

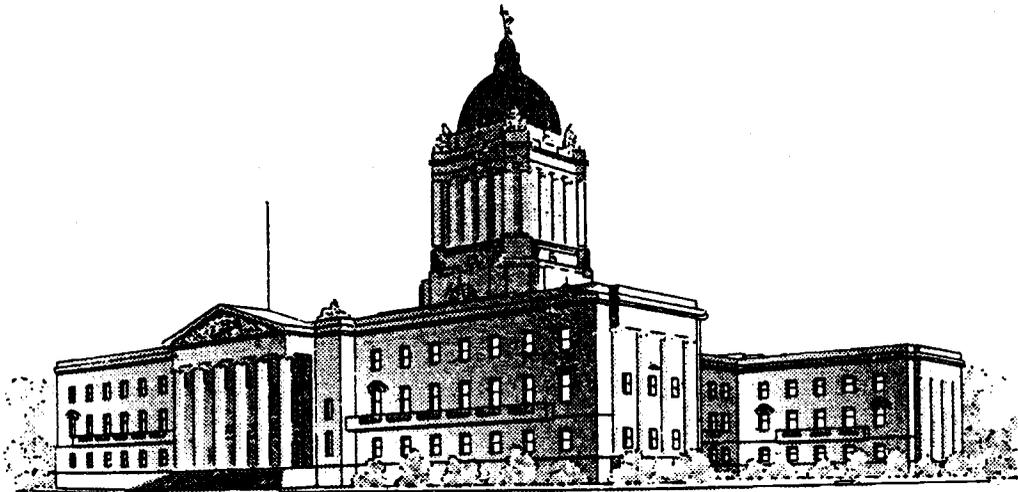


Sixth Session - Thirty-Fifth Legislature  
of the  
**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**(Hansard)**

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Speaker*



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**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Fifth Legislature**

**Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation**

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<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.
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DOER, Gary	Concordia	NDP
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HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	NDP
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
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<i>Vacant</i>	River Heights	
<i>Vacant</i>	Flin Flon	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, December 19, 1994

The House met at 8 p.m.

**ORDERS OF THE DAY**  
(continued)

Mr. Speaker: Please be seated.

**DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS**

**Bill 3—The Education Administration  
Amendment Act**

Mr. Speaker: Resuming debate of Bill 3, The Education Administration Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration scolaire).

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to continue on my comments to the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) about his proposal, but I notice that 50 percent of the October group is missing right now.

An Honourable Member: Fifty percent? Seventy-five percent.

Mr. Doer: Well, we are not counting one former esteemed member, the departed former member.

An Honourable Member: Now they are back up to 50 percent.

Mr. Doer: Good. I feel better. I guess the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) owes us a big vote of thanks because all the huffing and puffing of the Liberals' Party lately—I have heard them on the radio so many times—the adjournment motion could have been moved and gone before they even had anybody in the House.

It is a good lesson for all of us, because if we—

An Honourable Member: He had not even called the Chamber to order, and we are here.

Mr. Doer: No, no. It had been called. [interjection] Yes, it had been.

While we are dealing with education bills, it is important for all of us to remember these educations that we go through, these life experiences which are the finest form of education.

I am always learning. My favourite life experience is, beware of somebody who huffs and puffs because eventually somebody else blows their house down. I think that my honourable friends on the right may want to remember that, Mr. Speaker. [interjection] Hardly. They are becoming righter and righter every day as we watch the abandonment of the so-called red book.

It will be interesting to see the sort of junior red book when it comes to education sort of after the breaches of promises made on the original document.

Mr. Speaker, we have raised with the minister the contradiction in his own bill, power to the people but not too much power to the people, power to the teachers. When the minister truly trusts the people, we will see a bill in this House, we will see a bill in this Chamber, that does not give dictatorial powers to a cabinet minister, the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness), to disband any advisory council, any parental advisory council in the province of Manitoba as proposed in Bill 3. This looks like a clip-and-cut bill. I guess we should expect it from a clip-and-cut education policy from the last three Ministers of Education.

I respect the Minister of Education. I expect him to be thorough. I expect him to be consistent. I expect him to be following on his Darwinian philosophies in a very consistent way. He is a great believer in it's a dog-eat-dog world and you have to eat yourself a dog every day. I know he believes that. I expected to see some consistent Darwinian legislation in his bill, but there is no power to the people here. There is no real power to the people here because when push comes to shove, where does the buck stop? Who has the power over all the advisory councils? Who has that?

Does the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) have the power to disband all the parental advisory committees? Yes, he does.

So we have advisory committee No. 1 and advisory committee No. 2 and advisory committee No. 3. Advisory committee No. 1 agrees with the minister. They do not get disbanded. Advisory committee No. 2 agrees with a more comprehensive and holistic approach to education. It may believe that Canadian history should be part of the curriculum, but the minister has the right to take it away. He can give on one hand and take away on the other hand.

The legislation takes it away because the Minister of Education has the power to disband the parental advisory committees. Mr. Speaker, what if a school division wants to teach the 1919 strike? The Minister of Education could possibly—the parental advisory committee could take it away.

**An Honourable Member:** We put a plaque up.

**Mr. Doer:** Put a plaque up. It took a year and a half to do it, Mr. Speaker.

What if the school division wants to teach the history of Louis Riel?

You know, there is no power to the people under this bill. There is only one parental advisory committee. It is you, the Minister of Education. So that is what I said before. We want parental advisory committees to be there and we want them to have all kinds of input but not on discipline procedures. We are going to legislate that. If we do not agree with them, Mr. Speaker, I, the minister, the divine, supreme being, the ultimate Pooch-Bah of education, can totally disband this.

Mr. Speaker, some power to the people, some parental advisory committee. This minister does not trust the people. Why would he? He has not trusted them in the past. He has not trusted them in terms of financial decisions. He has not trusted them in terms of their own right to collective bargaining and other things. He has usurped that

authority. We only have one school trustee in this province and that is the Premier (Mr. Filmon). It is very consistent with the Tory philosophy. Act like you are giving the people power but take more power and centralize it to the minister's office.

Well, you know, when you look at housing programs, when you look at a number of programs across Manitoba, the Multicultural Secretariat, this is a very consistent philosophy. This is a very, very centralizing government. Child and Family Services, Department of Education, multicultural grants, Housing Authorities—this government does not trust volunteers. This government does not trust the people. It really says one thing and does another. That is very consistent to this bill. The only people they trust are the 20 people or so who are in cabinet. That is really quite true.

**An Honourable Member:** And Jules Benson.

**Mr. Doer:** And Jules Benson and his super, superannuated pension plan. [interjection] Oh, they may have disagreed with Jules lately. I rather doubt it. They obviously could not disagree when he proposed to give himself this fancy pension plan, 12 and 12. [interjection] Ours is seven and seven, the member may want to know that. Where I come from, 12 and 12 is more than seven and seven but of course under Tory new math—I guess we are teaching new math in the schools, Mr. Speaker. I guess it would come—

**An Honourable Member:** You tell me what you think of Marc Eliesen's pension.

**Mr. Doer:** I will tell you what I think. The former Minister of Finance tabled in this House a document that I had produced that he agreed with on Crown corporation salaries and benefits. The minister knows that we both worked on this through the transition of government. I, in fact, wanted the transition team to have that document that made it very clear that you pay people what the market will bear but you do not give them all these extra benefits. I always thought we should be more honest on the pay side, which that document did—[interjection] You look at the salaries for the chief executive officer of the

Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation you will not—I will show you the comments from the former member.

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

\* (2010)

Madam Deputy Speaker, the former Minister of Finance knows—[interjection] And it was there and the minister followed it. The minister should know this. We rejected any performance recommendations because how do you deal with the person who has pecuniary incentives and they are also head of a Crown corporation which has a monopoly? That is a very difficult situation, and I was rather disappointed with the educational decision of the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) on his defence of the Tony Knowles performance bonus at Red River Community College.

Madam Deputy Speaker, getting back to Bill 3. Clearly then the government—did you notice that the government in their press release never mentioned the power of the minister? Did you notice that in their Speech from the Throne they never said, oh, but the Minister of Education can take away these parental advisory committees? You notice that the fine print is never printed by the Conservative Party. You would not want to buy a house from this group, because look at the fine print. You own the house, but by the way, the Minister of Education can take this house over without any reason, without any defence. He can just blindly or madly take this house away. That was not anywhere in the communication strategy of the government. Why was it missing if it was such a good idea, proposal?

**An Honourable Member:** We had left out about three-quarters of it.

**Mr. Doer:** Obviously they did. We are dealing with iceberg legislation—one-quarter on the top, three-quarters underneath the surface. No wonder this is a government like the Titanic in terms of its policies.

I would have thought—

**An Honourable Member:** The people will speak.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, the people will speak, but hopefully the people will speak when they know what the actual bill is.

Madam Deputy Speaker, perhaps the minister, you know who again used to, in our minds, have a reputation of being a straight-ahead minister. He did not say—[interjection] Well, it is pretty straight ahead until you look at all the notwithstanding clauses, the kind of divine right of kings that have been remaining in the document, maintained by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Stefanson). I thought the Magna Carta was signed a long time ago. I thought we had moved a long time beyond this kind of ministerial power.

Why is the minister taking all this—why has the minister got the power to suspend a parental advisory committee? Why does he have that? Why has he maintained that in a unilateral way?

The minister mentions our vision. We do not agree with the minister's vision on education. We have said so clearly in our alternative speech from the throne. We put out our own goals of a public education system. If the minister will read that he will see from where we are coming. We believe the education system should have more than one objective. Yes, it should have the objective of preparing our young people for a future economy, but it also should prepare our young people for a future citizenship in our country and our province, and thirdly it should have a goal of preparing our children to learn how to learn, to learn life-long learning in our education system.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister always uses very, very narrow terms in terms of the goals of the education system. He wants to make it a system only to deal with the competitive realities that students will face, and that, we believe, should be not just the sole basis of our education system. That is why we can come to different disagreements with the provincial government on specifics.

When you believe in citizenship as one of the goals of your education system, then you would not be able to bring in recommendations to eliminate or delete Canadian history as a Grade 11 core program. Madam Deputy Speaker, if you believe that that should be part of the overall goal of your education system, then Canadian history should not have been deleted by the minister. That is why the NDP alternative is to maintain Canadian history.

We will cite chapter and verse the hundreds of people that are commenting negatively on the government's document in terms of Canadian history. Now, he may find a way—I listened to the question that was posed by the critic for the New Democratic Party, one of our Education critics, on Education, and it sounded to me as if the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) was going to find a way to backfill his original bias to delete Grade 11 history and find a way to place it in the document some other way. We will wait for that U-turn from the minister and we will welcome the U-turn. I know that Lady Thatcher does not believe that U-turns are appropriate, but sometimes when people are wrong, you know the minister should be for turning, and we certainly hope that the minister is for turning on the issue of the public education system on Canadian history.

We are concerned about the role of the limitations on teachers and staff who are employed by the school divisions. I think we have lots of conflicts of interest in this Legislature. We deal with it with disclosure withdrawal. If teachers are involved in different other school divisions, we think that that can be accommodated without creating any problems for the advisory council.

I want to also deal with the whole issue of discipline in schools, and as I have already stated originally, when we look at four years of inaction of the government just to implement a protocol—and the former Minister of Education is in the House. She gave us an interdepartmental committee. Well, that does not help a principal, it does not help a parent, it does not help a teacher, it does not help a person in the justice system, the Family Services Department. It has provided no

comfort to any of them that they have recommended in 1991 a protocol proposal from superintendents, school trustees, schoolteachers and school principals, and the Minister of Education to greet that consensus with an interdepartmental committee. Let us say that four years of inaction and four years of interdepartmental committees is not power to the people as the present Minister of Education would have us believe, but it is merely power to the interdepartmental committees which is obviously contrary to our educational goals.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this whole issue of individual teachers expelling students is a very important issue in the House, in Manitoba, and we are going to get lots of good advice in committee hearings about this. We have talked to teachers—

**An Honourable Member:** Well, let us go to committee then. Let us get at it.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, the Deputy Premier could get us a protocol. Then we would start listening to the Deputy Premier about getting some other action, Madam Deputy Speaker.

If the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) is saying that he does not trust the advice from principals and school superintendents and trustees and the Teachers Society then, Madam Deputy Speaker, we think he is wrong. Let us have an agreement for a change. Would it not be nice if this minister actually had one agreement with somebody? Would it not be nice if he did not have to fight every day? Maybe it would not, you know, make his day, but perhaps it would be nice to make the student's day. Again, there is an inconsistency on the discipline with teachers versus the parents advisory council, and I do not know why the minister cannot see that.

**An Honourable Member:** This is the fourth time he has said that.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, I want to make sure the minister has picked it up.

You know, here you have parents advisory committees—[interjection] Well, Madam Deputy

Speaker, how does the minister propose to deal with one or two teachers at any given school that have a certain standard, a certain bar, for suspending students and what if the parents advisory committee thinks that teacher is way off base or two or three teachers are way off base relative to the expectations in discipline in all the other classrooms?

Then the parents will not have any say about the decisions that teachers are making, and we say that the minister has not worked out this contradiction. In a one-and-a-half-page bill he has not worked out this contradiction in a way that I think is satisfactory to certainly those of us on our side, and I suggest when he starts hearing presentations sometime down the road from the public he will not have—there will be a lot of concerns about this issue.

\* (2020)

I have talked to principals, I have talked to teachers, I have talked to students and parents on this issue, and there is a great deal of debate going on right now, Madam Deputy Speaker, on the ability of teachers—everybody agrees that we want teachers to have respect. We want respect and authority in the classroom, but the whole issue of only suspensions being left with the teachers is a concern that we are going to have to, I would suggest, work out in this Chamber.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I was meeting with a number of people on safe schools and they made a number of recommendations to me that I want to pass on to the minister. They believe that safe schools communities require a multifaceted approach to this issue. It means that we have to have policy frameworks. We have to have security in our schools. We have to have school responses on safe schools. We have to have curriculum responses to safe schools. We have to have community partnership for safe schools, and we have to have alternatives. We have to have alternatives in place, and we believe that all divisions should have policies on student suspensions and weapons, something that this document does not address, this bill does not

address. We believe that all schools must have codes of behaviour and dealing with discipline policy pursuant to those crisis codes of behaviour.

Madam Deputy Speaker, any safe school policy should deal with the 80 percent of students that are absolutely well behaved, the 2 percent that the minister has already talked about that require intensive supervision. But the policy, in the opinion of many educators that we are listening to, should be geared not just to the 2 percent as the minister has done, but to the 18 percent of students who need to know that their negative behaviour will result in consequences, and the behaviour and the consequences need to be clearly outlined to get the students in line.

We also know that with those 18 percent of students that suspension should be a gateway to getting some kind of support, and they should receive priority and community referral where necessary.

There should be alternatives or possibly referral programs off campus to have academic maintenance and conflict resolution. We may want to look more at fresh-start proposals so that transfers could occur for those students unable to return to their home school, again, something not addressed by the minister in his document.

Every division should have printed material on protocols in writing. Every fall period should have meetings with students, with parents to discuss division policy and school policies. Students new to a school should be informed immediately what the expectations are, and this must involve parents right at the starting point.

We also know that security in schools is very important. I am not sure whether the minister knows this, but to guarantee a high degree of security of schools, we have to do a lot of work. Fifteen percent of the sexual assaults now occur, according to our statistics, in schools, something that we must all address. We must review our buildings and our identifications and our door policies in terms of access of people to our schools where these assaults take place. We must ensure

supervision in our hallways and on our playgrounds. We must use new communication techniques such as cellular phones and possibly video cameras on site.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the NDP would propose there would be an annual safety audit of every school to look at the appropriate security measures. We must have a school response to the whole issue of safe schools. We must have emergency response plans in place for schools. We must have a number of—investment and staff training in conflict resolution, in breaking up fights and dealing with intruders, behaviour management, something again that is not being conducted by this provincial government in terms of the front line of education.

We might want to consider school watch and encourage use of Crime Stoppers in schools. These are some of the proposals that could help us with vandalism and crime in our schools. Each school should establish a safe school committee consisting of staff, students, parents and community representatives.

We should involve students in planning a safe school program, and we should obtain information for all schools from Crime Stoppers, youth court and positive peer culture programs for youth security in our schools, just some of the ideas, again, to prevent disciplinary problems in our schools and to deal with them at the time that they take place.

We have to change our curriculum in our schools. We need to teach a number of things to deal with the culture of violence and the culture of nonviolence. We must teach this in our schools so that people will have the right emotional responses and have inappropriate beliefs dealt with in a developmental way as well as in a disciplinary way.

Prevention programs have been shown to reduce the numbers of students requiring more intensive support for intervention, which should be, obviously, a goal of the government and of all of us in the House.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have to develop a healthy child program in our schools, personal safety, street safety, drinking and driving, drug abuse, family life, weapons. We have to educate our students and families on the risks of these weapons. These are some of the programs that we can impart in our schools to help all of us in terms of being really sincere about doing something and not just putting forward a page and a half bill that is being proposed by the—

**An Honourable Member:** Why did you not tell Maureen Hemphill some of those things when she was the minister?

**Mr. Doer:** I was never minister with Maureen Hemphill, Madam Deputy Speaker.

Pursuant to some of the other ideas we had, we would also encourage a more aggressive school-police liaison program in our schools and make it formal.

I mentioned the healthy child program. We have the highest teen pregnancy rate of any province in Canada, and yet we have very little effort of the government to get a healthy child program in place, to get nurses in our schools, to start teaching some of the family life issues to our students and to start decreasing the number of teen pregnancies in our schools.

We want to empower parents to be involved in education. We want to establish community partnerships for prevention and intervention programs. We want to utilize community speakers and role models in our schools in a positive way. We would like to establish liaison with police and courts. We would like to develop mentor programs to provide one on one and positive role models in our schools with behaviour-challenged kids. We would like to work with communities as part of our school services.

Madam Deputy Speaker, these are just a few of the ideas that we have put forward as alternatives to the provincial government. The government, of course, has waited seven years to do something. They have drifted and drifted and drifted, and now

they can give us a page and a half bill that has three sections to it, two of which are contradictory.

They say, power to the people, but the real power is to the minister. All along the minister has all the power. There are not really parent advisory councils. There are parent advisory councils that exist at the whim and pleasure of the minister himself or herself and no one else. And that, Madam Deputy Speaker, is not empowering the people. That is empowering the Minister of Education.

\* (2030)

Madam Deputy Speaker, we believe that we must have much more straightforward expectations in legislation. We believe legislation must have a protocol to deal with the inadequacies and failures of the provincial government in dealing with a co-ordinated approach between Justice, Health, Education. We want to set up a protocol in a much more formal way than this government, rather than the interdepartmental committee.

We believe that amendments are absolutely necessary to make it clear the roles that will be consistently applied within schools. These roles should be developed by students, teachers and parents. We also believe that we need less power to the minister's consultants, a clearer stand on the governance issue for school boards, Madam Deputy Speaker. We believe this legislation must be amended to clarify the role of parents to our teachers and staff, and we believe that this legislation must be amended in major ways to deal with appealing the minister's decision to close down a school council.

In fact, we would argue that the minister's power must be amended to put strong limitations on the minister's ability to whimsically control parent advisory committees and be able to disallow those parent advisory committees by his ministerial fiat.

We also believe—

**An Honourable Member:** You are struggling here.

**Mr. Doer:** No, we are not. This is a bill that the government put in after they talked about something for five years, and the last year they put it in they spent no time developing it. They have put no effort into putting in strong expectations, strong clear guidelines for school boards, for the Ministry of Education, for the role of parents, for the role of teachers, the role of principals, the expectations of students. This government passed a one and a half page bill and we in the New Democratic Party at committee will rewrite this bill to make it better for the parents and students in this province.

This bill gives us the opportunity to finish the job that the Tories have blown in their proposals and make it clear what the expectations are, make it clear what the roles are, make it clear what the authorities are. You cannot have authority without responsibility and vice versa, and rather than having contradictions we will have clarity and we will have clarity when we pass our amendments at the committee after the next election or before, Madam Deputy Speaker, because Manitobans deserve more than a page and a half of public relations from this Conservative government on the twilight of their very, very dated mandate.

Thank you.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Deputy Speaker, it is with pleasure that I stand up and put a few words on the record with respect to Bill 3. No doubt there has been a considerable amount of effort from the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) to attempt to have debate on second reading so quickly into the session, and I appreciate the opportunity in terms of him bringing it before us. In fact, I would like to see this particular bill even go into the committee stage. I think it would be an appropriate thing.

There are a lot of individuals, stakeholders, that are out there that would like to be able to ensure that their thoughts and their ideas are in fact being heard and listened to, and one of the opportunities that we have in a Legislature, of course, to provide that sort of input is once we go into the committee stage. So I will likely be the only speaker from

our party on Bill 3, and I want to take up what the Minister of Education in his opening remarks was talking about with respect to the broader blueprint of education. You know, it is interesting.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I know that when the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) was making reference to the Liberal Party and the candidates and the commitment towards the education—and you know something, I am very proud of the excellent effort that our Leader (Mr. Edwards) has put into recruiting candidates that are very familiar with education. The Minister of Education only made reference to a few of them. He made reference to Anita Neville. He made reference to Gail Watson. He made reference to Marinus. But he did not make reference to another school trustee; the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) was actually another school trustee. But that is only one of the stakeholders. There are others.

Let us take a look at teachers. We can go to Bob Turner out in Portage. We can go to Elmer out in Selkirk. We can go to Vic Wieler in Kirkfield, O.T. Anderson in the north end, inner city. We have Art Miki out in Radisson. [interjection] The NDP should be nervous.

I would argue that education is and should be a major issue in the next provincial election and the Liberal Party will in fact ensure that it becomes a major issue in the next provincial election.

I was wondering in terms of where I should start off my discussion on this particular bill, and I thought what I would do is give you a basic outline of why we are at or where we have come from since this new Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) was first appointed as the Minister responsible for Education.

I recall very clearly one of the first announcements he made was that public education is going to have to be cut back, but not to worry because that is not going to have an impact on the quality of education, because in fact there are two very distinct things: that you can spend better, improve the quality of education even though we happen to be cutting.

Madam Deputy Speaker, that is when we first heard that this government was wanting to prepare the blueprint on education. It was shortly after that, a couple of months later, when we had the throne speech, and the throne speech had said, we are going to have a Parents' Forum. The Minister of Education (Mr. Manness), prior to that said that we also have our partners in education. We all remember them. Those were the superintendents' association, MTS, the Manitoba Association of School Trustees—the three larger umbrella groups.

So with the Parents' Forum and those three groups, this government was on its way to reform education, Madam Deputy Speaker. I believe, very much so, that the Minister of Education had very strong opinions about public education. In fact, when he met with the partners in education, and even when he met with parents, I believe what he was really looking for was to be able to cherry-pick from what they were saying, to be able to say, yes, that reinforces my belief on this particular area, so this is where I am going to get my information in order to sustain my beliefs.

What is the Minister of Education's belief? The fundamental flaw of the blueprint is that this is a document that is going to see more and more Manitoban students fall through the public school system. They are going to start to fall through the crack. That is the fundamental flaw of this particular document. This is a document that tries to say: Here is the student; that student is going to fit into the school system. If they do not fit in the school system, well, too bad.

That is the message that I believe the Minister of Education is getting out to the different stakeholders, and he believes, very much so, that there are a lot of votes to be had by talking about those basics, Madam Deputy Speaker, even though he does not like using the word "basics."

You know, it was interesting. Last year, after the math exams, we had the Minister of Education, in a very calm, passionate way, explain that Manitoba is not doing too good. [interjection] I stand corrected: too well. Well, I might not have

made it through the public education system had he been the minister, I guess. I have likely said worse in some of my grammar, but I look at it and I see that this particular minister in the actions that he has taken will have a very negative impact. That is why he has raised a lot of concern out in all the stakeholders. That is likely one of the reasons why we have so many educators who are wanting to get involved in the political system today, because of this minister's attitude and approach to resolving education.

\* (2040)

But I was saying, Madam Deputy Speaker, math results: When the math results came down the minister was quick to alert the province of Manitoba or Manitobans that we are not doing too well. Then the other day we had some other results on literacy and reading, and the minister was, I believe, surprised. I do not think he expected Manitobans to do as well as they did. Granted, it is marginal, but I understand that they actually did better than average in Canada.

It is interesting, just prior to my standing up to speak, I said to the minister—

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training):** We went over the bar two feet.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Now he is talking about the bar, "we went over the bar two feet." What he is trying to say is maybe the bar is too low and if we had higher standards across Canada, well, then Manitoba would not have done as well.

I do not believe that those results fit in to what this Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) was hoping. What the Minister of Education is hoping is to try to convey to all Manitobans that the public education system is in a mess, that there is an absolute dire need for dramatic change in our public school system. That is the impression that this Minister of Education is trying to get out there. At least that is the message that he has me convinced that he is trying to get out there.

Let us take a look at it. Everything that he talks about in terms of improving the quality of

education is those basics, those fundamental skills. Well, this minister, this government, have made other very significant mistakes. The minister quite often will say, well, the member never asks questions in Question Period about the blueprint. Well, I have asked questions about the blueprint.

When he talks about those fundamental skills, what is he saying about physical education? He is not even listening, I believe, to some of his cabinet colleagues. I find it very difficult to believe that the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) would concur with what this minister is prepared to do with physical education or the Minister responsible for Sport and recreation (Mr. Ernst). Well, if the Minister of Education was not set on his own personal agenda, and maybe he does have a majority of the caucus—absolutely a majority of the cabinet or we would not be seeing it here—but at what cost? The minister is prepared to write off phys ed for Grades 11 and 12, but at what cost?

I have submitted petitions every day. I believe, if we sit here for 91 days, I will have 91 petitions to submit, and the Clerk will read those 91 petitions every day. Those are just petitions that I have sent out. One of the largest schools that sent in a petition was actually, I believe, Shaftesbury, and I believe that is in the provincial riding of Tuxedo. If the Premier (Mr. Filmon) would be listening to what parents are telling students that live in their own area—[interjection] Well, the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) is talking about students signing that banner, I believe, is what he is talking about.

I will comment on that, but one of the biggest things is that this government does not even have an open mind in the sense when they have made a mistake. I believe, very much so, that many of the members in the Conservative caucus know they have made a mistake, that physical education should not have been dropped. That is not just coming from one geographical area. I have petitions from Flin Flon, all over the province. These are clearly demonstrating—and they are not just parents or kids. They are teachers. They are all the different stakeholders that are getting involved in signing these petitions. There is even

the odd New Democrat that has signed the petition.

I would argue, Madam Deputy Speaker, that if this government was sincere in wanting to really do some positive changes in Education, it would reconsider. What the Minister of Education should be doing, if he did have an open mind on this, is he should reinstate Grade 11 and Grade 12, not just Grade 11. I know the NDP platform is to reinstate Grade 11 phys ed. We believe that they should be reinstating Grade 11 and Grade 12. If the Minister of Education wants to demonstrate to not only the next parent council or the parent forum that is coming up, but also to the teachers—now this government wants to meet with the teachers—if they want to be able to send a strong message to the teachers' forum and the parents' forum, why does this minister not acknowledge that they have made a mistake on physical education and reinstate Grade 11 and Grade 12?

I did not even talk about the banner that I handed in the other day, which had hundreds of signatures from students at a particular school. Most importantly is, it shows that the professionals, the teaching staff and concerned parents from a relatively small geographical area are concerned enough to raise it and make some sort of a statement from within a school.

Grade 11 history—the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) made reference to Grade 11 history. Madam Deputy Speaker, it is interesting, with respect to the Grade 11 history, what is the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) saying? He say, well, we are going to change the curriculum for kindergarten through to Grade 10 to incorporate Canadian history. Well, I believe it is in Grade 6 where we have Canadian history, but there is a big difference in terms of teaching it at a Grade 6 compared to a Grade 11.

I believe that the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) should at the very least acknowledge that this is an area again where this minister has to review with the idea of implementing into the core curriculum.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I believe very much so that this opinion that the Minister of Education has

about changing of education and this government is actually very, very predictable. In fact, just recently the residents of River Heights were sent a letter. In that letter there was another brochure. That brochure was from the Filmon Team, Highlights from the Speech from the Throne. In one column we talk about New Directions for Education. I do not know actually if you can use New Directions relating to education in the sense that under the public document you also have the same headline of New Directions, but that is just another side issue.

It goes through I believe what this government believes are their popular things to say, for example, this piece of legislation. We are going to be amending legislation to give teachers more power to preserve order in the classroom and give schools increased authority in addressing school violence. It goes on to a number of other points. That goes back again to that fundamental flaw of this particular document.

When the Minister of Education brought in the legislation that is referred to, what does the Minister of Education refer to when he stands up to introduce his bills? He stands up to say, we are going to get rid of those troublemakers in our classrooms, we are going to empower the teachers to be able to do that.

If I were to heckle to the Minister of Education that you are wrong, what would he say? The Minister of Education would say, aha, so you want to leave those troublemakers in the classroom, is that what the Liberal Party wants to do?

Madam Deputy Speaker, this is the type of politics which the Minister of Education is prepared to play. Being an individual that enjoys playing the game, I am prepared to play at that very same level.

\* (2050)

If the Minister of Education wants to take it on as a game and play politics with this particular issue, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would argue that we are prepared to present the Liberal Party's

position in a very well-detailed way when the time comes. If the government wants to continue playing games in some aspects inside the Chamber, well, albeit, we are not given no choice but to participate.

**An Honourable Member:** Not given any choice. Not given no choice means you did not understand English in school. It is, not given any choice.

**An Honourable Member:** Did he use a double negative?

**An Honourable Member:** Yes, he did.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** It is terrible.

Madam Deputy Speaker, with that moment of pause and listening to the government I was able to come up with what the point was that I was going to be making with respect to the first reading that the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) made with respect to this particular bill.

**An Honourable Member:** Second reading.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** First reading when he introduced the bill.

The minister is quite free at telling Manitobans that this is going to be a bill that is going to get rid of the problem children in the classrooms. But, Madam Deputy Speaker, what the minister does not do or what the minister does not say is what is going to be happening to those students that are being suspended. What bold new initiatives is this government talking about those sorts of students? What are the parents going to do?

This is how the Minister of Education attempts to justify it, which really shows his lack of understanding of some of the problems that those children that are creating a lot of the problems, the circumstances and the background of many of the homes that they are coming from. [interjection] I guess that is where we differentiate from this government. We believe that this government does have a responsibility to ensure that in fact what we have is alternatives.

We have seen some school divisions, and I believe it was out in Charleswood where they brought in a crossroads program. There are even some organizations like Marymount that deal with students that tend to be problematic within the classrooms. I think that it is safe to say that all individuals inside the Chamber would like to see our classrooms managed in a proper way where all students and teachers feel safe in classrooms and to minimize the disruptions. Well, I just indicated that there are programs such as the crossroads that should be looked into out in Charleswood. There are other forums in Winnipeg School Division No. 1 where they allocate classrooms for students of this nature.

But if you listen to the Minister of Education, his response would be to let them fall through, suspend them. What are you going to suspend them to? So the teacher suspends him for two days, what do you think the student is going to be doing—going home to do their homework? Not likely, Madam Deputy Speaker. [interjection] Well, the minister says he believes in the woodshed theory. Well, I will not comment in too much detail on that particular theory, but I trust that it is not necessarily the same opinion that the Minister of Education has.

Another issue which the minister talked about was in dealing with discipline. He talks about, well, the Liberal Party's only stand on discipline is to have this provincial province-wide code of conduct or code of behaviour. He somewhat ridicules the idea of a province-wide code of conduct. In fact, he made reference to a question that I asked him in the last session. He says, well, the Liberal Party's opinion is that if a teacher hits a student that that should not be allowed. Well, he then says that all political parties believe that in fact is the case that you should not be able to hit and there are laws that are currently in place to prevent that from happening.

I do not want to draw a conclusion on behalf of the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness), but it sounds like the Minister of Education is ruling out the idea or the concept of a province-wide behaviour code or a code of conduct, and I find

that that is unfortunate. I think that there are a number of things that could be done. It does not have to deal with the specifics. It is not going to be dealing with the specifics per se, Madam Deputy Speaker. Does it talk about a province-wide code of conduct? [interjection] Well, the Minister of Education, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) can read what I have just finished saying, and I hope that they would understand it.

But I believe that there is a need for a province-wide code of conduct, code of behaviour. I received an interesting document actually from the Brandon School Division on student conduct policy, and it makes reference to threats, racial and physical and/or sexual harassment or abuse and theft. It talks about the possession of weapons. It talks about trespassers as this particular bill does, the using of a weapon, vandalism, drugs and alcohol and intoxicating substances.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I understand that both the Democrats and the Conservatives are very sensitive and that they do not necessarily believe that we should be talking about a province-wide code of conduct. That is most unfortunate from their perspective. But I do believe that there is a need and hopefully that we will see some additional comments on this matter when we do go into the committee and hopefully the Minister of Education will be approaching it in a very open fashion.

The Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) is already calling for the question on this particular bill. I have indicated to him that we would like to see it go to the committee stage. I think it is an appropriate thing to be able to see going into the committee.

**An Honourable Member:** For it or against it?

**Mr. Lamoureux:** The Leader of the Opposition wants to know if we are voting for it or against it. I sat by and I listened to the Leader of the New Democratic Party's speech, and I do not believe he indicated whether he was going to be voting for it or against it.

I do not have any problem in seeing this bill go to the committee stage. Hopefully we will in fact be able to achieve that. I am sure that the New Democrats will likely want to put up one or two more speakers, but if they do not, we could in fact see this bill passed today. In fact, that would be a positive thing because, as I say, there are a number of people who want to be able to speak on this bill, and we encourage that.

When, Madam Deputy Speaker, this bill does go to the committee stage we would anticipate to hear from the minister, in particular the government House leader, some sort of indication when the committee will be called. We look forward to that.

I do have some other comments that I would like to make with respect to the blueprint and some of the guidelines with respect to the advisory councils and some of the responsibilities that they have in fact been delegated out to. I also want to be able to comment on some of the other remarks that the Minister of Education (Mr. Manness) has put on the record. I will have that opportunity on the next bill that is going to be debated. I will also have that opportunity once it does go into the committee stage.

Having said those few words, in conclusion I think it is important that this legislation will result in different suspension policies in different school divisions unless this government gives additional direction in terms of what it is that it wants to see happen. It also allows the minister to make regulations on duties of the principals, the establishment of school advisory councils respecting the suspension of students. We anticipate that more, again, details on this will be forthcoming once we get into the committee stage.

\* (2100)

Having said that, I thank you for the opportunity to be able to speak.

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk), that debate be adjourned.

**Motion agreed to.**

**Bill 4—The Public Schools  
Amendment Act**

**Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Orchard), that Bill 4, The Public Schools Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Manness:** Madam Deputy Speaker, as the minister of the department it is my pleasure to present The Public Schools Amendment Act to this House for second reading.

Within our communities schools are charged with a great many responsibilities in addition to their educational duties. Foremost among these responsibilities is that of providing Manitoba students an environment that is safe, secure and nonthreatening.

I say to the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer), there are some things I want to get on the record, then we will move into the passionate part. The import of the bill is right now.

The bill will expand the authority of school principals to ensure the safety of the school and its students is not compromised by external sources. The Public Schools Amendment Act presented here is designed to help school authorities better cope with persons who pose a problem for the safe or orderly management of a school through their actions or by their proximity. This amendment provides a legal basis for removing and prosecuting individuals such as nonstudents, drug pushers, sexual predators, gang leaders and other undesirables deemed to represent a threat to the student or the school environment. It includes the right of a principal to document an act of trespass, to engage the assistance of a police officer as warranted and substantially increases the monetary penalties which may be imposed at the court's discretion.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the students within Manitoba schools are entitled to a safe and orderly environment conducive to the pursuit of a quality education. The educators are working very hard to deliver such an environment. We cannot, therefore, allow external forces to threaten this environment to our students. From this perspective, I respectfully submit The Public Schools Amendment Act to this House, and I would imagine that members opposite particularly would want to stand in their place, heartily endorse this bill and pass it and move it quickly on to committee.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I am troubled by a lot of things in public education, but nothing troubles me more than the response I have heard, particularly from the Education critic of the Liberal Party and to some extent also the response provided by the Leader of the NDP, with respect to the pressing issues facing the public education system today. I listened particularly carefully to both presentations, and I wanted to hear, amongst all the rhetoric and all the attack directed towards the document, the blueprint for change—I was listening carefully to hear whether members opposite would address some of the very foundational issues within the document.

First of all, do they support more or less time being directed towards the accomplishment within the area of language arts? Do they want to see more or less time directed towards physical education—well, they have stated their case on that—but beyond that, the core subjects of mathematics, science and social studies?

Madam Deputy Speaker, I wanted to hear them say also as to whether or not they support guidelines with respect to curriculum so that the curriculum we have today or we will have in the future is one that is ultimately expected to be taught in every school. I wanted to hear them dwell upon the issues of curriculum development. I wanted to hear them talk about teacher certification and teacher training. Particularly, I wanted to hear them talk about choice of school. I wanted to hear them even talk about whether or not boundaries—whether the number of school

divisions should be reduced. None of these issues were addressed in any of the presentations.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in my view those are the crucial issues. This is what we will be discussing in the lead-up to the election, indeed I would think at the time when the writs are dropped. These are primal issues and ones that I would fully expect the citizenry want to see the opposition parties address.

We have addressed them. We have addressed them in a very bold fashion. Maybe the members do not agree with our 15 pillars. Maybe they do not agree with the six major steps. The fact is, we have put on the record our views and the way we sense that public education in this province should be recast. I say to the members opposite they are going to have to address these issues.

I read an article from the Financial Post. This is very instructive. I ask members if they want to heckle me, fine, but not right now. Just give me 20 seconds.

This is quoted. The title is, *The Blob has Taken Over Education in Ontario*. I do not know what that means. The headline writer I guess of the Financial Post knows best about his titles to his articles. This is a quote: Last year an Etobicoke separate school teacher dug out a Grade 3 math test from 1932 and administered it to 2,436 students in 32 schools across the country. How did they do? This is a Grade 3 math test. Of the students in Grades 10 through 12, barely more than one-quarter could answer all the questions correctly. That was not a Grade 10, 11 or 12 test from 1932. That was a Grade 3 test from 1932.

I have asked my assistant to bring down a document that I use and maybe some of the members opposite may have heard that I have used on many occasions that I speak. It will I think drive home the same point. Those of us who are part of the system—and I consider myself a part of the system; I have to, I am the minister. I think that we are, when we look at education, notwithstanding the incredible pressures that have come upon it because of the societal changes

which we see around us and have for decades, notwithstanding the socioeconomic factors that members opposite particularly and indeed all like to reference from time to time. I think we begin to honestly believe that our system of public school education today is as good as it ever was.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I would like to read something else, and you have heard me read from this, and I pick a page at random. I would like to read from page 36 of this document I have.

I quote for Hansard. The title is *Wake, Robin*: At the foot of a large oak tree which grew beside a mountain brook, down under the sod lay a little pointed root. For many months it had lain there fast asleep, but now the spring had come. The warm raindrops came softly creeping down to it. The April sun smiled above it and sent his beams to warm the moist earth. End of quote. I could continue to read.

The next page, quote: *The great wide, beautiful, wonderful world with the wonderful water around you curled, and the wonderful grass upon your breast whirled, you are wonderfully dressed. The wonderful air is over me, and the wonderful wind is shaking the tree. It walks on the water and whirls at the mills and talks to itself on top of the hills.* End of quote.

I have asked people—this is a reader—what grade they thought this would be. I have fun with the audiences, because the response comes back to me generally, well, that sounds something like a Grade 3, 4 or 5 reader. I said, well, not quite. It is a Grade 1 reader.

\*(2110)

And here is where it becomes really interesting. I say, what year do you think this was? This was the prescribed reader of the province. What year do you think this was? I get the quotes, ah, I know when it was, it was before the Dick and Jane series that I took. It has got to be in the 1940s. I say, no, it was not in the 1940s. Some will say, oh, well, 1930s, but not before. Well, this was the provincial reader in 1902, Grade 1, and yes, it was

called the Victorian Reader, and yes, I am not talking about the fact that that is the way it was then, I am talking about the degree of difficulty, nothing more.

That was the first grade reader, and yes, some students did not achieve that in one year. Some students took two years to achieve this reader. That is the way it was. And now, as I have said on many occasions, I can understand why it is then, as a pioneer family, how it was my grandfather, who only had, by the way, and he was obsessed with this fact, achieved Grade 3, and yet how it was he could compose and write a letter, and a very learned letter, to anybody in business or anybody in a social sense. The fact is, Madam Deputy Speaker, some would say, well, that is what you are trying to do. You are trying to drive the system back to 1902. We are not trying to do that on this side.

What we are trying to do, of course, is simply ensure that our students whenever it is they leave the public school system—and the public school system has to be the model that will be in place for another 100 years or more because it has been the model that has been place for 125 years in this province—but that that system can ensure that the maximum number of people when they do leave that school system are fully literate, not part literate, but fully literate.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I know the members opposite will tell me, well, the fact is that in the '60s, early '60s—and this is true—there was a class of us in a small rural high school of 24 that started Grade 9 or 10, and by the time it was all over, five graduated. That happened. Five graduated. Those students who did not graduate with Grade 12 or left the public school system with Grades 10 or 11 were fully literate, every one of them, and every one of them of course made a contribution as it was much easier, and I acknowledge this, through the '60s and '70s, made a full contribution to society.

That is what the cry is coming from the parents today, and the cry is also from those educators who have the courage to stand up and also from those

trustees who understand that there is something that needs to be changed, and that is why we are making these changes. Now the Leader of the NDP can have fun and he can say it is just a page and a half of posturing or it is a page and a half of five-year late action. He can have that, but I would have loved to have brought in a whole rewrite of The Public Schools Act to have dealt with all of these issues.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the NDP knows fully well also that The Public Schools Act is a massive document. He knows that when we are engaged in making some of the fundamental changes that we are talking about and that have been enunciated in the New Directions document, he knows the impact that is going to have and the time it is going to take to incorporate those changes in a reformed public education act.

I think it will take the best part of two years, a year and a half at least, to draft a new Public Schools Act, and we are on the way. This minister started, his successor, my predecessor continued and I have also been working on redrafting The Public Schools Act. That in itself though is a monumental task.

So when the member makes fun that I have brought forward page-and-a-half bills dealing with education and kind of denigrates them to say you do not take education reform seriously, I tell him that is not the truth. We are doing what we can in the short period of this session to try and show particularly the people of Manitoba but also the opposition that we are true to our word, that there is a flow that fits in. It fits in with the basic change.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, when we were talking about Bill 4, The Public Schools Amendment Act, we are again very clearly trying to lay out why it is we are trying to make sure that school officials, the principal particularly and his or her staff, now have once again control, not specifically of the classroom in this case, but control of the premises and the facility of the school yard. Because, as the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) has said so many times, we are

going to have to try and remove any violence or criminal effects that we can from the public school setting, and that is the essence of Bill 4.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I would think that members opposite would want us, very clearly, to make sure that those undesirables who today have no place whatsoever within the setting of the public school, to make sure that they indeed are gone. [interjection] Well, I said undesirables. So if the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) figures then that is the only value for a private or independent school that they now become the dumping ground for the undesirables, well then I will let him make peace with the independent schools. I tend to disagree with him. I mean, there are also members on his side, I remind him, that have some affiliation with independent schools, in case he has forgotten.

Madam Deputy Speaker, this legislation and the amendments contained therein is designed to help schools better cope with drug pushers, sexual predators, gang leaders and other persons whose actions on or in close proximity to the school pose a safety or orderly management problem for school authorities. Present legislation dealing with disturbances and trespass does not provide sufficient deterrents nor basis for prosecution of offences. There is a little bit of ambiguity with respect to the powers today of school officials with respect to those individuals who would come onto the school grounds either for purposes of mischief or either purposes of their own profit, but certainly the end result being a disturbance and obviously destroying the learning environment.

We will do everything possible to remove that ambiguity to make sure that the school leadership has the powers and the tools to deal with these undesirables. The members opposite, they can try and have all the fun they want and try—and I know the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) will get up on Bill 4. He will harangue me on the physical education question and he will turn it again into the history issue, because right now that is the only thing he sees as the black and white issues within the area of education. He will not address the other pillar issues, Madam Deputy

Speaker. He does not want to get near them. He does not want to take a position because I do not think there is a united—the member takes great pride, the Liberal Party takes great pride from the fact that they have all the educators on their team, and they do. My goodness, they have a raft full of them, people, of course, who have been in the classroom before.

\* (2120)

I say to the member, if you honestly believe it is so easy to develop education policy today by bringing along practitioners, I tell him he has a lot to learn. He is vastly mistaken because today, when you tell a parent who might not have degrees, most often does not, and you tell them that they are not educated and therefore do not have any judgment to bear, that they have no input into their children's education or to be able to pass judgment on the public school system, I tell you, you are dealing with your own political future and you are putting it on the line because the reality today is, everybody is going to have a say in the reform of public education. So the members, the Liberals particularly, may take great joy in that they have a lot of former practitioners and other people of the education enterprise who are part of their team, but we will see.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I have found quite often, when you put four or five or half a dozen educators together to try and come to a common agreement, to see a common agreement emerge, it is sometimes difficult also. It does not always work that everybody agrees on the direction.

So, Madam Deputy Speaker, I will leave— [interjection] Yes, I could indicate to members opposite, certainly there is a fine that is considerably higher. I think it moves from \$100 roughly to several thousand dollars if somebody is found in contradiction to the intent of the legislation and, through the process, of course, of judicial precedence can have a judgment brought against them and will be expected to pay that level of fine.

Madam Deputy Speaker, with those words, rather than engaging—well, one more comment,

and I want to direct this particularly to my friend the education critic in the Liberal Party. In *The Globe and Mail*, December 17—and again it was reporting on the SAIP results across Canada. This statement was made, and, of course, many people make statements and made statements with respect to the results released under the reading and writing test. This quote comes from Paul Bennett, not the former football player, but the co-chairman of the Coalition of Education Reform, a group of grassroots critics of the school system describing the results as incredibly misleading.

I quote his quote: I am getting sick and tired of receiving reports where we show students performing at 80 percent or better when we do not really know what the foundation's standards are.

It does not meet conventional standards of what is outstanding work. I would love to see 80 percent.

**An Honourable Member:** Six and a half years you have had to wait.

**Mr. Manness:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I have read all the documents. I have read all of the reform documents from every province in this country, and I have not seen any of the problems stated as clearly, nor the solutions stated as clearly as the document that has been released here in Manitoba in *New Directions*.

**An Honourable Member:** That is an unbiased opinion.

**Mr. Manness:** That was a biased opinion by the way, I acknowledge that. But the reality is we are chastised by members opposite for not having in place an education information system. That is a fair criticism. I should probably take more blame for that than anybody, because when I was on Treasury Board we were trying to gain control of some of our systems development, but that is an area that our province is going to have to catch up.

No doubt about it, we are going to have to be able to measure more quickly and indeed more interactively the basic core of education statistics

that we have. We are going to build on it, but the reality—[interjection] Madam Deputy Speaker, I say to the members of the House and to the public at large, we are engaged in a process that I hope the members opposite support and endorse. We look forward with growing interest as the members opposite bring forward in greater clarity the principles of change that they would want to enunciate with respect to improving the public school system. To this point, I believe they feel that the public school system is basically solid and just needs a few degrees of fine tuning.

Madam Deputy Speaker, Manitobans want it to go further than that and this government does also. That is the essence of Bill 3 and Bill 4. Thank you very much.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I think in the past we have allowed the opportunity after a minister gives second reading to pose a question. I was just hoping that I might be able to pose a question with respect to this piece of legislation with leave of the House.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** With leave, indeed the honourable member can attempt to pose a question to the honourable Minister of Education.

Does the honourable member for Inkster have leave to pose a question to the Minister of Education and Training? [agreed]

\* \* \*

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Deputy Speaker, I am wondering if the Minister of Education could comment in terms of *The Petty Trespasses Act*, if in fact that was something that was being used previously in our schools or does that have any of the same problems? He made reference that *The Public Schools Act*, I believe, has something in place but it was somewhat ambiguous, as the minister made comments on. *The Petty Trespasses Act*, could he maybe comment on that particular act?

**Mr. Manness:** Madam Deputy Speaker, the question is fair. Certainly the provisions under

The Petty Trespasses Act were, in our view, not sufficiently broad enough to cover the public school, and if they were they may have been watered down. So we sensed that we wanted to give greater authority under this particular act to the public school administration.

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Deputy Speaker, I thank the minister for his explanation. He raised a few points about the bill and a number of other points about education that came back to the bill again in terms of the debate in this Chamber.

On the bill, we had thought that the authority was presently there without the legislation to deal with trespassing, with people being on school grounds in a way that was not official purposes without approval, and of course we thought that legislation under the Criminal Code and other legislation dealing with disturbances would apply to schools and school premises and school property. But if the minister is saying that ambiguity is in place and this bill may correct the ambiguity, then obviously common sense would dictate that people should have authorization to sell in schools, that common sense would dictate that individuals should not be allowed to develop a disturbance, that principals should have authority to deal with their own school premises, and that fines should be appropriate for purposes of deterrents.

The minister has stated that those fines have gone up from \$100 to \$1,000. We of course would find these sections to be fairly consistent with common sense. We would look forward to comments that are going to be made at a public hearing process on the legislation in the committee stage of the bill.

\* (2130)

Madam Deputy Speaker, the minister made a number of comments after he talked about the bill, and a tone is prevalent in the minister that he has no responsibility, he and his colleagues have absolutely no responsibility and no accountability.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

You know, they are talking about accountability for everybody in the school system but they are not talking about accountability for themselves. They have been the previous government. They are the previous government. They are accountable and responsible for seven years of legislation dealing with the public education system. They promised us in 1988, and the minister was critic. The member opposite was the Education critic for a number of years, I believe, and then he was Finance critic after that. I am just going by memory; I was not elected then, but I recall, the minister was responsible for the critic area of education.

So he comes into the House today as if it is the dawning of a new era, and he takes no responsibility for eight years of drifting along in education. So you will excuse us if we have to look two or three times to make sure that this is the same minister who has been sitting in the front bench on this the seventh or eighth session before they received a mandate in 1988. Where have they been for the last eight sessions? What have they been doing on education for the last eight years? What have they been doing? Nothing.

They promised, the Premier promised, as Leader of the Opposition, a complete rewrite of The Public Schools Act in 1988. So obviously, Mr. Speaker, when the minister says this is a priority to deal with some of these issues, the words ring hollow on this side, because where were you? Where were you and your colleagues on education over the last seven, eight years? You were drifting along and drifting along and drifting along, and the education system was not drifting along. Many people felt, over the last eight years, if you asked most people about the situation in education today versus eight years ago and ask them whether we are better off today in education, is the public education system in better shape under this regime than it was eight years ago? I suggest to you very strongly the answer is, it is not. It has gone backwards.

So you are talking about everybody's responsibility but your own. You are talking about everybody's accountability but your own.

You are talking about everybody looking forward, and you have failed to do so for six or eight years. So, Mr. Speaker, I would be careful. You know, there is an old saying, do not lecture other people if you cannot produce the goods yourself. It is for all of us. Practise what you preach, and what we have got from this government—well, I know the former Minister of Education is sensitive, the former, former Minister of Education is sensitive. Is he not the one that gave us the strategy of cutting community colleges? How does that fit in with the accountability of education? How does that fit in with the futuristic approach to the public education system? Oh, let us take the education system and post-secondary education that trains people, 85 percent of whom stay in the province and 90 percent of whom get jobs and let us cut it, and at the same time, the government then creates the Roblin commission which says basically that three Ministers of Education and the Premier were foolish. The Roblin commission basically said that the biggest bang for your buck in post-secondary education is in the community colleges. He said all of you people in the front bench that are in the cabinet are foolish when you reduce by 10 percent on the ideological grounds that you developed the ability to deal with the community colleges.

Now the Minister of Education cited a book that was produced in 1902, and I found that interesting. I do not find that anything that anybody should not be interested in when the Minister of Education reads that to us. I am sure other people would be interested to hear it, too, and I understand the Minister of Education is reading that to other people. I mean different people are handling this issue in different ways.

I find that I was very lucky at home maybe. I will tell you my own human interest story. It may not be interesting to you, but it will be interesting to me. This might embarrass—sorry, the member for Wolseley.

My mother had read the Reader's Digest once, and it had said that kids have got to be restricted in their television, especially kids at the learning ages, especially for reading. She—

**An Honourable Member:** Too bad she was not older; then you would not have to worry about that. We did not have television when I was that age.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, then you are dating yourself, but I was just at the age of television.

**An Honourable Member:** So she cut you off television at your tender learning age of 20?

**Mr. Doer:** No. She did not cut me off television. She gave me three hours a week of tickets that I had to hand in to her on a weekly basis to watch TV. Now there were not a lot of stations in those days. I will date myself that much. You know that test pattern was on for a lot of hours during the day—[interjection] One is very biased, to repeat the methods you may have think—thought—God love, I am talking about literacy here—let me have my water.

Now I was lucky because, in those days—I will date myself again—Hockey Night in Canada only had the second and third period. Remember that? Then, of course, you did not want to waste any tickets after that. You did not have to waste—[interjection] Well, it was not; it was Juliette in those days.

**An Honourable Member:** Yes, but tell me, did you watch horse opera on Saturday afternoon?

**Mr. Doer:** Of course, I did. I do not want to say that because the member may make comments about horse's rights or something, but I did watch horse opera.

The Minister of Education talks about 1902 and Grade 1, and that is very impressive reading for Grade 1, but we have a challenge in our society. When I talk about two or three hours of television a week and I talk about being able to—I mean the first period was not even on in hockey in those days. These kids, well, how many stations are they going to have?—500 stations. School-aged kids now are watching television up to 25 hours a week.

We have—

**An Honourable Member:** They should have to watch Question Period.

**An Honourable Member:** Do they get Question Period, too?

So we have a challenge about reading and literacy, and I think it is fair to say that we all have that. The amount of time the kids are spending at home reading books nowadays, or spending time reading at home with their parents or with themselves, the kind of value system at home on leisure time to read versus television is a serious challenge for all of us. I do not pretend today to have all the answers to the Minister of Education how to reverse the fact that kids are not reading as much as we used to read. We are not reading as much as the kids 40 years before us read, and we are not, obviously, reading at the levels, and I take the minister at face value that we are reading at Grade 1 level that book. I would expect that Grade 1 was still at six years old, and so it is a comparable comparison in terms of the education system, but that is quite impressive reading for Grade 1, and it is quite interesting. I would not mind getting a copy of that section and reviewing it with some people in terms of the comparability.

But, Mr. Speaker, this is a problem. It has been here for six or seven years, and it has been here for longer than that. What are we doing about it? What is the government doing about it? He talks about this issue, and he brings in a bill to deal with people on schoolyards that do not—[interjection] Well, I said before that if it is ambiguous in some other act, and these provisions will provide clarity, then we support it. I went through every section of it, and if the fines are deficient, we would, obviously, believe that they should be appropriate. That is not a complicated issue.

\* (2140)

I have also said in my previous speech on Bill 3 that I think the government should be doing more to have safe schools. The government should be doing a lot more in terms of safe schools. We have suggested that we look at the closed-door policies in schools, we look at identification of

visitors in schools. I mentioned that in Bill 3. We have proposed that we ensure supervision in the hallways in schools, that we look at playgrounds and the supervision of playgrounds, we use different technologies, perhaps, in our schools for supervision, and we also proposed the idea, that the minister has not responded to from the first speech and the second speech, that we have safety audits in all our schools to make sure that they are much safer for our kids.

As I said before, Mr. Speaker, 15 percent of sexual assaults, according to statistics we have, take place in our schools, and we need to make sure that they are safer places. Fifteen percent is unacceptable. Kids should feel safe in their schools. People, kids should feel safe in their school grounds, and we have to ensure that happens. Therefore, I am sure that this will be, if it is not already, in legislation, which is our fundamental concern about this bill. If it requires greater clarity, then so be it, and so we should provide it. I also think the government should provide a lot more in terms of safe schools. I mentioned before the tremendous pressure on some schools in terms of classroom sizes, particularly with all the layoffs of teachers and teachers' aides in schools.

That does—you know, the minister does not want to acknowledge, you know, that does not exist, we will just wish it away, we will just wish away our cutbacks and our reductions in our school program and pretend it does not have anything to do with the safety of students in schools.

I suggest to you, in playgrounds and in schoolrooms and in hallways, if you have less teachers to the pupils, you have less structure and supervision. If you have less people supervising, you may have a greater chance of intrusion into the schoolyards. What sense—you know, we can pass this bill, but we do not have people to implement it. If you do not have people to enforce it, if you do not have people to back up the students because you have reduced them more dramatically, then you have contributed to the problem, you have not assisted the situation.

Mr. Speaker, the minister has posed a number of questions outside of this bill, most of which we have answered on the reading of Bill 3. The minister has asked the question, will we support reduced school boundaries? Yes, we will. Absolutely. In fact, I said to the Manitoba Association of School Trustees that when the report comes down we will look at it to see if it makes common sense, but we will not follow the recommendation of the school trustees, that there has to be mutual consent between two school divisions to get an agreement.

That is absolutely—and I have said this to the school trustees, that is not something that any political party and only one perhaps is committed to doing that can commit themselves to. You cannot commit yourself to that, because if you had two small school divisions saying that they only can agree to amalgamate by mutual consent, then what is the sense of being in government? We may as well have nobody in government, because you have to at the end of the day, you try to—[interjection]

Your Leader at the school trustee meeting made a commitment that they would consult, consult and consult and quadruple consult. I said we would consult, look at the report, but if we had to implement it because of the school trustee recommendation of mutual consent of two school districts could not be implemented, then we would go ahead. We would take a leadership position.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** You are going to implement whatever they come out with?

**Mr. Doer:** Kevin, that is not what I said. I said, we will receive the report. We will read the report. We will look at the common sense of the report. We will look at a number of criteria, particularly the transportation of kids in rural school divisions. We will look at the transportation of kids in our northern communities. At the end of the day if two school divisions—the Manitoba School Trustees have said that they are recommending to all political parties that we will not implement a change in boundaries unless two school divisions agree.

You cannot do it that way because if two school districts disagree and it is logical and common sense for them to amalgamate, then at the end of the day, you know what you got to do, you got to say, we are just going to do it and that is the way it is going to be. That is what I said to the school trustees. Your Leader did not say that. He said, wishy-washy, wishy-washy.

**An Honourable Member:** We are the only ones who made a presentation—

**Mr. Doer:** Well, the member said that they are the only political party to make a recommendation to the Boundaries Commission, and that is their right to do so. We believe that we are going to have a lot of say on that school boundaries report, and that boundaries report should be a forum for the public of Manitoba to speak out and propose their ideas for school boundaries, and then we will have the opportunity in a rather fortunate way, as all 57 of us, to make some decisions upon their recommendations.

We have a different approach on this. I do not think your approach is better or worse than ours. We trust the commission to hear the public. We thought this should be a forum for the public, not for politicians. I find it awkward to create a commission that reports to the Legislature through the minister and then have a report to go to it. I have no problem doing that for a federal commission, such as the social services review, because it affects the federal jurisdiction. I am not sure whether he presented a report on Lloyd's paper on seasonal—we did on that, but we do not think we are any better than you for doing it, but I think federal jurisdiction is a more appropriate place to do it.

So, Mr. Speaker, the minister asked us what our position was on school boundaries. There are two ways to go, by the way. In Newfoundland—and the Liberals may want to pay attention to this—Clyde Wells took the divisions from about 68 or 69 down to about eight in about four nanoseconds, and proceeded with it, and apparently he is not a very flexible person. I do not know about that but apparently he is not.

**An Honourable Member:** He is decisive.

**Mr. Doer:** He is decisive, yes. In Saskatchewan they had a report and they had some dialogue with people about how they were affected—

**An Honourable Member:** Saskatchewan is the only province that is worse on administrative costs than Manitoba, and you are citing Saskatchewan.

**Mr. Doer:** I am surprised that you, sir, who are going out promising everything to education, one position on private school funding today, another position on independent schools tomorrow, another position the next day. If you want to go below the Saskatchewan—I am shocked that the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) is saying that they are going to go below the Saskatchewan and Manitoba level of funding for education, because that is not what you are telling us.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Lamoureux:** On a point of order, the Leader of the New Democratic Party is definitely imputing motives, Mr. Speaker. He is trying to indicate a position that is nowhere near accurate.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member does not have a point of order. That is clearly a dispute over the facts. There was no imputation of motive.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Doer:** I will be careful with the facts. I will be very careful about the facts. You look at every Liberal province in Canada, you look at every Liberal administration in Canada, and you will find that the level of investment in public education is much lower than it is in Manitoba. So you may—[interjection] Well, it is very interesting, you know. I find it very interesting that the Liberals who have the highest unemployment rate in any province that they govern right now, who have the most cutbacks in health and education right now of any province, who have the highest debt rate of any province in Canada, I find it incredible that the Liberals can say all these things in Manitoba because the

member asked me to look at the facts. When you want to look at the facts, you look at the facts.

\* (2150)

Maybe we know their platform now. Maybe it is the 7 percent cuts—[interjection] Well, I remember the voting record from the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux). I was at the Seven Oaks School Division when he said, oh, we are going to freeze the funding to the private schools. That is our promise. We guarantee it. You know, I remember that. I was sitting beside him. I almost fell off my seat. Mr. Speaker, I was in the Legislature when the member for Inkster sat with the Liberal caucus and when we moved the motion to freeze the rates of the independent schools, the private schools, in 1989—I have the Hansard.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Oh, in 1989.

**Some Honourable Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please.

**Mr. Doer:** They have changed their policy. If you do not like our policy in the morning, we have got another policy for you in the afternoon. Well, it may be beautiful—[interjection] Well, maybe the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) does not care about honesty, but I care about the voting record.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** John Plohman said he was going to reduce it to 50 percent. Is that a flip-flop?

**Mr. Doer:** If I could finish, Mr. Speaker—

**Mr. Speaker:** That is right. Order, please. The honourable Leader of the official opposition has the floor. [interjection]

Order, please. If you want to carry on a conversation, sir, you can do so outside the Chamber. Order, please. [interjection] Excuse me, sir. Now, the honourable Leader of the official opposition has the floor. If you want to carry on your conversation you can do so outside the Chamber.

**Mr. Doer:** Thank you. The point I am trying to make is in 1989 there was a vote and the vote was to freeze the funding to the private schools at 50 percent, and we would have an evaluation of this impact of the increase in funding to the independent schools on the enrollment of the public system and the private system. Now we had a minority government then. It was the last time we had one. So when you say it does not matter about the dates, it does, because if that amendment had passed with the NDP and the Liberals voting against the government to freeze it at 50 percent, we may not be as high as we are now with the cutbacks in the public education system. So you cannot say a couple of years later, oh, I am sorry, I made a mistake because I am getting a little heat now and I want to change our position.

You had a chance. You had an option. You could have voted for the 80 percent that the Conservatives are bringing in or you could have voted to freeze the rates. Your vote is on the record. You can say one thing in the morning and you can say one thing in the afternoon, but all we ask you to do is vote for a one-year moratorium at 50 percent. When you go out to school divisions and you go out to teachers and you go out to people and say, we have the same position today as the NDP on the independent schools, I say to you, you had your chance and you blew it. Be honest enough to tell the people of Manitoba that.

However, I am glad I was able to point out a little history for the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) because—[interjection] Well, I will provide tomorrow the Hansard. You can be selective—Mr. Speaker, let us look at this issue. In 1988, the Conservatives promised to go to 50 percent funding of the private schools. I could not believe how fast the Liberals outbid them and went to 80 percent. I mean, I have to admit, I could not keep up. It was quite an interesting election. We were not going to peak too early that election; I knew that.

There were two promises that I thought were really curious in that year. One was the—the member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) would be very

happy, as an old auctioneer—it was just, you know, what are you going to give me now? I will give you 50 for that. I will give you 80 for that. Sold to the highest bidder. We were out because we were at 28 percent, because we thought it would have a negative impact on the enrollment in the public school system.

The other promise that was quite interesting was the whole issue of health and post-secondary tax. The Conservatives promised to get rid of it in four years and then the Liberals promised to get rid of it in three years, so it was quite a bidding war. I think history will show that we were correct on both points, but being correct does not mean you are going to do well in the elections, let us face it.

Mr. Speaker, back to the Conservative bill. We believe that the government is correct to say that there is a lot of concern about the public education system. They have a lot of concerns about education generally and specifically. There are a lot of things that we can be doing to make sure that the legislation we pass in this House sets out clear expectations, clear roles, clear responsibilities; it is consistent legislation so that we do not have advisory committees going one way on discipline and teachers going another way, that it also deals with the rights of the ministers and the consultants that the minister has hired.

We actually think that, yes, there is a little flurry of activity now from the government side, sort of a pre-election flurry of activity on the public education system. Mr. Speaker, the question really remains, if all those concerns were so burning in the hearts of Conservatives when they came to office in 1988, what happened? Why is the education system in our opinion—and I really believe the education system today is in worse shape than it was when you were elected—[interjection] Well, I am not here to tell it like you want to hear it, I am here to tell it like it is in our opinion. [interjection] Well, I thought you would not like the ending.

Mr. Speaker, we therefore will enjoy the debate on this bill. We have put forward a number of other alternatives on getting safer schools and

safer playgrounds. We think the government, if it needs clarity, we are certainly willing to listen to the experts at committee on clarity and the fines that are in his bill. All the other questions the minister asked with the reader, the mathematics and a number of other things—the question is, where were you? It is time to have a change and time to have somebody that will start working on our education system from Day One, not at Day 1,000 or Day 2,000 as the members opposite. Thank you very, very much.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Mr. Speaker, I do not have very much time left this evening to address a number of the concerns that the New Democratic Leader put on the record with respect to funding of education. I will give plenty of explanation for that tomorrow.

I wanted to deal specifically with a clause from the current Public Schools Act. It is clause 231 in which it states: "Any person who . . . is guilty of an offence and is liable, on summary conviction, to a fine not more than \$100. and, in default of payment thereof, to imprisonment for not more than 30 days."

The minister addressed it in some of his comments in terms of why he believes it was necessary to bring in this piece of legislation to add a bit more clarity to the issue. We are going to see when this bill does go to the committee, hopefully a better explanation when we see for example that there is 30 days. I would think that this does cover virtually what the current bill is currently doing. Sure it increases the fines and so

forth, and that is a positive thing. We do not have any problem in terms of the increases with respect to the fines.

I am wondering what else this government is attempting to achieve by bringing in this particular bill, if there is anything else or if there might be a better way in which we can amend this bill. This is something which we will no doubt be watching out for once we do go into the committee stage, to see if there might be something we might be able to add to this bill to make it that much more of a positive one.

In the Minister of Education's (Mr. Manness) opening remarks on this bill he made reference to the Liberal Party taking a position on a number of the different issues. Mr. Speaker, he listed off more or less time on the language arts. He went into an example. I thought it was interesting that he would take a 1902 textbook in Grade 1. I am wondering if he is suggesting that we should go back to 1902 and get rid of the computers and the other things that classrooms today have.

I think there is a lot more to it than bringing forward—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. The hour being 10 p.m., when this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) will have 37 minutes remaining.

The hour being 10 p.m., this House now adjourns and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Tuesday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Monday, December 19, 1994

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