



Second Session - Thirty-Sixth Legislature

of the

Legislative Assembly of Manitoba

**DEBATES
and
PROCEEDINGS**

(Hansard)

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The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay
Speaker*



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MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
Thirty-Sixth Legislature

Members, Constituencies and Political Affiliation

Name	Constituency	Party
ASHTON, Steve	Thompson	N.D.P.
BARRETT, Becky	Wellington	N.D.P.
CERILLI, Marianne	Radisson	N.D.P.
CHOMIAK, Dave	Kildonan	N.D.P.
CUMMINGS, Glen, Hon.	Ste. Rose	P.C.
DACQUAY, Louise, Hon.	Seine River	P.C.
DERKACH, Leonard, Hon.	Roblin-Russell	P.C.
DEWAR, Gregory	Selkirk	N.D.P.
DOER, Gary	Concordia	N.D.P.
DOWNEY, James, Hon.	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert, Hon.	Steinbach	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
ERNST, Jim, Hon.	Charleswood	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen, Hon.	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
GAUDRY, Neil	St. Boniface	Lib.
GILLESHAMMER, Harold, Hon.	Minnedosa	P.C.
HELWER, Edward	Gimli	P.C.
HICKES, George	Point Douglas	N.D.P.
JENNISSEN, Gerard	Flin Flon	N.D.P.
KOWALSKI, Gary	The Maples	Lib.
LAMOUREUX, Kevin	Inkster	Lib.
LATHLIN, Oscar	The Pas	N.D.P.
LAURENDEAU, Marcel	St. Norbert	P.C.
MACKINTOSH, Gord	St. Johns	N.D.P.
MALOWAY, Jim	Elmwood	N.D.P.
MARTINDALE, Doug	Burrows	N.D.P.
McALPINE, Gerry	Sturgeon Creek	P.C.
McCRAE, James, Hon.	Brandon West	P.C.
McGIFFORD, Diane	Osborne	N.D.P.
McINTOSH, Linda, Hon.	Assiniboia	P.C.
MIHYCHUK, MaryAnn	St. James	N.D.P.
MITCHELSON, Bonnie, Hon.	River East	P.C.
NEWMAN, David	Riel	P.C.
PALLISTER, Brian, Hon.	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley	St. Vital	P.C.
ROBINSON, Eric	Rupertsland	N.D.P.
ROCAN, Denis	Gladstone	P.C.
SALE, Tim	Crescentwood	N.D.P.
SANTOS, Conrad	Broadway	N.D.P.
STEFANSON, Eric, Hon.	Kirkfield Park	P.C.
STRUTHERS, Stan	Dauphin	N.D.P.
SVEINSON, Ben	La Verendrye	P.C.
TOEWS, Vic, Hon.	Rossmere	P.C.
TWEED, Mervin	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 5, 1996

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING PETITIONS

Guaranteed Annual Income

Mr. Doug Martindale (Burrows): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Rhonda Chorney, J. Bonnie Caldwell, Otto Schelberger and others requesting that the Legislative Assembly urge the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson) to consider withdrawing Bill 36 and replacing it with improved legislation which provides for a guaranteed annual income that allows people to have adequate food, clothing, housing, child care and health care, that this annual income increases as prices increase and that this new legislation also provides for the creation of real jobs with the goal of creating full employment so that individuals on social assistance can find safe, meaningful work of their own choosing that allows them to meet their needs and the needs of their families.

Manitoba Telephone System

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): I beg to present the petition of Paul Phillips, Will Seymour, T. MacDonald and others requesting that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Gordon Warren, John K.T. Almdal and John G. Bays requesting that the Premier withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of M. MacHutchon, Jim Holt, Walter Domonski and others requesting that the Premier withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Louise Proven, Keith Proven, Morgan Proven and others requesting that the Premier withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Ruth Allbutt, Jac P. Siemens, M.B. McGrath requesting that the Premier withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

Selkirk and District General Hospital

Mr. Gregory Dewar (Selkirk): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the petition of Robin Gambler, Jean Sutherland, Diane Fidler and others praying that the Legislative Assembly urge the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to halt the proposed nursing deletions at the Selkirk and District General Hospital.

* (1335)

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Guaranteed Annual Income

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

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

THAT in 1976 Canada signed the United Nations Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which recognized the right of everyone to make a living by work which is freely chosen, recognized the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing, recognized the right of everyone to enjoy a high standard of physical and mental health, and provided for the widest possible protection and assistance to the family; and

THAT poor children and adults in Canada continue to die at a higher rate and earlier age than people with adequate incomes; and

THAT Bill 36, The Social Allowances Amendment Act, will create even greater poverty among the poor in Manitoba by eliminating government responsibility to ensure that everyone who lacks adequate food, clothing, housing and health care has these needs met; and

THAT the bill proposes to punish people by cutting them off from social assistance or reducing their benefits if they fail to meet employment expectations; and

WHEREFORE YOUR PETITIONERS HUMBLY PRAY that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Minister of Family Services to consider withdrawing Bill 36 and replacing it with improved legislation which provides for a guaranteed annual income that allows people to have adequate food, clothing, housing, child care and health care and that this annual income increases as prices increase and that this new legislation also provides for the creation of real jobs with the goal of creating full employment so that individuals on social assistance can find safe, meaningful work of their own choosing that allows them to meet their needs and the needs of their families.

Manitoba Telephone System

Madam Speaker: I have reviewed the petition of the honourable member for St. James (Ms. Mihychuk). It complies with the rules and practices of the House. Is it the will of the House to have the petition read?

An Honourable Member: Yes.

Madam Speaker: Yes. The Clerk will read.

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

THAT the Manitoba Telephone System has served this province well for over 80 years providing province-wide service, some of the lowest local rates in North America and thousands of jobs and keeping profits in Manitoba; and

THAT MTS contributes \$450 million annually to the Manitoba economy and is a major sponsor of community events throughout the province; and

THAT MTS, with nearly 4,000 employees including more than 1,000 in rural and northern Manitoba, is one of Manitoba's largest firms, headquartered in Manitoba and is committed to Manitoba; and

THAT the provincial government has no mandate to sell MTS and said before and during the 1995 election that MTS was not for sale.

WHEREFORE your petitioners humbly pray that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba request that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) withdraw Bill 67 and not sell the Manitoba Telephone System to private interests.

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

Standing Committee on Law Amendments Ninth Report

Mr. David Newman (Chairperson of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments): Madam Speaker, I beg to present the Ninth Report of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments.

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its Ninth Report.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your committee met on Monday, November 4, 1996, at 9 a.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building to consider bills referred.

At that meeting, your committee elected Mr. Laurendeau as its Vice-Chairperson.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 4—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba

Nap Gagnon - Private Citizen

Bill 76—The Gaming Control and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur la Commission de régie du jeu et apportant des modifications corrélatives

*Doug Chernichan - Manitoba Hotel Association
Sheldon Turbovsky - Winnipeg Bingo and Gaming Magazine*

*David Brant - Four Winds Founders
Larry Desjardins - Private Citizen*

Your committee has considered:

Bill 4—The Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société d'assurance publique du Manitoba

Bill 59—The Powers of Attorney and Mental Health Amendment Act; Loi concernant les procurations et modifiant la Loi sur la santé mentale

Bill 61—The Statute Law Amendment Act, 1996; Loi de 1996 modifiant diverses dispositions législatives

and has agreed to report the same without amendment.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 55—The Financial Administration and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant la gestion des finances publiques et apportant des modifications corrélatives

and has agreed to report the same, with the following amendments:

MOTION:

THAT subsection 6(1) of the Bill be amended by striking out "clause 7(b)" and substituting "clause (2)(b)".

MOTION:

THAT the following be added after clause 44(2)(d):

(d.1) the Chief Electoral Officer;

MOTION:

THAT section 82 be struck out.

MOTION:

THAT the following be added after section 93 of the Bill:

Consequential amendments, C.C.S.M. c. F85

93.1 *Subsection 9(1) of The Fiscal Stabilization Fund Act is amended by striking out "four" and substituting "six".*

MOTION:

THAT section 99 be struck out.

MOTION:

THAT the following be added after section 108 of the Bill:

Consequential Amendments, C.C.S.M. c. S185

108.1 *Subsection 24(1) of The Special Operating Agencies Financing Authority Act is amended by striking out "120 days" and substituting "six months".*

MOTION:

THAT section 113 of the Bill be struck out and the following substituted:

Coming into force

113(1) *Subject to subsections (2) and (3), this Act comes into force on a day fixed by proclamation.*

Coming into force: sections 93.1 and 108.1

113(2) *Sections 93.1 and 108.1 are retroactive and are deemed to have come into force on July 31, 1996.*

Coming into force: certain consequential amendments

113(3) *Subsections 83(1) and (2) and sections 84 to 93, 94 to 98, 100 to 102, 104 to 108, 109 and 110 come into force on the day this Act receives royal assent.*

MOTION:

THAT Legislative Counsel be authorized to change all section numbers and internal references necessary to carry out the amendments adopted by this committee.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 75—The Commodity Futures Act; Loi sur les contrats à terme

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendments:

MOTION:

THAT the definition “margin” in subsection 1(1) be amended in clause (b) by adding “during or at the end of a day by a member of the clearing house” after “must be deposited”.

MOTION:

THAT section 18 be amended by adding “futures” after “registered commodity”.

MOTION:

THAT subsection 22(1) be amended by adding “registered” after “Each”.

MOTION:

THAT section 41 of the English version be amended by striking out “his or her” and substituting “his, her or its”.

MOTION:

That subsection 44(3) be amended by striking out “commodity or option” and substituting “contract or option”.

MOTION:

THAT subsection 48(1) be amended

(a) by striking out the section heading and substituting “Restrictions on trading in contracts”; and

(b) by striking out “or” at the end of the clause (a), by adding “or” at the end of the clause (b) and by adding the following after clause (b):

(c) using electronic mail.

MOTION:

THAT subsection 69(2) be amended by striking out “or agents” and substituting “, agents or directors”.

MOTION:

THAT the proposed section 79 be amended in the French version by adding “de marchandises” after “à terme”.

MOTION:

THAT the title be struck out and the following substituted:

**THE COMMODITY FUTURES AND
CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENTS ACT**

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 76—The Gaming Control and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi sur la Commission de régie du jeu et apportant des modifications corrélatives

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendments:

MOTION:

THAT section 1 of the English version be amended in the definition “Commission” by striking out “The” and substituting “the”.

MOTION:

THAT subsection 6(4) be amended

(a) by striking out “licensing”; and

(b) by striking out “licences and”.

MOTION:

THAT subsection 9(1) of the English version be amended by striking out “he should see fit” and substituting “the Lieutenant Governor in Council considers appropriate”.

MOTION:

THAT subsections 10(4) and (5) be struck out and the following substituted:

Role of Executive Director

10(4) The Commission may exercise its authority under subsection (1) such that the Executive Director shall determine all applications received by the Commission in the first instance.

Directives as to criteria

10(5) The Commission shall establish policy directives as to the eligibility criteria upon which all applications shall be determined.

MOTION:

THAT section 11 be amended by striking out "the determination of the Executive Director" and substituting "a determination".

MOTION:

THAT subsection 14(1) be amended by adding "with" after "the Corporation or".

MOTION:

THAT clause 42(f) be struck out and the following substituted:

(f) require the Executive Director to provide written reasons for any determination of the Executive Director which is under appeal; and

(g) determine the procedures to be used at a hearing.

MOTION:

THAT subsection 45(2) be amended by adding "of Queen's Bench" after "Court".

MOTION:

THAT subsections 52(1), (2) and (3) be struck out and the following substituted:

Offences by the Corporation

52(1) Where a lottery scheme is being conducted and managed by the government through the Corporation, either alone or in conjunction with the government of a province other than Manitoba, the Corporation shall be guilty of an offence where it:

(a) knowingly purchases, acquires or receives tangible personal property or services from a business entity or a body or an association of persons where registration has not issued to that business entity or body or association of persons under this Act;

(b) knowingly employs any individual where registration has not issued to the individual under this Act:

(c) knowingly binds itself to an agreement with a siteholder where registration of said agreement has not issued under this Act;

(d) knowingly operates any slot machine, video lottery terminal or other gaming device where registration of the slot machine, video lottery terminal or other gaming device has not issued under this Act.

Offence to act as supplier

52(2) A business entity or a body or an association of persons shall be guilty of an offence if it acts as a supplier when it is not a registrant under this Act.

Offence to be employed

52(3) An individual shall be guilty of an offence if he or she accepts employment with the Corporation when he or she is not a registrant under this Act.

MOTION:

THAT clause 52(4)(d) of the English version be amended by adding "subsection" before "48(2)".

MOTION:

THAT section 53 be struck out and the following substituted:

Fine in case of offence by Corporation

53(1) If the Corporation is found guilty of an offence under subsection 52(1) it shall be liable to a fine of not more than \$250,000.

Fine in case of offence by others

53(2) *Every individual, business entity or body or association of persons found guilty of an offence under section 52 shall be liable to a fine of not more than \$250,000.*

Liability of principals

53(3) *Where the Corporation or a business entity or body or association of persons is found guilty of an offence under section 52, every principal of the Corporation or of such business entity or body or association of persons who knowingly authorized, permitted or acquiesced in such offence is also guilty of an offence and liable to a fine of not more than \$250,000.*

MOTION:

THAT clause 60(q) be amended by striking out "74 and 75" and substituting "73 and 74".

MOTION:

THAT section 66 be amended by striking out "Part 9" and substituting "Part 7".

MOTION:

THAT subsection 75(2) be amended by striking out "34" and substituting "43".

MOTION:

THAT Legislative Counsel be authorized to change all section numbers and internal references necessary to carry out the amendments adopted by this committee.

Mr. Newman: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the report of the committee be received.

Motion agreed to.

* (1340)

**Standing Committee on Law Amendments
Tenth Report**

Mr. Newman: Madam Speaker, I would seek leave to present the Tenth and Eleventh Reports of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments.

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member for Riel have leave to present the Tenth and Eleventh Reports of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments? [agreed]

Mr. Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its Tenth Report.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your committee met on Monday, October 21, 1996, at 7 p.m.; Wednesday, October 23, 1996, at 7 p.m.; on Friday, October 25, at 10 a.m.; on Wednesday, October 30, 1996, at 6:30 p.m.; Thursday, October 31, 1996, at 6:30 p.m.; Friday, November 1, 1996, at 9 a.m., and Monday, November 4, 1996, at 3 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building, to consider bills referred.

At the meeting of October 21, 1996, your committee agreed, by motion, on a counted vote of 6 Yeas, 3 Nays, to establish a time limit of 10 minutes for each presentation and five minutes for questions and answers after each presentation.

At the meeting of October 23, 1996, your committee elected Mr. Laurendeau as Vice-Chairperson of the committee.

At the meeting of November 4, 1996, your committee elected Mr. Dyck as Vice-Chairperson of the committee.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 32—The Council on Post-Secondary Education Act; Loi sur le Conseil de l'enseignement postsecondaire

William Bruneau - Canadian Association of University Teachers

*Robin Giles - Brandon University Faculty Association
Erik Blaikie and Norine Barlow - Brandon University Students Union*

William R. Eichhorst - Providence College

Lewis Layman - Private Citizen

Dr. Dennis Anderson - Brandon University Senate

Gerard Bashforth - Assiniboine Community College

Trevor Lines and Jason Wiebe - University of Manitoba Students' Union

Edward Lipsett - Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties
 Earle Ferguson, President, and Sylvia Jansen - University of Manitoba Faculty Association
 Marsha Hanen - Council of Presidents of Universities in Manitoba
 Susan Kushneryk, Darcy Rollins, Cheryl Herda and Michael Crowley - University of Winnipeg Students' Association and Red River Community College Students' Association
 Jim Clark - Private Citizen
 Claudia Wright - Private Citizen
 Alden Turner - University of Winnipeg Faculty Association
 Allen Mills - Private Citizen
 Shannon Slater - Canadian Federation of Students (Manitoba)
 Danny Blair - Private Citizen
 Chris Dooley - CHOICES
 Mark Golden - Private Citizen
 Colin Murray - Private Citizen
 Vaclav Linek - Private Citizen
 Elliot Levine - Private Citizen
 Kemlin Nembhard - Private Citizen
 Linwood DeLong - Private Citizen
 Douglas Arrell - Private Citizen
 Ed Byard - University of Winnipeg Senate
 Keith-Louise Fulton - Private Citizen
 Dr. Richard Noble - Private Citizen
 Blake Taylor - Private Citizen
 Brent Stearns - Private Citizen
 Jim Silver - Private Citizen
 Donald Bailey - Private Citizen
 William Seymour - Private Citizen
 Jennifer Suss - Private Citizen
 E.L. Carlyle - Private Citizen
 Don Sullivan - Private Citizen
 Paul Phillips - Private Citizen
 Shannon Slater - Private Citizen
 Tim Babcock - Private Citizen
 Robert Chernomas - Manitoba Organization of Faculty Associations
 Sara Malabar - Manitoba Young New Democrats
 Ed Janzen - Private Citizen
 Michael Amirault - University of Manitoba Student Action Coalition
 Henry Heller - Private Citizen
 Peter Laznicka - Private Citizen
 Brian Kelcey - Manitoba Taxpayers Association

Jennifer Nembhard - Private Citizen
 William Martin - Private Citizen
 Mark Gabbert - Private Citizen
 Elizabeth Johannson - Private Citizen
 Christopher Leo - Private Citizen
 Wesley Stevens - Private Citizen
 Dr. E.J.E. Szathmáry - Private Citizen
 Neil Tudiver - Private Citizen
 Caterina Reitano - Private Citizen
 Murray Evans - Private Citizen
 Rolland Gaudet - Private Citizen
 Bruce Daniels - Private Citizen
 David Markham - Private Citizen
 Tom Booth - Private Citizen
 Steven Holborn - Private Citizen
 Michael Shaw - Private Citizen
 Jim Forrest - Private Citizen
 John Whiteley - Private Citizen
 William Koolage - Private Citizen
 Robert Glendinning - Private Citizen
 William Pruitt - Private Citizen
 Maggie Ross - Lesbian and Gay and Bisexual Collective, University of Winnipeg
 Alistair Cameron - Private Citizen
 Joseph Donatelli - Private Citizen
 Richard Orlandini - Private Citizen

Written Submissions

Reuben Kaufman - Association of Academic Staff, University of Alberta
 John Mallea - Brandon University

Your committee had considered:

Bill 32—The Council on Post-Secondary Education Act; Loi sur le Conseil de l'enseignement postsecondaire

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendments:

MOTION:

THAT section 1 be amended by adding the following definition in alphabetical order:

“student” means a student of a university or college; (“étudiant”)

MOTION:

THAT subsection 3(1) be amended

(a) by adding "and accessibility to" after "excellence in"; and

(b) by striking out "avoids unnecessary duplication of effort and expense" and substituting "promotes fiscal responsibility".

MOTION:

THAT subsection 3(2) be amended

(a) by striking out "Subject to the power to regulate programs under section 14, in" and substituting "In"; and

(b) in clause (a), by adding "policies and" before "standards".

MOTION:

THAT section 4 be struck out and the following be substituted:

Relationship to government

4 In carrying out its mandate, the council shall

(a) act as an intermediary between post-secondary institutions and the government; and

(b) operate within a framework of accountability established by the minister, who may give the council general direction on matters that relate to its mandate and that are, in the minister's opinion, of significant public interest.

MOTION:

THAT clause 11(b) be amended by adding "and after consultation with the universities and colleges and with students" after "framework established by the minister".

MOTION:

THAT clause 12(e) be amended by adding "in consultation with the universities and colleges and with students, " at the beginning of the clause.

MOTION:

THAT section 14 be amended

(a) in subsection (1), by striking out the definition "reduce"; and

(b) in subsection (2),

(i) by striking out "new or expanded" in the section heading; and

(ii) by striking out "expand or reduce" and substituting "make significant modifications to, or cease to provide".

MOTION:

THAT the following be added after subsection 21(1):

Consideration of grants in lieu of taxes

21(1.1) Amounts paid under subsection (1) shall take into consideration the obligation of universities and colleges to pay grants under Part 10, Division 7 (grants in lieu of taxes) of The Municipal Act.

MOTION:

THAT the following be added after section 24:

Restrictions on incurring liability

24.1 Notwithstanding any other Act, a university or college shall not incur any liability or make any expenditure in a fiscal year beyond

(a) the unexpended amount of the grants made to it by the council; and

(b) its estimated revenue from other sources to the end of that fiscal year;

unless an estimate of the liability or expenditure has first been submitted to and approved by the council.

MOTION:

THAT Legislative Counsel be authorized to change all section numbers and internal references necessary to carry out the amendments adopted by this committee.

MOTION:

THAT the Preamble be amended

(a) in the first paragraph, by adding "in an atmosphere of open and critical thought" after "knowledge";

(b) in the third paragraph, by striking out "is accessible and effective" and substituting "provides choice and accessibility for students";

(c) in the fifth paragraph,

(i) by adding ", in consultation with universities and colleges," after "coordinate", and

(ii) by adding "that is nationally and internationally competitive" after "province".

Mr. Newman: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the reports of the committee be received, that is, the Tenth and the Eleventh reports, the Tenth Report to be received first.

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Riel (Mr. Newman), seconded by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the Tenth Report of the Standing Committee on Law Amendments be received.

Motion agreed to.

**Standing Committee on Law Amendments
Eleventh Report**

Mr. Clerk: Your Standing Committee on Law Amendments presents the following as its Eleventh Report.

An Honourable Member: Dispense.

Madam Speaker: Dispense.

Your committee met on Monday, November 4, 1996, at 6:30 p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Assembly to consider bills referred.

Your committee heard representation on bills as follows:

Bill 57—The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Act; Loi sur la divulgation de la rémunération dans le secteur public

Fred Veldink - Private Citizen

Alice Young - Private Citizen

Brian Kelcey - Manitoba Taxpayers Association

Dan Kelly - Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB)

Murray Grafton - St. Boniface Teachers' Association

Ian McIntyre - Manitoba Teachers' Society

Henri Peloquin - Private Citizen

Terry Voss - Human Resources, University of Winnipeg

Sue Loney - Private Citizen

Gail Atkins - Private Citizen

Peter Narth - Manitoba Association of Principals (MAP)

Written Submission

June LaPlume - Manitoba Medical Association

Bill 58—The Parental Responsibility Act; Loi sur la responsabilité parentale

Glynis Hart - Manitoba Association for Rights and Liberties

Marvin Mirochnick - Private Citizen

Jim Clark - Private Citizen

Victoria Lehman - Private Citizen

Norma McCormack - Private Citizen

Rosella Dyck - Coalition of Custodial Parents

Written Submission

Russ Wookey - Private Citizen

Your committee has considered:

Bill 58—The Parental Responsibility Act; Loi sur la responsabilité parentale

and has agreed to report the same, without amendment.

Your committee has also considered:

Bill 57—The Public Sector Compensation Disclosure Act; Loi sur la divulgation de la rémunération dans le secteur public

and has agreed to report the same with the following amendments:

MOTION:

THAT section 2 be amended:

(a) by adding "or calendar year" after "each fiscal year";

(b) by adding "or in the calendar year" after "provides in the fiscal year"; and

(c) by renumbering the section as subsection 2(1) and by adding the following as subsection 2(2).

Consistent reporting required

2(2) A public sector body that discloses the information required under subsection (1) on a calendar year basis shall continue to disclose the information on a calendar year basis.

MOTION:

THAT Legislative Counsel be authorized to change all section numbers and internal references necessary to carry out the amendments adopted by this committee.

Mr. Newman: Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck), that the report of the committee be received. This would be the Eleventh Report.

Motion agreed to.

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Vic Toews (Minister of Labour): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the Annual Report, 1995-96, of the Manitoba Labour Board.

Introduction of Guests

Madam Speaker: Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the public gallery, where we have this afternoon forty Grade 11 students from the Neepawa Area Collegiate under the direction of Mr. Bob Ferguson. This school is located in

the constituency of the honourable Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings).

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

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Tax Ruling

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, on Thursday in this Legislature, October 31, I asked the Premier a number of questions about whether the government had considered tax changes dealing with the Manitoba Telephone System as it moved from a public corporation to a private profit corporation. The Premier took the question as notice, then he said we had different scenarios, then he said he did not know if we have an advance ruling from Revenue Canada.

I would like to ask the Premier, has the government provided any analysis of the tax changes and the tax impact on the changing status of the Manitoba Telephone System and its impact on the ratepayers in the Manitoba Telephone System in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I can confirm that the government reviewed the opportunities available for various tax rulings from the federal government and because of tax changes that have taken place since the Telus sale, there was a new set of rules that prevailed that indicate that the maximum that assets can be valued at for depreciation purposes are fair market value. So a tax ruling was not sought on that since it implied no change and certainly any transaction with respect to the telephone system will be predicated on that knowledge and information.

With respect to the transference of pension funds which also required a tax ruling, that ruling has been sought and favourably obtained from the federal government, is my understanding.

On both those bases, the circumstances are known and will be known to prospective investors. With respect to any impact that might be had on the rates, I have indicated that there are a number of things that would have a positive impact on the rates and other things that

could in fact contribute otherwise to the rates. We have discussed the fact that no interest at, say, 8 percent being paid on hundreds of millions of dollars of debt would have a positive impact on the rates. The fact that a return on investment would be calculated would be a negative impact on the rates but would be more than offset by the fact that they no longer had to pay a substantial interest rate on the debt. The fact that they had to pay some taxes if they made profits would of course have an impact on the rates, but those can be seen to be calculable and assuming that the company would not necessarily be making any more profit than would be allowed for under CRTC would not necessarily be anything that would not be offset by the gains that they would make in greater efficiency under private ownership, Madam Speaker.

* (1345)

Privatization—Impact on Rates

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition): I would challenge any Manitoban to try to determine an answer out of the Premier's bafflebag there, Madam Speaker.

On May 2 of this year in this House and at his press conference, and October 31 of this year in this Chamber, the Premier repeatedly said—and we have raised the issue of Telus in Alberta, CRTC decisions three weeks ago in this House—on the record that there is absolutely no difference between a publicly owned corporation and a private corporation for purposes of determination of the rates.

Would the Premier please table in this House the impact of the change on rates moving from a public nonprofit corporation to a private corporation with the unfavourable ruling that the government is anticipating from Revenue Canada on taxation and the other factors that would lead to rate increases? Is the Premier still maintaining they will have no impact on the rates here in the province of Manitoba?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I am not anticipating an unfavourable ruling from tax Canada. I said, a favourable ruling has been received with respect to the transfer of pension assets. I said that the assets would be moved at fair market value, which is Revenue Canada's position on this kind of transaction at the moment.

I took time earlier—I know that the member has a short attention span, as short as his normal clips are for television, but I took the time to give him an indication that there are a number of factors on each side of the equation, some of which could have an influence towards decreasing rates and others which could have an influence towards increasing rates, and the net effect to the best judgment and analysis that we have is it would be a wash. There would not be any tendency towards an increase in rates just by virtue of privatization.

Mr. Doer: Maybe the Premier would like to put his clip on the record again about, I will not sell the Manitoba Telephone System if I am elected. Read my lips, Madam Speaker, says the Premier.

I would like to challenge the Premier to table his analysis. I know he had a study done by brokers that are now getting commissions for selling our telephone system to private investors. I challenge the Premier today to table in this House his so-called analysis that says that there will be no impact on rates moving from a public nonprofit corporation to a privately owned corporation. I challenge him to table it in this House today because he has maintained that position from Day One, from May 2 on: There would be no change. Table your analysis.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, it is not as though the business of operating a telephone company is something that is mired and fixed in place in 1906 or 1905, as members opposite would have you.

There are continual changes that are occurring within the business environment that the telephone company will operate. As I indicated, Madam Speaker, in that continuous changed business environment, there are a number of pressures that would direct towards increasing pressures on rates and other forces that would indicate towards decreasing pressures on rates, and the best analysis that we have is that there would be a wash, and that the rates, there would not be an ongoing tendency to have any other increases in rates other than those that the company would have under public ownership, which are the same inflationary pressures that would occur in the marketplace no matter who owned it, public or private.

Mr. Doer: With a new question, and I do not know why anybody in the public would want to believe this Premier after he promised he would not sell the Manitoba

Telephone System in the last election campaign. The Premier does not have an analysis. I went through his press kit and his advertising campaign and his public relations brochures, but he still has not provided an analysis to the people of Manitoba for a \$1.2-billion asset that he is proposing to sell contrary to his election promise.

I will table an analysis that has been produced by an economist who has been doing a lot of work in the privatization issue of Ontario Hydro. Ontario Hydro, of course, has been put on hold for privatization because of this tax issue. This analysis says that moving from a public nonprofit corporation to a private corporation will mean at minimum a 9.75 percent increase to the ratepayers of this province.

I would like to ask the Premier: Where is his analysis to counter this argument and where is the proof of his argument? Rather, do we have to just rely on his brokerage friends that are going to make tens of millions of dollars out of this sale?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I note right off the bat that the analysis refers to higher financing costs, and it suggests that Manitoba Telephone System would have to pay more money for capital than they do at the present time. I indicate to him that the very study that he put on the table a couple of weeks ago, which was the CRTC decision with respect to Alberta, said that they could have a return on equity of 6.4 percent versus currently paying 8 percent interest on that same capital. So they in fact are being awarded less as return on investment than they are currently paying as interest on the same debt.

He can produce any analysis he wants, Madam Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable First Minister, to complete his response.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, he can produce any analysis that he wants, but the fact of the matter is that he is looking for anything that supports his arguments. I am telling him that the best information that we have is that it will have absolutely—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, they do not want to hear the answer to the question.

* (1350)

Mr. Doer: Madam Speaker, we look forward to the analysis that the Premier should have tabled with Manitobans before they broke their election promise, before they broke their word and before they broke their commitment to the people of this province and all their candidates and all their MLAs promised not to sell the Manitoba Telephone System.

I would like to ask the Premier, has the Manitoba Telephone System requested a special factor to be included in a price cap regime due to the costs related to privatization that are not known? Can the Premier please answer whether and when Manitoba Telephone System has applied to the CRTC for this special factor increase to deal with privatization costs?

Mr. Filmon: I will take that question as notice on behalf of the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System (Mr. Findlay).

Mr. Doer: Why did the Premier not inform Manitobans that they have applied for a special increase in rates to deal with the unpredictable parts of privatization? Did the Premier tell his cabinet? Did the Premier tell his caucus? Did the Premier tell Manitobans? Madam Speaker, why does he keep with maintaining a position that privatization will not affect the ratepayers when seniors, the Manitoba union of municipalities and independent analysis all say the Premier again is not telling the truth to the people of Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: It is absolute nonsense what the member is putting forward. He can put all of his ideological blinders on and come in here every day and try and fill the public with his fear and loathing and doom and gloom and it is absolute nonsense, Madam Speaker, absolute nonsense.

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Impact on Rates

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Madam Speaker, the way in which the government is dealing with the selloff

of MTS is nothing short of scandalous. The same Premier, who said in the election he was not going to sell off MTS, said on May 2 when he broke that promise, he said at the time, there will be no impact on rates due to the privatization.

I want to ask the Premier, since we know that MTS did not do a single study, since we know that he received a report from the three brokerage firms that did not deal with that aspect, will he now admit to what everyone knows in Manitoba and what this analysis shows and that is that we are looking at a minimum of 9.75 percent and, in fact, in rural areas the increase could be substantially larger than a 9.7 percent increase strictly because of the cost of privatization?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): That is absolute nonsense.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson, with a supplementary question.

Mr. Ashton: What does it take for the Premier to tell the truth to Manitobans, that rates are going to increase? When will he start telling the truth and, for example, explain the July 1996 application to the CRTC which builds in a factor to pass on unforeseen costs to privatization? Madam Speaker, 9.7 percent is going to be the minimum. When is he going to admit it is going to cost even more than that to the ratepayers of Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I repeat that the CRTC will make their decisions based on the business case put forward by telcos, as they do today. Regardless of whether it is publicly or privately owned, it will not make a difference in terms of the manner in which they conduct their analysis.

Mr. Ashton: Madam Speaker, on a new question. I would like to ask the Premier if he does not believe the study and does not believe the Manitoba Society of Seniors, the Union of Manitoba Municipalities and others, will he at least acknowledge that even Peter Holle from the Prairie Centre, formerly with the taxpayers federation, admitted that there will be income tax liabilities that will be incurred by the newly privatized company and, in fact, the change in the tax status alone will lead to a substantial increase in rates under a private

company? When will he face facts and tell the truth to Manitobans?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, as we have indicated before, the mere fact that the telephone system will save some \$30 million a year in interest that they do not pay on debt that they would have, along with the potential for them to operate more efficiently than they do in the public sector, all of which will more than offset those factors.

Privatization—Withdrawal

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Well, Madam Speaker, if the Premier is insisting that Manitobans trust him after he broke his word on MTS, will he not do the right thing and table Bill 67 and put the issue of the sale of MTS to the shareholders of MTS, the people of Manitoba? Let them decide.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, the matter will be decided here in the Legislature by people who represent all Manitobans.

* (1355)

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Impact on Rates

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, I want to quote from this study. In particular the study states: Stentor has proposed that some rates be permitted to increase by up to 18 percent per annum, Stentor representing MTS and others. As another example, the recently privatized Telus, former AGT, is applying to double most residential rates by 1997 and more than double rural residence rates. Therefore, for residence ratepayers in Manitoba, especially in rural areas, the average increases of 9.75 should be viewed as a minimal potential impact.

Madam Speaker, my question for the Premier: If he is, for a change, to keep his word that rates would not increase, how many employees will have to be laid off? How many wages will have to be rolled back by what level? How many services to rural residents will have to be cut to keep this Premier's promise for a change?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, the Manitoba Telephone System had its employment reduced

from in excess of 5,300 to something just over 3,700 in the past five years, so public ownership of a telephone company is no guarantee of employment in the most rapidly changing field of technology anywhere in the world.

The comparisons are absolutely invalid because a telephone company will do what a telephone company has to do in order to remain competitive, whether it is publicly or privately owned. It has 70 percent of its revenues currently in competition with other companies. That is why it has reduced from 5,300 to just about 3,700 in the past five years.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, can the Premier tell the House why, if Manitoba Telephone System is not sold for more than book value, this independent consultant suggests that average utility rates will have to increase by 9.75 percent as a result simply of privatization in order to cover the increased capital costs?

How many jobs will go to keep those rates to zero, as the Premier has talked about?

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I would remind the honourable member for Crescentwood, a question is to contain a single question.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, as usual, the question is based on a hypothesis, but in addition to that, the telephone company will continue to provide services to the people of Manitoba. That is the way it will continue to do business here, and that is what it will have to do in order to do business in a very competitive world.

Mr. Sale: Madam Speaker, can the Premier tell the House where Manitobans are supposed to find the extra \$25 million that is implied by a rate increase of 9.75 percent? Where are rural and northern and poor people, where are small businesses supposed to find 25 million extra dollars so his friends can get a bigger return on their capital?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, I have indicated before that the Manitoba Telephone System's rates, whether they are publicly or privately owned, will be evaluated on the same analysis by the CRTC. There will be a number of pressures that will allow Manitoba Telephone System to operate at less cost, including the fact that they will not

have to pay the substantial interest that they currently pay on debt. They will have to pay a lesser rate for equity. They will also—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, they do not want to listen.

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Manitoban Ownership

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): When the Premier was at the press conference announcing the sale of MTS, he tried to give the impression that Manitobans as a whole will benefit in the sense that Manitobans are going to be the owners of this new privatized corporation when in fact, of course, all Manitobans today own MTS, but unfortunately within two days that will not be the case.

My question to the Premier is, when AGT went through privatization, within weeks it was registered with the Toronto Stock Exchange. Does the Premier today believe that Manitobans will still own more than 50 percent of MTS one year from today?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): I am more than confident that Manitobans will purchase the vast majority of shares in the privatized Manitoba Telephone System.

* (1400)

Mr. Lamoureux: Because of the way in which the shares are being issued, a majority of Manitobans will indeed own MTS. The question is, a year from today, does the Premier believe that a majority of the ownership of MTS will be owned by Manitobans or by residents outside of the province of Manitoba?

Mr. Filmon: That is not a question to which anybody can give an answer. It could be that Manitobans would have even more of a percentage of the shares a year from now than they did at the time of issue. But that is one of the things that would be predicated on how people react to the issuance of shares and what people choose to do with those shares.

Mr. Lamoureux: The question, quite specific, is: Does the Premier not believe that, by issuing out these shares,

there is going to be a very good likelihood, much like in the province of Alberta where it went to the Toronto Stock Exchange, that it is only a matter of time before Manitobans do not have a majority share of MTS?

Mr. Filmon: The fact of the matter is that Manitobans want to be assured that they will receive the best possible service from their telephone company at a reasonable cost, and they want to ensure that that company continues to be a very positive player in the Manitoba environment with respect to bringing in and being conversant with the most rapidly changing technology of any sector of our economy anywhere in the world.

You have innumerable examples of companies that are privately owned in the telephone area, including in Canada: New Brunswick Tel, who are lauded not only for their efficiency, their effectiveness, but for the very strong role that they play within the province of New Brunswick in attracting business, attracting investment and attracting jobs for the province of New Brunswick. On all counts, I am confident that the telephone company will continue to contribute very substantially to what the people of Manitoba want it to do.

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Impact on Rates

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Madam Speaker, for the one out of 10 Manitoba women who live in abusive situations, the telephone is central to personal safety plans, a lifesaving device and a lifeline with the outside world. The reasonable rates of a publicly owned utility make the lives of these women possible, and I mean possible in both senses of the word.

Now that the truth is out, I want to ask the Premier what steps his government has taken to protect the lives of abused women when MTS is sold and the rates soar a minimum of 10 percent, making telephone service impossible for many.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I have indicated before the reasons why I reject her arguments on the increase in rates.

Ms. McGifford: Then will the Premier guarantee us today that abused women and their children living on

social assistance, once MTS is sold, will have telephone services in their homes?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, if people are going to be investing over a billion dollars in the telephone system, they are not going to be withdrawing services. They are going to be investing for the purposes of increasing services so they can increase their revenues.

Privatization—Impact on Services

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): Now that the Premier has not answered that question, I will try again.

I want to ask the Premier to guarantee that lifesaving services for abused women, like unlisted numbers and number blocking, will under privatization remain free and accessible to abused women in Manitoba—

An Honourable Member: Like they are now.

Ms. McGifford: —as they are now.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I would just point out to the member opposite that those are services that do not just occur in Manitoba. They occur right across Canada. I point out to her that there are only two telephone services in Canada that are currently under public ownership, that is, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. Yet those services occur in all provinces in Canada.

Manitoba Telephone System ManGlobe Role

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Madam Speaker, yesterday I took a question as notice from the honourable member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway). I want to make a correction to my answer. I believe I referred to the funding that came to ManGlobe as coming under MIRI. It did not come out of the MIRI program but came out of the Canada-Manitoba Communications Agreement; the program which it was funded under. It is to the tune of \$500,000 for the creation of jobs and it is not a loan. I want that corrected.

But, Madam Speaker, in my taking of notice of the question, the member again put information on the record

that was again so far out. He put on the record there was some \$60,000 in travel. That is an incorrect number. I believe the numbers are something about just over half of that, but that was for the total activity of the travel of that operation.

Manitoba Telephone System Differential Education Rates

Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley): Madam Speaker, several weeks ago the CRTC ruled that Canada's telephone companies may apply differential rates for nonprofit educational purposes.

I would like to ask the Minister of Education whether she has yet applied to the Manitoba Telephone company for a ruling on special educational rates for Manitoba's educational institutions.

Hon. Linda McIntosh (Minister of Education and Training): Madam Speaker, I believe that I indicated to the member on numerous occasions in the past that MERLIN, our special operating agency which works independently and has been doing some excellent work on behalf of distance education and technology in Manitoba, has been working consistently and constantly on an ongoing basis with Manitoba Telephone System, CRTC, to do everything that it can to help bring rates down for educational services.

I can take the details of her question in terms of the last communication—[interjection] Well, she is asking for the latest communication and, to be perfectly frank, in the last couple of weeks I have been tied up in committee till two, three, four in the morning and I have not had a meeting with MERLIN in the last week or so, but I will check the details of that. I indicate, though, it is one of their prime things that they do. I do not know if they have had responses back from people, but I will check and let her know.

Ms. Friesen: Madam Speaker, I wonder if the Premier could tell us whether it is the intention of his government to grant differential educational rates before MTS is sold so that at least that public obligation is transferred to the new private for-profit owners.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, I do not grant those rates.

Ms. Friesen: Would the Premier then confirm that under the new ruling of the CRTC it is indeed the Manitoba Telephone System which does grant those rates? The Premier is responsible for it. Would he tell us whether it is his intention to grant differential educational rates for Manitoba's educational institutions?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, if the member already knows the answer to the question, then she does not have to bring it here to ask it.

* (1410)

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Rural/Northern Manitoba

Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River): Madam Speaker, under this government we have seen a deterioration of services in rural and northern Manitoba, deterioration in health care services, deterioration in transportation services, and now this government through its decision to privatize MTS is putting at risk the very lifeline for many northern and rural Manitobans.

Will the Premier give people of northern and rural Manitoba the assurance that their services will not be on the chopping block and rates will not be increased to a level where people in the North and rural Manitoba cannot afford a phone?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Why would investors invest over a billion dollars to purchase the assets of the telephone system, which includes fibre optic cable and digital switching, so that they can service customers in all of the towns, villages and hamlets of this province—once they have that invested and sunk cost, their great incentive is to increase the use of the system, not to decrease it and cut off service. This is an absolutely ridiculous suggestion on the part of the member for Swan River.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Swan River, with a supplementary question.

Ms. Wowchuk: Will this Premier admit that his government is prepared to sacrifice jobs in rural Manitoba, opportunities for education and the very lifeline for people in the North and rural Manitoba? Will he admit that this is absolutely foolish and withdraw the

bill and go back and listen to the people or at least listen to the people in committee?

Mr. Filmon: Absolutely not, Madam Speaker. I reject categorically the silly suggestions put forth by the member for Swan River. There has been no government in the history of this province that has done more to create jobs in rural Manitoba than this administration.

Every time that we worked hard to create jobs in rural Manitoba that member actively undermined and worked against Louisiana-Pacific—400 jobs for her area. She fought it every single opportunity.

Point of Order

Mr. Steve Ashton (Opposition House Leader): On a point of order, Madam Speaker, Beauchesne Citation 417 is very clear that answers to questions should be as brief as possible, deal with the matter raised and should not provoke debate.

Madam Speaker, if the Premier would for once admit that he cannot answer the questions about the impact on rural Manitoba of the privatization of MTS, let him do so instead of getting into the kind of irrelevant diatribe we have seen from him. Let him answer the questions for rural Manitobans about the impact on their phone rates and phone service from the privatization of MTS put forward by the member for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk).

Madam Speaker: The honourable First Minister, on the same point of order.

Mr. Filmon: On the same point of order, Madam Speaker, the member for Thompson may think that jobs for rural Manitoba are irrelevant; we do not.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Thompson did not have a point of order. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

Manitoba Telephone System Privatization—Impact on Rates

Mr. Stan Struthers (Dauphin): This government has no mandate to sell MTS, and they have not got the courage to come out to rural Manitoba and tell us. This government has no—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. The honourable member for Dauphin was recognized to pose a question. Would the honourable member for Dauphin please pose his question now.

Mr. Struthers: The government has no studies saying that rates will go down. Everything points to rates going up in rural Manitoba. Take a look at the facts. Will the Premier confirm that the MTS has requested special consideration for further price increases due to any costs related to privatization?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Madam Speaker, with such a lengthy preamble, I must admit that I missed the question, so I wonder if the member could please ask the question. You can skip the preamble; just ask the question.

Madam Speaker: Would the honourable member for Dauphin please repeat the question.

Mr. Struthers: I can skip the preamble, but the Premier should not skip the answers every time we try to get something out of him.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Would the honourable member for Dauphin please comply with the request to repeat his question.

Mr. Struthers: Will this Premier confirm that the MTS has requested special consideration for further price increases due to any costs related to privatization?

Mr. Filmon: No, Madam Speaker.

Mr. Struthers: If the MTS is concerned about the cost of privatization, why does this Premier say it is just a wash?

Mr. Filmon: Madam Speaker, MTS does not have any anticipation of increased costs, and they simply, I am given to understand, asked to deal with anything that may arise out of privatization in future applications, but they do not anticipate anything coming out of it.

Madam Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

Dutch Elm Disease

Mr. Mike Radcliffe (River Heights): Madam Speaker, I want to bring to the Chamber's attention today a serious problem that is developing in our city, and I think that I can invite all colleagues on both sides of the House to join me in concern.

I am told that we have approximately 4,500 of our elm trees in Winnipeg infected with Dutch elm disease. There are an additional 3,300 trees at risk. Winnipeg is unique in western Canada as being the jewel of the western prairies in our urban forest that we have in our province. There are approximately 142 boulevard trees and 395 parkland trees which are infected at this point in time, and I can tell that northern River Heights and Crescentwood—for my honourable colleague across the way who, I am sure, is listening very carefully to this presentation—are seriously at risk.

An Honourable Member: You mean the member?

Mr. Radcliffe: Yes, the member. I can tell this Chamber that Saint George's Green Team has been very effective at spotting the onset of the disease and has been instrumental in saving a great number of trees this summer. I can further advise this Chamber that a scientist, a plant science professor by the name of Martin Hubbes from the University of Toronto, is embarking on a genetic engineering plan to help to save our elm trees.

There is an organization, the Coalition to Save the Elms, which is actively engaged in the detection, the pruning, the removal of the diseased trees, and I would invite all members to join with this coalition to save our urban forest and one of the most outstanding attributes of our city. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Aboriginal Youth Justice Symposium

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, I wanted to take a few minutes to express my disappointment and my great concern to, I guess, the funny remarks that the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey) stated yesterday that she only had 38 hours to respond to the aboriginal youth justice symposium for a taping.

I have a copy of a letter that was sent to her office on September 6 inviting her to attend a community meeting that would be held Thursday, September 19, and then there was another letter that was sent to her office, and it is directed exactly to the Minister of Justice, that was sent out on October 9. That letter at the bottom says: We are ready to come in at your earliest convenience to tape your presentation. A response within the next 38 hours would be appreciated.

That was sent out on October 9, but the half-truths, some people were led to believe that there was 38 hours to the time of the taping. That is sort of playing with the truth here because there was so much time given to the minister to respond.

The aboriginal youth justice symposium was dealing with exactly the same things that the minister gets up in the House and says: We are dealing with the boot camps; we are dealing with the Young Offenders Act. Why is it so wrong for our Justice minister of Manitoba to hear from the youth that are affected by this, to hear firsthand exactly what the youth have to say? Does she not care?

Point of Order

Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Madam Speaker, on a point of order, as I said yesterday, I was asked for a response. I was given 38 hours and the member references it in the letter. Within that time frame I was unable to arrange to attend but made sure that a government member did attend, did participate in the taping, and I understand that it was also quite a successful day, and I was very pleased to provide some comments yesterday.

Madam Speaker: The honourable Minister of Justice does not have a point of order.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Point Douglas, to quickly complete his statement.

Mr. Hickes: On the same point of order.

Madam Speaker: I have already ruled on the point of order and indicated there was no point of order.

Point of Order

Mr. Hickes: On a new point of order. The youth justice committee has sent letters to the Justice minister and at 38 hours there was only a time to respond. She has enough staff that could pick up an MTS phone, could phone the friendship centre to arrange for a taping in the future at her earliest convenience, at her convenience.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Point Douglas does not have a point of order either. It is clearly a dispute over the facts.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Point Douglas has five seconds to complete his statement.

Mr. Hickes: Madam Speaker, there is a letter dated September 6, a letter dated October 9 and then the committee went right to her office and met with her staff in her office when they were trying to get an arrangement to tape the minister because they, the committee and the youth, want to hear from the government, so that way they can share some positive progresses that will help governments and all citizens of Manitoba. Please, Madam Justice Minister, at least make time for the December 2 meeting to hear from the youth.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Manitoba Telephone System

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity to state categorically that in my judgment the Manitoba government is making a serious mistake in selling the Manitoba Telephone System because it is going against the wishes of the people of Manitoba, it has no mandate whatsoever and I am afraid rates will indeed escalate at an accelerated pace under a privatized system.

We know the CRTC has a record of accommodating profits of a private company and there is no reason to suspect that CRTC in the future will have to accommodate profits to be paid to shareholders in addition to providing sufficient revenues through a rate base that will pay for the costs. A publicly owned MTS is providing service at cost. A privatized MTS will have

to not only provide the service at cost but has to provide additional revenues to satisfy the shareholders. As was revealed by my Leader today, there is evidence that privatization could lead to a 9.7 percent rate increase on average. So, therefore, there is no question that there is going to be a serious acceleration in rate increases.

When it is stated opposite, when the Premier (Mr. Filmon) states, well, service will be better under a private system and there will be more efficiency, I say the efficiency that he talks of will come at the expense of rural and northern Manitoba. In a relative sense, relative to urban Manitoba, I firmly believe that the service will deteriorate. In its effort to maximize profits, a private company will do whatever it can to cut services and, in that way, Madam Speaker, I believe that the people of Manitoba stand to lose.

In conclusion then—I was not sure how much time I had—I believe the government should withdraw this bill and go to the people. Let the people have a voice in this matter. It is a major Crown corporation. They want to have a referendum for tax increases; I think the corollary to that is to have a referendum or plebiscites for the sale of major assets. Thank you.

* (1430)

Bill 200—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): I just want to take a minute or so just to comment on Bill 200, which is a private member's bill that we introduced actually earlier, much earlier this session. It is a very good bill, we believe from within the Liberal caucus. It is a bill which we believe ultimately should be receiving a great deal more attention, and it is something which I would argue a vast majority of Manitobans would in fact support. In essence, what it is, Madam Speaker, is the enshrinement of the five fundamental principles of public administration, comprehensiveness, universality, portability and accessibility into provincial law. It is something which I have introduced on behalf of our party for the last couple of years now and I notice that the current member who adjourned debate, the minister of, I believe it is Energy and Mines (Mr. Praznik), has had it standing in his name since April 18.

I would have liked to have seen this particular bill at least debated and just stand to express my disappointment in the government of the day not recognizing the importance of the five fundamental principles to Manitobans and to ultimately ask the government to give reconsideration, given that we have two days left before we adjourn, and at which time the session would likely be prorogued and would have to start the process all over again. A vast majority of Manitobans believe in our medicare system today, and I ultimately believe that this government has a responsibility to adopt this very positive private member's bill. It is a bill in which I take a great deal of pride, in presenting this bill through this Chamber on behalf of the Liberal caucus, something which I believe all members should be supportive of and, at the very least, debate it. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Committee Changes

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Point Douglas, with committee changes.

Mr. George Hickes (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations be amended as follows: Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway); The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) for Swan River (Ms. Wowchuk) for Tuesday, November 5 for 3 p.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations be amended as follows: Burrows (Mr. Martindale) for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers); Broadway (Mr. Santos) for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson); Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) for Tuesday, November 5, for 6:30 p.m. Thank you.

Motions agreed to.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations for Tuesday, November 5, at 3 p.m., be amended as follows: the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) for the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey); the member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) for the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau); and the member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) for the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson).

I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations for Tuesday, November 5, at 6:30 p.m., be amended as follows: the member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) for the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger), and the member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) for the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine).

I move, seconded by the member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources (Tuesday, November 5, at 6:30 p.m.) be amended as follows: the member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Pallister) for the member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger); the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) for the member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), and the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) for the member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach).

Madam Speaker: It has been moved by the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources for 6:30 p.m., Tuesday, November 5, be amended as follows: the honourable member for Portage (Mr. Pallister) for the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger); the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) for the honourable member for Turtle Mountain (Mr. Tweed), and the honourable member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings) for the honourable member for Roblin-Russell (Mr. Derkach). Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), seconded by the honourable member for Morris (Mr. Pitura), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations for Tuesday, November 5, 3 p.m., be amended as follows: the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger) for the honourable member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey); the honourable member for Pembina (Mr. Dyck) for the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau); the honourable member for Niakwa (Mr. Reimer) for the honourable member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson). Agreed?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

It has been moved by the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer), seconded by the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations for Tuesday, November 5, 6:30 p.m., be amended as follows—

Order, please. [interjection] I know they are having a dispute, but I wonder if they would step outside the Chamber if they want to continue the dispute. It is very difficult for the table officers to hear these changes and it is imperative that they be given due consideration.

—the honourable member for Gimli (Mr. Helwer) for the honourable member for Steinbach (Mr. Driedger), and the honourable member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) for the honourable member for Sturgeon Creek (Mr. McAlpine). Agreed?

An Honourable Member: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, would you call for second reading, Bill 301.

SECOND READINGS—PRIVATE BILLS

Bill 301—The Native Alcoholism Council of Manitoba Incorporation Amendment Act

Mr. Eric Robinson (Rupertsland): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans), that Bill 301, The Native Alcoholism Council of Manitoba Incorporation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation “The Native Alcoholism Council of Manitoba”), be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

Motion presented.

Mr. Robinson: Madam Speaker, I want to take this opportunity just to put a few words on record respecting this bill.

It was requested some time ago by the board of directors and also the membership of the Native Alcoholism Council of Manitoba to make amendments to not only the name of the organization but also to bring up to date some of the terminology that is used in today's modern-day reality. I believe that, simply, this bill is not a contentious bill; it simply, as I say, brings into 1996 some of the terminology that is commonly used today, for example, removing the word “native” to “aboriginal” in some cases, also changing the word from “alcoholism” to “addictions” because we are not simply facing alcohol as being a social problem among the aboriginal community but, indeed, other addictions have come to the forefront, solvent abuse, drug abuse and also gambling addictions, and that was the purpose of the change at the request of the board of directors.

* (1440)

Also, we are asking that all members of this House support the other amendments that are being proposed. That is, bringing the board of directors size from 12 to nine, making it a more workable board for them to carry out their work, and a few minor changes that are self-explanatory in the bill. I look forward to support of all members of this House in making these minor amendments to bring the reality of the work that these people are doing at the Native Alcoholism Council sort of up to date on today's modern-day reality.

So with those few words, I look forward to the support of all members.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question?

The question before the House is second reading of private Bill 301, The Native Alcoholism Council of Manitoba Incorporation Amendment Act.

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

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, Bills 50, 73 and 301 are referred to

Industrial Relations committee for 3 p.m. this afternoon, Bills 41, 26 and 302 having already been referred. Any bills not completed during the 3 p.m. sitting are to be carried forward to the 6:30 p.m. sitting this evening, where Bill 17 is also already referred.

Madam Speaker: Bills 50, 73 and 301 are to be referred to the committee previously scheduled for Industrial Relations for 3 p.m. this afternoon, which have previously been announced to consider Bills 41, 26 and 302. Any bills not completed in the 3 p.m. sitting this afternoon will be referred to the same committee meeting this evening at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Ernst: Is there a will of the House to waive private members' hour?

Madam Speaker: Is there leave of the House to waive private members' hour?

An Honourable Member: No.

Madam Speaker: No? Leave has been denied.

Mr. Ernst: In that case, Madam Speaker, would you call for third reading Bills 54, 33, 36, 47 and 49.

THIRD READINGS

Bill 54—The Municipal and Various Acts Amendment

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), that Bill 54, The Municipal and Various Acts Amendment Act (Loi concernant les municipalités et modifiant diverses dispositions législatives), be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake): Madam Speaker, I rise to make a few comments on Bill 54. First of all, I do want to express our congratulations and sincere thanks to the committee that so diligently over two and a half years travelled around Manitoba listening to reeves and mayors and councillors across this province in trying to establish a new format with respect to our Municipal Act which has been around, I guess, for over around 100 years, and it was time for a change.

I know that during my short tenure as mayor of my community of Riverton, it was a difficult situation at times to have to deal with the Municipal Act, being new and not understanding the process and the situation and fortunately having a good administrator at that time who had indicated to me at this time, she said, Clif, we are going to have a tough time when it comes to trying to understand the Municipal Act with all its amendments and so forth.

But having said that, I want to say too that we are very pleased on this side of the House that Bill 54 came into being and that it will be proclaimed on Thursday. We feel, my colleagues on this side feel, very proud of the fact that we have sort of made history here along with the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) and the government side that we have been able to deal with the process and deal with the situation of Bill 54 and that it is a mark in time that this Legislative Assembly had the will and the ability to be able to bring through, pass and discuss a new Municipal Act that hopefully will provide our municipalities and our councillors, reeves and mayors and jurisdictions across this province much more freedom in promoting their own communities, make it simpler for them to be able to deal with the issues that they have to deal with day in and day out in their local communities.

We were very fortunate of course too during committee to hear many presentations, presentations that were not necessarily always in favour of some of the issues, some of the clauses that were presented during Bill 54. I must also say that I appreciate the diligence of the Minister of Rural Development, who met with myself and my colleague for discussing amendments and dealing with the issues that the communities brought to the attention of committee and to the Minister of Rural Development, and we certainly appreciate that.

We also want to make comment, Madam Speaker, that there are, and I said this in second reading, going to be some problems. We hope not too many problems, but we know that there may be some problems with the legislation that is now going to be in place to deal with our local jurisdictions. I know I can say that in discussions with the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) that the Minister of Rural Development and myself, as Rural Development critic for the opposition, have combined to say that we will address issues that come to his attention or to my attention or to the

members' attention as to situations or issues that Bill 54 does not deal with formally in dealing with the issues that they have brought forward that are concerns through Bill 54, whether it be clauses, whether it be language, whether it be a situation that it does not deal with specifically, what they would like or need for their jurisdictions.

So I know that we will work together on that. I can guarantee our side of the House and myself will definitely work with the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) in dealing with these issues as they come to be.

However, Madam Speaker, I do also want to say that during the process there were many difficult times and situations for some jurisdictions and municipalities in dealing with Bill 54. Being such a large, large bill, the situations that were brought forward and the issues that were brought forward in the bill were also made notice by these municipalities that they were disappointed that the final draft of the studies and the committee hearings throughout Manitoba and the bill itself were not exactly the same and not necessarily what the municipalities expected. The presentations were very, very good. The presentations made comment to that in meetings that I have attended with the Minister of Rural Development in different areas of the province, that they were wondering why the final draft and the legislation were different when in fact the minister had indicated, the government had indicated that the final draft would be a facsimile of the bill.

* (1450)

But, Madam Speaker, I just want to say again that I am very pleased to be a part of the process that occurred. I know that we did not necessarily do all the legwork like the committee did over the two and a half years, but we dealt with it. We dealt with it in I think a very fair manner, and I think we dealt with it with the people within jurisdictions, with UMM, with MAUM, that to make changes were necessary to make it a better bill. Hopefully, we can continue to do that to even make it a stronger bill as the years go by for the jurisdictions and the reeves, mayors, councillors throughout this province. Certainly we provided as much support for Bill 54 as possible and, in closing, I know that I did indicate to the minister, and he agreed, that now is the time to see how Bill 54 will affect, will be taken throughout the years. If there was anything there that we had brought forward to the minister now and this government during this process,

we would bring it back to him again in a lot stronger manner than we did this time or the people from UMM or MAUM or any jurisdiction that comes to this government.

So, Madam Speaker, in closing my few comments, I just want to again congratulate all those who took part in making history and proclaiming Bill 54.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Madam Speaker, just very briefly with respect to Bill 54, when the bill in fact was tabled, it is a very substantial document, and I think it would have challenged any one of us to have read through it to get a complete understanding of exactly what the bill is purporting to do. But I would acknowledge the effort, as the speaker prior to me acknowledged, in terms of those individuals that were involved in a process that ultimately led to the drafting of Bill 54.

In summation, from our perspective, from the Liberal Party's perspective, what we are hoping is that in essence we have now a much more simplified manner in which we can process things. We trust that will in fact be the case and no doubt that there even could be some amendments that do come up in the not too distant future with some of the concerns that have been expressed from different individuals. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Madam Speaker, it is my pleasure to also speak on third reading to Bill 54, The Municipal Act. I became involved with The Municipal Act fairly late in the process when looking through the act and seeing that there was a section in the act that had major implications for the city of Winnipeg. So, while I did not participate in the process through the over two years that the government and other municipalities did, I was able to participate in the process leading to Bill 54 briefly. I want to again reiterate what my colleague the member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans) has stated and the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), the process appears to have been—[interjection]

As the Premier stated when I heckled him during Question Period a week or so ago, you have made me lose my train of thought. It must be my advanced age.

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

The process that I think was undertaken in developing Bill 54, The Municipal Act, is the process that I think should be undertaken in virtually every piece of legislation in this House. I think the elements came together fairly well in generating a new piece of legislation, the first time in a hundred years. This was a massive undertaking, as has been stated before in the House. It is massive not just because there are so many elements to putting together a totally new bill dealing with municipal affairs, but also because there are so many different municipalities in the province of Manitoba, ranging from very small municipalities to the city of Winnipeg. They all have varying degrees of concerns and issues that need to be addressed in this underlying basic piece of legislation, and it seems to me, from what I can understand, the process, two and a half years of consultation, of going out into the communities, of getting information and concerns from the various stakeholders in the process, was what should be followed in any major piece of legislation.

So I want to commend the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), I want to commend his staff, because I know that while ministers take a lead role in policy determination, it is staff who actually implement the directives given by cabinet and the minister. The consultations that I had with the staff were uniformly of very high quality. I was able to ask any question I wanted, and I got answers that were excellent. So I commend the staff in the Department of Rural Development for the outstanding work they have done in putting together this piece of legislation.

Also, having spent a lot of time this session, as in other sessions, in committee where there are amendments that are made, and sometimes there are amendments made immediately while you are in committee, I think that we should all recognize every once in a while the work that the Legislative Counsel does in drafting a piece of legislation that is 300 pages long. Legislative Counsel has to take the work, the ideas that come through cabinet and the department and consultation, and they have to actually put it into language that will stand the test of time and will stand scrutiny over any potential court hearing.

Not only that, but they have to deal with amendments, and I know that in my case I would call Leg. Counsel and I would have an idea about what I wanted to have as an

amendment, but I did not know exactly where it should go and I certainly did not know the language that it should be in, and Leg. Counsel was, again, uniformly helpful in doing that. I know that they have been working very, very hard given this new split session that we have both in drafting the legislation this spring and then in dealing with amendments in the committee stages this fall. So I think on behalf of all of us, I would like to give some commendation to the members of the Leg. Counsel for the work that they have done.

As I said, dealing with the bits of The Municipal Act that I have dealt with has been a real learning experience for me as well as sitting in on the committee hearings. I have made every attempt in my six-plus years in the Legislature to expand my horizons and try and be very much aware of the need not to think only in terms of the city of Winnipeg or the perimeter or the capital region, which I know is difficult for all of us, but most particularly people who live in the city of Winnipeg and people like myself who do not come from a rural background. So listening to the presentations at the committee stage was very helpful for me to understand a little bit more about what the issues are that are of concern to various municipalities in the province of Manitoba. I will be the first to admit that I do not understand all the distinctions. I do not understand still how municipal government works in any real way, but I do have a feeling for some of what the concerns are and some of the issues that were raised. So I appreciate the process that I was allowed to participate in in the committee hearings.

I would like to speak a bit about the area that got me involved in The Municipal Act in the first place, and that is the area around changes to the boundaries of the city of Winnipeg. Now, the City Council, when it was alerted to this section of the act, had a meeting and discussed this situation, and they sent over a request to the government for an amendment, for a series of amendments actually, to clarify and make more comfortable for the city their concerns around the sections in The Municipal Act dealing with the city of Winnipeg boundaries.

* (1500)

One interesting thing about this process is that the City Council passed this resolution 15 votes to one vote, and I think anybody who knows anything about the City of

Winnipeg City Council will know how unusual that is. Normally there is a very large range of opinion on City Council, and it is very unusual that you will get virtual unanimity on any particular issue. But in this case the City Council voted virtually unanimously to share their concerns on this element of The Municipal Act with the committee, and the one city councillor who opposed the resolution that was passed by City Council, when he came to committee, stated that part of his opposition was the flavour that the resolution brought forward, that the language was a little harsh and did not open itself to compromise or working together.

So the concern that was raised by City Council was one that was raised by, in effect, every city councillor. That is, and I will not go into it in too great a detail because the minister and the government know very clearly what the concerns are, the process for making changes to the city of Winnipeg boundaries is very different from the process for making changes to the boundaries of any other of the municipalities in the province of Manitoba.

If a municipality, other than the city of Winnipeg, wants to amend its boundaries or annex other land or be annexed or amalgamate or dissolve, there is quite an extensive process that needs to be undertaken in The Municipal Act, a process that, I might add, appears to me to be a good process. This is not something that you want to have undertaken lightly; it is a major—in most cases, changing the boundaries of your municipality or your city is a very serious matter that should not be undertaken lightly. So there are many pages in The Municipal Act dealing with these boundary changes.

If the City of Winnipeg wanted to annex Headingley or St. Andrews or Springfield, or any of the R.M.s around the Perimeter of the city of Winnipeg, they, too, for the purposes of annexation would be considered a municipality, so the city would also have to go through exactly the same very detailed process for change. However, the area that causes the City Council and has caused me concern is that, if another municipality wants to annex land that currently belongs to the city of Winnipeg, it is a very much smaller, narrower, faster process, and this is driven largely by the cabinet. The only specific is that there be a requirement of a study undertaken as to the impact of the boundary change, but there are no parameters around that impact study. There is no statement in the legislation as to who will have

input into the study; and, other than it says, it shall be made public, there is no delineation of how people will find out the findings of the study. Also, this part allows the cabinet to decide whether they will send an analysis such as this and a request to the Municipal Board.

So we brought these issues and concerns to the minister and to his staff, and the council brought them to the committee hearings. I do not believe this city is completely satisfied, because the amendments that we brought forward were not accepted, but the minister is on record as saying that he believes, in effect, the legislation, as it now stands, strengthens the City of Winnipeg's hand in protecting its boundaries from other municipalities who may want to take part of it away. In the spirit of cooperation and understanding, as my colleague from Interlake has said, this is a huge, brand-new piece of legislation that needs to have some time to sort itself out. We have supported Bill 54 although we are going to maintain a very serious watching brief on the concerns that we have raised about the city of Winnipeg annexation problem.

One other part that I would like to speak to about in third reading is the other amendments that came through. I found it very interesting. The Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), I think, really made an effort to listen to what was being said in the committee hearings. He made notes, he talked to his staff, and he met with the member for Interlake (Mr. Clif Evans), the Rural Development critic, and myself, the Urban Affairs critic, in between the time when the presentations happened and when we went to clause by clause. He outlined for us the concerns that he had heard addressed by various presenters. Some of them, he was willing to address in the form of amendments; others he was not, but he gave us answers for the reasons why he was not willing to address some of the concerns and amendments at this time, a process that I greatly appreciate.

One particular amendment that I would like to commend the minister for suggesting—and it is an amendment that we would have brought forward had the minister not—comes out of a concern raised by the Canadian Union of Public Employees in their brief, and it deals with The Labour Relations Act provisions. Basically, the original act stated that the rights, obligations, liabilities, assets, et cetera, that the cabinet considers appropriate to be dealt with in regulations

dealing with amalgamations of municipalities may operate despite a collective agreement, which means that if two municipalities amalgamate or one dissolves and is taken over by another or if there are any of these boundary changes that take place, the employees who may be operating under two or three collective agreements, their collective agreements might not take precedence. The Canadian Union of Public Employees was quite concerned about this, as were we. The minister heard this concern, and he put forward amendments that stated in effect that any amalgamation that took place would have to do so under the aegis of The Labour Relations Act, which means that The Labour Relations Act takes precedence and must be looked at when you amalgamate or make changes in boundaries.

I applauded the minister at the time, and I would like to applaud the minister right now for having seen the inequities, the potential inequities in that part of the legislation and having made that very important change that we feel will enhance the ability of municipalities to deal with any boundary changes in the most effective, nonconfrontational manner possible.

Finally, I have a comparison, if you will, between how the minister and the government handled Bill 54 and how the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Telephone System (Mr. Findlay) and his government are handling Bill 67. As I stated, the process, the consultation process that took place in drafting Bill 54 took place over two and a half years. They listened to literally hundreds of people from across the province, recognizing—[interjection] As the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) said, as it should be, and I am commending the government for that because they recognized the importance of this issue, that it was going to have a massive impact on virtually every citizen in the province of Manitoba.

The second thing that happened in Bill 54 is when the minister came to committee hearings he actually listened. He listened and he reflected and he made decisions on amendments. Some he accepted, some he did not, but he clearly paid attention to the public-hearing process. He clearly utilized it as a way of hearing potential positive things, things that could be changed in Bill 54.

In contrast, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the government in putting forward Bill 67 did not consult with the people of

Manitoba. I will not go into the fact that this is a piece of legislation that was not mandated by the people of Manitoba. I think the parallel is that this is not a small piece of legislation amending a small bill. Legislation always has an impact on somebody, but we all know that some pieces of legislation are minor in their impact on most people. You do not necessarily have to consult broadly on those pieces of legislation. But the government recognized in redrafting The Municipal Act that they needed to consult in order to be an effective process and to bring forward a good piece of legislation.

* (1510)

Unfortunately, the government did not recognize, or chose not to recognize, the need to consult in that regard with Bill 67 which will have potentially an incalculable effect on all of the people in the province of Manitoba. We have debated back and forth in Question period. We have debated, more or less, in the committee hearings, although the government is not choosing to dialogue much of the presenters, these issues, but it is important that not only 57 people in the Legislative Chamber and several hundred people in the committee hearings, but a million people across the province of Manitoba have an opportunity to hear both sides of this issue because the impact of this piece of legislation is potentially so important on our futures as a province.

So I would like to compare those two, the process that was undertaken by the Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach) in Bill 54 versus the process that has been undertaken by the government in dealing with Bill 67. They went through exactly the same steps, without the consultation in Bill 67. They brought it through the same required steps in the Legislature. They are having public hearings. They have been going on for over a week now, but that is where the similarity ends.

We can only assume, I can only assume, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the government wanted a municipal act that worked and understood what it needed to do to bring that about. I can only assume, secondly, that the government knew what was going to happen with Bill 67. It knew the outcomes that were going to be brought forward, knew the potential or the actual changes that were going to take place for all people in Manitoba, did not want to meet the people head on, did not want to consult because

they knew what they were going to hear from their constituents and from the people of Manitoba.

The only thing that I can come up with, given the almost antithetical behaviour on the part of the government in Bill 54 versus Bill 67, that the government knew exactly what it was doing in both cases. In the one case in dealing with Bill 54, it acted in an admirable fashion, working exactly the way the process should work. In the case of Bill 67, it has worked in the most despicable, if I can use that word, I do not know if it is parliamentary or not, but underhanded, not clear with the people of Manitoba. The process has been abrogated, the process has been made a mockery of, and it is too bad because the government knows how to do it. They knew how to do it in Bill 54, they have chosen not to do it in Bill 67, and the people of Manitoba will see that distinction.

It is interesting because, in many cases, the people who are most affected by The Municipal Act, the people in rural and northern Manitoba, are some of the people who are going to be most affected by Bill 67. They saw the consultation that took place in Bill 54. They see that nothing is taking place in the same way in Bill 67. I think the people of Manitoba will understand the distinction there.

So with those words, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I close my debate on third reading on Bill 54, and again commend the government for an excellent process.

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that debate be adjourned on Bill 54.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 33—The Education Administration Amendment Act

Hon. Brian Pallister (Minister of Government Services): I move, seconded by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), Mr. Deputy Speaker, that Bill 33, The Education Administration Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration scolaire, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Ms. MaryAnn Mihychuk (St. James): I rise for the first time to put a few words on the record on Bill 33. This is the third reading of the bill, and we have had the opportunity to listen to community members presenting on The Education Administration Amendment Act.

The ultimate purpose of this bill is basically to concentrate—versus the minister's words—concentrate power to the minister's office, rather than in fact empowering local communities and parents. What it actually does is focus the attention on the minister and enable the minister much more intrusive powers in the classroom, in the school and on school boards.

We heard very eloquent and well-thought-out presentations by the Teachers' Society, by the Manitoba Association of School Trustees and from a group called CAST, which is a parents' group opposed to standard testing. They made very good points as to why this type of comparison of results and academic performance will actually lead to deterioration of our school system rather than the enhancement which the minister attempts to argue is the reason for these changes to The Education Administration Act.

If we truly wanted enhancement of public education, I would suggest that the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) would be wise to go out and speak to those who have that vested interest, go and speak to the teachers who are in the classroom daily with our children. Many jurisdictions, Mr. Deputy Speaker, have done that.

In the United States, a southern state was particularly concerned about how their schools were achieving and how their students were learning in the school system, and they went out and the one thing that they did is that they listened to teachers. That state has now turned its record completely around and has one of the highest success rates of any American state, and what they did was, they went and listened to teachers.

What we heard over and over again about this bill and the other education bills was that teachers were undervalued, were not consulted and were not respected in terms of the professionals that they are and the expertise that they have when dealing with our children.

This bill, contrary to the minister's pontification, actually is a shift of power into the minister's office rather

than the decentralist model which she proclaims by shifting power to parents and local boards and councils. Actually, the presentations that we heard from teachers and school boards both expressed very serious concern about the undermining of their power and their authority professionalism in the areas that have always been their mandate, their jurisdiction and, quite frankly, the minister has had the responsibility and power to set the overall parameters on public education and private education and has that ability already.

This further articulates the power that the minister wishes to enunciate to all of the education community, articulating points such as, the minister will decide on the assessment tools, the minister will decide on the program of study.

These things are not only within the mandate of the minister's powers today. The question arises, why does the minister feel that it is so important to rearticulate in such a pointed fashion her power and her ability to interfere in the classroom if it is not another direct attack to the very professionals that I would suggest she should be speaking to, and that is our classroom teachers.

* (1520)

This bill will enable the minister to determine all forms of assessment in the classroom. Assessment is a very complicated issue and, for professionals who wish to express how assessment works, it is very complicated because what you are trying to do is measure a person's performance. You are trying to measure their academic, their intellectual, their emotional successes and areas of needed improvement, and that, as we all know, is extremely complicated.

You cannot use one tool, for instance a standards test, which uses a pen and paper instrument and use that as a guide to then say, this student has a certain achievement level in that particular course at that time. Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is inherently unfair in fact to use one instrument when we know that we all have various learning skills, various learning abilities and various learning styles.

In fact, the Department of Education and modern educational thought is looking at the classroom teacher being able to identify the learning style of each individual student, and we want to move to that. We want to move

to a system which is able to identify the learning style of our child and to accentuate that learning style, and to be able to then understand that to assess that student's learning abilities and where improvement has to be, it has to be modelled to the individual child.

This is a model that educators are moving towards. It is not a simple model. It is not one that is going to be necessarily marked on a grade from zero to 100 and given a specific percentage. The trustees of Manitoba, the teachers of Manitoba, the parents and the educators, the administrators met—I believe it was about three years ago during the former Minister of Education Clayton Manness's platform. Those people, those partners in education, did sit down for a fairly long, intensive workshop in Brandon, where I believe colleagues from the other side of the House who are now MLAs that were at one time trustees also participated, and they looked at a vision of education and came up with virtual consensus, which is an astonishing accomplishment. We were all proud of that accomplishment.

We knew that change had to happen. We had a direction, and we wanted the Minister of Education to listen to what we had to say. The unfortunate part, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that the former Education minister, Clayton Manness, had his own direction. What I do have to give him credit for is having the honesty to come forward and say that he did not really care what that conference was telling him. He had an agenda, and he was putting it forward.

We did not agree with him. We knew at that time, through consensus, that it was not the way to go. However, what is unfortunate is that we are seeing the Manness plan—modified many times because many parts of it did not work—being implemented by the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) of today. I believe that over the past mandate of the Conservative government we have had five or six Ministers of Education all trying to find very simple solutions to complicated topics of assessment and evaluation.

This bill is extremely unfortunate. It attempts to come with a simple solution directed by the minister and, in fact, is often contradictory with what educational thought is saying; contradictory to what the documents that the department is putting out, and contradictory to the very fundamental purpose of public education.

The minister has decided that schools boards have apparently too much power and has, through this bill, decided that she is going to tell them what they must do and how they are going to report it. When you are looking at a mandate and the minister calls you to evaluate your special needs programs, that may seem like a fairly reasonable request. The complication of a request like that is that it will intensify and virtually increase astronomically the amount of administrative work required unless the minister is particularly careful and precise with what she is asking in terms of assessment.

The concern is that the statements in the bill are so broad based and going to be left up to regulation. The concern is that it is actually going to increase administrative costs as the minister is requesting more assessments, more reports, more paperwork and taking away from what really needs to be done, a refocus of our public education system into one that is based on the individual, one that encourages individual thought, one that builds on teamwork and co-operation, one that is going to be responsive to the needs of business, that is talking about higher thinking skills. Instead, what it is going to be doing is focusing the administration and the school system on increased administration, increased paperwork and increased responsiveness to the minister, whose legacy unfortunately has been one of mismanagement.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the legacy is that there have been directives from the minister that have not been possible to implement. We remember clearly when certain timetables were prescribed and the curriculum was prescribed by the government as to what was expected in the back-to-the-basics, back-to-the-core curriculum. Suddenly schoolteachers who know the curriculum like the backs of their hands said to the minister, there is not enough minutes in the day to conduct this program of study. Is the minister suggesting that we expand the school day, or is the minister suggesting that we eliminate recess? It is impossible to implement the curriculum as given by the number of minutes in the day even today. In certain programs of study, it is still impossible to follow the department, the minister's outline.

What a member of the public who came to the committee said was somewhat reassuring. He said, as a public school teacher for over 40 years, I know that governments come and go and ministers even more often

than that, but the real purpose of education is preserved. I think what he meant by that is the public school system or any school system is a large institution and is not likely to be turned over on its heels as quickly as perhaps the government may want and they may be misdirected. The institution itself will respond in a sensible way because the ultimate purpose is to provide a better education for our children, and I have that faith in the system as a whole. What concerns me is that we have legislation which puts a whole lot more faith in the Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) and, although she was a classroom teacher, I understand—I do not know for how long or where—but for one individual to be so empowered, the concern is that indeed they are not the best equipped.

* (1530)

The role that we had in Brandon when we used all the partners to come up with a plan that unfortunately was rejected by this government is the model to go. It is possible to receive and develop consensus in terms of the direction of education and it is not the one that the government is pursuing unfortunately. It is possible to meet with the partners and develop an agenda of change that will work, and I would say that classroom teachers, trustees, administrators are all ready to change. The problem is that if the changes are coming out unilaterally from the minister's office that are apparently contradictory to the very fundamental goals of education, you have a quandary. You have the system fighting each other. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is extremely unfortunate, because what we have are challenges in the education system that need to be developed in a consensus fashion. We need to be moving ahead to meet the needs of our children, not to be in a situation where we have the various partners fighting against, in this case, virtual unanimity. You have the partners fighting against the government, the Minister of Education, which is, as I say, extremely unfortunate.

MAST, the school trustees, presented to the committee on Bill 33; and Bill 33 is a very small bill if you look at the number of pages. It focuses on fairly specific amendments to reporting and assessment. Some jurisdictions, particularly right-wing jurisdictions, have decided that the way to improve education is to publicize grades, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and many speakers who

came to committee were very concerned that this indeed was the intent of this government.

The example from the people from CAST, Coalition Against Standardized Testing, I think, is particularly relevant. Here, if you looked at—they cited the recent Grade 3 mathematics standards exam—question 16(b) asks, if you have 24 different combinations of outfits, how many T-shirts and jeans can you have? This is for Grade 3. This is children eight and nine years old. CAST, the Coalition Against Standardized Testing, pointed out that in many communities, in many cultures, children do not have outfits. They would not even understand the term “outfit.” Perhaps, if you live in Tuxedo, you wear outfits, but if you live in Point Douglas, you have jeans and a T-shirt. The fact that you would have 24 different combinations or outfits is an example of how the test itself can be skewed and biased when you are looking at a paper and pen test and, in this case, probably tests your ability to understand language and cultural differences more than the mathematical test which it was presumed to be measuring.

The Department of Education is moving on a program of what they call hands-on manipulatives in mathematics for the early years. It is a program of study that has proven to be very effective. What it means is that children will get to experiment using different materials to make it practical, to make mathematics real, and schools are actively engaged in developing this new curriculum. For that example alone, how can hands-on manipulatives be tested by a paper and pen test, especially with something so obscure as, how many outfits do you wear, how many outfits would you have if you had 24 different combinations? It is truly an unfair examination.

Another question, question 29, the question here for the Grade 3 class again, write a math story problem where the answer is 36. Now, that is a pretty broad-based question. I would like to challenge the members in this House to answer that question. [interjection] Write a math story problem where the answer is 36. Well, that alone gives you second thought as to the meaning of the question itself. Mathematics was one of my favourite subjects. I loved to manipulate numbers, and I loved to calculate various answers that always came out with the right answer. It was fairly simple. This type of question, write a math story problem where the answer is 36, is not

a mathematics question. This is actually, I would say, a reading comprehension question, and actually is probably directed in the wrong subject. Clearly, this is not a mathematics subject or problem that is manipulative or hands on. It is very theoretical and requires a very good grasp of language, and I remind you that this is in Grade 3.

Would it be valuable, for instance, if we looked at the children in the inner city or even in my community on the east side of St. James, where there is a very large population of recent immigrants? These children are learning another language, and here they are facing a test which is dependent on their ability to understand fairly sophisticated language concepts. They are often encouraged to do well in math and have the skills and ability. Would this test in fact measure or somehow reflect accurately how well those children can do in mathematics, or do they understand the concepts? I do not think so. What it actually does is measure the person's ability to read the question and understand it.

The publication of results and assessment, which are the fundamentals of this bill, will lead to, what the minister is quite proud to say, competition. It will lead to school shopping, and presumably, according to most right-wing theory and philosophy, competition leads to improvement. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think that clearly parents do not agree that competition is what is needed in the public school system or in education. What is needed is a system that is going to provide for the needs of our children. What we will have—and we do have some studies indicating that in fact this type of school shopping has actually led to more mediocrity in the public school system, in the school system in general, has led to mediocrity and standardization.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this is a fear, that the government is actually moving away from allowing individual excellence in achievement and schools and diversification. What is actually going to happen is, a certain formula or recipe that has proven to be successful will be adopted by all schools, and so just like all stores move towards—we have seen a trend—megastores, we have Home Depot, we have REVY, we have these giant stores, SuperValu. Even Safeways are becoming large. There is a certain trend in the market, and when there is something that is appealing, you will see that same recipe being used in all sectors.

There has been evidence of other jurisdictions which have tried to go to this model of competition amongst schools. We have seen it in the U.K., in Britain, and some jurisdictions in the United States. The results have actually proven that it has deteriorated the overall standards of education and led to mediocrity. Parents instead are searching for schools that offer—initially they will be looking at schools that offer before-and-after daycare programs, lunch programs; they will be looking at the facilities of the school; they will be looking at the promotional materials that the school has produced. If a school has a sophisticated marketing strategy, they will probably be able to attract many parents, not based on the program or the legitimate values that are going on in the school, but rather the artificial or, I would say, the superficial aspects of the school. The other things, unfortunately, will be so standardized that there will not be the diversification, and that is exactly what we need in our public school system.

* (1540)

In fact, again, as we saw earlier, we see administrators and trustees moving away from focusing on improving education to doing more administration. Schools are actually going to be focused on attracting parents. Instead of focusing on enhancing the educational opportunities of children within the school, they are going to be busy developing skills and busy putting forward an agenda that will attract parents in terms of these other more peripheral items in the school setting.

So is that something that we want our teachers and administrators in schools to be doing, writing up glossy marketing materials so that they can attract students and hopefully their school can remain vibrant rather than focusing on what really needs to be done in the classroom and enhancing our ability to educate our children? I do not think so, and I do not think that parents and the community want that to happen in Manitoba schools.

The submission from the school trustees specifically cited the concern that this bill would augment substantially the role of the minister and diminish the role of school boards and that of the communities that elect them. I believe that needs to be a concern to people here in this House, and it is truly a concern to the people in our communities who elect on a very regular basis,

sometimes every two years, sometimes three years, school trustees who deal solely with the administration of the education system in their jurisdiction. We saw many communities speak out passionately about the value of their school boards, and we saw the government actually move off of a plan of school board amalgamation. It is extremely unfortunate that the government has decided to curtail or limit the school board's powers in such a way when we did recently see the communities' appreciation of school boards and how effective they actually were. In addition, the school trustees expressed the concern about regulation, and again I would like to point out that this government has a legacy of making fairly broad statements in legislation and then relying on regulation to put the specific details.

That was raised by the Fraser Institute recently, which did a comprehensive study on the government's legacy, pointing out that regulation was not the appropriate tool for developing policy; it was, in fact, a negative measure. It was extremely unfortunate, in our opinion, that this government has chosen to go the route of regulation rather than being up front and open about their legislation through bills.

I would just like to conclude that the Teachers' Society presented to the committee and also raised issues about the enhancement of power of the minister, about the absence of an appropriate systemic framework and clearly delineated indicators. There seems to be a contradiction with this bill and with some of the personal social career outcomes for students as described in the Manitoba Education and Training's *Renewing Education*.

Basically, this bill is an affront and an ineffective way to deal with assessment, and the fear is that the publication of these assessment tools will be used in an ineffective way, and actually that the minister's powers are enhanced and focused on the classroom and schools when they belong more, I believe, in a role of consultation and working towards unanimity, rather than causing division and more distrust amongst the very partners that should be working together. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is third reading of Bill 33. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Mr. Deputy Speaker, would you please call Bills 14, 15, 16, 39, 36, 47 and 49.

Bill 14—The Manitoba Trading Corporation Amendment Act

Mr. Deputy Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism (Mr. Downey), Bill 14, The Manitoba Trading Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la société commerciale du Manitoba.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Justice (Mrs. Vodrey), that Bill 14, The Manitoba Trading Corporation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur la Société commerciale du Manitoba, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is it the will of the House to adopt the bill?

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Yes, very briefly, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we recognize or acknowledge that over the last couple of years the Manitoba Trading Corporation is a corporation that has been reorganized, shifting the focus of its activities. This act, we understand, reflects these changes. The corporation will now act as a facilitator for export trade and development which we ultimately believe can be a very positive thing for the province, and therefore I support in principle changes that would allow for additional enhanced exports or international trades of different forms of products and services.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is third reading of Bill 14. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 15—The Tourism and Recreation Amendment Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik), that Bill 15, The Tourism and Recreation Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur le tourisme et les loisirs, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

Bill 16—The Charleswood Bridge Facilitation Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister), that Bill 16, The Charleswood Bridge Facilitation Act; Loi facilitant l'application de l'entente sur le pont Charleswood, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Deputy Speaker, just again very briefly. We understand that the purpose of Bill 16 is to prevent D.B.F. Ltd. to hold registered leasehold title to the Charleswood Bridge. This is not something in principle which we would support, but are somewhat cautious in terms of future bridges in the city of Winnipeg—in fact, other jurisdictions, but in particular the city of Winnipeg—and what potentially could come of this—some concerns that we do have, and we just wanted to express that reservation. Thank you.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is third reading of Bill 16. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 39—The Pari-Mutuel Levy and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister

of Agriculture (Mr. Enns), that Bill 39, The Pari-Mutuel Levy and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant les prélèvements sur les mises de pari mutuel et apportant des modifications corrélatives, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion agreed to.

* (1550)

Bill 36—The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of Government Services (Mr. Pallister), that Bill 36, The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'aide sociale et apportant des modifications corrélatives, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington): Mr. Deputy Speaker, many of our caucus colleagues have spoken on this dreadful piece of legislation, and so I will not put more than just a few very brief comments on the record and then we will be prepared to pass it after third reading.

The minister has made four basic statements. The first one is that Bill 36 will improve services to clients. It will not improve services to clients and we have shown in many ways how this will not happen. Secondly, the minister states that Bill 36 will reduce administrative duplication. We have shown how this will not happen when in the actual fact it may increase administrative duplication and certainly administrative costs. Third, the minister states that Bill 36 will avoid situations of fraud or abuse. We state this is a situation where there has never been a study that has shown that anything more than 3 or 4 percent of welfare clients abuse in any way, shape or form the system, far less than the white collar abuse that takes place in our businesses and corporations every day.

(Madam Speaker in the Chair)

An Honourable Member: White collar abuse in selling MTS.

Ms. Barrett: Yes, white collar abuse in the selling of MTS which will exacerbate the problem of people on welfare.

Finally, the minister says Bill 36 will help emphasize employment. Well, Madam Speaker, we all know what the job situation is like in the province of Manitoba. We know what the minister and her government have done to make it more difficult, not easier, for people on social assistance and people who have jobs to find meaningful full-time, high-paying good jobs. Those are all the kinds of jobs that particularly young people in this province know are going away, not coming to Manitoba. So, for all of those reasons which have been itemized in great detail by caucus members on this side of the House, we completely and totally and unalterably oppose Bill 36. It is a dreadful piece of legislation which not only does not do what it says it is going to do; it, in every single instance, will do exactly the opposite. Thank you.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is third reading of Bill 36, The Social Allowances Amendment and Consequential Amendments Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: No.

Voice Vote

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

Some Honourable Members: Yea.

Madam Speaker: All those opposed, please say nay.

Some Honourable Members: Nay.

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

An Honourable Member: On division.

Madam Speaker: On division.

Bill 47—The Public Schools Amendment Act

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): I move, seconded by the Minister of

Agriculture (Mr. Enns), that Bill 47, The Public Schools Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Gerard Jennissen (Flin Flon): Madam Speaker, I rise today to put a few words on record with regard to Bill 47, The Public Schools Amendment Act, and I will talk in fairly general terms. I am concerned when I hear the debate on Bill 47, especially that aspect of Bill 47 that talks about every school board making available to parents and students information about individual schools. It seems to me that so much of this is like the rest of the government's legislation, looks democratic on the surface, looks very appealing on the surface, but if you dig underneath it there is a much more sinister scenario and things not quite what they appear to be. So despite the overtly democratic surface of it, there is much to be concerned about in the sense that I would hate this province to become like parts of the United States where real estate values are going to be judged by SAT scores, by student achievement and student scores, where the performance and the scores of students become so important that they actually set value for the neighbourhood. Then, of course, that leads to intense competition, and it also leads to a very narrow evaluation of that competition, and it leads to cheating and dishonesty as well. I think we should be focusing on things much wider and broader in education than narrow, measurable variables which are easy to measure, but that seems to be the kinds of things that this government likes to deal with, things that are easy to measure.

The other problem, Madam Speaker, when you start comparing and shopping for schools because there is supposedly objective evidence out there that states that school A is better than school B, and this has always been the case. I mean schools have always fallen into various vague categories, but never deliberately pushed by government or by state, but now it would seem to me that inevitably what will happen is that some schools will be rated much higher than other schools. Parents with the wherewithal, the money, will inevitably, I think, do comparison shopping and then what you are going to get are students moving from so-called poorer schools to so-called better schools. What that really means in terms of education is the parents with money will send their kids to better schools, the parents without money will have to

take their chances on the public system. I think this is a very dangerous direction. Now, it is true that it does give individual parents choice and much more choice than perhaps that was there in the past, but the choice is highly illusive.

Students in the past have always moved from one school division to another, we never had a problem with that. School choice tends to be though, under this scenario, the prerogative only of the rich and, of course, if it becomes too streamlined or too, I guess, organized or demanding, then what will happen is that the few elite schools cannot possibly absorb the students that eager parents wish to send to these schools so you will have bottlenecks in any case. I would suggest it would be much simpler to build a good public system rather than to focus on creating elitist systems that are hierarchical and that do not serve that needs of all children of Manitoba.

I do not think that this government should continue in the direction they are going, that is the undermining of public education. What they are doing, I think, is making things much worse. They are giving advantages to the privileged, not to the underprivileged. As we have said many times before, the hallmark of a civilized society is how you treat those least able to take care of themselves, those most in need, and what happens here paradoxically is that the advantages will be given to those who are born, so to speak, with a silver spoon in their mouth. That is not a democratic direction, Madam Speaker, that is a very scary direction. This is a direction, however, that teachers almost instinctively discern or understand, and that is why they have fought so long and so hard against some of the directions that this government seems to push in education.

We have some major concerns about this particular bill. One of the concerns that we have is that although they talk about buzzwords of reform and various Education ministers in the last number of years have talked about the necessity of reform, is it really reform? Some people have stated, some teachers have stated quite openly that the last four Education ministers associated with this government should be called the four headless horsemen of the apocalypse, madly galloping off in four different directions. There seems to be no consistency, no overall direction. If there is, we have not discerned and teachers out there have not discerned it, and teachers out

there are very hesitant and very uptight, if I can use the word. They are very concerned not only about their jobs and their job security, but about the direction which education is taking. They are concerned about good education for the children for whom they are responsible.

* (1600)

In the past number of years there are many vague references to standards and maintaining standards and giving parents more power, and that sounds noble, but standards, if very narrowly defined, can be misleading and can be quite antidemocratic. Standards have to be seen in a much, much broader context than they are presently envisioned because education is not something as simple as test scores and little dots on a piece of paper.

Teachers are much more than just, shall we say, wardens of little prisoners. They are much more than that, Madam Speaker. It is an honourable profession, and there is maybe a lot of science to it. There is a lot of art and there is a lot of heart in it as well, and teachers are feeling that they are losing some of that.

Now, we are worried that the real emphasis is on centralization of power. Despite what the minister says, despite what some of the documents say, we note that there is a direction to make the minister almost all powerful. Always there is the veneer of democracy there, but in the background we have that uneasy feeling that, you know, more cuts are coming, a two-tier system is being developed, poor kids are going to be shortchanged.

As well, I do not like, as a teacher myself, the implications that flow fast from this government on occasion that teachers are lazy or that teachers are incompetent or that teachers are somehow conspiring against this government. I think teachers, and I have been a teacher, Madam Speaker, for 25 or 30 years, by and large tend to be almost neutral in terms of politics. The fact that teachers are so agitated now and so angry now, not just on this particular bill but other education bills, shows that this government has hit a raw nerve.

I think you cannot advocate almost an all-out war with teachers and expect to win that war. That was tried in Saskatchewan, I remember, under Ross Thatcher when he said the same kinds of things about teachers that I sometimes hear from members opposite, especially the

Minister of Education (Mrs. McIntosh) now, you know, almost the insinuation that teachers are lazy or incompetent, not willing to work or do not care. That is not true because, as a teacher, I know full well the number of years it takes to become qualified, the cost associated with that, the enormous debts we incur and trying to pay off those debts, the hours that we put into this profession, not just the 9 to 3:30. That is only one aspect of it.

Very seldom do people or do parents or do politicians—are aware or do they see the fact that teachers are also there from seven o'clock at night to midnight, and I can tell you, Madam Speaker, in the 25 years that I taught English I remember being at that school every Monday night, Tuesday night, Wednesday night, Thursday night and Sunday afternoons. Now, I am not bragging about that because all my fellow teachers did the same thing. So I take exception to the fact that sometimes members opposite make teachers feel as if they are overpaid, lazy, almost semibureaucrats that do not do much other than collect their pay cheque on their way to the cottage. I resent that because it is untrue. There is a tendency in this bill to strengthen that misperception of teachers.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, if I can talk about broad terms, the centralizing of education that this minister is bent upon is not a good thing, because education really does need input from parents and does need input from all stakeholders. We do not want to make the minister the final arbiter. The minister appears to say on the one hand, parent councils are important, parents are important, yet on the other hand the legislation puts enormous powers into her hands or into the hands of top bureaucrats.

It may look efficient but I do not think it is good education, and some of the efforts in the past that the minister has, you know, championed, as well as other ministers, for example, the amalgamation of school divisions, the sort of regional concept, may sound sensible in one level but in reality does not work. It certainly did not work for northern school divisions and for many rural school divisions, and in fact there were a number of teachers in Snow Lake as well as a number of school trustees who took exception to that direction, amalgamating school divisions and taking away local control and local sensitivity, which the community needs and trustees and councilors need. Manitobans want local

control and they want to be sensitive and they want an educational system where there is direct input. They do not want a top-down hierarchical system.

Thirdly, Madam Speaker, and our Education critic has pointed this out in great detail and spoken eloquently upon this point, is that there seems to be a market philosophy underlying the direction that this government wishes to take education. That is, education is seen as an extension of the marketplace. In fact, my honourable colleague from St. James just mentioned an example a few minutes ago. Well, I hate to disappoint the members opposite, but education is not an extension of the market system. We are trying to teach children, and part of teaching children means that they should have critical thought. We cannot make them automatic little gadgets that fit into an industrial system.

When I see the direction that this government takes, where there is a close wedding of education with corporations and more and more corporate financing being involved in education, I have some concern, because the objective aspect needed in education seems to be removed. One of the things that I lament especially as a high school teacher, Madam Speaker, is that the critical thinking that we once taught in high schools is no longer there, not because teachers do not want it taught but because they are forced into—I would not use the word “forced” but gently directed into—a kind of a curriculum that does not allow for that very much anymore. Instead there is tremendous emphasis upon being productive in a particular kind of market environment, and I have nothing against that. Of course, we want our children employed, but we also want children that can critically think and that can make choices because, if they cannot do that, they are not going to vote in the kinds of governments that will look after their own best interests.

So we want a quality public education system. We do not want an elitist system. We do not want a system where there are a few good schools at the top that all the parents want to put their kids into, and the rest of us, the great gray unwashed, have to do with what is left. We want serious attention being paid and serious money being put into a public education system, and we want our teachers treated with a lot more respect and a lot more, shall we say, almost reverence than this government is willing to do. It does not benefit this government to try a frontal attack on teachers because, I

will guarantee you, they will be the best organizers against this government.

So with that I would like to end, just stressing once again, we want a quality public education system. We do not want to put our effort, our money and our energy into systems that are just for the rich, not for all Manitobans. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is third reading Bill 47, The Public Schools Amendment Act. Is it the will of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Madam Speaker: Agreed and so ordered.

Bill 49—The Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Mitchelson), that (Bill 49) The Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act; Loi concernant les offices régionaux de la santé et apportant des modifications corrélatives, be now read a third time and passed.

Motion presented.

Mr. Conrad Santos (Broadway): Madam Speaker, I would like to put a few remarks on Bill 49, The Regional Health Authorities and Consequential Amendments Act.

This act is unique in the sense that it gives power to the cabinet, acting through the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), to establish health regions in this province and within each region to establish health authorities. The authorities are supposed to be run by a board and a chief executive officer, who is either elected or appointed by the minister. The authorities as a decision-making body within the health region are given some duties to submit health plans for the approval of the minister. They can also acquire, by lease, properties and facilities to facilitate their duties in providing the delivery of health care services. If the money is provided by the government, they can provide the health services needed,

but they can also provide other services beyond those that are provided for by the financial support of the government, provided that they themselves can come up with some other money or funding to finance those other services.

* (1610)

In this bill, a commissioner may be appointed by the cabinet, sort of a superduper official who is given absolute power to recommend changes in the kind of relationship between labour and management so as to accommodate the transition to the so-called new system of health care delivery service. This commissioner is the epitome of a grant of power without any limit because the commissioner, as my colleague the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) says, occupies a position of a dictator as far as organization and labour relations.

Point of Order

Hon. Brian Pallister (Minister of Government Services): I believe the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) might like to retract that statement, as it is unparliamentary, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Broadway, on the same point of order.

Mr. Santos: I am not speaking of my own thinking. I quoted my member from Flin Flon. He said it is a dictator. I do not want to—but if it is an opinion, it is an opinion, and anybody can express opinion in this Assembly.

An Honourable Member: Not in unparliamentary terms, one cannot.

Mr. Santos: It is in the Hansard. I would go further, Madam Speaker, I would say that our system of government in this country under the existing arrangement is nothing but a constitutional dictatorship. Let me explain.

Madam Speaker: Order, please. Is the honourable member still speaking to the point of order, because I have not ruled on the point of order?

Mr. Santos: Madam Speaker—[interjection]

Madam Speaker: Okay. I have not ruled on the point of order, but I would remind the honourable member for Broadway to pick and choose his words carefully. I did not carefully hear the context in which the word was used. I can only assume and hope that it was not used to specifically identify an honourable member.

* * *

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Broadway, to continue debate.

Mr. Santos: Madam Speaker, I quoted my colleague from Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen) saying that the commissioner occupies a position equivalent to that of a dictator. I am not talking about any member of this House. I am talking of the position of the commissioner as appointed under Bill 49, and there is nothing unparliamentary about that, because of the extensive power given under the statute to the role of the commissioner.

This commissioner is given a power in the context of transition of the organization of health care delivery system from the present system to a system of regional health authorities, but the transition is not specified how long this transition will be. How long is the absolute power of the commissioner? I recall my study of communist ideology. [interjection] A study, not participation. I know the member—[interjection] Yes. They said that when there is a need for a radical change in society, during the transition period in which the capitalist system will be converted into a classless society, the Communist Party will hold power.

This is exactly the occupation and the role assigned to the commissioner, and that transition may be an everlasting kind of period. There is no set time for the commissioner to exercise this absolute power. It is well known, Madam Speaker, the danger of power. Lord Acton said: Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.

Anybody who is placed in a position of the commissioner and given absolute power without any limit will be corrupted by that power. Being human as we are, we are not immune to all the privileges and all the perquisites of power.

The commissioner is even given some power and protection of a commissioner appointed under The Manitoba Evidence Act. The commissioner has the power to summon witnesses. He has the power to require witnesses to give evidence, to produce documents and other things necessary for a full investigation. The commissioner can enter upon any premises for the purpose of inquiry. He can issue warrants where the witness subpoenaed to appear neglected to appear or refuses to appear. These are all powers granted to the position of the commissioner created by the legislation. His recommendation may even overrule and substitute for the recommendations of the Manitoba Labour Relations Board. The appeal from the commissioner's recommendation is placed entirely in the authority of the commissioner himself. How can a person in the position of absolute power ever, ever reverse himself without losing face? That is not simply possible.

So the arrangement itself is flawed and weird. How can I appeal from my own decision and then myself reverse my own decision? I would never do that because I would be losing integrity and consistency. The same thing with this role of the commissioner. If an appeal procedure has to be instituted and be provided for, it should be an appeal to a different, higher level of authority, not to the same person. This is like being the sovereign appealing to himself. There is no such thing in our democratic system. This is a weird kind of arrangement.

Moreover, there is another setup here which says the regulations made under this act supersede The Labour Relations Act in any regulations or proceedings made under The Labour Relations Act. Think about it. There is this proposed Bill 49, then a regulation will be formulated under this statute if this statute passes. But that very regulation, which is a lower level of legislation, will supersede a statutory provision, the provision of the Manitoba Labour Relations Act. This is weird. Rules and regulations adopted under the act derive their force and authority from the act itself. Without the act the rules and regulations have no basis and, yet, the rules and regulations, which are just extensions of the provisions of another statute, will supersede and repeal an existing ~~fundamental~~ statute, which is The Labour Relations Act. What an indirect way of an institutional arrangement which cannot be justified at all.

It says a regulation made under the act has the same force and effect as certification and other decisions made by the Manitoba Labour Relations Board. The Manitoba Labour Relations Board is an independent body. It is set up by the Manitoba Labour Relations Act. It is representation from management and representation from labour. They make decisions by weighing all competing claims. That is the setup in the Manitoba Labour Relations Act in order to find some kind of decision.

* (1620)

And yet this one man, one person, who can appeal only to himself, can supersede the decisions of the Manitoba Labour Relations Act. This is dictatorship being entrenched in a particular statute in the form of the office of the commissioner. But moreover, it says, and may be made effective retroactively to a date specified in the regulations. If the regulations make certain rules reversing decisions, settled decisions of the Manitoba Labour Relations Act, the effect of the rule can even go backward in time in retroactive application of a decision.

This is wrong again. Retroactivity is hardly justifiable in any kind of democratic system. That is changing the rules of the game after the game is already over. That is changing all the setup and all the rules and arrangements after things have already settled and then applying it backwards when people who had entered into such arrangements before had relied on other rules existing at the time they entered into the arrangement.

This is unjust. This is unfair. Retroactivity can only be justified in very, very few cases. So what we are talking about here is the abuse, or potential abuse, of power because of the very setup in the office of the commissioner envisioned by this legislation.

What is happening here is that by instituting a single office, the evolution of the relationship between labour and management which has been there as a matter of gradual changes across the years in the reconciliation of the conflicting claims of labour and management is now being subrogated into and being determined by a single person who had no legitimate source of authority. In fact, he is appointed by the Minister of Health.

We should understand that labour and management are two centres of power in our society that are all the time

trying to compete in terms of their influence how it will affect our lives, our fortune, our future. It is the task of any government to be the umpire in this kind of silent competition and struggle for influence and power in the determination of the affairs of the members of society.

Joined in harmony, labour and capital can produce good results. Divorced from each other and placed in position of antagonism, it can stifle many values of society. Placed in confrontation with each other, they begin to destroy one another and there is no economic progress. There is no salvation for mankind in such a road of confrontation and self-destruction. Rather they should be able to co-operate, because it is only in co-operation between these two centres of power that we may advance our industrial relations legislation in the workplace, particularly in the field of delivery of health care services.

So what we are objecting to here is the absolute power that is granted to the office of the commissioner, and that is precisely the beginning of the death knell for a system of democracy in the workplace.

Those who are placed in a position to rule society should be always aware of the complication that is introduced to the relationship among human beings of the unequal position in this bargaining for influence how to determine things in our social, political and other aspect of our lives.

The real concept of democracy is not that every person should be equal to every other person, because that is not simply physically possible. There are persons who are born with more talents and more skill than others. There are people who have more grasp of situations than others. That cannot be remedied, but that everyone should have a liberty to achieve the highest level of development that he could possibly achieve to become what one can possibly become as an individual.

You cannot put a person in any box and say, he is a Liberal, he is a Conservative, he is this, he is that, he is left, he is right. There is no such thing. It depends from issue to issue. Democracy is designed so that the rights of all the people can be maintained. Those who have wealth, those who have none, those who have power, those who have none, those who are abandoned, those who are occupying positions of influence, everyone has

a role to play in our society, but these are not fixed boxes by which you can slot people. Whether you say, he is in the left, he is in the right, he is in the centre, these are our lingo that has no meaning. It depends from case to case.

In politics, stupidity is not a handicap, but it is a sad affair if those who make decisions occupy that category compared to those who have more political and social knowledge.

We are servants of the people that we serve, those who elected us to positions of stewardship and responsibility and accountability. We occupy roles in our institutional arrangement to which we can be elected, to which we can be appointed whenever circumstances demand. Only when we become true to the ideal of our system by pursuing the good of everyone can we be said to be doing what is in the public interest. The moment we abuse any of our privileges and our powers, there will be a repercussion, which means that we have lost the legitimacy to perform the public function to which we are elected or appointed. But, given a choice, it is always better to elect people rather than appoint them because it is an election that everyone, every member of any group, is given some kind of opportunity of choice. But, when that is not possible, then appointment can be justified. The position of the commissioner—

Madam Speaker: Order please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for Broadway (Mr. Santos) will have nine minutes remaining.

The hour being 4:30 p.m., the honourable government House leader.

House Business

Hon. Jim Ernst (Government House Leader): Madam Speaker, it is a matter of House business. The Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources is sitting tonight to consider Bill 67. It will be called again for tomorrow morning at nine o'clock in the event that it is necessary.

Madam Speaker: The Standing Committee of Public Utilities and Natural Resources, sitting this evening to consider Bill 67, will reconvene and meet at 9 a.m.,

Wednesday, November 6, if necessary, to continue to consider Bill 67.

* (1630)

The hour being 4:30 p.m. and time for private members' hour.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS
DEBATE ON THIRD READINGS—
PRIVATE BILLS

Bill 300—The Salvation Army Catherine Booth Bible College Incorporation Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), Bill 300, The Salvation Army Catherine Booth Bible College Incorporation Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi constituant en corporation le Collège biblique Catherine Booth de l'Armée du Salut), standing in the name of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS—
PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 200—The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), Bill 200, The Health Services Insurance Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'assurance-maladie), standing in the name of the honourable Minister of Northern and Native Affairs (Mr. Praznik).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 201—The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Rupertsland (Mr. Robinson), (Bill 201), The Aboriginal Solidarity Day Act (Loi sur le jour de solidarité à l'égard des autochtones), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau).

Is there leave to permit the bill to remain standing? [agreed]

Bill 203—The Public Assets Protection Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), Bill 203, The Public Assets Protection Act (Loi sur la protection des biens publics), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau). Stand? [agreed]

Bill 205—The Dutch Elm Disease Amendment Act

Madam Speaker: On the proposed motion of the honourable member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), Bill 205, The Dutch Elm Disease Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur la thyllose parasitaire de l'orme), standing in the name of the honourable member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau), who has 11 minutes remaining. Stand? [agreed]

SECOND READINGS—PUBLIC BILLS

Bill 202—The Home Care Protection and Consequential Amendments Act

Madam Speaker: Bill 202, The Home Care Protection and Consequential Amendments Act (Loi concernant la protection des soins à domicile et apportant des modifications corrélatives).

Committee Changes

Mr. George Hickey (Point Douglas): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations be amended as follows: Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) for Tuesday, November 5, for 4:30 p.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Broadway, that we rescind the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations, to be amended as follows: Burrows (Mr. Martindale) for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) for Tuesday, November 5, for 6:30 p.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations be amended as follows: Burrows (Mr. Martindale for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) for Tuesday, November 5, 6:30 p.m.

I move, seconded by the member for Broadway (Mr. Santos), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources be amended as follows: The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) for Selkirk (Mr. Dewar) for Tuesday, November 5 for 6:30 p.m. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Motions agreed to.

PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

Res. 21—Provincial AIDS Strategy

Ms. Diane McGifford (Osborne): I move, seconded by the member for Flin Flon (Mr. Jennissen), that

WHEREAS Manitoba is one of only two provinces without an AIDS Strategy; and

WHEREAS Health and Welfare Canada estimated that one in a 1,000 people are HIV positive, and further estimates that by the year 2000, one in four people living in the North will be infected; and

WHEREAS in 1990, two women in Manitoba were diagnosed HIV positive, but by June 1995, that number had increased to 37 which is a percentage increase of well over 1,800 percent over five years; and

WHEREAS despite the rising number of AIDS cases in Manitoba, the number of Manitoba Health staff assigned to deal with AIDS has been reduced from the equivalent of five full-time positions in 1985 to a situation now where two physicians work on the issue part time; and

WHEREAS senior health officials have said that Manitoba's health system has been reduced to the point where "the Ministry of Health lacks the ability to deal with epidemics"; and

WHEREAS there are still widespread misconceptions about AIDS; and

WHEREAS these misconceptions about AIDS are damaging to affected groups and individuals, and hamper education and prevention initiatives by community groups that are currently underway; and

WHEREAS the financial costs associated with treatment for a person infected with HIV/AIDS from diagnosis to death have been estimated in excess of \$150,000, but some research estimates that the cost could be as high as \$1 million for each person who dies as a result of contracting AIDS when the economic and social costs are factored in; and

WHEREAS there are a number of issues which the Minister's Advisory Committee on AIDS has asked the Minister to deal with including street outreach to vulnerable populations; the impact of AIDS in aboriginal communities, where numbers of infected individuals have been forecasted to reach epidemic proportions; and AIDS within the prison population; and

WHEREAS these issues cannot be adequately addressed without enhanced funding and staff resources; and

WHEREAS there is a strong public interest in developing and implementing an AIDS Strategy for Manitoba immediately which deals with: a) education and prevention, b) care and treatment, and c) research.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the provincial government to consider developing an active partnership with the community to discuss and implement a three-pronged AIDS Strategy immediately dealing with: a) education and prevention, b) care and treatment, and c) research; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Assembly urge the provincial government to consider providing adequate funding and staff resources to fight this terrible disease in Manitoba.

Motion presented.

* (1640)

Ms. McGifford: Madam Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak on this resolution today. It has been with us for quite some time, and I believe it was

in December 1995 that I first submitted the resolution, and because of this I want to begin by noting some small statistical, or large statistical changes to the original resolution. First of all, in Clause 3, I would like to point out that by June 1996, that number had increased to 51 which is a percentage increase of well over 2,500 percent, and further on down in the WHEREAS No. 8 the new cost as estimated is \$180,000 as opposed to \$150,000.

I would also like to point out that the minister has now produced a document entitled Manitoba's Provincial AIDS Strategy, and I will return to that document towards the end of my presentation.

I want to now add to the facts and concepts presented in the resolution as fuel for the need of a strategy, and I add the following points:

1. One in 10,000 Canadians is living with AIDS; one in 1,000 Canadians is HIV positive.

I want to note here that there is some controversy over when HIV becomes AIDS. There is a table of indicators, and there is a controversy surrounding how many indicators are necessary before an individual is said to have AIDS. This presents some difficulties for women because some of the indicators for women are different from men, and they are not always in the table, but really the point here is that there are 10 times as many individuals in Canada, and presumably in Manitoba there are 10 times as many individuals who are diagnosed HIV positive as have been diagnosed with AIDS, but these individuals will go on to get AIDS and will go on to die from AIDS.

Second fact. Some experts estimate that in Manitoba 1,500 people are HIV positive and do not know it. That is to say, there are 1,500 cases of HIV, but the persons who have it do not know it; health authorities do not know it. These people are living in our province and in many cases may be spreading the disease.

Fact three. AIDS is a women's issue. Women can and do get AIDS and pass it on to their children. Women desperately need education when it comes to AIDS. I was speaking to a public health nurse earlier today who told me that she has heard from many young women who believe that by taking a birth control pill they are also protecting themselves from AIDS, and this is truly

shocking and certainly absolutely terrifying. AIDS is increasing three times more quickly among Canadian women than it is among Canadian men, and the point that I want to make here is that AIDS is ceasing to be a disease of gay and bisexual men and is certainly now a disease of women. AIDS takes the lives of more Canadian men than diabetes, kidney disease and chronic lung disease. AIDS is completely preventable, as it is passed only through sharing I.V. drug equipment, receiving tainted blood. It can be passed from a woman to her child while the child is in utero or also through breast milk; and, last, AIDS is passed through unprotected sex. I do not think we need to go into that in a lot of detail right now.

The latest statistics from Manitoba Health on HIV-AIDS, and these are the statistics as of June 30, 1996. The stats come out twice a year, at the end of June and at the end of December. Anyway, the latest statistics show that from June 1, 1985, to June 30, 1996, a total of 530 persons were diagnosed in Manitoba as HIV positive. They show that from January 1, 1996, to June 30, 1996, eight men and seven women were diagnosed as HIV positive, which is really an incredible increase in the number of HIV-positive women. Again, I want to remind members of the House, and especially the minister, that HIV-positive women are likely to have HIV-positive children and the health consequences are enormous. Not to mention the emotional trauma, the physical suffering, the devastating effects on families, what happens if you are HIV positive is eventually you die and I think dying children have a particular poignancy. It upsets the balance of nature. It is not what we are used to. It certainly is not what we want.

The facts alone I think cry for a major AIDS strategy which includes, as we have said in the resolution, education and prevention, care and treatment and, of course, research, but we need to consider several other aspects of HIV-AIDS which necessitate a really multidimensional and multidirectional approach with regards to an HIV-AIDS strategy. For example, I think most of us recognize the stigma which continues to affect those living with HIV-AIDS, whether this stigma is externally generated or whether it is internally generated, and I know it is both external and internal.

People living with AIDS, or people who are HIV positive, are frequently spoken of as the lepers of the 20th

Century. They are often deserted by their families or their real illness is covered up either by themselves or by their families and, therefore, supports from communities and supports from organizations, from groups outside the family, are absolutely essential since the care is not always there within the family. For example, I can remember when I worked in the AIDS community a young woman who was living in Winnipeg with three children, she was HIV positive. She was getting sicker. She refused to tell her family of her real illness, because she was afraid her family would turn their backs on her and desert her. She was forced, therefore, to depend on community AIDS service organizations for emotional support, for child care, for help with housework, for help with buying the groceries, other shopping, cooking and cleaning really for her entire life and for the lives of her children or the care of her children, I suppose, to be more accurate.

I remember a young man who died in a rooming house. His only furniture was a mattress on the floor. He had a couple of boxes for his clothes. He had no telephone. He had little sense of how to access services. He had no help from his family, who lived on a very distant reservation, and as far as I know, the family may not even have known of his illness because this young man, like many others living with HIV-AIDS, was quite ashamed to discuss the state of his health.

I think it is important when we talk about an AIDS strategy for us to remember that HIV-AIDS is a roller-coaster illness, that some days an individual can be extremely healthy and this can be followed by periods of terrible illness and even hospitalization. This makes regular employment for somebody living with HIV-AIDS extremely difficult. It often leads individuals in need of community support regarding advocacy for housing, for social assistance and sometimes with health care providers.

To ask a question—and this is happening with people living with AIDS, AIDS is more and more becoming a chronic disease rather than an illness which kills somebody quickly. So as AIDS more and more becomes a chronic illness, as persons living with HIV-AIDS live longer and as services become harder to access, consider for example the possible effects of Bill 36 on people living with HIV-AIDS.

In circumstances like this, the question of who decides when a person living with HIV or AIDS is no longer employable is extremely important. It is extremely important who decides whether that person still has to apply for 15 jobs every social assistance cycle. Who decides? Especially when an individual may appear very well one day and two days later the individual may be extremely ill and even hospitalized. So it is a very, very important decision who makes these kinds of decisions.

I want to move on from here to the kinds of care that are currently available. I first want to indicate that most AIDS service organizations include either staff or volunteers who are living with HIV-AIDS. Sometimes both staff and volunteers are living with HIV-AIDS. These people give thousands and thousands of volunteer work to public education, to providing care and support, to offering a range of administrative, managerial, policy-making services and also to fund-raising for their community and for the services that they need. Truly in the HIV community, the consumers are often the providers, and it is extremely important to remember not only the model they give to us all or serve for us all, but also the level of expertise existing among the consumers, Madam Speaker.

* (1650)

People living with HIV-AIDS really know what they need, really know what they want and absolutely must be consulted at every stage of an AIDS strategy. As to the care that is available, I do not want to speak a lot about the medical care. There is care available from physicians, private physicians and from the Village Clinic. We have excellent HIV-AIDS nurses in Winnipeg, Jocelyn Preston at St. Boniface, Margaret Ormond at the Village Clinic, Anne Russell at the Health Sciences Centre.

There are several centres which offer pre- and post-test counselling. The medical care is available, though my contacts in the community tell me that because the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae), who is going through the motions of showing interest in AIDS, because he has virtually turned his back on the community, that in Manitoba, and I quote, we are so very, very far behind in equipment, services, drugs, programs, treatments and facilities.

At this point I think it is important for us to salute the dedicated health care professionals and make the point that they cannot get blood out of a stone.

I mentioned the life-saving drug program, which of course has now been cancelled and which was always extraordinarily difficult to access in any case, but I think it is important to make the point that people living in the AIDS community are now quite naturally living in fear of future delistings of very necessary medications and pharmaceuticals.

Currently there are several AIDS service organizations available working in Winnipeg and around the province. There is the AIDS Shelter Coalition of Manitoba which is essentially responsible for creating the Artemis Housing Co-op, providing advocacy work, shelter, income security and, laterally, I understand providing food and clothing.

Pardon me, Madam Speaker. Are you indicating that I have two minutes? Well, I have much more to say than I possibly can in two minutes.

Perhaps in that case what I will do is, I want to briefly turn to Manitoba's provincial AIDS strategy. I want to point out that this AIDS strategy really began when the Krever inquiry was in Winnipeg and made clear that this government's record with regard to HIV-AIDS from 1985 to 1988 had been almost nonexistent. I am shamed by this public revelation the government has had about developing the AIDS strategy.

Now, to comment on the strategy itself, it is like certain hamburgers so thin that it has holes in it. I believe it to be a grand hoax, a public exercise and absolute, pure hypocrisy. When I read the introduction attributed to the minister, the cant and coyness, the utter hypocrisy of this introduction made me feel like J.A. Macdonald was reputed to feel after drinking too much gin.

To illustrate my point, this publication consists of 11.25 pages of text. There is not one full page. There are lots of graphs taking up spaces. Six pages are a prelude to the actual document, and I would say they are a very swaggering prelude. The whole thing is of course couched in politically correct language with proper nods from time to time to those living with HIV-AIDS and to their caregivers.

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

Ms. McGifford: May I ask for leave?

Madam Speaker: Does the honourable member have leave to continue? [agreed]

Ms. McGifford: I thank members of the House for giving me leave to continue.

I was talking about the whole document being couched in politically correct language. The strategy recognizes, as of course it should, that HIV-AIDS can be related to poverty and racism, that AIDS is a social disease insofar as persons living with HIV-AIDS are stigmatized, sometimes viewed as the modern equivalent of lepers, as we have already said.

The strategy apart from its sparsity makes sense. Why would it not? It reflects the views of the persons living with AIDS, their families, their caregivers. It is the condensation of 150 recommendations produced by a round table. It has feedback from 300 key persons and organizations in Manitoba and of course members of the minister's advisory council on AIDS. This strategy reflects the ideas, the recommendations and the experience of persons involved in providing care for those living with AIDS.

I was present at the round table that first met in November 1994 and at some of the subsequent meetings, and I know the research and the work that went into the discussion papers. I remember the minister's staff very carefully researching from provincial jurisdictions across Canada and producing the AIDS strategies in all the other provinces which had already developed their strategies, progressive jurisdictions like B.C. and Saskatchewan and like Ontario used to be, but I know too from being at that round table the skepticism that many persons felt. Many persons at the round table had little faith that anything serious would happen and, personally, I still do, for a paper is just a paper, and who is certain what will become of this paper?

It sounds to me like Manitoba Health is saying, here is the strategy, here is the information, here are the ideas, here are the visions, here is how to do it, indeed, here is how it must be done. The paper speaks of organizations,

agencies, regional health authorities and jurisdictions being responsible for planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating their programs without touching on the very simple fact that these very AIDS service agencies in Manitoba will not be running after March 31, 1998, because they are running on federal money. They have never had a cent from this province and there will not be any federal money left after March 31, 1998.

So the big question, Madam Speaker, is, who is going to pay? Where is the money coming from?

Now, the House has already indulged me, and I do not really want to press my luck, but I do want to tell the minister that I look forward to one day eating my words, publicly apologizing, but today, as far as I can see, this AIDS strategy is another broken promise, even worse, I think, because it is setting up the sick and dying, pretending that there really is a plan to provide them with care when indeed, if there is not any money, the care simply is not possible. As far as I am concerned then, this strategy may be politics at its worst, and, quite frankly, I find it disgusting.

With those words, I will take my seat and leave it to the minister.

Committee Changes

Madam Speaker: The honourable member for Gimli, with committee changes.

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the member for La Verendrye (Mr. Sveinson), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Public Utilities and Natural Resources for Wednesday, November 6, at 9 a.m., be amended as follows: the member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) for the member for Portage (Mr. Pallister); the member for Gladstone (Mr. Rocan) for the member for Ste. Rose (Mr. Cummings).

Motion agreed to.

* * *

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Health): Madam Speaker, the honourable member for Osborne (Ms.

McGifford) has some significant experience in dealing with issues related to HIV-AIDS, dealing with people involved with this particular terrible disease, and that is acknowledged. Her continuing contribution by way of advocacy is also acknowledged. The resolution put before this House by the honourable member exemplifies that continuing commitment on her part, which is appreciated.

The honourable member quite rightly updated the resolution she has placed before the House, and with respect to the economic impact of HIV-AIDS from diagnosis to death referred to by the honourable member, indeed, the total economic impact may range as high as a million dollars for each person who contracts AIDS when all costs are factored in, that is not to mention the human factor, Madam Speaker.

* (1700)

The resolution calls for the development of an active partnership with the community to discuss and implement an AIDS strategy, and that process did indeed go forward as set out, to some extent, by the honourable member, culminating in the release of the provincial AIDS strategy on July 4 of this year. That, too, was acknowledged by the honourable member. So certainly the initial comments of the honourable member are appreciated and helpful. The later comments, including those made after the honourable member was given leave by this House to exceed the time allotted to her, were somewhat, in my view, less helpful, nonetheless uttered with all of the right intentions, and so I will attempt not to take any personal offence by the comments made by the honourable member. I say that perhaps also on behalf of all of those people who have been involved in the development of the Manitoba AIDS strategy. The comments made by the honourable member, which were critical near the end of her presentation, could as easily be applied to myself as to all of the other people who were involved in the development of the Provincial AIDS strategy. So on their behalf, if not on my own, I will express regret that the honourable member chose to wind up her comments in the way that she did.

It might be of help to the House if I were to refer to the partnership-building references in the Provincial AIDS Strategy document as follows: 'When HIV-AIDS first appeared in the mid- 1980s, it became clear that many

issues and concerns needed to be addressed. As time passed and the virus and disease became better understood, it was evident that to cope with HIV-AIDS we should need more than just sound scientific or medical knowledge. Manitoba Health responded to the first appearance of HIV-AIDS by introducing the surveillance and monitoring system to determine how HIV was being spread in Manitoba. The department developed initiatives to alert both the general public and target communities. Education programs were also developed for physicians and nurses who would be providing care and support to persons infected and affected by HIV.

These departmental activities were conducted by Manitoba Health staff already devoted to the control of sexually transmitted diseases, since HIV was and is primarily a sexually transmitted disease. Activists in the gay community responded to the threat of HIV by developing innovative education and prevention programs.

In the early 1980s, long before Horace Krever, Manitoba Health funded the Winnipeg Gay/Lesbian clinic which later became the Village Clinic. Recognizing the uniqueness of HIV disease, Manitoba Health established an advisory committee in 1985, again, long before Horace Krever, to address the prevention of HIV infection and other concerns. The committee included representatives from the gay community, the medical community and the department.

Although education and prevention activities were occurring in the gay community, most Manitobans had limited access to information on this new disease. In 1988 and again in 1994, Manitoba Health launched multimedia public awareness campaigns. By 1994, I suggest, Horace Krever was at work, but certainly all of the things that I have referred to so far, Madam Speaker, happened long before Horace Krever. In fact, days after my appointment as Minister of Health in 1993, I was part of the group of ministers in Canada who mandated Horace Krever to do the work that he has been doing. The references to only because of Horace Krever's urgings have certain steps been taken are quite incorrect, and the honourable member knows better than to say that, but she said it anyway. That is the kind of thing that is not helpful in a logical or rational discussion about such a serious issue.

In order to better understand the needs of persons at risk of infection and those already infected, two formal community consultations were conducted in 1989-90. The ad hoc committees on prevention and care and treatment made recommendations, several of which have been implemented.

Prevention and education projects of the past five years have included theatre for youth, peer programs for post-secondary students, outreach to street youth and sex trade workers, and the telephone information line which is still in operation. These projects have been aimed at both the general public and those at greater risk.

To facilitate a more co-ordinated approach to caring for clients in hospital and the community, three nurse co-ordinator positions were established, one each at the Village Clinic, Health Sciences Centre and St. Boniface Hospital, to which again the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) referred.

Together, we have accomplished much, Madam Speaker, and to listen to the honourable member, you certainly would not think so. But it is on this success that we must now continue to build. The honourable member suggests nothing has been done and nothing will be done, and I just simply cannot accept that. There are too many people who have been involved in the process thus far for any risk of the honourable member's suggestions—any risk that the honourable member's forecast might somehow come true. There is a shift in the incidence of the disease and the honourable member is aware of that shift. There is a shift in the needs of people at risk and those infected, and the work of the Minister's Advisory Committee on AIDS has been much appreciated by myself and by the department.

Unfortunately for us all, the honourable member's very unkind comments today take no account of the work that has been done and take no account of those other people in our community who are committed to the issues that the honourable member says she is committed to. And I say I do not doubt her commitment, I just have a strong sense that an unkind attitude really does not help in helping us move forward with these things, and that is exactly the kind of attitude that especially people already infected with HIV-AIDS do not need. It is at times like that in their lives when a kinder attitude is something that I believe would be far more helpful and is more likely to

get things done, get the kinds of services that they need to them when they need it most. You do not always achieve a co-operative and successful outcome simply by being unkind every time you get an opportunity to discuss an issue.

This is the kind of issue that ought to transcend the kind of cheap partisanship that sometimes characterizes the way we behave ourselves in this Chamber, Madam Speaker, and on behalf of all those who suffer from HIV-AIDS or those in the future who might be in that very unhappy position, I express my regret, and if I may on behalf of this whole House express regret for the positions that are sometimes taken in this place.

* (1710)

The honourable member in her resolution calls for an AIDS strategy that deals with education and prevention, care and treatment and research. Those are all items that are the framework, the main focus of the AIDS strategy. So I think that makes it clear that there have been people who have been listening to the types of points of view put forward by the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford).

The goals of the strategy are to reduce the spread of HIV infection, an obvious goal, an obvious thing to attempt to do. Another goal is to provide a continuum of compassionate prevention, care, treatment and support programs for persons at risk of and infected or affected by HIV-AIDS.

Here again the honourable member put forward herself the services that are in place and available today, so that the strategy is indeed something that is an ongoing thing. It is not something that just popped up because the honourable member put down a resolution in this Legislature, Madam Speaker. In fact, the resolution is basically dated, of little use because it has already been accomplished and, instead of being the subject of such unkindness on the part of the honourable member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford), ought to have been withdrawn by the honourable member for Osborne with the expression of the hope that the work goes forward, which is exactly what I am here to do today, to express that hope and to offer the leadership of the government of Manitoba to make sure that the goals set out in the AIDS strategy for Manitoba are indeed carried forward by this

government in the conduct of the Department of Health and the other departments that have also been part of the development of the strategy. Thirdly, there ought to be a facilitation of the planning, delivery and evaluation of all programs and efforts to ensure that they are guided by a Healthy Public Policy philosophy. The strategy deals with the very issues referred to by the honourable member, and if we could strip away the unkindness on the part of the honourable member, I think we would be in a better position to move forward.

Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood): Madam Speaker, it is with no pleasure at all that I put some comments on the record in this regard, in regard to my honourable colleague's appropriate resolution. The patronizing paternalism of the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) in regard to being nice is not something that would go down well in any centre in which people living with HIV or AIDS would dwell.

I have been to too many funerals. I have been to too many funerals of friends who have died of AIDS. I have been to too many meetings of voluntary associations who have tried to get this government to respond with even modest small grants to enable them to meet at least some small portion of the costs of the services they provide. I spent at least five meetings with officials of this minister's department in the early 1990s, when I was the Chair of the Manitoba AIDS Shelter Coalition. I met with his official, Ms. Lampe, now retired, I met with his official, Ms. Matusko, who is still there, I met with the medical officer of health, and we were told there is money aside for you. Madam Speaker, not a nickel, not a single nickel flowed to the organizations who were trying to make compassionate shelter available for people living with HIV-AIDS.

While we met and talked and talked and met and met and talked and talked some more, some of the people who were involved with that project died. So, when this patronizing minister stands up and tells my honourable friend to be kind, I would suggest that he go to the AIDS Shelter Coalition, to Kali Shiva, to Village Clinic, and meet with their clients and say, be kind to us, we are getting on with it, we are getting a strategy. But they are dying. They do not have to be kind to anybody who has made their last years less tolerable, less just, less compassionate than they might otherwise have been. So, if there is any offence to be taken, it is not here in this

House among members who know all too well that, yes, in this House, posturing takes place. If there is offence, the offence is on behalf of those who have lived and died with AIDS, who have worked on their behalf in the community, who have met and spent countless hours trying to find just, compassionate and healing services that could find some funding from this Minister of Health and his predecessor, Mr. Orchard.

Madam Speaker, to term this document a strategy is to give whole new meaning to the English language. First of all, the document itself is eight pages of history with which we would take little exception. Most of it is true; some of it needs a bit updating, but most of it is true.

Finally, on page 11, we get the strategy. This strategy, so-called, was the subject of numerous federal conferences, international conferences, provincial working groups, private groups meeting, studies, and all of this was written by 1989. When I became chair of the AIDS Shelter Coalition of Manitoba, documents with these words in it were all readily available. The interlinking of income support, health maintenance, shelter, prevention, education, nonstigmatizing treatment, the role of research, all those things were known. All of them had been written about. The literature was already full of such wind and words. The difference is, Madam Speaker, some jurisdictions took them seriously and put into practice things that might implement some of these lofty goals.

Madam Speaker, a strategy is not words on paper. A strategy is not a promise to do something that for eight years we have known needed to be done. A strategy is action. A strategy is sitting down with those community groups that are at the very bottom of this lovely chart on page 17, underneath everything else, but in fact they are the only things that make life bearable for people living with AIDS. A strategy supports those organizations.

The minister talked about the Village Clinic. It was funded under an NDP government. It has had to fight for its life against this minister's attempts to put it out of business, to roll it into some other organization, to cut back its funding.

Madam Speaker, the first guidelines for dealing with employees of this government who are HIV positive were developed under the NDP government and were

implemented during the last stages of life and the death of an employee of this government who was an employee of the Department of Education during the time in which I was the Assistant Deputy Minister of Education. Much educational work was done not by me and not through me but through my colleague who was the person responsible for community relations and education work, who is now the Education officer of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees.

* (1720)

Madam Speaker, this is not a strategy. This is simply a defensive record of history with no resources attached to it, no meaningful commitment on the part of the department to actually allow community organizations to survive, no significant understanding of the degree of risk to aboriginal people. In fact, this government desperately wishes this whole issue would go away because they do not like dealing with it. Meeting after meeting after meeting, promises have been made, promises have been broken. Community organizations sustained by volunteers who themselves very often are volunteers at risk because they themselves are sick. In spite of their illness, they give incredible strength, incredible services. They give of themselves. They educate. They go to churches, they go to community clubs, they go to fraternal organizations, they go to unions, and they share their knowledge of how this disease can be prevented, and they share their commitment not to be dying but to be living with this disease.

Those of us on this side of the House, Madam Speaker, have been to too many funerals. We have been part of too many memorial services. Now, I am sure that members opposite have also had friends, maybe even family members who have contracted AIDS, and so they know, at least some of them know, of what this disease does to a person and to a family and to relationships. I would implore them, if they do in fact have any personal experience that they might draw upon, that they would go to this Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) and say to him, for God's sake be just in what you are doing with the organizations in this community that are seeking your help to survive, because as my colleague has pointed out, by 1998 there will be no federal money left. It is only federal money that is sustaining those community organizations that are now in place, the few organizations, federal money and the incredible

generosity, often of the very families of victims of this disease who in their legacies and in their tireless commitment to dealing with the challenge of AIDS have raised money through bequests or through donations or through other means.

I want to close my remarks with a little story. When my friends in the community and I were seeking to build the first shelter that was purpose built, in fact, for people living with AIDS and in fact the only co-op in Canada so designed, we knew we had to raise about \$120,000 to make this thing go, and quite frankly, that seemed to us to be a daunting task. So we sought for opportunities, and finally one day a member of the south Winnipeg Rotary Club called us up and said why don't you come down and talk to us. We looked at each other and we said, gosh, south Winnipeg Kiwanis Club—I beg your pardon, Madam Speaker, not Rotary, Kiwanis. We said, gosh, you know, men's service club, I do not know whether they are going to be very open to this, but we will go. So we did, and we took our brochure and we took our story, and very quickly after I spoke, actually very briefly they said, we do not need to hear a whole lot more from you, we know what you are trying to do. We want to help. We think we could raise \$35,000. Do you want to work on it? Well, you could have knocked me over. So I said later that evening to the gentleman who had made this, to me, astonishing intervention, I said, why, why your club? You are a suburban club of middle, older-aged men. I just would not have expected this from you, homophobia being what it is. He said, I had a very good friend die of AIDS.

It is that simple, Madam Speaker. When the disease touches you, all of the prejudices, all of the reluctance to deal with it slip away. So if there are members opposite indeed who know of or have family members or friends with this disease, I wish they would speak to their cabinet colleagues and would say to them that if you truly believe in a compassionate society you will not continue to abuse the trust and the commitment of those trying to work on this disease. You will not invite them to apply for funds and then yet one more time turn them down.

Madam Speaker, I call on the House to embrace this resolution to recognize that indeed we do not have a strategy. We have a set of windy goals, we have very little in place that constitutes anything that could possibly be called a strategy on AIDS.

Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Energy and Mines): Madam Speaker, I certainly would like the opportunity to join in this discussion on what is an extremely important subject to the people of the province, in fact, I would suggest to all people of the province. The member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) and the member for Osborne (Ms. McGifford) constituency spoke very much about the effects of a terrible, terrible illness on many people that they have known. I think the member for Crescentwood spoke about the number of funerals that he has attended and certainly by members on his side of the House.

I want both members to be aware that they or members of their party are not the only ones who have experienced funerals of individuals that they have known, friends who have died and suffered from this most terrible of diseases. One of them, I have a friend from my schooldays, who passed away from AIDS two years ago and I attended his funeral. It is when you see the young die so prematurely in their life, cut down by a terrible illness, that one feels the terrible waste of such a disease.

Madam Speaker, members of the opposition through this resolution have challenged us as a government on our strategy, the way we are attempting to deal with this particular issue. They challenged the Minister of Health (Mr. McCrae) and members on this side, and I think it is important though to put some of these into context. I know my time is short. I expect I will have other opportunity to speak to this matter if time perhaps runs out today, the remaining time available to me, but I think it is important to put it into context.

I know in my tenure as an assistant to the Minister of National Health and Welfare many years ago when this disease was just beginning to come into public recognition, discussing some of these issues and recognizing what a growing great pressure we would have on the health care system from a very practical point of view of planning how one deals with resources. At that time, the sense of how overwhelming the AIDS epidemic, because truly it is an epidemic and not limited to a small geographical locale but truly an international epidemic, trying at that time to sense how the ballooning demand for resources or share of resources will be dealt with. I remember in the Department of National Health and Welfare that sense of frustration in trying to get a handle and appreciating, just appreciating, the huge

amount of resources that would be needed as this disease, illness spread throughout our population. It was very difficult in those days, as it is today, because the demand for resources is just so huge and so great.

I say to members opposite that one of the difficulties here is when one puts this illness which—and I do not think any member of this House can truly in words express the horror of such an illness as AIDS because it really involves the human contact in a way that makes it just such a terrible, terrible illness. But we put it into the context of so many illnesses, diseases today in terms of cancer, that we have seen expansion in breast cancer, for example, the growth and increase in cancer rates, and I say this for any Minister of Health, the demand for

dollars for research is certainly growing, the demand for support programs for people who suffer are growing. Any Minister of Health having to deal with these issues and deal with them in a manner of the larger picture of all of the demands on the budget, keeping in mind that despite comments about cutbacks in Health that we are still—

Madam Speaker: Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable minister (Mr. Praznik) will have 11 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5:30 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, November 5, 1996

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