



**Fifth Session- Thirty-Sixth Legislature**

**of the**

**Legislative Assembly of Manitoba**

**DEBATES  
and  
PROCEEDINGS**

**Official Report  
(Hansard)**

*Published under the  
authority of  
The Honourable Louise M. Dacquay  
Speaker*



**Vol. XLIX No. 12 - 1:30 p.m., Wednesday, April 21, 1999**

**MANITOBA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
**Thirty-Sixth Legislature**

Member	Constituency	Political Affiliation
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	Arthur-Virden	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Albert	Steinbach	P.C.
DRIEDGER, Myrna	Charleswood	P.C.
DYCK, Peter	Pembina	P.C.
ENNS, Harry, Hon.	Lakeside	P.C.
EVANS, Clif	Interlake	N.D.P.
EVANS, Leonard S.	Brandon East	N.D.P.
FAURSCHOU, David	Portage la Prairie	P.C.
FILMON, Gary, Hon.	Tuxedo	P.C.
FINDLAY, Glen	Springfield	P.C.
FRIESEN, Jean	Wolseley	N.D.P.
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, Hon.	Riel	P.C.
PENNER, Jack	Emerson	P.C.
PITURA, Frank, Hon.	Morris	P.C.
PRAZNIK, Darren, Hon.	Lac du Bonnet	P.C.
RADCLIFFE, Mike, Hon.	River Heights	P.C.
REID, Daryl	Transcona	N.D.P.
REIMER, Jack, Hon.	Niakwa	P.C.
RENDER, Shirley, Hon.	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, Hon.	Turtle Mountain	P.C.
VODREY, Rosemary, Hon.	Fort Garry	P.C.
WOWCHUK, Rosann	Swan River	N.D.P.
<i>Vacant</i>	St. Boniface	

## LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 21, 1999

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

### PRAYERS

### ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

#### TABLING OF REPORTS

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to table the 1997-98 report from the Council on Post-Secondary Education; the Annual Financial Report for the year ended March 31, 1998, for Brandon University; the Annual Financial Report for 1998 of the University of Manitoba; the Annual Report for the year ending June 30, 1998, from the Public Schools Finance Board; the Financial Statements for the year ended March 31, 1998, for the University of Winnipeg; the Annual Report for 1997-98 for the Department of Education and Training.

**Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Natural Resources):** Madam Speaker, I would like to table the 1997-98 report for Natural Resources; the '97-98 report for the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund; the '97-98 report for the Manitoba Habitat Heritage Corporation; the year ending March 31, '98, report for Venture Manitoba Tours; and the Pineland Forest Nursery '97-98 Annual Report.

#### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Prior to Oral Questions, I would like to draw all honourable members' attention to the public gallery where we have this afternoon seven Grade 12 students from St. Claude School Complex under the direction of Miss Sharon Olson. This school is located in the constituency of the honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns).

And, thirty-seven Grade 5 students from Dr. D.W. Penner School under the direction of Mrs. Pat Brolund and Mr. Ken Bartel. This school is located in the constituency of the Speaker.

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

(1335)

### ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

#### Athena Educational Partners Partnership Agreement

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** Madam Speaker, Athena Educational Partners, which is owned by Telescene, is proposing five-year contracts to Manitoba schools, an issue that the minister will be aware of. The contract includes, in the five-year agreement, TVs and computers in exchange for a 12.5-minute daily program, 10 minutes of which is allegedly news and two and a half minutes is direct commercials.

I would like to ask the minister, in lieu of the responsibility of the government on curriculum, what is the position of this government on the purchase of commercials during the curriculum time for kids in our schools.

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Education and Training):** Madam Speaker, as to whether advertising should be present in classrooms, this would be a matter best addressed by school boards themselves in consultation with their communities, parents, students, and educators. My department, of course, in turn would examine whether there are any administrative issues to any arrangement. I would not want the issue being raised here today to be confused with other private-public partnerships, and I believe that is understood. Honourable members opposite would be aware of the private-public partnership announced yesterday with the Anokiiwin school in the city of Winnipeg, where Morris-MacDonald School Division partnered with Anokiiwin school to assist in ensuring that adults of aboriginal or Metis or Inuit ancestry could access a Grade 12 education to help prepare themselves for a better future.

**Mr. Doer:** Madam Speaker, of course we are aware of Tech Voc and Boeing co-operative arrangements but always with the public owning the curriculum. The commercials that are shown in these shows, Nintendo commercials, corn pop commercials, as part of the curriculum time being devoted to children in the classrooms—part of their kids' attention is now being directed to watching these commercials under this program, which is built on the concept developed by Channel 1 in United States.

Surely, if this government can take a position on issues like God Save the Queen and on issues of other curriculum issues—and the minister knows in the annual report that we are responsible for leadership—why can this minister not take a leadership position on commercials like corn pops and Nintendos in our classrooms? I am opposed to it.

**Mr. McCrae:** Well, Madam Speaker, I think that I respect the positions taken by honourable members opposite on any number of issues. I respect them. It does not always mean I one hundred percent agree. In fact, we know that there are occasions when agreement eludes honourable members opposite and myself on various issues. I, too, would have concerns if my children or the children of my contemporaries in Manitoba should be subjected to things that are not appropriate or that in any way would interfere with the curriculum requirements of our New Directions in education.

Having said that, I also respect the autonomy of elected people at the school division level and matters like this are, in my opinion, best left to elected officials at the school division level to make decisions in consultation with the teachers, with the school business officials, and with the parents in the division. A debate like this is a good and healthy debate, and it ought to take place at the level of the school division. The honourable member wants to have that debate here, and to some extent I can agree with his sentiments. I do not want the children of this province subjected to things they ought not to be subjected to either. But, on the other hand, school divisions have to be allowed some measure of autonomy; after all, they are a taxing authority, as well.

**Mr. Doer:** Well, in the annual report of the Department of Education—and we have had numerous interventions by previous ministers of Education on establishing the responsibility of curriculum and taking leadership in curriculum in Manitoba. Madam Speaker, if the proposal was for an hour of commercials a day, would the minister take a position, or if it were two hours a day, would the minister take a position? Of course, he would. Commercial time in the curriculum shown to kids takes away from teaching time in the curriculum for kids. I want my kids to be learning something from a teacher, not getting Nintendo ads and corn pop ads in school.

The province of New Brunswick, the Premier of New Brunswick, the minister in Nova Scotia and also the minister in British Columbia have said no. They have taken leadership on these curriculum issues. Would this minister just say no to commercials during curriculum time in the classroom?

**Mr. McCrae:** I think the honourable member maybe should show a little more respect for our colleagues who are elected school trustees across this province. I would be as shocked as the honourable Leader of the Opposition if children were subjected to hours of commercial television ads on any given day, which is what the honourable member said. Obviously that is ridiculous.

Does the honourable Leader of the Opposition think that our elected trustees across this province are so irresponsible that they would allow that sort of thing to go on? Does the honourable member want to get rid of school boards altogether and take over their jobs for them? That is what is implicit in his question. Let him let his whole position be known, not just part of it.

\* (1340)

#### **Athena Educational Partners Partnership Agreement**

**Ms. Jean Friesen (Wolseley):** Madam Speaker, our children live in a world surrounded by commercial advertising, but what we have not done before in Manitoba is to bring TV commercials into the classroom on a daily basis.

What I would like to ask the minister is if he would confirm that school divisions that enter into such agreements for commercials in the classroom are in fact selling our students' attention. This is a captive audience, no clicker, no off button. Is that not exactly what would be happening here?

**Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Education and Training):** The honourable member for The Pas (Mr. Lathlin) would like to use his remote control to turn me off. There are times when we hear about accountability, and sometimes I think honourable members opposite are not very interested in accountability.

I believe the reason for that is I do not think they are able to handle the truth sometimes. The truth is that New Directions in education has indeed been preparing our children for a future full of change, preparing them to be able to respond effectively to that change and to benefit themselves and their families in the future.

That being said, I repeat that the scenario painted by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Doer) would be just as unacceptable to me as it would be to any right-thinking school trustee across this province. I do not hear honourable members opposite complaining when there are other commercial relationships with our schools, for example, materials supplied in schools, things like clocks and coke machines and those sorts of things. I do not hear too much from honourable members there.

The honourable member has to keep in mind that there are curriculum requirements mandated by the Department of Education and Training, and we expect those curricula to be met and taught.

**Ms. Friesen:** Could the minister confirm that schools which enter into such agreements for commercials in the classroom will be required to report their enrollment figures and their daily attendance figures to these outside companies? Could the minister tell us whether this is in accordance with the spirit and intent of The Public Schools Act of Manitoba?

**Mr. McCrae:** I understand that Athena Educational Partners, which owns and markets

the YNN, has approached a few school divisions in the province and that discussions are underway with those school divisions. I fully would expect to be kept up to date on what is going on in those discussions. However, again, school divisions and their trustees recognize the responsibilities they have to our children. They are responsible to ensure that the children are meeting the standards set by the provincial government, something that it took this provincial government to bring into effect in this province. The school divisions are responsible for ensuring that our children can address and achieve the assessment process that is part of New Directions. With all of that in mind, I would expect them to be extremely responsible in their negotiations with a company like Athena Educational Partners.

**Ms. Friesen:** Could the minister who represents a government which has cut year after year the actual dollars out of the classroom and who is not prepared to take leadership on this issue—will he at least take the prudent step of waiting, of advising school divisions to wait until the independent study done by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education is prepared and released on this subject?

**Mr. McCrae:** I would be happy to take the honourable member's suggestion under advisement and consider it very carefully, but I simply cannot accept what she said at the beginning of this question. Indeed, when the New Democrats were in office, they inherited from the Lyon government a 21 percent spending on education out of total spending, and the New Democrats in those days took that 21 percent and hacked and slashed to the point where our schools were left with 17.7 percent of funding when they left office. In contrast, the Filmon administration moved that up to 19.3 percent of total spending, so I am not about to take too much advice from the honourable member with respect to the funding for public education.

\* (1345)

#### **Wine Boutiques Licensing Process**

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** We have raised some serious questions about political influence in the granting of liquor licences.

Yesterday we raised the question of Mr. Cubby Barrett and the licence in Cross Lake, and we raised the issue with the first batch of wine licences with one Mr. Denardi, who was the Crescentwood Conservative candidate in 1990, sat on the Liquor Commission Board, left the board and conveniently got a liquor licence a number of months afterwards.

I would like to ask the Minister responsible for the Liquor Commission how she can explain the fairness with a recent round of applications for private wine stores of having one Gordon McFarlane, the comptroller for the Conservative Party, the minister's official agent in the election, cited by Mr. Monnin in his report, acting as the third-party consultant dealing with the applications for those wine store licences.

**Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister charged with the administration of The Liquor Control Act):** Madam Speaker, we know the members across the way have opposed private wine stores from the very beginning, have opposed them, spoken in opposition. This is a continuation of their constant opposition and absolutely no solutions. Mr. McFarlane was representing his firm, the management consulting firm of Grant Thornton. He was then chosen by his firm to act as part of the selection committee. I would remind the members across the way that the advertisements for the expansion of the private wine stores did go out in July 1998, well before anything was received in relation to the Monnin report.

**Mr. Ashton:** Madam Speaker, as a follow-up, I would like to ask the minister: how can she explain to applicants such as the Forsyths, for example, the fairness of a system that led to Mr. Joe Jerema [phonetic] with Pembina Fine Wines, contributor to the Conservative Party, receiving a licence, by the way, a licence which has the same name and location that the Forsyths had been seeking, spent \$11,000 out of their pocket to put in? How can she explain the fairness of Mr. McFarlane with his connections directly to this minister, sitting there as a supposedly objective party analyzing their application?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** I can tell the member that the process was one which began in July of 1998, in which approximately 180 interested partners

were given information and in which decisions were made on objective criteria such as location and premises, the operating plan, the marketing and merchandizing plan, the financial resources available, and also based on the management team plan.

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, I am wondering then, Madam Speaker, if the minister can explain the fairness of this process again, which resulted in De Luca's, a contributor to the Conservative Party, receiving a licence, Tom Frain [phonetic] being one of the principals, and one David Filmon being one of the principals. How can she explain the fairness of this process when her official agent in the last election sat there as a supposedly objective party, but just coincidentally resulted in these individuals getting the licence?

**Mrs. Vodrey:** Again I can say that the application process was a wide-open application process, that through the process there was an opportunity, then a second stage in which there were interviews. There was every effort to make sure that everyone who was interested in having this opportunity could fully explore this opportunity with the team of people who was set up to apply the objective criterion. Based on the objective criterion and interview process, there were five new stores which will in fact add to Manitoba. I would remind the members again that this process started in July of 1998.

#### **Cross Lake First Nation Arbitration Award**

**Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas):** My questions are directed to the Minister of Northern Affairs.

Madam Speaker, 15 years ago, the Cross Lake First Nation made a claim for the first time to the arbitrator regarding Claim 109, the Pipestone bridge. In December of '93, the arbitrator ruled in favour of Cross Lake. Since then, two more times there have been favourable rulings by the legal system for Cross Lake.

In February '99, the Manitoba Court of Appeal again ruled in favour of Cross Lake, and in March the government was ordered by the Court of Appeal of Manitoba to pay the damages, the interim damages to the Cross Lake First Nation.

I would like to ask the minister: what will it take for him and his government to comply with all these court orders that have been coming from the arbitrator and now finally the Court of Appeal of Manitoba?

**Hon. David Newman (Minister responsible for Native Affairs):** Madam Speaker, questions have been raised on this issue previously by the honourable member for The Pas, and the responses that I gave indicated that the matter was going to the Court of Appeal and the Court of Appeal would then give guidance to all parties as to what the responsibilities were. The Court of Appeal has spoken, and the Court of Appeal will be listened to. The direction and guidance given by the Court of Appeal will be respected in the policies which will be put into play and the implementation of those policies that will be put into play to address this particular long-outstanding matter under NFA 1977.

\* (1350)

**Mr. Lathlin:** Madam Speaker, I would like to respectfully table the latest decision by the Manitoba Court of Appeal for the government and the Minister of Northern Affairs, and also ask him: what part of the judgment that has been rendered three times by his legal system does he not understand?

**Mr. Newman:** The Northern Flood Agreement was of course signed in 1977, and the New Democratic Party was in government for a period of time, certainly from 1981 at least until 1988. Not only did they do nothing in relation to this particular issue, Madam Speaker, but the advice that was given at that time was exactly the advice that was followed by the government lawyers and the civil servants up until recently. Recently we have been taking a look at the spirit and intent of NFA 1977 and developing a totally different relationship. One of them led to the comprehensive settlements in four of the five communities. That was done by this government, and the last one concerning Cross Lake was almost achieved, including the resolution of this particular issue, but the new chief and council chose to go a different path. The solution to the issue raised in the Court of Appeal will be addressed in this new relationship

that we have with Cross Lake in ways that are fair, reasonable, in the public interest, the interests of the people of Cross Lake.

**Mr. Lathlin:** Madam Speaker, my last question to the same minister is: given his habit of lecturing aboriginal people—

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

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable member for The Pas, with a final supplementary question.

\* (1355)

**Mr. Lathlin:** My question to the minister is if he expects aboriginal people to follow the laws even when they come here to the Legislature, his lecturing of civility, obeying the law, I would like to ask the minister: when is he going to follow the law and implement the decision that has been given three times by the legal system of Manitoba?

**Mr. Newman:** Madam Speaker, what we are talking about is the implementation of an agreement. There was some difference of opinion by all parties, including the federal government, as to the interpretation of the agreement. The final position by the Court of Appeal will be respected by the province of Manitoba and its government, and the implementation will take place in accordance with all of the due processes but with dispatch because this is an important issue which may contribute to the socioeconomic development of the people of Cross Lake, which we support strongly.

I can assure you whatever time it takes, it will be a lot faster than the seven years it took for the New Democratic government to do nothing in relation to this particular issue, and since. We have at least accomplished 80 percent of the objective, and we are going to accomplish a hundred percent before we are through.

#### **Diabetes Costs to Health Care System**

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** Madam Speaker, my question again is for the Minister of

Health. The costs related to diabetes for the health care budget are quite enormous. In fact, reports and experts will tell you that it is one of the costs that is going to be increasing over the next number of years. The question to the Minister of Health is: does the government have any idea of the percentage of cost to diabetes on the health care budget, and what specifically is it doing in terms of addressing this important issue both in Winnipeg and rural Manitoba in the upcoming budget?

**Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health):** Madam Speaker, the member is correct that certainly costs related to diabetes have been continuing to increase in the province of Manitoba. That is why the previous Minister of Health undertook a study, a review, and a strategy was released back in just November of this year, November '98, to deal with the whole issue of diabetes in the province of Manitoba, a comprehensive strategy with a number of recommendations that are being acted on. Some we discussed yesterday. This is the treatment side in terms of more dialysis stations, but the more important issue is doing everything we can to prevent diabetes in the first place. That strategy outlines a number of initiatives to deal with that very important issue, and if the member for Inkster has not had an opportunity to see that strategy, I am certainly prepared to forward him a copy.

\*(1400)

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I look to the former Minister of Finance, today's Minister of Health, and he will recall great claims of tax reduction. What I am asking the Minister of Health now to look at is a part of those initiatives meant increasing the deductibles, so things like testing strips, things like syringes are a real cost for individuals who have diabetes. Is the Minister of Health prepared to revisit that issue so that we ensure that there is better control at that level so we are preventing some of those long-term costs on health care?

**Mr. Stefanson:** Well, again, Madam Speaker, the study that was released just in November of last year, just some four or five months ago, outlines a number of recommendations to deal with a diabetes strategy to prevent the number of

incidents of diabetes. As I have indicated, we certainly are acting on a good number of those recommendations. That report is an excellent source document for us, all of us as Manitobans, to deal with this very important issue to do everything we can to make sure that diabetes does not occur in Manitobans in the first place.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** Madam Speaker, what we are asking the Minister of Health is to recognize that there are individuals that are not testing their blood every day as they should be, and that is why I ask the Minister of Health: what is this government going to be doing in the upcoming budget to deal with this very critical issue which in the long term is going to save a great deal of dollars on health care expenditure in the future? What is the government doing in this particular budget?

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The question has been put.

**Mr. Stefanson:** Madam Speaker, we have already taken steps dedicating additional resources to deal with diabetes strategy. The member may have noticed when we provided some additional support just recently to all of the regional health authorities across Manitoba. A major part of that was to provide support for diabetes co-ordinators to deal with this very important issue right throughout all of Manitoba. The report I referred to earlier also has a number of recommendations to help us as a province deal with preventative measures to do everything we can to ensure that Manitobans do not end up having diabetes. So again we are taking a number of steps. We have dedicated additional resources to deal with this very important issue, and I encourage him to wait for our upcoming 1999 budget.

### **Hog Industry Marketing System**

**Ms. Rosann Wowchuk (Swan River):** Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Agriculture. When this government announced their plan to move away from single-desk selling despite the opposition of the majority of producers, one of the biggest fears of the producers was their ability to get price information which is critical to a fair and open

market. This fear has come to pass. Manitoba Pork is no longer reporting prices because one packer is not providing the information.

Given that under Manitoba law this is a requirement, I would like to ask the Minister of Agriculture what steps he is taking to resolve the problem which is causing chaos in the hog industry in Manitoba.

**Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Agriculture):** Madam Speaker, I want to assure the honourable member for Swan River that there is no chaos in the pork industry in the province of Manitoba. The pork industry is recovering from a very serious price decline that has afflicted other producers, wheat producers and produce producers generally speaking, but the outlook for pork at the moment is far from chaotic.

The issue that she raises with respect to price transparency, let me correct her that, with the flexibility of the marketing system introduced by this government, which has bred so much confidence in the industry in the province, there has been a difficulty in establishing a price. The reporting of that pricing arrangement is undertaken by the Department of Agriculture, which up until a very short little while was providing a reasonably satisfactory service in that regard.

One major packer, namely the Neepawa people, have stopped reporting, and we are addressing that issue while I speak.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Madam Speaker, I would like to ask the same minister, since he said he would ensure levies would be collected under the new open-market system—and in fact when he was asked how he was going to do it, he said watch me. Since all people are not contributing their levies, I would like to ask the minister how he is addressing this to ensure that there is equality in the industry. We are watching you.

**Mr. Enns:** The honourable member will well recall that the question of collection of levies has always met with some difficulty. When it was the sole responsibility of Manitoba Pork, there were some significant defaults taking place, as the member is well aware of, and I intend to address those situations.

I am meeting with the Manitoba Pork council next Thursday. It will be my first meeting with them in their newly structured organization. This is the group that now has the total responsibility of the levy and how it is spent, and we will be having discussions about the very issue that she raises.

An area that I am still not satisfied with is to impose the levies on the number of weanlings that get shipped out of the province. I need cooperation from the federal authorities, customs authorities, to impose those levies on the weanlings that are being exported, as well.

**Ms. Wowchuk:** Madam Speaker, given that when anybody in the farming operation makes a change, they do a review of the change to see what the impacts of it are, I would like to ask the minister if he will do a review on the changes, or whether he has done a review on the changes to the open-market system that he has moved to, to see what the impacts are on small operations, on family operations, who are the ones that are suffering right now because of the lack of price transparency.

**Mr. Enns:** Madam Speaker, it was precisely that responsible industry in-depth review that was undertaken by Professor Clay Gilson, one of our most respected agricultural economists, now retired from the University of Manitoba, that led me to make the changes that, by and large, are widely supported in the industry, that have brought hundreds of millions of dollars of investment to this province, that have in a very short while increased our pork production by some 55 percent and will continue to do so. Now there are some problems to be ironed out, and I am prepared to work with the pork industry to see that they are carried out.

### **Epileptologists Recruitment Strategy**

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** Madam Speaker, over 23,000 Manitobans suffer from epilepsy, 40 percent of them intractable cases. Over a year ago, I raised this issue in the Manitoba Legislature that we were losing our only remaining epileptologist to the province of Alberta. At that time I asked the Premier (Mr. Filmon) to get involved to try and make sure that

this person would stay in the province to provide that medical service for people suffering from epilepsy. At that time the Premier refused and the Minister of Health, in answer to the question, said that he was on a recruiting program, the recruiting program was underway and that they were going to have an epileptologist for the province of Manitoba.

I want to ask the new Minister of Health to advise this House: has his government found an epileptologist for the province of Manitoba, when we should be having at least a minimum of three in this province, Madam Speaker?

**Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health):** Certainly, on a number of fronts, we continue to make significant improvements in terms of recruiting people to Manitoba to remain in Manitoba in a number of medical areas, Madam Speaker, whether it is anesthetists, oncologists, and so on. In terms of the very specific question asked by the member for Transcona, I will take that as notice, and I will report back to him as soon as possible.

**Mr. Reid:** That is what the previous Minister of Health said to me in answer to my questions.

\* (1410)

#### **Epileptic Patients Nerve Implants—Monitoring**

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** I want to ask the Minister of Health: since Dr. Pillay, the epileptologist who has left Manitoba for Alberta, pioneered the vagus nerve implants to control the 40 percent of intractable epilepsy cases in this province, who has taken over the monitoring of those cases, to monitor to make sure that those patients are receiving the care that they need, to follow up on Dr. Pillay's research so the patients are not put at risk?

**Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health):** Well, again, Madam Speaker, I certainly thank the member for Transcona, both for his question and obviously his interest in this very important area. Similarly to the first part of his question, I will take that part as notice as well and report back to this House.

**Mr. Reid:** Madam Speaker, can the Minister of Health explain then why his department has not made the decision with respect to the funding of all of the vagus nerve implants that Dr. Pillay had to pay for out of his pocket, at least in part, and has left the province of Manitoba, leaving those patients without any medical care in the field of epilepsy? Why has this government not paid for those particular implants?

**Mr. Stefanson:** Well, Madam Speaker, without necessarily accepting the preamble, I am certainly prepared to look into the issue that the member for Transcona has raised, the issue that he has raised here in all three parts to his question, and to report back to this House at the earliest opportunity.

#### **Health Care Facilities Food Services—Operating Costs**

**Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood):** Madam Speaker, last week the minister conceded, as did the two hospitals in question, that HSC and St. Boniface were paying more than \$50,000 a month for food they were not receiving. He defended that. Will he today confirm that as of about two weeks ago they are each paying over a hundred thousand dollars a month now because they are now picking up their share pro rata of the fixed costs for the little peas they are not receiving either?

**Hon. Eric Stefanson (Minister of Health):** Well, Madam Speaker, I certainly did indicate to this House that the Urban Shared Services Corporation—which is a corporation formed by the nine hospitals here in the city of Winnipeg, so obviously they are on both sides of this issue. They are running the hospitals. They are also purchasing their food from the Urban Shared Services Corporation. Their objective throughout this entire process is to be sure that we have high-quality food with proper nutrition and to do it as efficiently and effectively as possible so that any savings can be redirected into other health care needs here in the province of Manitoba. So it is the management, the CEOs of these nine hospitals, that are a part of that organization.

It is taking a little bit longer for both the HSC and St. Boniface to come on stream with

the new organization. I think that is being done for a couple of reasons. One is there are some capital requirements required at both facilities to a certain extent; and secondly, I think it is prudent and proper to be absolutely certain, as these steps and changes are implemented, that they are done ensuring that at the end of the day proper quality food and high-nutritional food is provided.

**Mr. Sale:** Madam Speaker, surely the minister would agree that it would have been prudent, proper, good business, good management, to have assured himself and the department that all of this planning was in place, all of the estimates were in before they committed \$20 million to this plan. Would that not have been prudent and proper management?

**Mr. Stefanson:** Madam Speaker, certainly at the outset of this whole initiative an extensive amount of work was done in terms of the capital requirements, the operating savings, and as I have already indicated, the process is taking slightly longer to implement, but at the end of the day we are going to end up with a system that does provide high quality food, proper nutrition, and does save dollars that can be used elsewhere in the health care system.

Certainly when you look at the patient surveys, they continue to show higher and higher approval ratings at all the facilities, higher than they were under the previous system, under the old system, and certainly even NDP members can understand and appreciate that one centralized service can provide the services more efficiently and effectively, thereby leaving more dollars to dedicate to other health care needs in the province of Manitoba.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

## MEMBERS' STATEMENTS

### Power Up Program

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Madam Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise in the House and speak about an important and innovative initiative of this government.

The Power Up initiative is a two-year \$300,000 computer training program for Manitoba women. It was announced recently by Premier Gary Filmon and Rosemary Vodrey, Minister responsible for the Status of Women.

This program will give free computer training to women in various communities throughout the province. This is a tremendous initiative. We are all aware of the importance of computer literacy in today's world and one's ability to move ahead in the workforce is now largely contingent on one's familiarity with computers and related technology. The Power Up program involves 15 hours of training in a computer lab. There is also a work book and tutorial disc so women can learn at their own pace.

The Women's Directorate in partnership with Manitoba Education and Training developed the Power Up program. Employment Projects for Women Inc., a community-based employment centre for immigrant women and women re-entering the workforce, is developing the curriculum for the course. This government wants to give all Manitobans a chance to succeed, and we are committed to helping Manitoba women seize the incredible opportunities present due to our economic growth. This training will help give them a competitive edge.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

### Littleton, Colorado, Tragedy

**Mr. Gord Mackintosh (St. Johns):** Madam Speaker, it is important to reflect on the horrific tragedy of at least 15 children murdered yesterday in Littleton, Colorado, and express our empathy, our sadness, our anger at this criminal and moral outrage.

Any time there is such a violent, senseless end to the life of a child, we are shocked and are drawn to share the pain with the survivors. When a family sees a child off to school in the morning, the family looks forward to and expects a day of learning and personal growth for that child, expects a better future, not the eradication of a future.

Tragedies like this also make us re-evaluate our parenting, our systems, our social development, and seek improvements. This offers us the only good that can come from such horror. Such re-evaluation must include questioning how we can better protect our children while at school, that we must recognize that violence is not bred in the school; it is brought in from outside. So we must re-evaluate the virtually unchecked growth of a violent popular culture which is fuelled by the search for profit. The growth and glorification of violent movies and television so-called heroes and violent video games that enlist children in violence against human characters, for example, are powerful forces. The sanctity of human life is relegated to body counts in movies, in scores in video games. This culture helps legitimize violent responses by youth to conflict and challenges.

We must also re-evaluate our responses to domestic violence. We must re-evaluate how we prevent and suppress gang activity and how we deal with youth despair, and we must re-evaluate how schools can become a stronger part of the solution to teaching and practising of nonviolent conflict resolution.

In conclusion, while we mourn the loss this tragedy brings, we also hope that from this school in Colorado some most profound and unintended lessons will be taught and that we will in some way progress.

### **William Glesby Centre—Opening**

**Mr. David Faurshou (Portage la Prairie):** Saturday last, I had the pleasure of attending the gala opening of the William Glesby Centre in Portage la Prairie. The William Glesby Centre is a first-class, multiuse theatre which will accommodate a variety of performing arts as well as small- and medium-sized conventions. The economic and cultural impacts of this centre have already been felt in the community of Portage la Prairie.

I am very proud to tell all members present today that the Department of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, under the direction of the Honourable Rosemary Vodrey, participated in the construction of this \$2.1-million facility providing \$400,000 in assistance, which is

greatly appreciated. In the first months of operation, the William Glesby Centre has hosted a number of sold-out events. This facility has indeed enhanced Portage la Prairie's position as a regional centre in rural Manitoba and has heightened our sense of pride.

The centre has been named in honour of William Glesby who was a highly respected local businessman who dedicated a lifetime of support to a number of local initiatives in Portage la Prairie. Mr. Glesby passed away in 1996, but his spirit of generosity to the city of Portage la Prairie lives on in this new facility in his name.

I would like to express a special thank you to the Glesby family, especially his wife Fimi for her continuing support of the citizens of Portage la Prairie. I also would like to thank the Portage Community Centre board who had the vision and dream of this facility, and as well the volunteers and contributors for their efforts in promoting the potential of our community through the construction of the William Glesby Centre. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

\* (1420)

### **Isaac Beaulieu**

**Mr. Oscar Lathlin (The Pas):** Madam Speaker, late yesterday afternoon we received word that one of our elders had passed on to the spirit world, and so it is with great sadness and a deep sense of loss that I rise today to pay respects to the late Isaac Beaulieu. Mr. Beaulieu was from the Sandy Bay First Nation. As a young person just starting out in my work life, I used to watch our earlier leaders in awe, and Mr. Beaulieu was one of them, as they would meet and develop strategies to implement their visions for our future. Some of you might be aware of the document called Wahbung. Wahbung was developed then, and today scholars often refer to that document as they do their work.

Mr. Beaulieu was one of those few people in our earlier days of development who went into the education area. He, himself, one of few aboriginal people in those days, went on to get post-secondary education. More recently he was

the director of education at the Sandy Bay education authority, and yesterday he was performing his duties as senior adviser to the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs when he died.

On behalf of everyone here, Madam Speaker, I would like to send our sincere condolences to the family of the late Mr. Beaulieu. Our prayers, I want them to know, are with them, and I pray that the Great Spirit will give them strength and guidance that they may get over this bump in life as they go through. Thank you.

### **Manitobans with Epilepsy**

**Mr. Daryl Reid (Transcona):** Madam Speaker, a few moments ago in Question Period I had a chance to raise the issue with respect to the 23,000 Manitobans who are living with epilepsy and the problems that they are encountering in their life.

During the Christmas period, just a few months ago, I had a chance to meet a young woman by the name of Rhonda—and I will not use the last name—who is an individual who is living with epilepsy and is one of those 40 percent of the intractable cases that we have in the province of Manitoba. This individual had gone through a series of drug treatments in the sense of trying to control the epilepsy that she is living with daily because she does suffer from very serious seizures.

This individual was unable to bring her epilepsy under control and had the good fortune to encounter Dr. Pillay, who has since left the province of Manitoba. Dr. Pillay, seeing that this young lady was in a position of being a candidate for the vagus nerve implant, performed that procedure and that young lady, Madam Speaker, to this day is living what I would consider to be a relatively normal life considering the circumstances that are involved with her illness.

That is a process that Dr. Pillay pioneered in the province of Manitoba that has brought a more normal life to many Manitobans, those that he implanted that device into. The unfortunate

part is that this young lady had another encounter with the medical system in one of her seizures where there was no one around that could bring that seizure under control, and she was taken to hospital. The hospital medical staff tried to use drugs to control that seizure that the young lady was encountering when all it would have taken would be to take the magnet that she had in her pocket, pass it over the vagus nerve implant, and the seizures would cease.

Madam Speaker, we have a serious problem in this province where we have people that have undergone the vagus nerve implant, and we do not have someone there to provide the ongoing research and medical supports that are necessary for people living with epilepsy. That is why I think it is so serious that I have asked this minister and his government to make sure that those patients are well cared for and not put at further risk due to their condition. Thank you.

## **ORDERS OF THE DAY**

### **House Business**

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, by way of House business, I am going to move momentarily that the House will resolve itself into Committee of the Whole. Following that process, we will then ask that you call Bill 17, The Elections Amendment and Elections Finances Amendment Act, for second reading.

## **THIRD READINGS**

### **Bill 2—The Electoral Divisions Amendment Act**

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader):** At this time, Madam Speaker, I would move, seconded by the honourable Minister of Rural Development (Mr. Derkach), that Madam Speaker do now leave the Chair and that the House resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole to consider and report on Bill 2, The Electoral Divisions Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les circonscriptions électorales, for third reading.

**Motion agreed to.**

**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE****Bill 2—The Electoral Divisions  
Amendment Act**

**Mr. Chairperson (Marcel Laurendeau):** I would like to call the committee to order to deal with Bill 2, The Electoral Divisions Amendment Act (Loi modifiant la Loi sur les circonscriptions électorales). Does the honourable First Minister have an opening statement? The honourable First Minister, did you have an opening statement?

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** No.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Does the Leader of the Opposition have an opening statement? No. Okay, thank you.

**Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Opposition):** No, but do not tempt me.

**Mr. Chairperson:** Okay. I will not tempt you then.

The bill will be considered clause by clause. The title and preamble are postponed until all other clauses have been considered in their proper order by the committee.

Clause 1—pass; Clause 2—pass; Clause 3—pass; Clause 4—pass; Clause 5—pass; preamble—pass; title—pass. Bill be reported.

Committee rise. Call in the Speaker.

\* (1430)

**IN SESSION****Committee Report**

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (Chairperson):** Madam Speaker, the Committee of the Whole has considered Bill 2, The Electoral Divisions Amendment Act, reports the same, and asks leave to sit again.

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

**Motion agreed to.**

**House Business**

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader):** Madam Speaker, if you could please call Bill 17, The Elections Amendment and Elections Finances Amendment Act, for second reading.

**SECOND READINGS****Bill 17—The Elections Amendment and  
Elections Finances Amendment Act**

**Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier):** Madam Speaker, I move, seconded by the government House leader (Mr. Praznik), that Bill 17, The Elections Amendment and Elections Finances Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi électorale et la Loi sur le financement des campagnes électorales, be now read a second time and be referred to a committee of this House.

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. Filmon:** Madam Speaker, I rise today to introduce Bill 17, The Elections Amendment and Elections Finances Amendment Act. As honourable members know, this bill will implement recommendations advanced in the report of former Chief Justice Alfred Monnin.

Madam Speaker, when the report of the Commission of Inquiry was released, I indicated to the people of Manitoba that the government would accept the recommendations advanced by Mr. Monnin. Today I am introducing those measures which require legislative amendments by the House.

This bill is divided into two parts. Part 1 deals with The Elections Act, and Part 2 presents amendments to The Elections Finances Act. In Part 1, The Elections Act will be amended in order that more timely consideration can be given to the report which the Chief Electoral Officer files following each general election. In order to ensure that this takes place, the act will be amended so that within 60 days of tabling of the report, the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections must begin its consideration of the report.

The second amendment to The Elections Act relates to the limitation period for prosecutions. This section will now permit the Chief Electoral Officer to commence a prosecution not later than one year after the date on which the Chief Electoral Officer has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that an offence has been committed. This replaces the previous five-year limitation based on the date of the election, not on the time when the Chief Electoral Officer is given reasonable and probable grounds.

In Part 2, Madam Speaker, The Elections Finances Act is being amended in a number of areas. First, new provisions are being added in relation to auditors retained by registered political parties. Should an auditor's professional judgment or objectivity be impaired, the act will now require that he or she must resign immediately from this position. This reasoning must be provided to the Chief Electoral Officer and the newly assigned auditor.

A new section is being added in order to deal with the auditor's report and ensure that all reports are in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards. This new section will also permit the auditor to include any statement that he or she feels necessary if: (a) the financial statement to which the report relates does not present fairly the financial transactions contained in the records of the candidate or registered political party; (b) the Auditor has not received all the information and explanations required from the official agent or the chief financial officer; or, (c) the official agent or the Chief Electoral Officer has not kept proper accounting records. I believe that should be "the official agent or the chief financial officer has not kept proper accounting records."

Further provisions have been added to ensure access to the records by the Auditor and also ensure that any oral or written statement or report has qualified privilege. Second, Madam Speaker, we are implementing the recommendation that records must be retained for a minimum of five years. However, additional powers will be given to the Chief Electoral Officer should he be of the opinion that records should be kept for a longer period of time to extend this period in order to ensure compliance with the act.

Third, a new section will be added to the act in order to permit periodic inspections and audits by the Chief Electoral Officer of the records of candidates, constituency associations, and registered political parties that relate to information that should be in statements or returns required by the Chief Electoral Officer under this act. Fourth, as with the amendments to The Elections Act, the time limitation on prosecution period will be extended. It will now provide that the CEO may initiate a prosecution not later than one year after the date on which the Chief Electoral Officer has reasonable and probable grounds to believe that an offence has been committed.

Finally, Madam Speaker, a report by the Chief Electoral Officer under this act will require consideration by the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections within 60 days of tabling in the House. All of these amendments will be in effect once the bill has been given Royal Assent.

Madam Speaker, former Chief Justice Monnin also recommended that political parties should adopt a code of ethics that would guide their party, or a code of conduct should be legislated for them. After a review by the Chief Electoral Officer and discussions among representatives of all registered political parties in the province, it was concluded that each political party is capable of ensuring that this recommendation is implemented within its own operational structure. Speaking for my party, we are developing a code of conduct which will guide our internal operations. At the same time as we prepare our party's code of ethics, we continue to work with Elections Manitoba and are interested in its proposals that the parties adopt common electoral values. We will review Elections Manitoba's proposals in this area with keen interest.

Madam Speaker, this has been a difficult time for all concerned. However, the extensive and exhaustive inquiry undertaken by the former Chief Justice has allowed us to look at the core fabric of our democracy. Some people may be discouraged about our process. Some people may be troubled with the results of this inquiry. However, we should remind ourselves that the actions of a few have not inflicted irreparable

damage on our democratic system of government. Our system remains strong and with the amendments being introduced today and the lessons we have all learned, our system will be stronger than ever. Thank you.

**Ms. Becky Barrett (Wellington):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased today to be able to rise and speak on Bill 17, amendments to The Elections Act and The Elections Finances Act, arising out of the Monnin inquiry and report.

I would like to give a little personal context to this bill and both The Elections Act and The Elections Finances Act. I cannot think of any two bills that are more important to the provision of good government than The Elections Act and The Elections Finances Act. I may be open to some criticism on that, but I do believe that the issues and the elements in the whole electoral process are absolutely critical and fundamental to our democratic system, and The Elections Act and The Elections Finances Act are the vehicles through which we as Manitobans can have whatever degree of trust we have in our electoral process.

\* (1440)

It is essential that we have a very high level of trust in our electoral process or the damage to the fabric of our democracy can be irreparable. I would like to say that I think, from my experience, both The Elections Act and The Elections Finances Act as they are currently, even before Bill 17, in effect in the province of Manitoba provide an excellent basis for holding good, democratic elections in the province, if everyone who participates in that process accepts and understands the basics of fair play and fair elections. I believe that is what Bill 17 is addressing, the fact that some people in this province have not accepted and understood that.

The two acts that we are amending today are excellent pieces of legislation. It is very difficult, Madam Speaker, I believe, for people not to have the ability to vote in the province of Manitoba. The changes that were put into place in both of those acts in the last session of the House really made these two pieces of legislation excellent bases for holding democratic elections in Manitoba.

I first dealt with The Elections Act and The Elections Finances Act in the provincial election in 1981, when I held an organizational position with the provincial New Democratic Party, and I was the person in the party who interpreted those pieces of legislation for the various campaigns during the election, not to the exclusion of the auditor or the Chief Electoral Officer, but I was the gatekeeper for questions, and in 1986 I did much the same thing. In 1988, I had the distinct honour during very difficult times, when the election was called very quickly, of working very closely with the then Chief Electoral Officer, Richard Willis, who died, unfortunately, far too young. He was a wonderful Chief Electoral Officer and provided marvellous guidance to all of the parties and all of the campaigns in the province of Manitoba.

We dealt very closely with the appointment of returning officers. The process of the appointment of returning officers is one of the very few areas where the Chief Electoral Officer has made recommendations that the current government has chosen not to follow through on, and we have made a commitment on this side of the House that we will bring in amendments taking the appointment of returning officers out of the hands of the government and putting them, the appointment and training, more completely into the hands of the Chief Electoral Officer where we think they belong, not, parenthetically, Madam Speaker, because we think that it is necessarily a process that is open to political patronage but because the job of a returning officer, as anyone who has had any knowledge of that, is a very difficult one, and because it is a difficult one we think it is very important that they be people who are, in a way, permanent and well trained and not have to be appointed sometimes on very short notice.

So, as I say, even before Bill 17, The Elections Act and Elections Finances Act were wonderful pieces of legislation, and I look forward actually very shortly to being able to work under those two acts in an actual election campaign, to put into practice the amendments that took place last June and the amendments that will be debated and, I assume, passed by this House very shortly.

Normally my recollection is that when the minister or, in this case, the First Minister speaks on second reading, outlining the principles of the legislation, as is the purpose of second reading, they put it into the context, the reasons why, and go into some detail in many cases as to the reasons why this legislation is being brought forward. I was all prepared to listen extensively to the Premier when he made those explanatory notes. Unfortunately, the Premier was very brief in his comments. So it falls to me to provide that context for the members of the House, the context out of which has grown the elements of Bill 17.

I know we all here, some more than others, certainly wish the events of the last four years had not happened, but they did, and we are sitting here today with Bill 17 in front of us dealing with the outcome of those events. [interjection]

Yes, thank you. My colleague the member for Interlake (Mr. C. Evans) has asked me to explain some of the background and the context that has led to the elements of Bill 17. The Premier did say that his government would accept the recommendations of the Monnin inquiry. He did say that. I just wish that the Premier had said, finally and definitively, that he was appalled by the events that gave rise to the Monnin inquiry in the first place and Bill 17 as an outcome of the Monnin inquiry. I think most Manitobans would believe that the Premier has been, to give him the best possible context, grudgingly apologetic in his comments, recently forced into making apologies to the people of Manitoba.

However, the background on why we are now sitting here debating Bill 17. I would like to quote from Justice Monnin's report, and I quote: "A vote-rigging plot constitutes an unconscionable debasement of the citizen's right to vote. To reduce the voting rights of individuals is a violation of our democratic system."

Now it is absolutely appalling to me, and as I think it is appalling to all Manitobans, that we actually have to have a report—at the cost of upwards of \$1 million in money, to say nothing of the cost to the electoral system, the cost to the

trust the people of Manitoba have in their political process and in their elected and appointed political representatives—that we have to have such an expensive process to come up with a statement that Justice Monnin has put in his report that should be blatantly and completely obvious to every single person who participates in the political process. At the very least, it should be blatantly obvious to all citizens of the province, but most particularly to those people who work within the political process, whose aim in life is to elect people to the Legislature of the province of Manitoba so that they—those representatives who are elected—can influence and implement policies and directions of the government of the province of Manitoba, an aim I might say that is one that I aspire to as well.

I am not one of those people who think that the political process is a necessary evil. I think it can be one of the highest callings that anyone could undertake, and I am more than proud to stand here today as a representative of the 57 constituencies and so a representative of the government of Manitoba in the largest context.

I have never apologized nor will I ever apologize for the choice of profession that I have undertaken and that the people of my constituency have given me. However, it is increasingly difficult to have people in the province of Manitoba accept my reasoning and my love and respect for this process and for our profession. Unfortunately, it is due not to the actions of a few, as the Premier (Mr. Filmon) stated in his brief remarks just earlier today, that have tainted this process.

I think very much I agree with Justice Monnin, who says that we probably have not gotten to the bottom of this whole issue, that people have lied and covered up to such an extent that we may never get to the bottom of this issue. But even having not gotten to the bottom of this issue, the numbers and the extent and the depth and the breadth of the actions of the people who have been identified in this scandal is appalling. It goes to the heart of the democratic process in the province of Manitoba in general, and it goes to the heart of the Progressive Conservative Party in Manitoba in particular, and, most dreadful of all, it goes

straight to the seat of power of the government in the province of Manitoba.

\* (1450)

I will not say that I am knowledgeable about the political history of the province of Manitoba, but I would like someone from the government side or anybody to tell me when, with the possible exception of the scandal around the building of this Legislative Building 75, almost 80, years ago, there has been a scandal of this magnitude, of this proportion, in the political process in the province of Manitoba. I do not think there ever has been one.

I would say that in comparison between the Rodman Roblin scandal leading around the building of this building and the vote-rigging scandal of 1995 to 1999 in the province of Manitoba that the one that goes to the heart of democracy is the vote-rigging scandal. It is just unconscionable, as Justice Monnin has said, that this was allowed to happen.

Justice Monnin goes on to say, and I quote: The attempt here at vote splitting was, in my opinion, clearly unethical and morally reprehensible, end quote. Justice Monnin's report, which is the genesis of the elements of Bill 17, I would like to say does vindicate the position of the people who raised this concern in the first place. It vindicates the members of the official opposition both in this House and throughout the official opposition in their role as party members.

The Manitoba NDP had been accused by the Premier of fabricating the entire story about the vote-rigging scandal for political gain. Now, it would be one thing if this was the first time the Premier had gotten up in his seat and accused the opposition of saying something or promoting something or putting forth an idea simply for political gain. It is a mantra of the Premier's that he has undergone for the length of time that he has been Premier, and it does parenthetically, Madam Speaker, I believe, no justice and brings no glory to the office of Premier when the current occupant of this office continually claims political expediency as the rationale for questions and concerns raised by the opposition. But he certainly did accuse us, both in the House

and outside the House, of political opportunism. I believe that the report certainly vindicates our concerns and the issues that we raised.

I say even more importantly than the vindication of the staff of the Manitoba NDP and the members of the opposition of the Manitoba NDP who were vindicated, even more importantly is the vindication of Darryl Sutherland, who had the courage, finally, to come forward and make accusations that were proven to be accurate against the highest and most powerful people and organization in this province. This is a man who was living on welfare on a reserve with \$114 a month, I believe; this is a person, when you look at the power in this province, is at the bottom of the power grid; this is a young man, who has had very little of a sense of power in his life, up against the government of the Province of Manitoba, up against the Premier of the Province of Manitoba, up against, as we found out through the Monnin inquiry, the five or six or seven or eight, at least, most powerful individuals in the Progressive Conservative Party and the Progressive Conservative government.

This young man, Darryl Sutherland, had the courage of his convictions to bring forward those accusations and to undergo the most vile kinds of personal attacks on the part of the Premier of the province. This young man, Darryl Sutherland, kept up with it. He did not flinch; he showed the mettle of which he was made, as did the Premier of the Province of Manitoba who stated in this House, time and time again, there was no truth to the rumours; they were simply partisan political posturings, who stated in the media and in public that it was just something out of the furtive imagination of the Manitoba NDP and that Darryl Sutherland was not telling the truth.

Again, I think we need to look at the character of these two protagonists, if you will. If there are two protagonists in this morality play that we were seeing the dénouement of, well, at least the preliminary dénouement of, in our debate on Bill 17 today, it is has to be Darryl Sutherland versus the Premier, the one with no power, no influence, no money, no support system, nothing but the knowledge of the truth,

and the other, arguably the most powerful person in the Province of Manitoba with the supports of the government behind him, the supports of the party behind him, the absolute—there is no one in this province who has more supports behind him than the Premier. Who ended up being the hero in this story, and who has ended up being the villain in this story? I think the people of Manitoba know the answer to that. It did not require Judge Monnin to bring that forward, but I am very grateful to the people who participated and brought forward their stories and their truths to the commission so that the people of Manitoba now have it in black and white who was the hero and who was the villain, and very shortly, they are going to do their democratic duty and they are going to respond to not only the Monnin inquiry, but as a major component of their response in the election the Monnin inquiry will be there.

The people that the Premier had aligned himself with that came out in the Monnin inquiry were people that are long time, high up in the party and the government. These are not Johnny-come-latelys or Cubbys-come-lately. These are longstanding members of the Tory hierarchy, the social and political and financial, I dare say, elite of this Conservative Party in government. So you cannot shove under the table and just say, oh, they were misguided, they were new, they did not know. None of that washes. These people knew and they know that they knew. What they did and what they said and how they behaved throughout this entire miserable disgusting mess sheds a very bright light on the public morality and the private morality and the ethics and the principles that guide at least these people. I would venture to say that these people are not acting in isolation. They were responding to and part of a culture that this party and this government have operated under for many years.

We have Cubby Barrett, a major player in the Interlake region and an honorary life member of the Progressive Conservative Party. He was part of the Progressive Conservative campaign fund committee. We have Taras Sokolyk, the Progressive Conservative campaign chair who also served as the chief of staff for the Premier (Mr. Filmon) of the province of Manitoba.

Let me digress a minute, Madam Speaker, because I think what is interesting when you figure out who all these people are is how they interweave the party and the government. Now, I come from the United States originally, and one of the basic tenets of the political process in the United States is the separation of church and state. I think that concept is one that plays out or should play out in the political process in Manitoba, and that is, the state is the government, and the church, in this context, and my apologies to honourable members who are men of the cloth, the church in this analogy is the party.

\* (1500)

It should be simple to anyone who has any concept of basic democracy and the role of a government and the role of a party. Yes, they work together. The party works very hard to gets its members, its nominated candidates elected and hopefully elected as the governing party, but once that happens they should be backing off and doing party work and leaving the work of the government to the government members. The idea that Taras Sokolyk, who was the chief of staff, the closest person to the Premier (Mr. Filmon), the one to whom the Premier's door is always open—aha, even if the ears are closed, if you believe the Premier—that person is also the campaign manager for the entire 1995 provincial campaign for the Progressive Conservative Party. This is mind boggling. But Mr. Sokolyk is not the only person who has that meld of party and government.

We come to Julian Benson. Julian Benson, when the party were in the vote-rigging scheme, admitted to working with Sokolyk and others to write cheques on personal accounts, to pass them through, to give money to the independent candidates with the aim of splitting the vote and thereby electing Conservatives in three constituencies in the province. Julian Benson had another role. His other role was chair or president of Treasury Board, arguably, I would say, in the hierarchy of a government, the second most powerful position in government, the person for whom the Premier's (Mr. Filmon) door is also always open. No other two positions in the government, not the minister's,

not deputy minister's, not any other staff person position has the power that Mr. Sokolyk and Mr. Benson had in the government. In this scheme, no other two people had more power and influence and their hands more into this than those two high up ranking Conservative officials.

Another person who was involved was the campaign manager in the Interlake, Mr. Allan Aitken. Now, in our party, campaign managers during campaigns are very important. They are incredibly important individuals, and they are put into the system at a very high level, at least during a campaign. They know a lot about what is going on. They know a lot about what is happening with the Leader's tour and with the polling and with the strategy. I do not doubt that Allan Aitken probably was involved in the situation at a much higher level than he alludes to.

The Tory candidate in the Interlake, Mr. Ed Trachuk was also implicated. Now we are going, instead of up the food chain, we are going down it a little bit. We are going down to the campaign manager and the candidate in one of the ridings. But, again, these are high profile people who should be above reproach, and we should not have to be dealing with the elements of Bill 17 here today, because it should be a given that if you are involved in the political process, if you want to be working toward electing candidates and governments that represent your views and your beliefs, that you do it within the rules. But, no, these people, and however many more there are, there are no rules. And why are there no rules? Because this is an arrogant, tired government filled with hubris.

**An Honourable Member:** Hubris?

**Ms. Barrett:** Hubris. Look up your Greek. Pride, overweening pride that in virtually every Greek tragedy where it is mentioned and where there is a protagonist who experiences it, that protagonist goes down to ignominious defeat, Minister of Education (Mr. McCrae), and I think that is what is going to happen here. The rot, the hubris, started from the top, and Justice Monnin may not have been able to find out any direct implication in his very narrow interpretation of his mandate, but the people of Manitoba know

where the hubris starts. They know where the hubris ends. They know where the rot begins, and it starts from the top and it is going to end at the top.

We also have Arni Thorsteinson and Bob Kozminski, and I do want, Madam Speaker, to get into the specifics of Bill 17, so I am not going to speak very extensively on these two individuals. But you know what? Arni Thorsteinson was the chief fundraiser of the PC Manitoba Fund. Again, hello, one would assume that a person with that kind of authority and that kind of power not only would have the ears of the Premier (Mr. Filmon) but also would know and understand the fact that in the political process you have to not only be squeaky clean but you have to be seen to be squeaky clean. Clearly, that concept never entered Arni Thorsteinson's mind. And Bob Kozminski, I have here a comment from Bob Kozminski. Oh, I thought I did, but at any rate, basically Bob Kozminski stated and I quote, as quoted in the Winnipeg Sun on February 10 of this year: Quite frankly with my political leanings and what the NDP has done to this province over the years, I would do anything to take votes away from the NDP.

No wonder Justice Monnin had as one of his major recommendations the fact that the parties should really get their acts together and put together a code of ethics, and, Madam Speaker, I can speak briefly, if I have enough time, about the fact that the New Democratic Party does have a compendium of ethics and principles and values that permeates everything we do. I think the Conservatives have a compendium of principles and ethics that permeates everything they do, but I do not think they are exactly the kinds of principles and ethics that Justice Monnin wants having in there, and the people of Manitoba. It is not do whatever needs to be done to justify your side's victory. It is not the end justifies the means. It is not our side, right or wrong. It is not there is no difference between the party and the government. It is not do whatever you need to do no matter if it is unethical or illegal or immoral. Do anything you need to do, but do not get caught. Now that is the basic principle and dictum that this group of people just did not—

**An Honourable Member:** They got caught.

**Ms. Barrett:** They got caught.

**An Honourable Member:** That is what they were so afraid of.

**Ms. Barrett:** Oops. It was not that it was wrong. It was not that it was wrong. The problem with this whole thing for the Conservatives, from the top on down, is that they got caught.

I guess the one comment I would like to make about the Premier's involvement in all of this—or lack of involvement, if you take his comments—is, the word I think that has been used in a statement I read, his curious passivity in all of this. He did not know. Nobody told him. He did not act on anything when Mr. Sokolyk told him on June 23, I believe last year, that this was not a problem, but they, meaning the NDP, were on to something. Well, would you not think that, given the context at that point, the Premier would have said to Mr. Sokolyk: Come here, Taras; come into my office? What do you mean by "they are on to something"?

\* (1510)

That is the responsibility of a leader. It is the responsibility of the Leader, the member for Tuxedo (Mr. Filmon), who is Leader in two contexts here. Well, we have the separation of the parties, or should have the separation of the parties, whose goal is to elect members, separated from the government, whose goal is to provide good government. There is one area, one person, in whom those two entities come together. That is, in this case, the Premier of the Province of Manitoba. He is not only the Leader of the government, the First Minister. He is also—and in this context equally as important—the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. It was his duty as both Leader of the party and Leader of the government to demand from Mr. Sokolyk: What do you mean by "they are on to something"?

By his passivity, he acquiesced in the cover-up, I would suggest. He may not have been overt in his actions, if Justice Monnin is

accurate—and I reserve my personal view on that—but at the very least he was covert—not covert, but passively acquiescing in the extension of the problem and the not getting down to the facts, which was his job. It is always his job. It happened on his watch, as he is wont to say these days.

**An Honourable Member:** And he was what? Asleep at the watch?

**Ms. Barrett:** No. The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) asks if he were asleep at the watch, and I do not think so. I do not think he was asleep at the watch. I think he did not want to know, and he wanted to have that lovely phrase called "plausible deniability." Well, I think, Madam Speaker, that we have come to the realization here in the province of Manitoba that while there may be a concept called plausible deniability, and while the perpetrators of this cover-up and this scandal attempted, perhaps, to provide that plausible deniability to the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party and the Premier of the Province of Manitoba, it has not worked. The people of Manitoba do not feel that the Premier's comments are plausible.

However, I do have some comments that I would like to put on the record regarding the elements of Bill 17 itself. Mr. Justice Monnin made seven recommendations. Bill 17 directly addresses five of them. Two of them are not directly addressed, and with good reason, I believe. The procedure—what happened after Justice Monnin's report was tabled is that two committees are ongoing in the province here that have worked with the Chief Electoral Officer in Elections Manitoba over the years to implement and come up with the recommendations to make the electoral process more fair and more open. There are two ad hoc advisory committees; one that deals with The Elections Act and one that deals with The Elections Finances Act. The representatives from those two committees met a week ago actually, a week and a day ago, to go over the recommendations of the Monnin report. There were representatives from all three political parties at that meeting, as there have been representatives from all three political parties at all of the advisory ad hoc meetings. They are not always the same people, but there were representatives.

In the case of our party, we had the provincial secretary who is the chief administrative officer for the party. We had the auditor for the party as a whole. We had the comptroller who is the chief financial officer in the party office, and we had myself as a representative from the caucus and a person who has some background and experience in dealing with these two pieces of legislation. There were two representatives from the governing party and two representatives from the third party.

We spent quite a bit of time looking at all seven recommendations and came up with five recommendations that we felt should be in legislation. I would like to deal with the two that are not. The first one—and I am trying to remember which one it is—was recommendation 4 that the reporting formats for campaigns, audited statements, et cetera, and candidates, be looked at and upgraded. The reason that is not in the legislation is that Justice Monnin was looking at The Elections Act and The Elections Finances Act as they appeared in 1995, which was the act that was in effect when the vote-rigging scandal took place. Since that time, most particularly last June, there have been major amendments to both acts that have dealt with, in the view of the Chief Electoral Officer, the auditor and accountant who was there in an advisory capacity, and the representatives from all three political parties had been dealt with by subsequent amendments to the 1995 legislation. So that particular recommendation was not dealt with in the Bill 17 before you.

The other recommendation that was not dealt with, and the Premier alluded to it in his opening comments, was the recommendation that all political parties should look at a statement of ethics as was recommended by federal white paper and electoral reform known as the Lortie report, after the chairperson. Now Justice Monnin recommended that all three parties have the same code of ethics. As you can well imagine, Madam Speaker, when we got to that particular part of the discussion at the committee, we decided that all three political parties do have a set of ethics that they are operating under, maybe not written down, and they are very different.

**An Honourable Member:** Even Conservatives?

**Ms. Barrett:** Oh, yes. I did not say ethics had to be good ethics.

**An Honourable Member:** Oh, win at all costs.

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes, that is an ethical position. Win at all costs is an ethical position. It is not a—

**An Honourable Member:** Do anything to stop the NDP. Was that not one of them?

**Ms. Barrett:** Yes. It may not be positive but ethics is a valueless word. It can be positive or negative. So we agreed, all three parties and the Chief Electoral Officer, that it would be highly unlikely that the three parties would agree on a single set of ethics, but we did, as the Premier stated, agree that this Chief Electoral Officer would come back with some examples of statements of principle that other organizations have used and that we would look as a committee at possibly finding some statements that could be used by all three parties, but that each individual party would put together their own statement of ethics.

Madam Speaker, I would like to say that the Manitoba New Democratic Party—I went through the Lortie report and looked at the recommendations on the various elements that should be in a statement of ethics. I would like to outline many of the Lortie recommendations and say that we were there. Each party should have an explicit statement of the organization's values, principles, philosophy, objectives, and traditions.

Madam Speaker, I recognize that my time is almost up. I would like to, and others will be talking about the various specific elements of Bill 17, say in closing that while the genesis of Bill 17 is a dreadful black mark on the history or actions that have produced a dreadful black mark on the political history of the province of Manitoba in general and the Progressive Conservative Party in government in particular, the elements of Bill 17 are good elements. The bill itself reflects the spirit and the direction of Justice Monnin; the process through which we got Bill 17 shows that sometimes we in this House can work co-operatively together. I just regret from the bottom of my heart that we had to go to the extent that we did to deal with the

elements of Bill 17. I hope that this will never be necessary again.

**Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster):** We, too, would like to be able to see—

### Introduction of Guests

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. Prior to recognizing the honourable member for Inkster, I would like to draw the attention of all honourable members to the loge to my right, where we have this afternoon Mr. Brian Pallister, the former member for Portage la Prairie.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Lamoureux:** As I was saying, Bill 17 is indeed a bill for which there is unanimous support inside the House to see pass. The general will, much like the boundary redistribution bill, is to see it in fact passed prior to budget debate, which is going to be starting next week or on April 29.

Madam Speaker, there were a number of thoughts that came across my mind as I was listening to the member for Wellington (Ms. Barrett) speak on this particular bill. Before I comment on that, I want to comment very specifically on the legislation that was in fact introduced.

The Monnin inquiry, and I will start off with the four recommendations which are encompassed virtually in its entirety inside, were that the statute of limitations which currently exists, two years from the date of alleged offences, be changed to two years after the Chief Electoral Officer finds grounds to believe an offence has been committed; the second one, that the Legislature move rapidly when the Chief Electoral Officer requests any amendment to the relevant statutes.

\* (1520)

The sixth and seventh amendments, recommendations, were also brought into the legislation, the sixth one being giving the Chief Electoral Officer the power to conduct investigations and audits of the financial affairs of political parties; and seven, that, as a result of

recommendations one through six, political parties be obliged to keep their financial records for a minimum of five years after filing a statement.

Madam Speaker, there is the other recommendation, which was No. 4, which makes reference that Elections Manitoba revise its reporting format to better account for sources of income and expenditure. That one was dealt with, as the member for Wellington had pointed out, in the previous legislation that was proposed and passed since the '95 election. In fact, I believe it was passed last June.

With respect to recommendation No. 3, which no doubt the Premier made reference to and indicated that his party and he were taking action not only on a code of ethics but also the code of conduct. The recommendation reads that the registered political parties prepare a code of ethics. If they fail to do so by December 31, 2001, then a standard code should be legislated.

Well, Madam Speaker, I recognize that this particular recommendation was not included in the legislation, as there was an all-party group that sat down with Elections Manitoba and reviewed that particular issue, as the member for Wellington had made note of. So me, being the happy Liberal team player I am, I am not going to necessarily say what my personal thoughts are on this particular recommendation, but suffice to say, I believe, I really do believe that there is a need for a code of ethics and a code of conduct. It pleases me greatly to the degree which our leader is committed to ensuring that that does take place within the Liberal Party. I am told through our administrative arm of our party that in fact we are going to be developing a thorough code of ethics and a code of conduct.

As the member for Wellington points out, in particular when we take a look at variations and there is no doubt going to be some variation, what would be nice to see in time are the three parties getting together and coming up with a code of ethics which ultimately could be brought into the legislation, in particular, the code of ethics.

Then the other one was No. 5, the audit methods be improved in conjunction with

auditors, accountants and the Institute of Chartered Accountants. I think that is something that is still somewhat being reviewed, and we will see what ultimately comes of that. I do believe that the recommendations put forward and the intent of those recommendations are in the most part being adhered to and definitely being addressed by all three political parties. I think that is a very strong positive.

Having said that, the beginning of the session, we heard through a matter of privilege, I believe it was, and I think you have it under notice, so I will be very careful on the comments on it, but the position that we—

**An Honourable Member:** That is a change.

**Mr. Lamoureux:** I appreciate that vote of confidence. Madam Speaker, the party's position has been in recognition of the Monnin inquiry to accept that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has made an apology and that in fact we move on.

Having said that, Madam Speaker, as I have indicated to the Chamber before, we do find it quite difficult to believe that so many people around the Premier were involved, yet the Premier himself was not necessarily aware of it. Having said that, I wanted to comment on what some would say, you do not throw stones at a glass house—or a bull in a china store, those are the types of things that one has always got to be careful of.

I have had opportunity because I have always had an interest in, as I am sure everyone in democracy and how it has performed, how we might be able to improve it. I took the opportunity to meet with members of Elections Manitoba months ago to talk about concerns that I have as an individual, as an elected MLA, and how we can make our elections that much more democratic, if I can put it that way, dealing with issues, whether it is third-party advertising, whether it is paid labour going into campaigns, not necessarily taking an account for. There are many things, a lot of room for us to be improving.

What I would like to see is a much more proactive approach from Elections Manitoba at

addressing some of those issues that I had raised with them, and also to see political parties being more open-minded and maybe not as protective over their own personal interests as much as protecting what is in the interests of all Manitobans in future elections. I am being baited to comment on something I would dearly love to comment on, but for the member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski), I will indicate maybe one story in the last provincial election as an example of not throwing stones in glass houses.

I can recall we had a very heated campaign, as I am sure all members have heated campaigns, but we had signs disappearing. Well, Madam Speaker, we all no doubt have signs disappearing. I found out that it was the New Democrats that were taking down my signs. Now, the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen), a very wise person and someone that I respect, asked, what was my evidence? What we did, Madam Speaker, is we actually went to some of the homes, and the NDP campaign was telling them that they could not have two signs on the lawn. So then they took down the Liberal sign and put up the New Democratic sign. It was an interesting experience.

We filed the complaint with the Elections Manitoba. We had a pile of signs that were just kind of disappearing. At the end of the campaign, I was happy and doing some touring around, and one of the bins in very close proximity of the NDP campaign office was full of my signs. Well, at the time individuals indicated—[interjection] No, I never did get an apology. Nor did I ever get any comments. Anyway, Madam Speaker, I know, and I use it just as an example, I think that there is a lot of behaviour that cannot be condoned that takes place in campaigns, and we have to be very careful of what we say.

I can remember a volunteer that came to the campaign office. I am sure many of my colleagues inside the Chamber might be able to relate to this particular story, and that is the overenergetic volunteer that comes in after doing a drop and has a few of your opponents' brochures. Madam Speaker, I had indicated to the volunteer that that is not something which I can support, and they should not be taking action of that nature.

Madam Speaker, that is the reason why, and in fairness to this particular volunteer, and I will not tell you his political allegiances prior to my campaign, but in particular I think what is important to note here is that there is merit for a code of conduct. As members, we have to ensure that Manitobans as a whole have a responsibility to do what we can to ensure that there is a higher sense of conduct, of professionalism. I should put it maybe in terms of professionalism. As one member makes reference, the Minnedosa riding, that is something which has occurred. It is an action which, even though it was very isolated, it is something that happened to be with the Liberal Party. It is appalling to see that sort of action take place.

\* (1530)

What is important, Madam Speaker, I believe, is what sort of action is taken when we hear or we see something of this nature take place. That is why I said, right at the very beginning in entering into this, is that we have to be very careful in terms of the way in which we try to come across as being super clean or holier than thou on very important issues. We are not accusing the New Democrats of being super clean.

For the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), I have to be very careful because we talk with impunity, because we can say whatever we want in here and no legal action can be taken. I was aware, and I will share it with the member for Thompson of an incident that happened in Thompson with one of your workers. These sorts of things—and it does not mean the member for Thompson would have supported it. [interjection] No, it had nothing to do with bribery. As I say, there is a fine line and there is this gray area. Quite often, we see incidents like the Monnin inquiry and that investigation, which was absolutely a slap to the face of democracy, and anyone looking at it justifiably and duly should soundly criticize it.

There are other actions, Madam Speaker, maybe not to that degree, but there are other actions that do take place that go far beyond that line, and bribery is definitely one of them. There is absolutely no doubt about it. That is some-

thing which I would not attempt to defend, even though it happened to be with the Liberal Party, but I am not saying that the Liberal Party is void of any sort of election mistreatment.

Unfortunately, things of that nature happen, but if the member for Thompson believes it does not happen in the New Democratic Party, he needs to take his head out of the sand because I have had many—and I want to respect what the member for Wolseley (Ms. Friesen) had indicated, you know, evidence is important.

That is the reason why it is without doubt I can take shots at the government. It is without doubt I can talk about my sign incident at the local level. But I have to be very careful because a lot of stuff that we hear, Madam Speaker, is rumour, is hearsay and so forth, but I believe that a lot of those rumours do, in fact, take place.

That is the reason why, you know, when we look at the recommendation of the code of ethics and the code of conduct, I think it is absolutely critical for all three political parties not only to recognize it, because action speaks much louder than words. What we really need to do is to see those documents, so it helps better define that gray area, so not only as candidates but as volunteers, that in the future we do not see the same sorts of actions that have happened in the past.

Having said that, as I indicated at the beginning, it pleases the Liberal Party greatly to have this bill before us. We look forward to its speedy passage, much like the boundary redistribution legislation. I understand we might even be doing the elected Speaker resolution tomorrow or next week, but the idea again is to pass that.

There are some good, positive signs. We recognize that and we look forward to continuing to move forward in terms of providing a better form of democracy for Manitobans. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson):** Madam Speaker, I sort of notice a pattern here. The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) speaks and

I planned on speaking, and after he finishes speaking, I feel this sort of urge to say more than I was originally going to say. I must admit that he has done it again, because what I find interesting with the member for Inkster's comments is that I think his advice is wise up to a certain degree, but I think he has missed the point.

The whole question of ethics that the member talks about, the member for Inkster should recognize here that you have to look at the degree of lack of ethical behaviour that is involved. I realize that he is sensitive because the only party that has been convicted, anybody connected with any political party thus far in recent years of any kind of offence is I believe the son of a Liberal candidate in Minnedosa, who attempted to bribe Joe Anderson, a person I know quite well, an aboriginal candidate, by the way, attempted to bribe that individual and ended up being taken to court for it; I mean, attempted to bribe him for the purpose of getting him to withdraw from the election.

Now, I want to say to the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) that if you do consult with any authority in terms of ethics, that would certainly rank as unethical behaviour of the highest kind, not the types of incidents that the member talked about.

You know, I often find in elections, it is true—you know, one thing I find interesting, though, is a lot of these sorts of accusations that float around about signs often are directed at parties when you have a lot of evidence that it is straight vandalism. I say to the member, what he was talking about was not that case, because if you have people who have a house saying to withdraw a sign, to take down a Liberal sign or an NDP or a Conservative sign, anybody that is an owner of a home has the right to put up whatever number of signs they want. [interjection]

Well, I will tell you one thing, Madam Speaker, we in the New Democratic Party like to put signs on houses where people actually vote for us. [interjection] Well, I can say that. It is very easy—I can prove that in my own case because I only put up window signs. [interjection] Well, the member says come up to

the north end of Winnipeg. But, you know, it is interesting, because is the member suggesting somehow that people in his constituency are not in the position of making a decision? If we say at the door, which I think is reasonable, we want to put signs up—we do not want to put signs up in houses where people are not going to vote for us, and we trust that people are going to vote New Democrat if they put the sign up. By the way, in northern Manitoba—

**An Honourable Member:** What about a wife that votes Liberal and a husband that votes NDP?

**Mr. Ashton:** The member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) says, but what if there is a split household? That is quite different from where you have two people in a household and three signs up, and I have seen that sort of situation. I have always said in my house—[interjection] Well, The Maples, we are talking about The Maples then.

In Thompson itself we have window signs, and that requires the permission of the property owner to put it up. If someone tells me at the door that they are voting NDP, I will ask them if they want a sign, and then we will deliver a sign. But if they say I will put a sign anyway, that is not the way it is done. [interjection] It is interesting because the member for Inkster obviously does not get it. Maybe his party does not care where it puts its signs up, but in our case, I can tell you that virtually every candidate that I know will say the same thing. I will say that if I go to a household that has a Liberal sign on it, and someone says, but I am voting NDP, I will offer to give them a sign if that is the case. [interjection]

It is interesting because the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) still does not quite get it. He still does not get it. After he sort of says we are all concerned about ethics, sort of bribery in a Liberal campaign, he then slips into this thing with the signs back and forth, not recognizing the quantum difference in what we are dealing with. I say to the member, because he is the ethics critic, the ethics critic should be the first one to recognize that attempting to bribe someone is about the worst possible kind of behaviour.

**An Honourable Member:** Both are wrong.

\* (1540)

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, you see, the member says both are wrong. Once again he shows a complete ignorance of ethics. It is sort of like, you know, this is part of, by the way, the way in which you get out of this. It is like, well, yes, our campaign in Minnedosa attempted to bribe a candidate and was convicted of that, but, you know, everybody does things that are wrong, so that kind of means we are all in the same circumstance. It does not, Madam Speaker.

You know, what is interesting, the only person that is condoning anything is the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) who tries to compare this thing with the signs to attempting to bribe a candidate to drop out of an election. That is an offence under The Elections Act. It is an offence to the ethics and morality of this province, and I say, Madam Speaker, when the member tries to put these two things in the same circumstance, he does a disservice to any sense of ethics in this province.

I notice the Conservatives, by the way, have yet to be—

#### Point of Order

**Mr. Gary Kowalski (The Maples):** My understanding of the rules of the House is that we are all considered honourable members, and under Beauchesne I am wondering if calling the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) of not having ethics is the same as calling him not an honourable member and is out of order. So I would ask, if that is the case, that the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) reconsider his intemperate words and withdraw those comments.

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

**Mr. Ashton:** Madam Speaker, I did not refer to the member for Inkster as being unethical. I was referring in debate to the lack of a sense of the balance of what he is talking about in terms of ethics, which is a disagreement of opinion. But I did not accuse the member for Inkster of

unethical behaviour. It is a very important point in debate, a disagreement of opinion.

**Madam Speaker:** I will indeed check the authorities and read the transcript before ruling on the point of order raised by the honourable member for The Maples.

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**Mr. Ashton:** Madam Speaker, I want to stress again, because until we learn the lessons of what had happened in the Minnedosa case and the events covered by the Monnin inquiry, until we do that we are ensuring that this type of behaviour will happen again.

The thing that has to be understood, what happened in Minnedosa was unacceptable, period. No, well, everybody has done something or other campaigns have done this or other campaigns have done that. One campaign attempted to bribe someone to drop out of the race. They were taken to court. They were found guilty of that offence.

That is wrong, period, which brings me to the Monnin inquiry, because this is what has to be established here. And I want to stress again in case anyone misunderstands the point here that I do not suggest that every Conservative member in this House or every member the Conservative Party is somehow unethical because of what we have seen proven by the Monnin inquiry. That would be an unfair statement. There are some very honest Conservatives in this House, very honest Conservatives in the party generally, and I actually, one of, a New Democrat, I said, well, is it not a bit of an oxymoron to talk about an honest Conservative? And I said: be fair to people. Do not hold them responsible for the behaviour of somebody who happens to be a party member or a member of the House here who did not know about that.

But, you know, the end result—I do not blame all Conservatives for the action of everyone that is involved, but I do say that one should reflect on the Monnin inquiry to show that I certainly hold this government responsible; I hold the Premier responsible. By the way, I hold the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey)

and the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey), the co-chairs of that 1995 campaign, responsible. I say that it is not good enough for any of the individuals involved with this to say, well, I really did not know. I did not know. This was a systematic attempt to disrupt the electoral process. It was developed at the highest level. It was developed by people who are the entire inner circle of the Conservative Party, and I say to members opposite that if you remain silent—did anybody, for example, question the presence at the Conservative convention of some of the principals in this inquiry? Did they question it? Do members of the cabinet who go off on vacation with members like Cubby Barrett, who supposedly had been banished from the Conservative Party, when members sit here and we mention Cubby Barrett, who was proven to have been a major part of this unethical scheme, sit there and it is like, you mention Cubby Barrett's name and the smiles go up on the other side. It is sort of, oh, Cubby, Cubby, we, you know—members opposite still have not understood that Cubby Barrett was involved in unethical behaviour, period, period. And they show it day in and day out.

I want to run through the rest of this rogues' gallery, because these are people who not only were involved in this unethical scheme, each and every one of them has benefited immensely from their connection to the Conservative Party. This is not just random unethical behaviour. These are people who have been the—I mentioned this earlier to the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns). You know, the Conservative Party the last 11 years in Manitoba might as well adopt the pig as its symbol, because they have been at the trough. Cubby Barrett has been one of the most significant beneficiaries of his connection with the Conservative Party.

Now let us run through some of the rest of this rogues' gallery. Taras Sokolyk. Do you know what amazes me again? This shows how little the Conservative Party understood this back in June. I remember questioning the Premier (Mr. Filmon) for two hours on Taras Sokolyk's role. Taras Sokolyk, do you remember him, the chief of staff for the Conservative Party? Do you know what the Premier said? He said, well, I am not going to

answer questions about what happened in the election. That was a different Taras Sokolyk. He was my campaign manager then. He was not working for the Conservative government, he was working for the Conservative Party. Taras Sokolyk. Now how many times did he lie under oath? Once? Twice? Three times? Seventeen times. The chief of staff lied under oath 17 times, Madam Speaker.

I would note that I still have serious questions about the Premier's role in terms of lack of being forthcoming because he was aware on June 23 of Mr. Sokolyk being aware and probably involved in the 1995 campaign. That is to assume, you have to expect us to believe, that this happened without the co-chairs of the campaign, sitting MLAs—the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) and the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) were co-chairing that—while the Premier was the Leader of this party, while his chief of staff was also his campaign manager. They knew nothing. They did not know anything about Jules Benson being involved in the campaign, anything about this involvement.

On June 23 the Premier came into the House, do you know what his words were? It did not happen. Madam Speaker, he said it did not happen. On the 24th he came into the House, and he said what? He said that he had talked to officials. Well, that was not true. He talked to one official in the campaign. He once again said: I have no knowledge of the Conservative Party being involved with any of this. That was not accurate information because on the 23rd, as we found out under oath, it took the Premier to be under oath before he went ahead and revealed that. By the way, when Taras Sokolyk resigned, what did the Premier (Mr. Filmon) say? Oh, well, the only discussion I ever had with Mr. Sokolyk about this was in 1995. It is not true. He told the media he had a conversation in '95 when in fact he, on the record at the inquiry several months later, confirmed he had a discussion with Mr. Sokolyk on the 23rd of June. That is Mr. Sokolyk.

Jules Benson. Jules Benson. Now is this just some random Tory that just happened to do something? Some rogue Tory? The head of Treasury Board. How many years was he

treasurer of the Conservative Party? You know, it is interesting because when he became the chief civil servant, what is amazing is that no one on that side, no one in the campaign, understood that under his oath he was not supposed to be involved in political campaigns. The height of irresponsibility I thought was when the Premier went outside of this House and said, well, since the Schreyer government changed the role of civil servants in the political process, people just did not know that Jules Benson was not supposed to be involved in campaigns. Madam Speaker, did the co-chairs of the campaign not know that? I mean, this is the highest paid civil servant in the province involved directly in the campaign.

\* (1550)

I want you to picture this for a moment. This is the same person on Treasury Board that was meeting with the advertisers for the Conservative Party in 1995. Does anybody not see the ethical difficulties when you have somebody who is in a key position to grant favours to people? The Jules Benson, chief civil servant on the one hand, popping up as Jules Benson, loyal Conservative member on the other side. Jules Benson, the rogues' gallery.

Let us continue with another one, Gordon McFarlane. Well known to the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey), official agent for her campaign in 1995, well known to the co-chairs, the comptroller of the Conservative Party.

**An Honourable Member:** McCarthyism, guilty by association.

**Mr. Ashton:** I say to the member, in this case what is not credible is the fact that Gordon McFarlane committed serious offences for which he is going to be held accountable. Have you read the Monnin report on Gordon McFarlane? Yet this individual continues to pop up, as we have seen even today.

I tell you what is amazing about a lack of ethics and how the Minister responsible for the Liquor Commission (Mrs. Vodrey) does not quite get it. You know, her only concern was, well, he was doing this before the Monnin report came out, but she does not understand that it is

wrong for somebody who was the comptroller of the Conservative Party, who was her official agent, to be the supposedly objective third party dealing with liquor licence applications, which, coincidentally, result in two groups with Conservative connections ending up in that.

### Point of Order

**Hon. Rosemary Vodrey (Minister charged with the administration of The Liquor Control Act):** Madam Speaker, I would just like to point out to the member, on a point of order, that this individual was acting on behalf of his firm, Grant Thornton. Grant Thornton is a very reputable CA firm in this province, and they have a reputation to preserve. The member is attempting to draw some kind of allegation.

If he has anything in relation to the firm of Grant Thornton, which acts as auditors to the MLCC, I would like him to put it on the table because I am very, very concerned with the image that he is casting on a very reputable firm within this province and an individual who was acting in his capacity as a chartered accountant in this function.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. The honourable Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship did not have a point of order.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Ashton:** Madam Speaker, I want to make it very clear that the Gordon McFarlane I was referencing was the same Gordon McFarlane who was cited in the Monnin report as having breached the law in causing a false statement to be filed with Elections Manitoba, contrary to Sections 81 and 83(b) of the act. So do not lecture me about this individual's ethical accounting practices.

Madam Speaker, this is the same person, and she still does not get it, the lack of ethics that is shown by this individual. The least this individual should have done—there are hundreds of accounts in this province. Did he not understand that by being the comptroller of the Conservative Party and the official agent to the minister, with direct knowledge of who is a Conservative, who contributes to the

Conservative Party, that he could not be an objective source in terms of analyzing liquor licence applications? You know, it shows again that the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey), who, coincidentally, was also the co-chair of the campaign in which these activities happened, still does not get it. Even after the fact when you have a clear example of something this wrong, that the public understands to be wrong, the minister sits there and attempts to defend Mr. McFarlane's activities. Mr. McFarlane should not have been involved in vetting the liquor licence applications, period; and, if she does not understand that, she should not be the Minister responsible for the Manitoba Liquor Control Commission.

I say, Madam Speaker, let us continue with this because once again they still do not get it. I mentioned three individuals, all of whom lied, all of whom committed election offences, all of whom breached serious ethical standards in this province. We are talking again—I want you to picture this because these are not random people—the comptroller for the Conservative Party.

You can continue because it continues in terms of some of the other players in this, key players again: fund raisers, donators to the Conservative Party. Once again, people who have benefited greatly by their association with the Conservative Party. These are not just altruistic individuals who donate money to the party of their choice. These are people who have benefited through legislative changes, through appointments to boards that have benefited them directly. These are not people who are involved for altruistic motives.

Bob Kozminski. Now, you want a summary of the Tory ethic for this province, you can do it in his comments, his infamous comments. You know, Bob Kozminski said he would do anything—I will repeat that—anything to take votes away from the NDP—anything. He reminded me by the way, I had an individual, former young Conservative from Ontario, who was involved in my campaign a number of years ago and echoed these remarks. He came to Manitoba. He went to Conservative constituency meetings in my constituency, and he said, you know, after a few months, he under-

stood he was in the wrong party in Manitoba. The reason he supported the NDP, he said, was because he knew what the NDP stood for. He said when he went to the Conservative meetings, the one thing that they had in common, the one thing they talked about was their hatred of the NDP and their desire to defeat the NDP.

Is it not interesting, Madam Speaker? Bob Kozminski will do anything, anything, to take votes away from the NDP. Well, we saw in that case, with Mr. Kozminski, he did not just say it, he put it into action. Who were these altruistic individuals here? Who were signing the cheques? Mr. Kozminski. Mr. Thorsteinson, oh, we cannot leave him out. I mean, it is interesting. We have a former member of ours, now affiliated with the federal Conservative Party. Mr. Thorsteinson has a long connection with the federal Conservative Party, particularly when they were in power, you know, the on-the-take days. I would recommend that book to people because it shows what happens when you get a systematic lack of any sense of what is ethical, complete lack of any sense of moral judgment. You know, people forget why Brian Mulroney was so unpopular. It was because in the eight years it was in government, I cannot think of a government, and certainly a federal government, in Canadian history that has so many people involved who were up on charges for influence peddling, ministers involved with questionable activities, contracts being let out with obvious political connections.

**An Honourable Member:** Grant Devine.

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, Grant Devine. The member for Dauphin (Mr. Struthers) talks about Grant Devine—by the way, another Premier who did not know what was going on in his government. That is what he says. How many Conservatives have been charged? But, you know, I say to people, I say to members opposite, what we have seen here is, you map out these players. I have not mentioned some of the other players in this as well because it just amazes me how they keep popping—Allan Aitken. You know, here was the guy who could not remember the entire year of 1995, by the way, the entire year, 1995.

**An Honourable Member:** Just a blur.

**Mr. Ashton:** Just a blur, just a blur. You know what I find interesting though, Madam Speaker, is this is the entire inner circle of the Conservative Party. This is the chief of staff. This is the head of Treasury Board, all clearly indicted by Justice Monnin for unethical behaviour. It is the key fundraisers. Cubby Barrett, member of the Conservative Party for life. These are the key financiers. We have constituency campaign managers. We have candidates in the Interlake.

The bottom line with this is the only real approach of the government since this has come into place has been to sort of give these apologies, supposed apologies. But I question apologies where somebody says: well, I am sorry; I apologize, and then they immediately attack people who raise questions about what happened, about ethics, about morality, about what happened four years ago. I look to the Premier. I question the Premier's role from June on not going public and talking about his meeting with Taras Sokolyk. I question his role in not asking Mr. Sokolyk, according to the Premier, what happened. Can you believe a Premier whose best defence is to say: Well, Sokolyk told me that the NDP was on to something, so I blinked. Madam Speaker, he blinked. [interjection]

**An Honourable Member:** Get a lawyer.

\* (1600)

**Mr. Ashton:** Get a lawyer, and do not come to my staff meetings. By the way, because the Premier is a member of this Legislature, I will assume he was telling the truth. We have to assume that. I would not assume that about any of the other sordid characters who were involved in this, because they lied repeatedly under oath. But can you believe the 11-year Premier of this province blinking, saying get a lawyer; do not come to staff meetings.

He is trying to say to the people of Manitoba that he is—you know, like their slogan, the Filmon team. Well, the Filmon team right now, they are all involved with this scandal. Manitoba Strong, you know where they talk about Manitoba Strong. What leader is this, Madam Speaker, who blinks and says: get a

lawyer, do not come to staff meetings. I am sorry. What about Jules Benson? Well, there is another great situation. The Premier is aware of Jules Benson's involvement in July I believe it was—a wedding.

**An Honourable Member:** It was his son's wedding.

**Mr. Ashton:** Exactly. My colleague points out. You know what is interesting is, was Jules Benson immediately subject to censure by the Premier? Did he fire Jules Benson? You know what I find amazing is, he knew in July, and Jules Benson—he even called Jules Benson a liar in October, then he retracted it. The funny part was, the only correct statement I think the Premier made in this entire drama was in October, because Jules Benson did lie. Read the report. Read what Justice Monnin said. Benson obviously did not tell the whole truth regarding the extent of his involvement in the 1995 campaign. This is Judge Monnin, page 57: "I am of the view that Benson's involvement was improper and that certain party members failed to see the clear distinction between a civil servant and a party volunteer."

You know what happened to Jules Benson? He was not fired. He went out and he got to retire. Some punishment.

**An Honourable Member:** With his little severance package.

**Mr. Ashton:** With his little severance package, exactly. By the way, Jules Benson was receiving a 12 percent RRSP contribution, far more generous than anyone in this House receives. Jules Benson was allowed to collect another six months worth of RRSP credits and, you know, not a black mark on his record. Nothing in his file. You know, Don Leitch actually said he was asked to leave, but even the Premier would not go that far. Jules Benson walks away from this with what? He walks away from this with not a scar.

**An Honourable Member:** \$40,000.

**Mr. Ashton:** Yes, \$40,000. This is how much this punishment has been brought forward.

Now, let us deal with the Cubby Barretts and the rest of this bunch here, you know, Cubby Barrett, the Cross Lake liquor licence. I have been in Cross Lake many times. I knew the previous owners of the hotel. It is absolutely disgusting that Cubby Barrett boasted on six occasions that he would have no trouble using his connections to get a liquor licence when he was purchasing that facility. On six occasions he said that. There are two witnesses to that effect.

The great thing about the Tories is, you know, you can get away with that. You can be shown in this scandal to being directly involved in unethical behaviour. But you know what? Cubby Barrett sits there today and he owns what? The Cross Lake Inn. He has four licences, VLTs. Cubby Barrett cashes in every day, every week, every month, from his political connections to the Conservative Party.

Now, it is interesting, because this whole crew, you know, I mean, there was a group in Thompson trying to buy a hotel recently. Guess who shows up? Allan Aitken shows up, Allan Aitken, and I am sure if I was to mention this to him he probably would not remember it either, but it is almost wherever you turn you start to see a connection here, and this is what I mean about this common theme. Notice the connection, by the way, the players and the Monnin report, the vote-splitting scandal. Now, where are they showing up?

Think of this for a moment. What is the one branch of government, the one Crown corporation where the simple granting of a licence could make you money, could make you a millionaire? It is the Liquor Commission. Think about this for a moment.

**An Honourable Member:** Who is on that?

**Mr. Ashton:** Cubby Barrett, by the way, who is on the Liquor Commission, as the member points out. This is how they sort of stand back and sort of try and separate themselves from it. Grant Holmes, chairperson, has donated \$8,200 to the Conservative Party; Wesley Goodspeed, \$6,500; Joyce Buffie, another contributor. I just want you to picture this.

Now, this is the apolitical Liquor Control Commission. They used to have a Mr. Tom Denardi on it. He was apolitical too. He just happened to run in Crescentwood in 1990 for the Conservative Party. He got on the board. They discussed and developed the proposal to have private wine stores. He got off the board. He applied for the wine store licence, and guess what? He got the licence, you know, just sort of random person off the street, right? Yes, right. This time around, the same thing. Who pops up again? Gordon McFarlane. There are hundreds of chartered accountants in this province, and he just happens to end up being the person doing the third-party audit. The objective source. I note, because, by the way, I have talked to people who did not get a licence. One family spent \$11,000, and they were shocked when they got a letter back, not from the Liquor Commission, but from Gordon McFarlane. Gordon McFarlane, we would like to thank you for your interest and submission. It continues: unfortunately your proposal was not selected for further consideration.

We--now I wonder what "we" was referring to. "We" as in him as a chartered accountant, or "we" as in the Conservative Party. Which "we" was Gordon McFarlane talking about. I want to read on the record again the fact that in the liquor store situation, and by the way I just want to show you the lack of ethics here. This decision was made in December of last year. This is not ancient history, this is December of last year. Pembina Fine Wines, Joe Jerema, [phonetic] a contributor to the Conservative Party and De Luca's Fine Wines. I outlined three individuals with close connections to the Conservative Party, the De Luca's, who have been contributors; Tom Frain [phonetic], I believe, who contributed \$2,000 to the Conservative Party; and also David Filmon, obviously connected with the Conservative Party.

They still do not get it. We raised this and the minister says, well, this is terrible, people have a right to earn a living. I can tell you that the family that put their application in good faith and spent \$11,000, they had a right to be treated fairly. We have a situation where you have Gordon McFarlane supposedly doing the analysis of it, and you end up with people with

Conservative connections getting licences. I say to this minister she should be ashamed of even doing anything other than apologizing to the many applicants who put their names in good faith or apologizing to this House.

*Mr. Gerry McAlpine, Acting Speaker, in the Chair*

Perhaps she does not understand after having been in government so long that the people of Manitoba see, they see the ethical rot that eats to the heart of this government. That is my point. It is not just Monnin. It is 11 years of accumulated arrogance that we are seeing from this government. Eleven years. They just do not get it. They did not see anything wrong with the vote-splitting inquiry, the vote splitting in 1995. They try and stage manage Monnin now as if, well, it is all in the past. They think a few "apologies," and I put that in quotation marks, because I really question how authentic those apologies are, are going to somehow change things and move things on. But what we see is they have not learned. It was not just the 1995 in elections. It is with basic things such as dealing with liquor licences. They still have not learned. They cannot pretend they are banishing people, and then go on holidays with them—

**An Honourable Member:** Or conventions.

**Mr. Ashton:** —or conventions. They just do not get it, Mr. Acting Speaker. I get back to the federal Conservative Party, because they did not get it until they were knocked down to two seats.

**An Honourable Member:** They did not get it till they got it.

**Mr. Ashton:** They got it good. Yes. The member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) referenced that.

**An Honourable Member:** And gender parity.

\* (1610)

**Mr. Ashton:** And gender parity, indeed. They did it the hard way. Two members. I smell the same rot, and that smell will not go away for one very simple reason. We are dealing with the

Premier (Mr. Filmon) here. He is the same Premier that has watched over this for 11 years.

By the way, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would note the fact that I do not believe the vote-splitting scandal was the first time we have seen a pattern from this Premier on these kinds of issues. Talk to senior Conservatives that remind me about 1983. Does anyone remember Brian Ransom? Brian Ransom. It is interesting. I have talked to Conservatives that say the same thing happened then. Filmon's camp ran another candidate. They made sure there were three candidates to split the vote. There were all sorts of dirty tricks. I believe at least one of those individuals involved was later convicted in terms of an immigration fraud, scam—1983; 1988, I have mentioned this before—

**An Honourable Member:** Mr. Clark.

**Mr. Ashton:** And Mr. Clark, indeed. I say to people who say, well, what is the proof, in fact there has been a significant amount of work done on this. I believe the proof will come out. I remind people that in 1995 the Conservatives denied there was anything wrong in the Interlake, Dauphin and Swan River. No, it did not happen. In 1998, the Premier in June said it did not happen. It was not true. It was not true.

I want to go one step further, because the funny part about all the attention that has been paid to the vote-splitting scandal, Mr. Acting Speaker, is the fact that the biggest scam of the last election is one that I think needs to be investigated further. Maybe we need an inquiry on this scam. You know, it is funny. The Tories must be really frustrated right now with the vote-splitting scandal, because you know what really bugs them the most. Number one is that they got caught. Number two is it did not work. It did not work. They did not win any of those three ridings. That probably means more to them than anything, the fact that it did not work. If it had worked, that would have been fine.

But there was another scam in the last election. It was called Save the Jets. Remember that one? What is funny about this, some of the same people that were involved in the vote-splitting scandal were part of this Save the Jets committee. In fact, the ironic part is the head of

it is now running for the Conservative Party in the next election.

**An Honourable Member:** Who is that?

**Mr. Ashton:** John Loewen.

**An Honourable Member:** The same.

**Mr. Ashton:** John Loewen, indeed.

You know, the bottom line here is, what did they do? Now I want you to compare Gary Filmon, who sort of did not know what was going on in the vote-splitting scandal, so he says. You remember what he said about the Jets, when days after the election it became clear that there was no hope of saving the Jets. Do you remember what he said? He said: I was out of the loop. [interjection]

Yes, the next day, as the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) points out: I was out of the loop.

**An Honourable Member:** Remember that in February, they agreed. They had already met with the Finance minister, and he already knew that.

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, as the member points out, the former Minister of Finance, now Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson), had met with this group and gone through the business plan. They knew there was no hope in February, but they also knew that this was a great campaign issue. I remember what they did in the election. Here is the sort of ethical standards of this party. You know who they took advantage of in that election. We know in terms of aboriginal people, but it was also young people. They would go to the door in Rossmere and constituencies they knew to be close. They would not talk to the parents. They would talk to young adults, especially young males—

**An Honourable Member:** My son almost voted for them.

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, the member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) said his son almost voted for them on this.

They went in and cynically said there is only one party that will save the Jets. I would suggest it cost the Liberal Party several seats, especially in southwest Winnipeg. It certainly cost us Rossmere, and probably made a significant difference in St. Vital and other seats that were close. You know what? I want to note this, by the way. This scam, this Tory scam, won them the election.

**An Honourable Member:** That lie worked.

**Mr. Ashton:** And indeed, as the member for Crescentwood (Mr. Sale) said, the only difference between this and the Monnin inquiry is that lie worked: Save the Jets.

**An Honourable Member:** Phoenix rising from the ashes.

**Mr. Ashton:** Ah, exactly.

I guess I have some comfort, by the way, going into the next election. I know they cannot be running on Save the Jets again. Somehow I do not think Save the Moose is going to do it for them this time. I think the Moose are going to do okay as it is.

**An Honourable Member:** Save Gary Filmon.

**Mr. Ashton:** Well, indeed, you know. What it is going to be, the next election is Save Gary Filmon. Save the Premier, save his tattered reputation. I think the only reason he is hanging in, Mr. Acting Speaker, is because people know that one of the reasons the Conservative Party has suffered to the degree that it has is because of his leadership or lack thereof.

I want to say, Mr. Acting Speaker, to repeat the phrase that I think is so often used in other contexts but should be used in this case: Those who do not learn from history are condemned to repeat it.

What we have to learn from the Monnin inquiry is the need to put in place the recommendations we see in this bill. But what we also have to do is understand, as this Conservative Party has failed to do since the scandal came forward—and that is to commit to a real concept of ethics in this province.

I ask the members opposite to do nothing more than what most Manitobans would ask. They want elected representatives and political parties to do their best for the province. They do not want people, either in an elected position or in close proximity to the party, to benefit financially in a huge way through no other reason than their connection with that party. They do not want fixed elections. They do not want the kind of lying that we saw repeatedly, like Judge Monnin talked about, never having seen as many liars.

The people of Manitoba want political parties committed, Mr. Acting Speaker, to a vision of fairness and ethics, and I say to members opposite, if you think that you have learned the lessons from Monnin, you have not, and I say on the record that I really believe the only way in which the Conservative Party will learn the lessons of the scandal is by being soundly defeated in the same way that Brian Mulroney was in 1993.

**Mr. Tim Sale (Crescentwood):** Mr. Acting Speaker, as all members of the House know, I had a rather long and intense involvement in this whole disgusting scandal, and I want to speak in support of the amendments, although I think there are a couple of them I am going to make comments on that may not go far enough.

My involvement in this sorry process started with the fact that a number of the press believed that there was a story here that had not been told in its full entirety in 1995 because people had lied to the investigation by Elections Manitoba, but, unfortunately, they had no hard information other than a strong perception that the whole truth had not been told.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, when I was privy to a conversation with Allan Aitken and Kim Sigurdson in which a free and frank admission of the depth of this scandal was made, I realized that we were not going to be able to simply say, well, that was '95, this is 1998, because what was at risk was the public trust in our whole democratic process. What was also at risk was the potential for at least one political party, the Progressive Conservative Party, to believe that they could get away with anything in their pursuit of power.

\* (1620)

So we began to attempt to tie down what actually happened, and, ultimately, in spite of our best efforts, we were unable to get Mr. Sutherland to make the admission that he finally made to the CBC. At that point we had, as our lawyer had told us we needed to have in January when we first consulted legal counsel on this issue, two ends of the story. We had Mr. Aitken as confirmed by Mr. Sigurdson meeting with Mr. Sokolyk, and we had Mr. Sutherland admitting that he had received substantial funding to persuade him to run for a party created by the Progressive Conservative Party of Manitoba.

You know, in spite of the fact that virtually the whole riding of Interlake, my honourable colleague from the Interlake's riding—the whole riding knew about this scam. The Tory candidate, Mr. Trachuk is named in the report as having sat down with Mr. Sokolyk and Mr. Aitken—and we believe Val Hueging as well, although that is not in the report—and hatched this scheme prior to the writ being dropped in mid-March of 1995. The whole Interlake knew about this. Mr. Sigurdson and his friends knew about this. Obviously Mr. Sokolyk knew about it, he hatched it. Mr. McFarlane knew about it; Mr. Benson knew about it. Mr. Thorsteinson and Mr. Kozminski made some efforts to raise money for this little scam; they knew about it. Mr. Benson knew about it. The number of people who knew about this in 1995 was an astoundingly large number. The Premier knew about the allegations because Paul Samyn came to him on the bus and said, Mr. Premier, this is what we have been told, is it true? That was the point at which the Premier had the ability because, my goodness, it is very clear from how that party runs that if the Premier says jump, the members all say, how high, sir, how high.

If the Premier had asked the question in any kind of serious way, he would have been told. So it is difficult to believe that he simply walked away from the most serious accusation that could be made during an election, an accusation of bribery, vote splitting and money flowing improperly from one campaign to another campaign. Yet he tells us, and we are bound to accept his word in this House, that he knew nothing.

It reminds me of that funny story of when Mr. Benson was fired by Mr. Leitch, who said, Jules, you have to go; you cannot stay. The Premier said he did not know anything about that. Did not know anything about that. Jules was gone. You know, you had this kind of image of the Premier coming into his office and saying: where is Jules, I have not seen Jules for the last few days, where is big Julie, and the Premier's secretary said, oh, we fired him; Gary, we fired him, he is gone. And Gary says, oh, I did not know, I did not know. No, I just did not know. There are so many things he apparently did not know.

I want to focus on the auditing and accounting issues in this set of amendments which is, particularly Part 2, the amendments to The Elections Finances Act. I might just say to the honourable member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey), there is a little clause in here that she might want to read and think about. It is Clause 10.2(4) An auditor whose professional judgment or objectivity is impaired in the manner described in subsection 3 is disqualified from being an auditor and shall resign immediately.

It is an interesting section. She probably should send a copy of that to Mr. McFarlane because it would be instructive for him to consider how as a professional person he could be her campaign manager, the assessor for the Liquor Commission, the comptroller of the PC Party in the election and not perceive there to be any hint of a conflict. He is clearly in possession of knowledge that would cloud at least his judgment if not his action. He knew who gave money, big money, to the Tory party. He knew who gave money to the candidate for whom he was the manager. He knew whom all the cheques were written to, the \$1.5 million worth of cheques that were written in the 1995 campaign, but it never occurred to him that there might be a conflict here. Well, he should read that amendment and so should the Minister responsible for the Liquor Control Commission. It is simply atrocious that she would hide behind the firm he works for and say, oh, when he came to do this little job for us—for which he was well paid—he was just acting in his capacity as a member of his firm. I barely knew the man, you know, I can hear her saying it now—I barely knew the man; I hardly recognized him. Gordon

McFarlane, I barely knew you. Well, what a scandal. What a scandal.

But let us talk about the auditing function here. Because of the fact that the cover-up scheme was essentially inept when it came right down to it, essentially inept—

**An Honourable Member:** No argument there.

**Mr. Sale:** I am glad the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Enns) agrees that it was an inept cover-up scheme, because it certainly was. You know, you have a certified fraud inspector and an ex-businessman—we will talk about him in a minute—and you have Jules Benson, all kind of forgetting that when cheques go through the bank, the bank makes a microfiche copy. So you can tear up your cheque; you can hide it in a file; it does not matter; it is still on record at the bank in a microfiche copy.

So when we received information about this cheque, the game was over. All that had to happen was that Judge Monnin subpoenaed the records of the PC Party, and the bank very properly, after checking the authority of the judge, provided the microfiche copies, every single cheque, a great thick wad of paper with three cheques per page, and do they ever make interesting reading. I think that it would almost be a kind of public service for all members of the Conservative Party to get a copy of those cheques. They would find them very, very interesting.

I want to comment on the auditing process. You, know, Mr. Acting Speaker, there is a recommendation here to strengthen the audit process, but let me tell you that the federal government, the federal elections process, requires that Elections Canada does the audit, not a private firm, not somebody subject to political manipulation or to a nudge-nudge, wink-wink, do-not-ask-for-the-bank-statements audit, but Elections Canada. I am really wondering whether this amendment goes far enough in terms of its requirements, because it still allows for private auditors to audit the statements of political parties.

Let me tell you what the Conservatives did in 1995 in terms of the cheques they wrote:

\$300,000 written to their polling firm in the immediate run-up to the election, \$300,000 of polling in the few weeks before the election, a lot of it push polling, pushing for issues so they could get people to agree to language—push polling, not honest polling for opinion but push polling.

\* (1630)

Now, of course, that is not an election expense under The Elections Act. Polling is not an election expense—you do not have to declare that—but advertising is. Now, the Conservative Party had an advertising limit in 1995. It was exactly 50 percent of the campaign limit, about \$540,000 roughly. That was their advertising limit. But, you know, the cheques to Jake Marks total \$787,000. Now, those who understand The Elections Finances Act and how it works will know that if you go over on your advertising, it is game over, right? You have broken the act and at the central party level, if you go over, the election can be simply nullified. It is a very serious offence.

So how was it that the party could get away with writing \$787,000 worth of cheques to Jake Marks and Barb Biggar—

**An Honourable Member:** Barb who?

**Mr. Sale:** Barb Biggar. Remember Barb Biggar, Biggar Ideas? Yes, \$787,000 on a limit of \$540,000; they were \$240,000 over their limit, not an accidental couple of thousand, \$240,000 over their limit. Now, how did the auditing function work in regard to that little problem? How the auditing function worked in regard to that little problem, that \$240,000 overexpenditure, I think the member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) knows how it works. He is listening very carefully.

How it works is this. Elections Manitoba only audits what they are given. Right? So it is pretty simple. You just do not report all those cheques that were written for election purposes. You just do not report them. You say: we spent the limit, and Elections Manitoba says: oh, very good, how clever of you, you just spent the limit. There is no requirement to show how it is that out of receiptable campaign donations \$240,000

more than was allowable was spent. They do not have to show, well, this ad was not used or this paper was not consumed or these slots on radio were not in fact used. We bought them, but we did not use them. They do not have to prove, under this legislation or under the previous legislation. [interjection] The member talks about that kind of tactic, and I would believe that from the Conservative Party, that they would buy billboards and they would buy air time and they would buy TV time so that no one else could have it. He must have gone to the same law school as his colleague, where students take out books so that other students cannot get them. What an interesting comment. The honourable Minister of Agriculture has an interesting sense of fair play.

I do not think this auditing function is going to prevent a party in the future from spending far more than they were allowed to. I ask members to cast their minds back to 1995 and the last week of the campaign, the last 10 days, but mostly the week. There was saturation advertising from the Conservative party. You could barely see anything on television for the number of ads for that party. In my riding we had the distribution of brochures, full colour, seven- or eight-page foldout brochures that were far more expensive than we could afford and live within the limit, but there they were, thousands and thousands of them.

I think it is entirely possible that the Conservative party not only broke the law in regard to bribery and obstruction and perjury, but they also broke the law in the election spending. But under the current regulations, there is no way of finding that out. There is no audit procedure to find that out. What one has to ask, Mr. Acting Speaker, is: would any sane person spend \$240,000 more than they were allowed to spend? Why would they do that? Charity? From that party? I do not think so. So we are left with a puzzle. They spent \$240,000 apparently on things they did not use. Charity to Jake Marks, that is the only possible explanation, because those expenses were never declared.

Now, they forgot to declare a couple of other expenses too. There were some expenses to Barb Biggar and there were expenses to Allan Aitken and there were several other expenses.

They just forgot to include those. But you know, those pale by comparison with the amount of advertising overexpenditure. I think at the end of the Monnin inquiry, the Tories were so glad to get out of that without seriously looking at the advertising spending and the degree to which they broke a very serious provision of that act. They just congratulated themselves that all that had happened was that five of them got convicted of breaking the law. They thought that was a pretty good conclusion by comparison with what could have happened if Judge Monnin had gone into the auditing in a serious way.

I want to turn to the work of Mr. McFarlane briefly, page 3 of the transcript of Monday, October 26, examination by Mr. Green of Mr. McFarlane. This is a clue to the degree to which the Conservative Party is so utterly confused about accountability, the separation of the party from the province, of elected office from appointed office. This party is so ethically confused. Listen to what Mr. McFarlane says. This is the person who appears as an official of the PC Party of Manitoba, the comptroller in their election campaign. Mr. McFarlane, question from Mr. Green, you are still the campaign comptroller of the Progressive Conservative Party, are you? Mr. McFarlane answers, yes. Question: You were first appointed by Premier Filmon before the 1995 election? Answer: Yes. Question: As the comptroller of the campaign, to whom do you report? Answer: I guess, ultimately, to the PC Manitoba Fund, but during the election campaign, it was basically to Taras Sokolyk. The reporting structure was such that I reported to him.

Now is that not an incredible statement on the part of Mr. McFarlane? He thinks that he is accountable to Arni Thorsteinson, as the comptroller of the party. He does not understand that in an election there is a law called The Election Finances Act, and it is the party that is accountable, not the PC Manitoba Fund. The PC Manitoba Fund is not even an elected body, let alone an official body under The Elections Act. It is the bagman. The comptroller of the party thinks he is accountable to the bagman. What an amazing statement for Mr. McFarlane to have made.

We go on to find out in the second interview that Mr. McFarlane had with the commission that not only was he the confused comptroller of the party who thought he was accountable to Arni Thorsteinson, he was also the accountant for Taras Sokolyk. He was Taras's accountant. He helped Taras deal with his financial affairs, including billing. The PC members opposite, Mr. Acting Speaker, might be interested in this too. Mr. Sokolyk billed the party for consulting services that he provided on the weekends when he went to party meetings. By golly, I wish I could get some consulting services for meetings I went to on a weekend. We would all retire.

**An Honourable Member:** Just gas money would be good.

**Mr. Sale:** Gas money would be good, as the member for Lakeside says.

Mr. Sokolyk got consulting fees from the PC Party for his weekend time. There are some really interesting people to whom these fees were ultimately paid out—\$8,500 worth of them—very interesting. Well, it appears that some of the consulting fees were paid out to Mr. Sokolyk's son for advice and assistance. His son was 12 years old at the time. You know, I kind of wondered whether—

**An Honourable Member:** Did you give him a T4 slip?

**Mr. Sale:** I wondered whether he got a T4 slip, yes. I also was kind of wondering whether the income tax people might be interested in finding out whether we were just splitting income here so that we did not have to report too much on our old income tax.

So it is really interesting. I paid my son several thousand dollars in consulting fees. It is on page 89 of the transcript, asking about Mr. Sokolyk's son. Mr. McFarlane again says: to your knowledge what management services did Mrs. Sokolyk provide to the company? Answer—this is the man who wrote the cheque and audited the books: I am not sure what management services she provided. Question: do you know if she provided any? Answer—now, here is an interesting answer. This is fees paid from Sokolyk Holdings to Mrs. Sokolyk. Here

is the answer: well, she certainly would be attending PC functions and that sort of thing, but I do not know that I can answer for sure.

So, hello, Mr. McFarlane, Mr. Sokolyk's accountant, is explaining that Mrs. Sokolyk should get management fees because she attended PC Party functions. Wait a minute. There is a little confusion here, I think.

Okay, next question. And Mr. Sokolyk's son on at least one occasion received a management fee to your knowledge? Answer: yes. Had he received management fees on more than one occasion? Answer: I would have to check the records. Question: Would you do that and let us know the dates, please? Undertaking number 3, advise re management fees received by Mr. Sokolyk's son.

By Mr. Green: do you know what management services he provided to the company? Answer: not absolutely certain. Question: are you generally aware? Answer—this is from the accountant who signed the statement: no, I am not. Question: do you know how old he is? Answer: I believe he is 13, 14, something like that. Question: is that his present age? Answer: yes. Question: so at that time the management fee in May of 1995 was paid, he would have been around 10 years of age, to your knowledge. Answer: something like that.

This is from an accountant. You know, subtract three from 13, you get 10. Answer: something like that.

Invoicing, which we will get to the specifics of later, the invoicing on a per diem basis by Sokolyk Holdings Limited, was that, to your knowledge, specifically authorized by anyone in the PC Party? Hello. Answer: to my knowledge, no.

So here is the Premier's Chief of Staff billing the party of the Acting Speaker. Was it authorized by the party? Not to the accountant's knowledge, and he wrote the cheques: to my knowledge, no. Well, now, how did he get instructed to pay these management fees to Sokolyk Holdings on the part of the PC Party. This is very interesting. Who instructed him to

do this? Answer: Taras was giving me these invoices and I assumed they were valid invoices.

So Taras writes out an invoice to Taras, Taras signs it, Taras gives it to McFarlane, McFarlane cuts a cheque, and Taras cashes it. That is called controls, right, internal controls on your accounting system. You authorize your chief of staff to write cheques to himself—really interesting.

Question: so you did not actually at any time check to see that it had been something that had been okayed by the party prior to your receiving the invoices? Mr. McFarlane's answer: no. Question: you were just going on Mr. Sokolyk's say-so, in effect? Answer: yes. Question: do you know if anyone in the Progressive Conservative Party had okayed the use of Sokolyk Holdings as a vehicle for charging these consulting fees? Answer: I am not sure who that might be.

It is no wonder that Cubby Barrett got a licence for the Cross Lake Inn with an accountant doing the cheques like Gordon McFarlane. He would write cheques to a man who would sign over some of this money to his 10-year-old son, and there is only one reason to do that, and that is to avoid income tax. That is the only possible reason for that. He would sign cheques to his wife, who by the accountant's admission, did not do anything for the company. Why do you do that? To split income to avoid taxes.

Mr. McFarlane did the assessment on the 35 shortlisted liquor licence applications. Mr. McFarlane, the campaign manager for the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey), the minister responsible, sat with the minister and assessed applicants for licences that made people instant millionaires, and he could not make the connection between his role as the comptroller of the party—and he thought he reported to Arni Thorsteinson in that role—his role as the accountant for Sokolyk Holdings, where he writes cheques out to 10-year-olds, and his role assessing 35 applicants for liquor licences that would make them millionaires. He sees nothing wrong, and the minister saw nothing wrong, and that is exactly why this party is in deep trouble. That party sees nothing wrong with mixing

party, government, private, election, fundraising. They not only see nothing wrong with it, they do not even understand that those are separate concepts. That is how far out of touch they are.

*Madam Speaker in the Chair*

I want to turn to Mr. Benson for a minute. Mr. Benson was in knowing breach of his oath from March of 1995 until the day he was allowed to resign with his nice little \$40,000 severance package. He knew he had broken The Civil Service Act. He did not just do it in a minor accidental way. He visited advertisers. He sat in on the budget development. He met with the campaign committee. Let the co-chairs of the campaign tell this House that they did not know of Mr. Benson's involvement when he sat in on the budget meetings, and he sat in on advertising meetings, he signed over a hundred cheques, he came regularly to party headquarters during the election. Let them stand up and say they knew nothing about this when they served on this committee as co-chairs. Let them stand up and make this House believe that they knew nothing about this.

That is an untenable position for them to take, unless they were totally derelict in their duties, and they did not go to any of those meetings, and they did not talk to any of those people, and they did not play any role as co-chairs of the campaign. It is a strange coincidence that two of the several senior cabinet ministers who are resigning just happen to be the co-chairs of the 1995 campaign.

I ask backbenchers on the government side: is it credible that the member for Arthur-Virden (Mr. Downey) and the member for Fort Garry (Mrs. Vodrey) in their role as campaign co-chairs would have no knowledge that Jules Benson represented them at budget meetings, represented them at advertising meetings, went to the headquarters of the party on a regular basis, wrote out and did a great deal of the bookkeeping—over a hundred cheques he made out by his own admission—and they did not know that and the Premier (Mr. Filmon) did not know that. The meetings were held in this building. They were not held in party headquarters. They were right here, meetings about the budget for the PC election campaign. The member for

Arthur-Virden is on the ethics group. The fox is truly in the henhouse.

\* (1650)

Finally, I want to talk just a little bit about the kind of role that I believe we should not have had to take in this campaign: to point out the illegal behaviour of the party opposite. Had Elections Manitoba, in 1995, simply followed the money this whole thing would have been found out then, and we would not have had to spend a million dollars or whatever it was. It would have all come to light then had they simply followed the money. Had anybody been truthful on the PC side, when they were asked questions in 1995, we would not have had to spend this money in 1998. It would have all come out, if anybody had been truthful, but none were. Mr. Aitken lied, and everybody else they talked to on the PC side lied.

So it was left to us and to the press to chase down the truth. It would not have been able to be done if it had not been for a courageous person who finally told the truth, Darryl Sutherland; a former candidate who assisted in getting the process rolling, Kim Sigurdson; and a braggart named Allan Aitken, who was so cocky that he thought he could brag to us about this scam, particularly in response to a question from my honourable friend, the member for Interlake (Mr. C. Evans). He bragged to us.

You know, in retrospect, both the member for Interlake and myself realize that he bragged alright, but even in his bragging he was lying, because he did not tell us about Cubby Barrett. He alluded to cheques of course, and a number of other things he told us, which were not quite truthful, but there was enough truth there to get going on it.

You know, I could say something that would make honourable members opposite laugh. I think I will just say it and that is, I have been waiting for this reformed Premier, instead of making gutter, personal attacks, to get up and thank Kathy Aitken, and to thank Kim Sigurdson, and to thank Darryl Sutherland, and to thank Clif Evans, and to thank Tim Sale, for bringing to light the worst scandal in Manitoba's electoral history. If he is really glad that this

stain is now out and can be dealt with, if he is really glad that ethics are going to finally surface again, he would thank those who put their reputations on the line.

Instead what did he do? He slagged Darryl Sutherland. He puts words in Justice Monnin's mouth and accuses me of something that Justice Monnin never said, did not even allude to. Justice Monnin's nose was out of joint, and I recognize that, but Justice Monnin did not suggest that I had broken the law. If he had ever suggested that, then of course there would be a problem here, but he simply did not like the aggressiveness with which we chased witnesses.

Would we do that again? You are darn right, we would. We got the key witness that he finally came to believe, Kathy Aitken. The only reason there was an inquiry was because we had an affidavit from Kathy Aitken, and the Premier was embarrassed to the point where he finally had to do the right thing. That is why there was an inquiry. Was it an aggressive act on our part? Absolutely. We went after the truth, and we finally got part of it, in the words of Judge Monnin: Part of the truth.

He is still uncertain as to whether he got the whole truth. I think it is pretty clear from whom he did not get the whole truth.

One of the things that the press pointed out informally throughout this whole process was—it was interesting—the Conservatives only ever admitted to that which could be absolutely proven on the evidence. They never voluntarily came forward and said: Here is the story. We are embarrassed. It was stupid.

They grudgingly, with their fingernails clenched, admitted only each fact as it was proven on the record. They never once came clean on anything. Even Gordon McFarlane, interview No. 1, interview No. 2 and finally testimony, still did not tell the whole truth, as Justice Monnin pointed out. Not one of those people has yet told the whole truth. It will be interesting, it will be interesting if criminal charges are laid for obstruction or perjury; it will be interesting to see what monkeys fall out of that tree when it starts to shake and when the prospect of major jail time or major fines has

come home to five members of that party; it will be interesting to see whether their memories improve and whether the truth becomes finally known. It will be interesting. I think that we will all watch and wait.

**Mr. Kowalski:** I was not planning to speak on this bill, but the member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) motivated me with some of his comments. First of all, and I am sure I misunderstood him, I am sure he meant no intent to smear the ethics of many of my constituents in The Maples when he talked about how it is unethical for people to have more than one political sign on their front lawn. [interjection] Yes, he did, he said that. I took that—and there are many constituents of mine who did that, and it is part of the culture of some of the people where they come from that you do not say no when you are asked. Also, they believe in the secret ballot, and they believe that if they want to put all three political parties' signs on their front lawn, that is their democratic right. I was very disturbed by his comments calling that unethical. That is calling many of the people in The Maples unethical, and I take great offence to that.

Then he went on to smear the ethics of my colleague for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) and tried to diminish the wrongfulness of a member of the NDP party picking up the campaign signs in Inkster during the last provincial election and tried to say that was unimportant, that was not a serious thing. [interjection] No, please, this is my chance to speak, can I please speak? That is what he said. He says that is not important.

This is a slippery slope. That is why this whole debate I find very unfortunate. Whether it is the NDP pointing to the Conservatives or whether it is we talking about a candidate in Minnedosa doing wrongdoing, this is the ugly side of politics. This is a very ugly side, but you know what, he without sin, let him cast the first stone.

I will give you an example. In my own campaign in 1993, I was running against David Langtry and Norma Walker. I received some information that David Langtry was in the process—he was being sued civilly. Someone brought that to my attention. I said: no, I do not

want to get into that. So then we went on the Peter Warren show as three candidates and what happened was someone from my campaign phoned in to bring up that point. Now, I was the candidate. I cannot control what every one of my workers do. This is someone who is very loyal to me, and they thought they were helping me. Well, Norma Walker jumped on it and started to discuss how if David Langtry was being sued, you know, he should not be running. I interrupted and I said: being a police officer, I believe someone is innocent until proven guilty and that this was a civil suit and no one was found responsible or irresponsible, therefore we should not discuss it. But that is an example of how zealots in a campaign do things that possibly we are not pleased with.

The member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), the quality he brought to this debate, it brings all politicians down, this whole debate, by what we are talking about. I mentioned, and I am not being partisan, when we talk about the Liquor Commission, what about B.C. with Glen Clark?

\* (1700)

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the honourable member for The Maples (Mr. Kowalski) will have 36 minutes remaining.

The hour being 5 p.m. and time for private members' hour.

## PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

### PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS

#### Res. 3—Access to Health Services

**Mr. Clif Evans (Interlake):** Madam Speaker, I rise this afternoon to make some comments on my resolution. A resolution—

**An Honourable Member:** For the record.

**Mr. C. Evans:** I am sorry. Read it?

I move, seconded by the member for Concordia (Mr. Doer), that the resolution be accepted.

**An Honourable Member:** You have got to read it.

**Madam Speaker:** I would request that the honourable member read the resolution into the record, please.

**Mr. C. Evans:** Thank you very much. I do not know if I remember how to read.

"WHEREAS the five principles of Medicare are universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness, portability, and public administration; and

"WHEREAS more and more often, residents of Manitoba cannot access health services when and where they need them; and

"WHEREAS the chronic shortage of hospital beds in Winnipeg, especially at the tertiary care centres, has a serious negative impact across the province; and

"WHEREAS following an incident where a man suffering serious gunshot wounds could not be admitted to the Health Sciences Centre, the Interlake Regional Health Authority wrote to the Vice President of Clinical Services for the Winnipeg Hospital Authority to express concerns about timely access to medical care; and

"WHEREAS the Interlake Regional Health Authority asked, 'What do you suggest we do when H.S.C. refuses to take the trauma patient, either because their O.R.'s are full, or because they have "no surgical beds."' and

"WHEREAS the Interlake Regional Health Authority letter goes on to say, 'What we in rural Manitoba find upsetting is the second-class treatment our patients receive from Winnipeg Hospitals. If our patient had shot himself in Winnipeg, he surely would have been treated at H.S.C.'; and

"WHEREAS serious incidents have occurred across the province where patients should have been admitted to Winnipeg hospitals for treatment or surgery, but could not be transferred because there were no available beds; and

"WHEREAS by failing to ensure that there are enough hospital beds to admit seriously ill or injured Manitobans, the Provincial Government is undermining the principles of Medicare.

"THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of Manitoba urge the Provincial Government to consider taking immediate action to ensure that all Manitobans have access to quality health services when they need them, regardless of where they live."

**Motion presented.**

**Mr. C. Evans:** Madam Speaker, I take this opportunity to make some comments with respect to the shortages of beds in our Winnipeg hospitals and also point out some of the incidents that have occurred across the province, not only in the Interlake constituency, and I am sure in other constituencies, where people have been put in a position through injury or accident or serious illness and have not been able to access specific hospitals that have no beds available for specific injuries and specific care that is needed.

This government has made plans over the years and has made promises over the years to take care of the elderly patients that we have in this province and provide personal care beds and personal care homes, so that acute care beds could be more available to those that would need them. This would, of course, as they have promised, free up these beds, would make it possible for someone from Ashern to be transferred by ambulance to the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg at the whim of a call from the doctor in Ashern and have available a bed and the necessary service and the doctors available at the hospital to treat this injury. Madam Speaker, this has not been happening. In many situations I know—and I will relate some that have occurred in my constituency, and I know that they have occurred in other areas of the province.

But why is that? Madam Speaker, this government promises increased funding, promises funding for personal care homes to provide the chronic care and long-term beds for patients. That has not happened since 1995 alone. There have been incidents where there

have been no beds available. There have been nurses cut, hospital bed cuts, funding cuts by this government, and this has created, in some cases, traumatic experiences for certain patients, certain people who have needed services, who have needed to come to Victoria, who have needed to come to Health Sciences, who have needed to come to Grace and have not been able to, who have been turned away, or in some cases have been left for days needing surgery and that not occurring because there are no nurses to take care of the situation, there are no doctors to do the operations. I have and I will, of course, provide some incidents.

The personal care home issue, when in 1995 all these promises were made, and I quote you: The government has delayed construction on many personal care home facilities that would contribute to a reduction; for an example, Lions Manor in Winnipeg. It was announced in 1992 but construction has not started. Hartney Personal Care Home was approved in 1991 and was reannounced as a priority in the 1998-99 capital plans.

Madam Speaker, the one that I would like to bring forward, and I believe next month is the official ribbon-cutting, finally after turning the sod in 1995, after taking photo ops, I am proud to say that I was at the second official opening of the personal care home in Fisher Branch after four years, longer, promised to the people in the community of Fisher Branch. I was there for the second official opening, and I am very pleased that that personal care home which is going to have 30 beds is going to be made available very, very shortly.

**An Honourable Member:** Then they will have another official opening.

**Mr. C. Evans:** And then they will have another official opening, yes.

Madam Speaker, we want to talk, too, about the availability of these beds, chronic care and acute beds, and the availability of our doctors and nurses in Winnipeg for our northern communities and for our patients and people who perhaps have to be transferred in by air. Why would a doctor in Arborg call the Health Sciences Centre on a Monday, make arrange-

ments for a patient, a constituent who has broken his leg severely to the point that an operation was needed and, as the doctor said, as quickly as possible—waited four days sitting in a hospital, waited four days. Unquestionably, that is absolutely disgusting.

The gentleman had written to the minister at that time, to Minister Darren Praznik, explaining his situation. From 7 p.m. on July 21, he returned home, back to Riverton, on Thursday, July 31. Madam Speaker, this leg was broken so severely, so severely that this gentleman asked that if they could not do the operation in the Health Sciences Centre, could they at least transfer him to a hospital where they could do it. The minister remembers that, I think, because I wrote to the minister also, and I am sure that he would if he saw the letters.

We are not just here and I am not just here saying, bad, bad. I am saying something has to be done. Something has to be done. Where is that funding that has been promised? Where are those personal care beds that are being promised? Where are they? Are we going to wait for another election for some more sod turning? Where is the common sense? Just because rural Manitobans are in rural Manitoba and there are hospitals in sporadic communities, there are situations that cannot be handled, and these people have to be transferred to Winnipeg where the better technology, where the better operating skills are available. Is that happening? No, it is not happening.

\* (1710)

Madam Speaker, another incident that occurred in my constituency. I was called by the children of the father, Mr. Kjartan Fridfinnson, who had been hauled in and sent home twice for a triple by-pass operation. The third time they called me and said, Clif, what can you do for us here? We are afraid that dad is going to die going back and forth between Arborg and Winnipeg. He needs a triple by-pass, and the doctor keeps telling him there is either an operating room not available or a bed not available or the time. That is sad, and that should not happen. It should be available; those services should be available. It should not be put on the onus of the doctors and nurses to say

that we do not have the space, we do not have the nurses available, we do not have the doctors available to do it. Mr. Jonasson, who suffered a broken leg, basically said he sat and watched the poor nurses running around taking care of patients. The doctor who was supposed to do the operation for his leg came in once in a while just to see how he was doing. They could not feed him because they were scheduling him to go into his operation at any time. So, for four days, he sat in the hospital with the intravenous, not knowing when the operation was going to be, not having any indication from the operating room doctor or the operating doctor as to when the operating room was going to be made available. He then—and it is documented to the minister—suggested that he withdraw himself and take himself over to Seven Oaks to see if they could do the operation for him.

Well, the operation was finally done, and I can say that even though the bitter taste is in his mouth, the operation was a success. There were other comments that he made, but his comments were, to me personally, that the system is overworked, undersupplied and overworked. Nurses, doctors, beds available. That is not what we here on this side of the House or I think all Manitobans want to see. We want to see co-operation in the health care system. We want to see co-operation for our elderly so that the personal care home beds are available, so that those personal care homes that are available will be able to provide those extra beds. Can we wait another five years for this? No, Madam Speaker, it has gotten out of hand. It has gotten out of hand since 1992. This is 1999. Promise after promise after promise.

Madam Speaker, it is not that I want to bring out specific cases to lambaste. I am bringing out specific cases, because these people are either writing to me directly or calling me directly. Why, is the question. Why is it not available? Why can I not come from Gypsumville and go to Ashern which has a hospital? The doctors are so overworked there, and the nurses, that they cannot handle the situation in Ashern, call Winnipeg to find out where they can send this gentleman or woman and are told, keep them for another day or two because there is not anything available.

The gunshot wound, Madam Speaker, from the Interlake Authority. Now this letter is written on Interlake Regional Health Authority. I want to make a comment about that. There are people who are saying that with the new regionalization there are difficulties, and the regional boards are having these difficulties getting things into place. It is going to take time. Our regional health authority, who has received the recognition, is probably one of the ones that I think is working the hardest amongst the regional authorities, but they are not without being questioned on some of the situations.

We cannot have everything, Madam Speaker. We cannot have it perfect all the time, but what the constituents are saying is we want to see that these regional health authorities have the availability and better opportunity to be able to provide these services. I quote you, and this is from Dr. Isaacs, Dr. Piesas and Dr. Berrow, and it is copied to the College of Physicians. It is with respect to the main part.

The latest incident occurred on November 2 at 20:30 hours. A man was brought to Ashern hospital with gunshot wounds to both feet. The orthopedic resident, when they called Health Sciences Centre, said we had no beds and we might try Victoria. We had to accept the responsibility for trauma.

Madam Speaker, we do not want to see those type of situations. I do not believe any of us here, especially rural members, want to see those type of situations. The member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns), myself, all northern community members, do not want to see what we have seen and heard and continue to see and hear. Let us have some co-operation. Let us have some of those resources available for those people that are going to need it most. I would support that. The members on this side of the House would support that and will support it. Unfortunately, we may have to do it. Thank you.

**Mrs. Myrna Driedger (Charleswood):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to have this opportunity this afternoon to speak to our government's commitment to ensuring that all Manitobans have access to quality health services when they need them.

Since our government was elected in 1988, we have demonstrated many times over our commitment to providing quality health services in our province. We have demonstrated it in our funding commitments. We have demonstrated it in our service enhancements. We have demonstrated it in our efforts to improve how our health system in Manitoba is organized.

Consistently health has been our government's highest spending priority. In 1988, we committed 31 percent of our budget on health. This year, nearly 35 percent of the province's budget goes to health care. Today we spend \$1,691 on health care for every man, woman and child in our province, compared to \$1,488 in 1990-91. This is at the same time we have faced a drop in federal spending on health care from \$298 to \$175 per capita. Our balanced budgets in recent years and our efforts to repay the province's debt are freeing up resources for health care that would have otherwise been lost to interest payments.

Over the years, our increases in health spending have supported numerous improvements to our health services. Funding for home care has almost tripled in the past decade and continues to grow. The funding of more than 200 supportive housing spaces, the introduction of a new program, Companion Care, and the expansion of mental health services are examples of improvements in our community health services.

Significant funding increases have been provided to the regional health authorities to respond to the growing demand for tests and treatment. Bone density services have been introduced in Brandon and expanded in Winnipeg. Diagnostic service capacity is expanding for CT scans and for ultrasound services. The expansion of the Manitoba Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation will expand treatment capacity and the range of services available.

As part of the new funding going to RHAs, the Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson) has recently had the pleasure of announcing \$1.1 million for pediatric speech and hearing services in rural and northern Manitoba. Of this funding, \$150,000 will be allocated to preschool children

with lifelong disabilities through the outreach therapy program in partnership with Family Services, the Society for Manitobans with Disabilities and the Rehabilitation Centre for Children.

This \$1.1-million funding is in addition to the \$420,000 recently provided to the Winnipeg Hospital Authority for expanded pediatric speech and hearing services in Winnipeg. As well, the government is providing \$122,000 annually for the innovative three year pilot project Promise Years involving prevention, early identification and intervention of communications disorders in preschool children in South Westman.

Improving children's ability to communicate improves their health and learning, and thus contributes to the health of Manitoban families and Manitoban communities. Working in co-operation with the Children and Youth Secretariat, the Health department is providing financial assistance and education to help families raise healthy children. Services such as Women and Infant Nutrition, Stop FAS, BabyFirst, and EarlyStart are examples of this support.

To respond to the rapid rise of diabetes in our population, kidney dialysis is now available in the communities of Dauphin, Flin Flon, The Pas, Pine Falls, Thompson, Morden, Portage la Prairie and Ashern, in addition to the city of Winnipeg.

Over the past 10 years the number of haemodialysis stations has increased by 90 percent. At the same time, Manitoba Health is working with the regional health authorities and aboriginal communities to develop and implement strategies to stem the incidence and severity of diabetes. Plans to establish foot, vision, kidney and blood pressure clinics to help prevent the complication of diabetes is one example.

Misericordia is a 24-hour urgent care centre. The Aboriginal Health and Wellness Centre and the introduction of a number of community health resource centres across the province are examples of new and alternate services available

to Manitobans. We are moving closer to the introduction of midwifery in the province. We are also involved in discussions with the regional health authorities on improving the province's emergency transportation centre or system as well.

Our achievement in improving health services have been alongside our efforts to introduce reforms to our province's overall health system. Regionalizing our health services delivery system, consolidating specialized programs in our urban hospitals and emphasizing the shift to more appropriate community resources are examples.

There has been much progress today, and we will continue to move ahead to meet the changing needs of our health system. Our support for expanded vaccination programs, mammography and other screening programs and prevention strategies in diabetes and HIV serve as a foundation for our shift to health promotion and disease prevention. Regional health authorities are taking the initial steps of conducting community health assessments and using them as a tool for strategic and operational planning.

As a province, we will also be using the findings of these assessments to help set the future directions and strategies for Manitoba Health. The shift to more appropriate services in our community is another very important direction. Recently the Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson) made announcements on our capital construction program. In the last two years alone, our government has committed nearly 900 new personal care home beds to our system. This capital construction, along with our additional support for home care, supportive housing and companion care will make a significant impact on responding to today's demands on our hospital system.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, through our commitments to increase funding in the face of federal transfer cuts, the enhancement of health services and the reorganization of our province's health services system, we have demonstrated our commitment to ensuring that Manitobans have access to the health services they require.

As we await further announcements in our budget for the coming year, members can anticipate further demonstration of this government's commitment to our health system. Manitobans can be confident that we are changing health care for the better. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

\* (1720)

**Mr. Marcel Laurendeau (St. Norbert):** Madam Speaker, but only for a few short words. I must say that when it comes to health care, this province, Manitoba, is leading the way. All we have to do is look across the country at what is happening.

Madam Speaker, it is interesting when we talk about the five principles of medicare and universality and acceptability, comprehensiveness, portability and public administration.

We had a resolution back in 1993-94, moved by the honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux), we accepted that. We accepted that as a Legislative Assembly. Manitoba realized the problem back in 1988-89, when we were first elected as the government to govern. The changes started then. You could not make the drastic turns that were required to happen because of the new technologies and the new realities of health care, but we saw what had to be done and the plan was put in place.

Madam Speaker, that plan is taking effect. We had a minister who saw and forecast where it was going. [interjection] Yes, we did have several ministers. We had Don Orchard, who was a very good Health minister. Maybe the honourable member for Burrows (Mr. Martindale) would rather give this speech than I. I might like to hear from him after I have finished putting a few words on the record. I am glad the honourable member is helping me, but one thing we do not need is help from the NDP on how to correct the inequities within a health system. The inequities are there today because of what we received back in 1988.

Our Minister of Health (Mr. Stefanson) just made an announcement on the capital projects to the tune of \$150 million. There is infrastructure being built across this province, and I think it is

important that we stop—the honourable members, every time money is put into health care, they say it must be an election. Every time. Every time there is a positive change, they say there must be an election coming.

Madam Speaker, since I was elected in 1990, every announcement must have been then towards an election, because that is what we have been doing is putting in place corrective actions to correct the inequities that were there from the past. The honourable member for Flin Flon, I am sure he is very well aware—not Flin Flon, I am sorry, Dauphin (Mr. Struthers). You were close. Flin Flon is close. [interjection] I can see that, and I greatly appreciate this by the way. So you just stay there and just keep briefing me.

In my community I was on the board of the Victoria Hospital back in 1989. We saw where some of those inequities were, and we approached the government of the day. Don Orchard was the minister at the time, and Minister Orchard recognized some of the inequities within the system. We moved towards some of the new technologies. We brought in the first CAT scan within the Victoria. We brought in some of the new technologies for some of the new surgery, and we wanted to move towards day surgery, because we saw what that effect would have on the bed situation. We were able to expand from—Madam Speaker, the member for Brandon wants to speak to this as well I see. You might want to remind him that at about quarter to they can get up and speak to this motion. At the Victoria Hospital, as I was saying, we saw the need and we put in the request to the minister. When the minister forwarded us money for actions at the Victoria, those investments showed up multiple times in bed savings at our hospital.

Madam Speaker, the day surgery program alone, we were able to expand from 900 operations to over 2,000 and 3,000 operations, and those were beds that were saved throughout the hospital. In the birthing centre alone—and we called it the Victoria Hilton actually because of the system that we put in place. Mothers from across the city were coming to the Victoria to have our birthing centre, to see the new

opportunities that we had brought at the Victoria.

\* (1730)

Madam Speaker, the technologies that are expanding in health care are growing by the hour. Not by the year and not by the decade anymore but by the hour. As you look at these new technologies, you have to look at how you are investing—I am glad the honourable members think it is funny. You really do not believe in this, do you? You would go back to your old ways and just put the money in and hope it was spent right in the long run. When you look at how you invest the money, Madam Speaker, that is the important issue.

Madam Speaker, I am proud of our government's contributions in health care. Were there mistakes made in the past? Yes. Any government would make mistakes. Our government, I am sure, has made some, but we can correct those mistakes after they have been made. We can also look at the future and see where those needs are. Did we know what new technologies were coming? Maybe the NDP did. They might have looked in their crystal ball that they have hidden in their caucus room to see what was happening in the future, but some of the new technologies—[interjection]

The member goes to the frozen food issue. Why is it that they have this big thing about frozen food? Where did you think the hospitals were getting the food from in the first place? Where did you think our kitchens were ordering this food? Where were we getting our corn flakes from? Were we getting that in Manitoba? Well, we were serving that at the Victoria. Where were we getting our Quaker Oats from? We were ordering our Quaker Oats, and cooking it in the hospital. Well, guess what? It was coming from Toronto. Excuse me, but where are the vegetables coming from? They are coming right here, grown in Manitoba, Peak of the Market. That is what we have to have.

Madam Speaker, it is the NDP and their policies that make us have to get some of our foodstuffs and sustenance from the east. They believe in this Wheat Board who says that you cannot produce any of this product or create

something from your product here in Manitoba. Where do they come from? Then they say go shop at home.

If we were allowed to create some of these products from our own wheat here in Manitoba, instead of having to ship our wheat to be ground in the east and then ship our bread back here so we can bake it—[interjection] Oh, and the member says he doubts it. Well, maybe he had better look into the policies.

#### Point of Order

**Mr. C. Evans:** My point of order is that this member was expounding how great the technology in the last couple of years has come about, and that his government has been undertaking to making sure that this fabulous technology has been put in place.

We commented on the frozen food, Madam Speaker. If this is the technology that he is talking about, then let him continue to talk about the technology that serves the people properly, and not frozen food.

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Government House Leader):** On the same point of order, I found it very interesting because I am not quite sure the point the member is making. Of all the complaints that were received about food, over half of them were coming from the facilities with the old food systems, so we are not quite sure where the member is.

**Madam Speaker:** Order, please. I am also a little confused on the point of order, but what I think that the honourable member was trying to say is that the member should be relevant and should be speaking to the resolution before him. So I would remind the honourable member for St. Norbert to be relevant to the resolution that was moved.

\* \* \*

**Mr. Laurendeau:** The honourable member is right. I was leading astray, and I think it was because I was biting on some of the bait that they were throwing this way. So, Madam Speaker, I will try and stay to the member's resolution that he brought forward.

Madam Speaker, as usual, all I see within this member's resolution is negativity. That reminds me of what the NDP is all about. When you critique something, it does not mean necessarily that you just criticize, but you should also come forward with a plan or a better plan. Not once have I seen that better plan being offered.

This government has, over the years, put forward a plan. This government has, over the years, worked on that plan, and this government will continue to work on that plan. We can, and we will in the future, succeed because of the leadership that we have within this party.

This party will lead health care into the future, not as some governments have done in the east and the west that are not of our same persuasion, Madam Speaker, but we will continue to make sure that health care is the No. 1 priority for this government and for this province because all Canadians look at health care as the priority for all governments.

Madam Speaker, when we talk about health care, we have to look at more than just health care within the hospitals but at how we work at preventing some of those diseases. The honourable member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) brought forward a very good question today during Question Period when he was speaking about diabetes. He was asking the amount of dollars we put into that area, and he is right, in some cases, we should start working on the cause of those diseases. That is what this government is doing. Again, within the diabetes area, we have a plan to work toward correcting the food supplements and other areas that diabetics require so they do not become the third-level diabetic and need insulin and other levels of medication.

Madam Speaker, it is interesting when we look at the hospitals and we see the new technologies that are available. We have knee surgery being done that 15 years ago was not really at the same capacity as it is today. We are performing hip surgeries today in our hospitals that 15 years ago were not happening. They are going in with the new technologies in surgery now where an operation would put you down for seven, eight, nine days; today, you are in and

out. It is two and a half hours and you are back home, and in some cases, you are back on the golf course.

The technologies are there, but it is important that you look at these technologies in the light of how we can best use them in the future. So we can have a vision that says we will throw money at the problem without looking at the results, but I think it is important that we see what the results are and not look through rose-coloured glasses, as some members in this House would want to do, or in the crystal ball and say it might work.

Madam Speaker, what we are doing for health care will work. What we are doing for health care is a plan. The plan is there and the will for this plan to succeed is there. We have the leadership, and the people of Manitoba will see that in the very near future. Thank you.

**Mr. Dave Chomiak (Kildonan):** Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity of speaking to this very excellent resolution that has been put forward by the member. I want to comment a little bit about some of the comments that have been forwarded by members opposite in regard to health care.

I noted that the comments of members opposite were the rote responses that have been circulated recently by their central spin control with respect to health care. I want to deal with that because it reminds me of an interview I had recently on the radio, which was the one question that I was waiting to be asked for some time as it relates to the inequities in the health care system. The radio interviewer said to me something similar to what the member for St. Norbert (Mr. Laurendeau) had said. He said to me, well, Mr. Chomiak, you and the NDP are always criticizing; have you ever done anything positive? I was waiting for that question, and I have been waiting for members opposite to again ask that question. [interjection]

I remind the member for Assiniboia (Mrs. McIntosh), who is sitting there, that in 1992, when the Minister of Health, Don Orchard, talked about improvements in the health care system, I said what about a central bed registry? It is recorded, Madam Speaker. We said why

not a central bed registry? The minister said, great idea, and it has been announced every year since 1992, and we still do not have it.

\* (1740)

Madam Speaker, when the member for Brandon East (Mr. L. Evans) talked about a two-year waiting list for bone density examinations in Brandon—a two-year waiting list—the minister stood up and said we are going to do something about it. We waited six months, and we waited eight months, and we waited nine months, and then there was a by-election in Portage. Lo and behold, during the by-election in Portage, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and several ministers were out to announce a grant of \$83,000 to reduce bone densities from a two-year waiting list to zero. That was raised by the member for Brandon East (Mr. L. Evans), and it took nine months for subsequent ministers of Health to put it in place. Then when the bone density list got up to two years again, I remind the member for Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger), when it got up to two years again and we stood up in this House and said do something about the bone density scanners, it took the government another year to put in place a program to reduce the waiting lists.

So, Madam Speaker, do not let me hear that members on this side do not have positive actions. When we raised in this House, when members of this House—17 stood up to talk about the intolerable situations with respect to waiting lists, and when we put in place a waiting list help line, only then—and I did a letter personally to the Premier (Mr. Filmon). That day the Minister of Health announced a program to reduce waiting lists. So do not tell us that members on this side of the House do not have positive suggestions.

In fact, we talked three years ago about earmarking funds for the CAT scans, for the MRIs, for the cancer tests and for bone density scanners, and we told the government, earmark funding for those programs. The government did not listen. We told the government, and they did listen, finally, three years later in the midst of an election. They came around and said now we have money. So do not tell me we do not make positive suggestions, Madam Speaker. If

the government had listened to what we had said for the past five or six years, they would not be in the mess that they are in today with respect to health care. They know it, we know it, and the people of Manitoba know it.

Madam Speaker, two years ago, I sent a plan about foreign doctors to the Minister of Health, the previous, previous minister. I have yet to receive a reply. I have yet to receive a reply on a program that we put forward for improving conditions in rural Manitoba for doctors. So do not let them say that we do not have positive suggestions.

This afternoon, the member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) had a very good suggestion with respect to diabetes. We had two press conferences here in the Legislature with people suffering from diabetes where we asked the minister to come to the press conference, meet with the sufferers of diabetes, find out what problems they are having with their test strips, with their inoculations and with their difficulties, and do something about the problem.

Do you know what the minister said? He did come down—and I will give him credit. He said: my department made a mistake; we made a mistake in this area. I will give him credit for recognizing a mistake and doing something—[interjection] That is right. The minister says, as soon as I realized it, Madam Speaker, so do not let members opposite say we are only negative and we do not bring positive suggestions to this Chamber and to the health care system.

For five years, I have written to minister after minister after minister asking for coverage for Betaseron, and minister after minister after minister has come back and said we are studying it. Now, I will give the previous minister credit for putting in place a pilot program for Betaseron, but do not let members opposite say we do not make positive suggestions, Madam Speaker.

Now I will make another positive suggestion. Make the pilot program permanent so that those people who are on the pilot program do not have the uncertainty of not having their drugs and not having coverage. There is another positive suggestion and you can

construe it negatively, Madam Speaker, but it is meant as a positive suggestion.

Let me talk about the frozen food. When the frozen food came, we went and said look at the alternatives that have been offered in a study. A study was forwarded to you by a chartered accounting firm, by a consulting firm, Madam Speaker, that had a very realistic option. We warned them, do not proceed on the plan that you are going on because you will have nothing but trouble. Now, that can be construed as negative, but that could also be construed as a very positive attempt on the part of an opposition to save the government from wasting \$20 million and causing suffering to many individuals. They did not listen.

In 1995, when the government announced the greatest capital plan in the history of the province, we endorsed that plan. We said, yes, go ahead with the Health Sciences Centre; yes, go ahead with the cancer institute; yes, go ahead with those personal care homes. And we said at the same time, Madam Speaker, but because we are in an election, frankly—and I said it publicly—I do not believe the government will come through with those commitments.

You know what? Unfortunately, we were right. When they came in, they cancelled the program, used the federal government as an excuse, and why are we facing the difficulties with people lying in the hallways today? Because the government cancelled that program. So do not let it be said that we do not make positive suggestions, and do not let members go around saying that we only criticize. We told the government; we supported the government on that capital plan. They went and they got re-elected on that capital plan, and then they had the gall to cancel that plan and put the lives and the health of Manitobans in jeopardy, waiting and lying in hallways.

So do not let them leave the impression that this side is only negative. Heaven knows, we could be far more negative than we are. I have been told on many occasions personally that we should be bringing to this House patient after patient after patient and, you know, Madam Speaker, we do not do that here. We generally do not do that unless it is a very serious case.

That has not been our style. We could, but we do not. We could be a lot more negative than we are.

When Holiday Haven was in trouble, I came and I stood up in this Chamber and I announced the problems—[interjection] I will get to that—and the minister stood up and said: No problem. He sent out the associate deputy minister to say: No problem. There was a report on the minister's desk that said that management should change. Did I say to the government: close it down? I said: change the management. I was very careful in what I did. [interjection] I will get to that.

I was very careful in the criticism I brought to this Chamber because I felt lives were at stake and we felt lives were at stake. We had long discussions in our caucus room about how we approach this issue, and we approached it very apolitically. When the gentleman was killed, I will give the minister credit. He immediately took over management.

**An Honourable Member:** I was only minister two or three weeks then.

**Mr. Chomiak:** I agree. You were just minister and you made a decisive move that was very necessary. But the point I am making is that we had raised that issue six months earlier. If the previous minister had acted, if the government had acted in good faith, then perhaps that gentleman would not have had to go through what he went through and the situation would have been improved a lot sooner.

I also got taught a lesson there personally, that I stopped trusting a lot of what happens in this Chamber because of what happened in that situation. I still to this day feel guilt that I should have been harsher. Perhaps, if I had been more vigorous, we would not have had to go through what we went through.

So do not let it be said that members on this side only criticize. Yes, we criticize, and we criticize a lot. But we have also tried to improve the situation in this province, and we are very proud of what we have done to stop the privatization of home care. We are very proud of what we have done to stop the ill effects of

Connie Curran in this province. We are very proud of what we have done to raise the attention of Manitobans about the effect of frozen food and the ridiculous situation that is occurring with respect to frozen food in this jurisdiction. We are very proud about the issues we have done to raise awareness about waiting lists.

That brings me to the point about earmarking money for surgery. We also told the government: earmark money for surgery; increase the surgical times in the hospitals. That was a positive suggestion. Some of it has been taken. So do not let it be said that we only offer negative comments and criticism and we do not have a plan for what has to happen in this province. Do not let that be said. That is not true. And the member who put together this resolution today, it was an effort to point out that the situation in rural Manitoba is very, very difficult, and they have the same right to access to health care and need for health care as we do in the city of Winnipeg. They ought to have that right, and no one ought to be faced with a situation of going into a tertiary care facility with a very serious illness and not be offered care or sitting in a hallway for four or five days. That is not right.

That is one of the reasons why this government is suffering in the public's mind. They can say all that they want about all of the programs they are putting in place, about all of the money they are spending. They could have 10,000 \$500,000 ad campaigns, and I do not think it will change the conception that the public has gathered.

After 11 years of Conservative mismanagement of health care, I think it is going to be very, very difficult for members opposite to convince the public that they have an idea, a vision, and that they know where they are going. I think that they have run out their string. The fiasco from 1995, which has resulted in the chaos in our health care system today, was the death knell, I think, to this government and its health care plans. If they had a \$10-million ad campaign, I do not think they could convince the public fundamentally that they can improve the situation in health care. We hear it, and we see it day after day.

I think I will close, Madam Speaker, by indicating that members on this side of the House will continue to do their job. We will continue to criticize the government when warranted, and heaven knows, there is no lack of activity in that area. We will continue to raise positive suggestions. For example, 1995, when the Postl report came out, we said, one of the best reports on children's health and on health care that we have ever seen. We said to government: Why do you not implement the recommendations? In fact, we made some of those recommendations and additional other recommendations part of the core of our campaign. You know, we are still waiting for implementation. The member for, I believe—is it Charleswood or is it St. Charles?—Charleswood (Mrs. Driedger) made reference to Children and Youth Secretariat. We have been waiting five years for most of those programs, and we are only now seeing them announced or put into place. If there was any kind of consistency behind it, we would have seen it four years ago.

\* (1750)

With those comments, I would just like to say I support strongly the resolution of the member, and I urge members opposite to listen to what we say. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**Hon. Darren Praznik (Minister of Highways and Transportation):** Madam Speaker, I did very much enjoy the comments of the member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) because there is a debate to be held in health care, a very serious debate. The member for Kildonan and I had the opportunity during my two years as minister to engage in that debate on a fairly regular basis. I will say this about the member for Kildonan: he comes to the position as critic with, I think, an understanding of many of the issues. He spends his time doing a great deal of research on them. I think we had a reasonable relationship as critic to minister.

Many of the things that he outlined today that were suggestions in our exchange, I think I pointed out the action that we certainly took when I was in charge of that portfolio and responded very quickly to things that were happening. But there are some things that he misses, Madam Speaker, in that analysis. They

are missed in the day-to-day debates in this Chamber and, I would say, have been missed in the day-to-day reporting and coverage of the mass media in our province on many of the health issues.

That is, it is great to sit and talk about things that should happen in health care, about money being allocated for this program or that program that should be developed. But what has not been addressed fully in that discussion—and I know it is easy for members opposite to throw their comments in at this particular time, and to throw those kinds of comments—is a fundamental issue in health care that underlines whether there be a program or not. It is part of that reform and movement of change that is happening all across this country and has to happen, and to which I will say, Madam Speaker, I never felt we had any support from members opposite moving forward: that is, the fundamental change in the way that health care is administered and delivered in our country.

It is very easy to say that, yes, we need a program, this decision should be made, but do you know how health care has been, how the way we administer a fund and deliver health care has developed in this country? It is over 30 years of layering one system upon another of a private, charitable health care system, the beginnings of medicare in the '60s, the Canada Health Act, a greater and greater role for government as opposed to just being an insurer to where we became funder, to where the public expectation is that we are the administrators. Yet, within that system—[interjection] Just let me finish. Well, the member references the Canada Health. Yes, the great principle of public administration. That is right. We have accepted that.

What does that mean? Does that mean that government in provinces direct and operate health care? Well, Madam Speaker, I think that is what the public expects. Quite frankly, if our health care is going to survive, I believe that has to happen. The system, as it existed in Manitoba until regionalization and even with the existence of agreements and the survival of various boards in Winnipeg in our hospitals, have so many layers that were built in over 30 years that it makes it so difficult for decisions to be

implemented that they bog down in a mess that is very, very frustrating to people who want to see the kind of programs that we talk about happen.

Madam Speaker, I would suggest to this House that the most significant reform in health care in the history of public health care in this province was the creation of regional health authorities. The member for Kildonan (Mr. Chomiak) referenced the Holiday Haven situation. When that happened, I remember I was only a few weeks in the ministry. We had a death. As it turned out, the death was not related to the claims that many were making, but I remember saying to staff in the ministry: what are my options? What are my authorities?

And, you know, the only authority that we had in law was to remove their licence, which meant in January we had a hundred-and-some residents of that facility who you would have to move through the cold of winter to some other place because there would be no licence for that facility. Nowhere in the legislative authorities of this province, in 30-some years of developing medicare, in which the New Democratic Party was the government of this province for many of those years, did any Legislature provide for a number of mechanisms other than removing a licence.

What did we do? We brought in the legislation. It passed this House. I cannot recall whether it was supported by members opposite or not, but now ministers of Health have the authority to go in and take over those facilities if it is in the public good, if things are happening that need to happen. So that is exactly what the member for Kildonan and I agreed upon, that it was a matter of addressing the management there, that the legal authority for government to act would be in place. It did not, it did not. So in fairness to previous ministers of Health who have had to deal with those issues, the ability to go in and actually make change and deal in a manner that both the member for Kildonan and I agree was the right course of action did not exist.

So it is easy to sit there and say: why does the minister not go in and take over the management and bang the desk and demand it in front of the cameras? Anybody can do that, but

when you sit in the desk of the minister, you have to act within the law. If you do not have the authorities, you do not have them until this Legislature gives them to you.

I can tell you, Madam Speaker, in case after case, in dealing with decision making in health care, how frustrating it is to ministers of Health in this province and across this country in their inability to implement decisions that you and I, as members of this House, will agree are the right decisions. Because every one of those independent hospital boards that existed was looking at ways to protect their turf, to operate within their own system, to not give up anything to anyone. That rivalry still goes on today to some degree among some of the boards in the city of Winnipeg. It is changing, leaps and bounds.

Many of our rural regional health authorities where those boards evolved into the RHA, I know mine, the North Eastman Health Association, we are seeing a lot of things happen that are years overdue, in my opinion, and they are overdue because the mechanisms to make them happen did not exist.

Yet every time we have come to this Chamber to see those mechanisms created, my recollection is very rarely did we have the support of members opposite. We had their criticisms but not their support.

So when you are looking to see the changes in health care happen that must happen, programs develop that we must see. You also have to have the changes in the way we operate our system take place in order to facilitate that. That also means changes in the way we fund health care.

One of the great frustrations of Ministers of Health before regionalization was we gave

budgets to hospitals, and we did not know where that money was spent. We discovered \$2.5 million of taxpayers' money being used by the nine Winnipeg hospitals collectively to subsidize their public cafeterias. Did any member of this Legislative Assembly vote anywhere to make that decision to use health dollars to fund cafeteria food as opposed to being used for hip or knee replacements or cancer treatment? No, I do not think we could find—well, we may find some in the New Democratic Party because they would support their friends at UFCW. They would. But I do not think we could find a Liberal or Conservative member of this House, and there are probably some New Democrats, Madam Speaker, who would agree that that is not a good use of money.

But, you know, every year that money was wasted, hidden in the budgets of hospitals, taken out of programming for patients, and when the money was not there for the patients, the answer was: we did not get enough money from government. Nowhere did a hospital ever say: we are short because we had to subsidize our cafeteria. Now, Madam Speaker, that is an affront, not to any party, that is an affront to the elected members of this Legislature. And until those systems are fully changed, transparent and accountable, that the public, through their government and the public part of it can see where dollars are being spent, we are going to continue to have that problem.

**Madam Speaker:** When this matter is again before the House, the honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation (Mr. Praznik) will have seven minutes remaining.

The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 10 a.m. tomorrow (Thursday).

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Wednesday, April 21, 1999

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