outlets in the north end, whose food is provided by Winnipeg Harvest food bank. One of the reasons that they are compelled to rely on food banks, regrettably, is that there is a vicious attack on the poor by governments, primarily at the federal and provincial level.

I would just like to itemize some of the things that this provincial government has done to make life worse for low-income people. There have been numerous cuts in the last two budgets, particularly the budget of a year ago, which have greatly affected our constituents.

* (1700)

This attack on the poor has become worse with the installation of the welfare fraud line. What my colleagues and I and advocates in the community are experiencing is that when someone complains

or alleges that there is a fraud or even when someone begins to advocate for an individual that they are being cut off benefits until the investigation is completed.

I think this is a real travesty of justice, because it is a reverse onus on people to prove that they are innocent rather than having their issue continue while an investigation goes on. We would not countenance this kind of injustice in the criminal justice system. In fact, clients would win their case if there were any kinds of examples like this in the criminal justice system, but because it is the welfare system the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) and her government deem that this is acceptable.

I am saying that it is not acceptable, because people need these basic necessities, and the Canada Assistance Plan assures Canadians that their basic needs will be met. To cut people off from their basic necessities while an investigation is going on I think is unfair and may well be illegal. If it is illegal, you can be sure that there will be a court challenge challenging this government.

I have correspondence on this as well as examples from my colleagues and from advocates in the community. For example, I would like to quote from a letter, and the Minister of Family Services, I believe, was also sent a copy of this letter. It is signed by the staff at St. Matthew's-Maryland Community Ministry, and it is dated October 25.

I would just like to read a couple of sentences from this letter. They say: It has been reported to us that a report of fraud can lead to an investigation which suspends issue of welfare payments for the duration of the investigation regardless of that person's guilt or innocence. Furthermore, people who have had benefits suspended have not received any compensation for lost benefits even when no fraud was discovered.

I think that is an appalling situation. That is one of the reasons why people are forced to go to food banks, because they have no income to buy

food with. We want this stopped and if it is not stopped I think the courts will put a stop to it.

The minister has just recently tabled the annual report for her department, the Department of Family Services, for 1993-94, and the report has a very good summary of the effects on people of her government's policies. For example, when we look at the number of students on the caseload we can see the result of their discontinuing the Student Social Allowances Program. This was a move that we protested and said that this would result in students dropping out of school. Many of those people are going to be on social assistance instead of furthering their education.

So we see that in 1991-92, there were 1,025 students on this program; '92-93, there were 1,144; but, lo and behold, 1993-94, there are only 226 students and those students were no longer eligible for this program. I would be willing to bet that instead of being in school and furthering their education, these students are on welfare and going to food banks to supplement their income, because the income on social allowances is so inadequate. If you look at the Social Allowances Program by students, you can see that the budget line has decreased by about \$4 million as well.

Another way that this government chose to save money on the backs of the poor, and once again forced them to use food banks, which is what this bill is about, was by limiting the health benefits for people on social assistance. So you see in the annual report of the minister that the caseload has gone up in '91-92 and '92-93 and '93-94 from 27,115 to 30,187, but their budget line for dental, drugs and optical has gone down in all three of those categories from '92-93 to '93-94.

What happens when individuals no longer qualify because of these rules? Well, here is an example from someone. They have to go to food banks as my colleague from Wolesey (Ms. Friesen) says. She should know because many of her constituents are also poor, and they are also forced to use the numerous food-bank outlets in Wolesey constituency. But here is correspondence that I have, a copy of correspondence that

was sent to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) dated December 6. It is about a four-year-old girl whose prescription glasses went missing from her nursery school program, and she applied to have these glasses—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would like to caution the honourable member for Burrows. I believe Bill 209, The Donation of Food Act, specifically deals with the questions of liability of donors of food.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank you for the advice that you have just given me, and I will wind up very shortly, but I would like to make one point about food banks that the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) pointed out to me in a discussion, and actually helped me with my speech yesterday, and I thank him for that. He said, the problem with food banks is that they become institutionalized, and as an institutional solution to poverty, it is terribly inadequate and does not meet the basic needs of people.

As I was saying in an identical bill on the Order Paper yesterday, which remarks were found to be in order at that time—

Mr. Speaker: I am sure the honourable member for Burrows is not reflecting on the Chair. I am quite certain of that, sir.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, as I was saying yesterday, the problem with food banks is that the nutrition is terribly inadequate, that the main supply of food is stale bread and stale doughnuts. I know this from unloading the truck from Winnipeg Harvest and serving people in the North End Community Ministry from 1984 to 1990.

I have a very interesting article from a newspaper in Thompson, Manitoba, with government staff, and I commend them. In fact I left a message on their voice mail commending them for having a food security workshop to address hunger in the North. They talked about malnutrition of people in Manitoba, and they talked about the effects of poverty.

So, in conclusion, Mr. Speaker, while we support this bill, and we believe it does provide encouragement for people to donate without fear of being sued, we regret that food banks are a necessity in such an affluent country and such an affluent province. We think part of the reason is the actions of this government and their cutbacks and the federal government and their cuts to social programs which have been announced in the last budget and will continue in the next federal Liberal budget.

We believe there are much, much better ways of meeting people's basic needs than food banks. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to be able to put a few words on the record on this particular Bill 209.

It is a very positive bill. In fact, you know yesterday we sat through an hour and a half or so of discussion on a bill as the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) made reference to it with respect to virtually the same issue, and the member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) just made reference to the xeroxing of it. I think it is a wonderful idea, and there is absolutely no doubt about that.

The New Democrats will say that the Tories Xeroxed it from them, I guess we could equally say that you Xeroxed it from us last year. We had it in the form of a resolution.

I remember Mr. Gaudry's resolution, No. 30, Charitable Donations to Food Banks. We are talking about the same idea. But you know something, I am really encouraged by what I saw earlier today.

Earlier today we saw all three political parties get together and do something constructive, contrary to what possibly might have happened yesterday. But we will put that behind us, Mr. Speaker. What we saw was three political parties inside the Chamber recognize that there is some benefit with joint co-operation, and hopefully we will be able to achieve some benefit from that resolution that we passed earlier today.

But you know something, I believe that we should do something with this particular bill, with in fact not only Bill 209 but also the other bill that the government has introduced, Bill 5, The Food Donations Act, because like the resolution that we introduced last year, all three political parties are in fact talking the same thing.

* (1710)

Do you know something? It is feasible. If the government House leader, for example, or members from the government benches and members from the New Democratic benches—the Leader of the Liberal Party and myself have discussed this—we will commit to seeing this bill and the government bill or some sort of a consensus be achieved between now and tomorrow at eleven o'clock where we get this particular bill or the government bill not only in second reading, out of second reading, and let us get into the Committee of the Whole. Let us pass this bill out of the Committee of the Whole and get it into third reading and, Mr. Speaker, then give it Royal Assent.

If the will of this government and the will of both opposition parties—and I believe that the will is there. This is a wonderful time. Here we are, just days away from Christmas, days in which, I would argue, people are generous. Their hearts are open. They want to be able to make donations of this nature, and I think it would be a very positive gesture from the Manitoba Legislature if in fact we had unanimous support of what it is that we are recommending right now, that all three political parties tomorrow morning take the initiative, and it can be—I am not fussy, we are not fussy and I do not believe the New Democrats are fussy—whichever bill it takes.

We will co-operate. We will ensure, Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that the Liberal Party will not put up another speaker on this bill or the government bill. We are very sincere in saying that we want this particular bill to pass or the government bill to pass into committee. We will sit in Committee of the Whole if necessary tomorrow, whatever it takes, because we know,

with the leave of this House, that in fact it can happen. We have seen co-operation in the past. The purpose of my standing up right now is not to kill 15 minutes or to do anything of that nature. It is to propose that we deal with this item. The timing is right. All three political parties have spoken. This is not an idea that the Liberals or the New Democrats or the Conservatives should take credit for. Let us give this idea to the Manitoba Legislature, and I think it would be a wonderful thing that could happen. We can demonstrate this to the public tomorrow morning. So I would ask that all members think about it. The commitment is there from us. Let us think about it overnight, and let us pass a bill tomorrow that will ensure that Royal Assent would be given to it.

Mr. Jack Reimer (Niakwa): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Vital (Mrs. Render), that debate be now adjourned.
Motion agreed to.

Mr. Speaker: We will proceed to Bill 213, and we will come back to 210 in a few minutes.

BILL 213—The Workers Compensation Amendment Act

Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for St. Johns (Mr. Mackintosh), that Bill 213, The Workers Compensation Act; Loi modifiant la loi sur les accidents du travail, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Reid: Mr. Speaker, this is a piece of legislation that had been introduced originally by my colleague the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) several sessions back. It was in response to an action that had taken place by the Court of Appeal of the Province of Manitoba, wherein the justice of that court, one Mr. Sterling Lyon, Justice Lyon, had reviewed the application of a provision of The Workers Compensation Act by a regulation, and that regulation was found to be inconsistent with the act, and I believe the justice at that time struck down that provision.

Since that time we have been without any protection for firefighters with respect to latent injuries that they might sustain to their lungs, their brains, their kidneys, their internal organs in general. These are injuries that they sustained as they performed their normal duties, as they encountered certain facets of their job to which members of society in general are not subjected. When I refer specifically to the chemicals and toxins that firefighters come in contact with, they are either through contact with their skin or through inhalation as they go about doing their normal duties.

Many of us in society take for granted the very significant work that firefighters perform on behalf of society. They are the only ones that run into burning buildings when others are leaving, and they do that not only to protect human life, but to protect the properties of many Manitobans. For that, we owe them a great deal of gratitude for their not only risking their well-being, but also to protect society in general.

(Mr. Ben Sveinson, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

This legislation has been carried forward by myself after the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) had introduced it some sessions back, and we are still trying to have this legislation move into committee stage. We nearly succeeded in doing that a couple of sessions ago to give members of the public the opportunity to come forward and to comment on this legislation. The government in their wisdom chose to this point in time not to allow that to happen. We are hopeful that they would see their way clear this time to recognize the significance of this legislation and to want to protect full-time municipal firefighting forces of this province, something that they have not been interested in doing to this point in time. So we are hopeful that they will have a change of heart after hearing the comments that we have and maybe commenting themselves that they will let this bill go through to committee.

This bill, Mr. Acting Speaker—as I have said, the legislation that was in place through Manitoba

Regulation 24-77 which was passed in 1977 refers, and I will quote from a document that I have here in front of me: Where a firefighter suffers an injury to his lungs, brain or kidneys, unless the contrary is shown, the injury shall be presumed to have arisen out of and in the course of employment as a firefighter resulting from the inhalation of smoke, gases and fumes, or any of them.

That, Mr. Acting Speaker, would give firefighters protection and did give firefighters protection until it was struck down by the Court of Appeal. Since that time there have been absolutely no attempts by this government to reintroduce legislation or protection for firefighters that would restore the protection that they once had. The Workers Compensation Board itself, as well, has not made the necessary attempts to reintroduce those regulations and/or legislation that would provide that protection.

I know the Minister of Labour (Mr. Praznik) has commented several times in the past that he is earnestly looking for ways to solve this problem and to provide that protection for firefighters. That was some two years ago, and I can tell you we are here two years later and we are still waiting for action to be taken. I am not sure why, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister of Labour does not want to incorporate this into the legislation. Maybe he has something on his mind that we are not aware of. He has never stood up in this House to even comment on this legislation. We hope that he would take that opportunity and if there are some concerns he has he would make us aware of them.

Quite possibly if there were a friendly amendment to this legislation, that could be done in committee as well, and we could move forward with this legislation. One of the things that we talked about in the past and a lot of us take for granted is the duties that firefighters perform.

I know that, Mr. Acting Speaker, even in my own community of Transcona, some of my immediate neighbours are firefighters for the City of Winnipeg. They tell me that they are on first

response units within the City of Winnipeg here, and by first response I mean that they attend calls that they have received, 911 calls that they have received, which do not necessarily mean that it is fires in progress.

They respond to accidents, they respond to people who have succumbed to injury or to health conditions within their own homes or elsewhere. These firefighters go in, not knowing the medical condition of individuals, and with the conditions that we have in society where there is, I believe, a growing incidence in the number of cases of HIV and AIDS, not only within this province but within the country in general, we must recognize that firefighters actually go in and have to deal with injured people where there are bodily fluids on site and that the firefighters may on many occasions not have the adequate protection provided to them. Therefore, they themselves would come in contact with HIV-carrying persons, and in a sense it would put not only the firefighters at risk, but their families as well.

* (1720)

I have asked, and I know the firefighters have asked—I know the firefighters have met, not only with this minister, but they have met with other members of this House as well. They would very much like to see a reporting mechanism that would allow them to become aware immediately upon an individual being transported to a medical facility and where the adequate testing is done, and it is determined that an individual has come in contact with either HIV or/and AIDS person, that the firefighter should be notified immediately so that person could then be put into a safe place, Mr. Acting Speaker, and not be in a position where they would put their family in harm's way by means of transmitting a disease should that firefighter encounter that.

I think this is something that is fair and reasonable, and I think that this legislation would allow a firefighter, should they come in contact with that disease and or other diseases that are encountered in the performance of their duties—that we would want to do the right thing and

provide that protection for the firefighters and their families.

I know that there has been a significant number of studies done, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I have several of them with me here today. You can see that every time I come forward with this legislation, the pile of studies is growing in support of the message that firefighters and members on this side of the House have been bringing forward, that firefighters are susceptible to diseases of life beyond what would be considered normal for society in general. In one study that I have here with me, and it was a report to the Workers Compensation Board on cardiovascular disease and cancer among firefighters, it says, as recent as September of 1994—it is an extensive document of studies that were done.

I can refer to several sections of this study, and it breaks it down by specific segments. In the report itself, this cardiovascular disease and cancer among firefighters report, it spells out different issues with respect to the studies that were done, and different internal organs and what the results of the findings were.

The study findings talk about an association between firefighting and lung cancer and that there is the nonmalignant respiratory disease that has consistently been found among working firefighters.

So we can see, Mr. Acting Speaker, that this study shows that there is a correlation between firefighting and the lung cancer disease itself. The study goes on to talk about the statistics, the study of mortality rates, that have been done on various firefighting forces throughout the country and, of course, throughout the various states of the United States as well.

There have been extensive studies done. When you compare socioeconomic groups that are comparable to that of a firefighter, we find that firefighters have a higher incidence of diseases that might be considered by some to be normal diseases or ordinary diseases of life. Firefighters

are more susceptible to these diseases than other socioeconomic groups that would be considered comparable.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

There are various caustic agents that we take for granted, that are in every one of our homes, that many of us do not even think of as being a hazard, but when a fire starts and our furniture and our homes and our carpeting and the paints, and if the other items that we have in our homes start to burn, they release various gasses and chemicals

Vinyl chloride is one of them—a very, very dangerous product. We know that when there have been real accidents and vinyl chloride cars are involved, of course, whole communities can be evacuated, and yet we have firefighters that are going into burning buildings where there are vinyl chloride gases in place through plastic articles that are burning, vinyl and other items that are burning.

We do not think about the asbestos that is in some of these. We do not think about the soot that the firefighters are having to inhale when they go into these burning buildings. We do not think about the diesel exhaust fumes that the firefighters inhale every time they start up one of their service vehicles, their firetrucks or their first-response vehicles, inside the buildings. They have to inhale these gas fumes. It shows that diesel exhaust fumes are a problem. Also, there are statistically significant increases in lung cancer mortality which occurred in the group of firefighters.

The study goes on and it talks about summary, and I have here a summary of the panel's findings and recommendations, Mr. Speaker. This summary was done in September of 1994, when they reported. It says, with respect to cardiovascular disease, which is something that is very worrisome, I am sure, to firefighters, if not all society in general, that that there is a probable connection between cardiovascular disease and a firefighter's occupation. It also says that a probable connection exists between the aortic aneurysm. It also says that there is a probable connection between brain cancers and the

occupation of a firefighter. It also says, there is a probable connection between lymphatic and hemotopic cancers. There is a probable connection between firefighting occupation and colon cancers, bladder cancers and kidney cancers.

So you can see that there are a wide range of diseases that affect firefighters that study after study have shown are linked to the occupation of firefighting.

We think, Mr. Speaker, that it is only fair that as a society we recognize the risks that firefighters are putting themselves in harm's way to protect society. We think that it is only fair that we take the necessary steps to correct the injustice and to restore protection for those in the municipal firefighting service who daily put their lives on the line to protect public lives and property.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I conclude my remarks, and I ask all members of the House to support this legislation, to allow it to move through to committee, to allow members of the public to come forward and voice their concerns and their thoughts. I ask for the support of all members of this House. Thank you.

Mrs. Shirley Render (St. Vital): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer), that debate now be adjourned.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 210—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that Bill 210, The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, I would like to take a few minutes to explain in general terms what the intention is of this particular legislation.

As members may remember, we on this side of the official opposition supported the introduction of the no-fault auto insurance legislation that was introduced here about a year ago. We supported it because it was based on a major recommendation by Judge Kopstein, who studied the entire Autopac system. You may recall, we set up this committee of one by Judge Kopstein in early '88. The recommendations came in after the government changed but, nevertheless, Judge Kopstein made a number of very important recommendations. His key recommendation was the implementation of a no-fault system.

An Honourable Member: And it is working.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Exactly, it is working. I am very, very pleased about that, because we on this side advocated it for a number of years.

An Honourable Member: But you did not do anything about it.

Mr. Leonard Evans: We did not do anything? Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mrs. McIntosh) realizes, we set up the Kopstein report in early '88. He made the recommendation, but we were not in government so we were not in the position to do anything except to advocate that the government of the day—

An Honourable Member: You could have done something about it in the '70s.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Well, at least we established Autopac as it was.

* (1730)

At any rate, Mr. Speaker, there were a number of good reasons why the Kopstein recommendation should have been implemented, which it was, as I said, in the legislation. Among other things, of course, it was fairer. This legislation is much fairer, the no-fault insurance scheme that has been proposed. It avoids lengthy and costly litigation. It does not discriminate against a lot of people who were at fault, were deemed to be at fault in an

accident, but basically were ordinary Manitobans, regular people who for some reason or other made a mistake, in a fit of absent mindedness went down a wrong way on a one-way street. These things happen to the best of us, to all of us, they can happen, and it is recognized.

At any rate, it also enhances protection, generally, of Manitobans, including pedestrians. I could say a bit more about that later. Also, very importantly, it is holding down the premiums. It is holding down the increasing costs that we were recognizing when we were in office and which this government had to deal with since it has been in office.

The amendments that I am proposing in this bill deal with what we perceive to be as deficiencies in the existing legislation. They are based in large measure on public representation made at the committee stage of this Legislature.

We listened very carefully and received documentation, the committee received documentation including that from the Public Interest Law Centre of Legal Aid Manitoba. They made quite a comprehensive study of the legislation and made a number of very valuable suggestions.

Some of them were implemented by the government, but there were many others that I think we should have paid attention to and implemented.

Among other things, and I have just mentioned some of the highlights of the bill that we hope will improve the existing legislation. Definition of a spouse, we feel that one should not have to be married for five years or in some sort of relationship for five years to be defined as a spouse and we are shortening that to two years.

This legislation also covers pedestrians. Maybe a lot of people do not realize this, but you are protected by this legislation even if you do not have an Autopac policy because you do not own a car or, even if you do not have a driver's licence, and of course the driver's licence, a portion of that

goes towards auto insurance, so even if you have no driver's licence and you do not own a car, as a pedestrian, you are involved in a motor vehicle accident, you are still covered, you are still protected by this legislation.

What I am suggesting, the legislation restricts these pedestrian accidents to Canada and the United States. We suggest that we should not restrict it just to North America, we should allow it anywhere in the world. We should protect Manitobans who unfortunately may be at fault, involved in some kind of a motor vehicle accident.

We also think that the current legislation discriminates against seniors because there is an arbitrary cutoff or phasing out of income replacement benefits after the age of 65. We think this is arbitrary. I know the Manitoba Society of Seniors has been very critical of the legislation on this account.

I think that the amendment I have will remove that discrimination and allow the system more or less to tailor the compensation to the individual if that individual can give evidence that he or she would have continued working beyond 65 to a certain age. So it would be a matter of satisfying the corporation that this was the case and that we could accommodate that individual.

There are many, many Manitobans who work well into their 70s and beyond, people in the various professions, the various occupations, and I am sure members can think of a lot of examples. So that discrimination is removed by this legislation.

We also recognize in this amendment that the cost of living is higher in northern Manitoba, and that is reflected often in the wage levels paid in places like Thompson and Flin Flon and so on, and we recognize that in one of the amendments where we increase the amount of maximum yearly insurable earnings by \$5,000.

Also, we believe that some of the benefits are rather niggardly. The spouse of a deceased victim under the legislation is entitled to a lump sum

indemnity. Without going into the detail, Mr. Speaker, which I know I should not do anyway, I can just simply say that we have improved these benefits to spouses of deceased victims so that they do not suffer undue financial hardship. That is true for some of the other benefits. We have increased the amounts, and those are there for anyone to read in the particular legislation.

Also, we believe that anyone who is a victim of an accident and needs personal assistance should be guaranteed that assistance in the least restrictive environment. That means that if a person can and should be looked after in his or her home as opposed to a personal care home or institution, that should take place.

Also, we believe that where there is evidence favouring the payment of a compensation to a claimant, and the evidence is balanced between evidence that is contrary to the claim and evidence that is in favour of the claim, that on balance the compensation should be paid to the claimant.

Another suggestion we have in this legislation, another proposal in this legislation, which I hope that all members would support, is setting up a system of advocates. That is having advocates available who would help claimants who may need some assistance in going to Autopac with regard to a review of their case or indeed with regard to an appeal to the commission that was set up under the legislation. So we think that there is a need and a role for claimant advocates, and that is provided for in this legislation.

We also think that it is important that there should be annual reviews of the amounts paid out by MPIC because of inflation and so on, and we require in this legislation that the corporation shall review the maximum amount of expense reimbursement at least once in each year to determine whether it should be increased or perhaps decreased if that be the case.

Mr. Speaker, we also suggest that it is important for a review to take place by the Public Utilities Board on the success of the, as I call it, new no-fault legislation, and that this provides that on or

before June 1, 1997, the corporation shall file a report with the Public Utilities Board and the board shall review the experience of the corporation in the previous three years with respect to the various claims paid out and so on, and generally to ensure that it is operating fairly and adequately and that all are treated in an equitable fashion.

Mr. Speaker, a member opposite earlier on in my remarks said, it is working, and indeed it seems to be working, and I am very pleased about it. It is established on the Quebec model; and the Quebec plan, I know, was very successful in keeping premiums down, keeping the rates that people paid. The premiums people paid in Quebec have been maintained at very low levels because of the new system, because of the no-fault system that they had put in place some years ago. So this is based on the Quebec model which was successful and it seems to indeed be working in Manitoba.

There is always room for improvement, and I suggest, therefore, that this amendment is suggesting in a very positive way some improvements, additional benefits, additional fairness for seniors, additional fairness for workers.

I use just one other example in that respect, Mr. Speaker. The current legislation says that, if you are involved in an accident, whether you are at fault or not at fault, and you lose work, you lose wages, you are entitled to income replacement under a formula. However, you cannot get a nickel until one week has transpired, so whether you are at fault or not at fault makes no matter. Under the current legislation the corporation, MPIC, will not pay you a nickel for lost wages for a whole week.

So we think it is only fair that the loss of wages begin the day after the accident. There is no reason why a person has to lose wages because he or she is involved in an accident. Whether he or she is at fault or whether he or she is the innocent party, it does not matter which, you lose a week's pay under the existing legislation.

* (1740)

So one of my amendments, Mr. Speaker, wipes this out. Another very, very important matter—perhaps this will be the last point I will make on the legislation—is with regard to the appeal process.

As you know this legislation virtually has changed dramatically the way the MPIC and the auto insurance system has worked in this province. It has eliminated the litigation process that has gone on for years, a process which has been rather costly, has not always been that fair, and there was a lot of criticism of it, and, of course, the response has been the implementation of this no-fault insurance.

But the fact is that there has to be some additional room for appeal. There is appeal permitted from the review panel. If you do not like what MPIC has awarded you, you can appeal that to MPIC. They have an internal review, but beyond that you can go to a review commission which reports to the Minister of Consumer Affairs. If you do not like that, if you do not like the settlement, there is no other appeal except if you have an appeal with regard to law or jurisdiction. If you have an appeal with regard to law or jurisdiction, you can go to the Court of Appeal, but that is it.

What we have done in this amendment is to strike that out, which therefore allows a claimant to go to the Court of Appeal with matters of substance as well as just jurisdiction and law. So to that extent we have provided for greater appeal to that court on the part of claimants, on the part of citizens of this province who may, unfortunately, may be involved in an accident and have to go through this process.

So I think, Mr. Speaker, these amendments I am putting forward in a very positive way, I think they are a real step forward. I am sure the vast majority of Manitobans would agree with this, and I trust and hope that all members of this Legislature would see fit to support this particular bill.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister charged with the administration of The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Act): Here I would like to adjourn debate, seconded by the honourable government House leader (Mr. Ernst).

Motion agreed to.

Bill 212—The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (2)

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): I move, seconded by the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), that Bill 212, The Child and Family Services Amendment Act (2); Loi no 2 modifiant la Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Martindale: Mr. Speaker, this bill is identical to previous private members' bills that we have introduced, both myself as Family Services critic and my predecessor the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett), and the purpose of this bill is to change the reporting procedure for the Children's Advocate and require that the Children's Advocate report to the Legislative

Assembly instead of to the Minister of Family Services.

When we initially debated this bill, the minister and the government argued that it was not necessary and we said, yes, it is necessary because if the Children's Advocate makes any recommendations to the minister, we will not know what those recommendations are. Fortunately we actually found out that the Children's Advocate had made some recommendations to the minister because he corresponded with some people, I believe, in Thompson on April 2, 1993, and had some very pointed comments that he made, saying I am concerned that the needs of children may not be fully met with recent cuts.

He also said that the care provided by the foster families has done more to meet the needs of children than any other system. So we know that the Children's Advocate has had—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) will have 14 minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House now adjourns and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Friday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, December 15, 1994

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