

# LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, June 15, 1979

Time: 2:30 p.m.

**OPENING PRAYER** by Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER, Hon. Harry E. Graham (Birtle-Russell):** Before we proceed, I should like to draw the honourable members' attention to the gallery where we have some Grade 12 students from McGregor Collegiate. These students are in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Portage la Prairie. On behalf of all the members, we welcome you here this afternoon.

Presenting Petitions . . . Reading and Receiving Petitions . . . Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees.

## MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister of Health.

**HON. L. R. (Bud) SHERMAN (Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, before the Orders of the Day, I would like to make a brief Ministerial Statement. I have copies available.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to advise the Legislature that the government has approved a Redevelopment Plan for the Health Sciences Centre in Winnipeg. Details are scheduled to be announced on Tuesday morning, June 19th.

The intention has been, Sir, to announce them simultaneously in this House and at a news conference to be held in the School of Nursing Auditorium on the Health Sciences Centre campus.

Because there now appears the possibility that the current Legislative Session may be prorogued before the scheduled announcement date, I want to take this opportunity while time permits, to advise members of the House of this impending development.

I also wish to extend an invitation to all members of this House to be present and to share in Tuesday morning's announcement ceremonies. Printed invitations now are being distributed and will be delivered to both caucus rooms.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

**MR. SAUL MILLER:** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the long-awaited announcement by the Minister, and the long-overdue announcement by the Minister. I don't know the details of the announcement, of course, we won't know until Tuesday, but I do know that the plans for the redevelopment of the Health Sciences Centre were formulated a number of years ago, were on track and would have been in progress now except that they were frozen in the fall of 1977. I hope that with this announcement that will be made on Tuesday, that those plans will now be gone ahead with quickly because the delay has really seriously affected the delivery of service in Winnipeg, and I think in Manitoba, because the Health Sciences Centre is not just a facility for Winnipeg, it serves all of Manitoba. It is the major health facility in Manitoba.

So that's why I regret that there has been this delay and I'm hoping that with the announcement on Tuesday, all the roadblocks will be eliminated and henceforth the redevelopment can take place, a rationalization can take place and we will end up in Manitoba with far better facilities and services than we have to date, and lay the groundwork for a sound delivery system for the future.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

**HON. JAMES E. DOWNEY (Arthur):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to distribute for information of the members of the Assembly the 25th annual progress report of the University of Manitoba Faculty of Agriculture, a study on the agricultural research and experimentation that is taking place at the university. It will be distributed — they're available for distribution.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Notices of Motion . . . Introduction of Bills. Before we proceed with Oral Questions, I want to apologize to the Kronsthat School from Gretna, Grade 7 and 8. This school is in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Rhineland. On behalf of all the honourable members,

we welcome you here this afternoon.

## ORAL QUESTIONS

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**MR. HOWARD PAWLEY (Selkirk):** Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister of Health — can the Minister of Health indicate what the position of the Manitoba Health Services is, pertaining to the regional-wide bargaining involving the Manitoba Health Organization and the Institutional Service employees?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister of Health.

**MR. SHERMAN:** Mr. Speaker, the budgets for the facilities to which the Honourable Leader of the Opposition refers are set and approved in discussion between the facilities and the Health Services Commission. The facilities themselves are on global budgets and make their own wage contract negotiations with their employees. In this case there has, of course, been central bargaining through a central bargaining table, organized by the Manitoba Health Organizations. At the present time, there are some nine facilities who have not settled with the Institutional Employees Union and progress is being pursued and being accomplished slowly.

**MR. PAWLEY:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister advise whether or not it is the position of the Manitoba Health Organization that there ought to be a disparity insofar as hospitals and institutions in Winnipeg as compared to those outside the city of Winnipeg?

**MR. SHERMAN:** Mr. Speaker, I would refrain from offering an opinion of the type asked by the Leader of the Opposition. We have prescribed no policy; the Health Services Commission has laid down no policy; but I would say that it is not uncommon for wage rates in rural institutions and wage rates in urban institutions in service areas and service fields such as the health field to be different.

**MR. PAWLEY:** Is the Minister then indicating that the position which has been made known by the representatives of institutional service employees to the effect that the Manitoba Health Organization position re disparity is as a result of the behest of the Manitoba Health Services, is in fact incorrect?

**MR. SHERMAN:** That is my understanding and that is what the Manitoba Health Services Commission has advised me, Mr. Speaker. It is in fact incorrect.

**MR. PAWLEY:** Mr. Speaker, a further question to the Minister of Economic Development. Can the Minister of Economic Development confirm that building construction has declined by some 29 percent in the first five months of this year in comparison to the first five months of 1978?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister of Economic Development.

**HON. J. FRANK JOHNSTON (Sturgeon Creek):** Mr. Speaker, I don't know why the Honourable Leader of the Opposition asks the question when he well knows the answer himself. Housing construction and apartment block buildings and office building construction is down in the province of Manitoba, because we had a tremendous year in 1978.

**MR. PAWLEY:** Mr. Speaker, can the Minister confirm that insofar as Electro-Knit Fabrics is concerned, that the liquidation sale is taking place today and that in that liquidation sale, there is the inclusion of a number of polyester products?

**MR. JOHNSTON:** Mr. Speaker, I haven't personally been out to the sale, but I'll have my department check it and see if there is or there isn't.

**MR. PAWLEY:** A supplementary. I refer the Minister to his earlier statements to the effect that the Electro-Knit Fabrics Limited was being closed down due to the fact that velour and the doubleknit was no longer in demand within the general market. Can he advise as to the fact that apparently Electro-Knit was manufacturing polyester, whether or not steps were undertaken to ascertain whether or not there was sufficient market in that field to permit the continuation of the operations?

**MR. JOHNSTON:** Mr. Speaker, the products made in the Electro-Knit factory in Selkirk, it was investigated, it was discussed with the owners, and they showed us — for the last six months we have been discussing it with them. The products that they are making in that plant do not have a market great enough to keep that particular operation open.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

**MR. RUSSELL DOERN:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Health and ask him whether he considers the licensing of guest homes as a municipal responsibility?

**MR. SHERMAN:** I'm not sure, Mr. Speaker. I don't have any answers yet to the guest home problem. We hope to achieve some this summer.

**MR. DOERN:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister of Health whether he supports the position of Councillor Jim Ernst who said that in the absence of provincial standards, the City of Winnipeg would undertake to set standards for guest homes within the city?

**MR. SHERMAN:** Mr. Speaker, all I can say about that is that I am aware of the position that Councillor Ernst has expressed. I am not prepared to say that we feel the entire responsibility should be left to the city. We have made no such decision. We have made no decision, Mr. Speaker. We are looking for the best, most practical, most co-operative and least intrusive way to deal with this problem. I think it will be some weeks yet before we have answers, but I can assure my honourable friend that we are working on it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Elmwood with a final supplementary.

**MR. DOERN:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister then, that in the absence of a provincial policy, if the city does make a move in this direction, would the province assist the city authorities to develop standards? Would they work with them to aid them in this task?

**MR. SHERMAN:** Speaking generally, Mr. Speaker, my answer would be yes. The whole question of standards is one that was touched upon the other day. It is certainly desirable in an ideal sense to have standards, except that standards always imply substandard operations, which bring with them subsequent problems. But my general answer to the principle implied in the honourable member's question is yes.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

**MR. SAUL CHERNIACK:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Honourable the First Minister, and in wishing that he participates in a successful opening at Long Spruce and Henday tomorrow, whether he has thought about, and did, invite several people who I would think have a pre-eminent position which would entitle them to be there, and those would be in my opinion, Doug Campbell, Duff Roblin, Stuart Anderson, Len Bateman, and the Governor-General of Canada. Have they been invited?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable First Minister.

**HON. STERLING R. LYON (Charleswood):** Mr. Speaker, there is an extensive list of people who have been invited by Manitoba Hydro, and some by the government. I don't have that list in front of me. I do know that some of the gentlemen named by the Member for St. Johns have been invited.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

**MR. CHERNIACK:** Well, I was just wondering, Mr. Speaker, whether the Honourable Premier, if he agrees with my suggestion that all five have a pre-eminent right to be invited, whether it is not too late now for him to inquire as to whether or not they've all been included and whether he is prepared now to issue a belated but courteous invitation for their presence.

**MR. LYON:** Mr. Speaker, as always, we thank the Honourable, the Member for St. Johns, for his suggestions which will be given all due attention.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Churchill.

**MR. JAY COWAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Education. Has the Minister had the opportunity to acquaint himself with the letter dated May 16, 1979, originating from the Manitoba Department of Education School Building Projects Committee, in reference to the danger of asbestos used in the schools within the province?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister of Education.

**HON. KEITH A. COSENS (Gimli):** Yes, Mr. Speaker, I have had that opportunity, and I can advise the House that we have this particular situation under study and are prepared to pursue it to ascertain whether in fact there are any dangers associated with fibrous asbestos and the dust that emanates from it, and I am prepared to tell the House at this time that we'll take every necessary action.

**MR. COWAN:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. The Minister indicated that the subject is under study. Is he then confirming that tests will be made in the school buildings to test for high levels of asbestos dust in the air, and if so, who will be undertaking that particular testing program. Which department will be responsible for those tests?

**MR. COSENS:** Mr. Speaker, where testing is necessary, this would fall under the jurisdiction of my colleague, the Minister of Labour. If the expertise for this type of testing is not found in that particular department, then we will make sure that we do find it so that it is available for our use.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Churchill with a final supplementary.

**MR. COWAN:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is to the Minister of Labour in that case. Can the Minister of Labour indicate if there has been any upgrading of the equipment used by his department to test for asbestos fibres in the air in the past three years?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister of Labour.

**HON. KEN MacMASTER (Thompson):** No, Mr. Speaker, I can't confirm whether that's correct or not.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Point Douglas.

**MR. DONALD MALINOWSKY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I have a question to the Honourable Attorney-General. Is the Minister aware if we have the same kind of a problem with the hot dogs as we have with hamburgers?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Attorney-General.

**HON. GERALD W. J. MERCIER (Osborne):** No, I'm not aware, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Transcona.

**MR. WILSON PARASIUKE:** Thank you. My question is directed to the Minister of Health. In the light of further revelations in the Winnipeg Free Press regarding problems in Guest Homes and in the health care of outpatients, can the Minister indicate if he's launched an inquiry into the manner in which his department prescribes and dispenses drugs to outpatients?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister of Health.

**MR. SHERMAN:** No, Mr. Speaker. Not specifically. What we are doing, is attempting to draw together the lines of approach that will produce a solution, hopefully to the whole problem. Certainly, the material reported in the Free Press is valuable resource material for any government. I would simply say at the same time, however, that one should not, I think, accept unnecessarily, extreme interpretation of the guest home situation. Some guest homes are very good, very good. Obviously, some of them are not very good. But I think we have to be careful about the general approach

developed.

**MR. PARASIUK:** Yes, I'd like to ask a supplementary to the Minister specifically with respect to the question of the way in which drugs are prescribed and dispensed to outpatients. I believe that that is a function of personnel within his department, and not a function of the guest homes. And therefore, that's why I asked him, in light of the allegations made that wrong drugs have been dispensed to patients, is the Minister launching an immediate inquiry to ensure that this doesn't happen again, or at least that the incidence of it is reduced?

**MR. SHERMAN:** Mr. Speaker, I will take the honourable member's question as good advice, and as a good suggestion, and I will act on it.

**MR. PARASIUK:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, supplementary to the Minister. Staff have been quoted that funds to train departmental staff to deal with the whole question of prescribing and dispensing drugs to outpatients have in fact been frozen for some time. Can the Minister indicate if there are sufficient funds in his departmental Estimates for this year to ensure that a proper training program will be carried out for his staff to ensure that outpatients receive the proper drugs as prescribed to them?

**MR. SHERMAN:** Mr. Speaker, the attempt has always been made to provide adequate funding to ensure proper dispensation and distribution of drugs for psychiatric patients. Whether, what the honourable member is suggesting would be covered by available funds in the Budget, I'm not sure. I can't answer because I don't know to what extent a new mechanism would have to be put in place, and what the size of that mechanism would be.

You know, I think all of us in this House are in favour of de-institutionalization, and there has been widespread de-institutionalization in the last 10 years, but it, too, brings with it its problems and this is one of them, the post-mentally ill patient out in a single room somewhere in the community and dependent upon a system that can only afford so much.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Ste. Rose.

**MR. A. R. (Pete) ADAM:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to follow up on a question to the Minister of Industry and Commerce posed to him by my leader in regard to the knitting plant at Selkirk. I would ask the Minister if there has been any discussions in regard to converting the equipment over to a single knit for the manufacture of acrylic, polyester, which is in very popular demand, I believe in many, many materials on a combination basis. I'm just wondering if there's been any discussions as to the costs involved to convert over to the single knit and whether it would be possible to manufacture denim, which has almost world-wide demand at the present time?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister of Economic Development.

**MR. JOHNSTON:** Mr. Speaker, we have been working with the owner of this plant for six months. He is just as disappointed as anybody that the products that he is making are not a saleable item at the present time and the machinery in his plant is not suitable for something else. I am sure that if that owner of the plant could have done what the honourable member suggests, it would have been done long ago.

**MR. ADAM:** A supplementary question to the same minister. I'm just wondering whether the cost of installing this new equipment would be prohibitive and I'm just wondering if the Minister would consider assisting that plant to convert over to the different equipment that is required to manufacture saleable products, as he has undertaken to do in other areas of manufacture.

**MR. JOHNSTON:** Mr. Speaker, we are not undertaking to do it in other areas of manufacturing except under the Enterprise Manitoba Program which refers to the rural areas and it's 50 percent up to \$30,000, which would not be of help to the Electro-Knit Plant.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for St. Vital.

**MR. D. JAMES WALDING:** Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Honourable Government House Leader. The House is rapidly approaching the end of the session. Can the Honourable House Leader now give an indication to the House as to the status of those outstanding Orders for Return?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Government House Leader.

**HON. WARNER H. JORGENSON (Morris):** Mr. Speaker, I will endeavour to ensure that they are returned as quickly as possible.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

**MR. CHERNIACK:** I wonder if I can address a question to the Honourable the Minister of Health indicating to him that I have just received a third phone call this week from a constituent of his who can't get him to respond to the call. Will he call him if I give him the number?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Orders of the Day. The Honourable Minister of Mines, Resources and the Environment.

**HON. BRIAN RANSOM (Souris-Killarney):** A few days ago, Mr. Speaker, the Honourable Member for Churchill asked a question about park facilities in northern Manitoba. I'm happy to be able to say, Mr. Speaker, that the budget for the development of those facilities was substantially increased this year for northern Manitoba and, briefly, at Leaf Rapids there is a new campground this year with 70 sites available for use with a potential for 120; Hugo Bay is open this summer at Clearwater Lake, initially it will have 120 new units with a potential for 150; there is expansion at Setting Lake, conversion from a wayside park to campground with about 30 new units; there is expansion at Paint Lake; the Liz Lake campground with 25 new units due to open this summer, also a new wayside park; Reed Lake and Grass Rive provincial Park has an expansion of 20 campsites; Asquasum Campground was renovated and is ready for use this year with expanded overflow; Granville Lake is open this year with a potential of 150 units, of which 100 units are ready.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Churchill.

**MR. COWAN:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'm pleased to see that the government, according to the Minister's answer, is continuing our very active park program in northern Manitoba, because most of those sites that I am aware of were coming onstream when the government changed hands, and I thank him for that answer. I do appreciate their continuance of those programs.

My question is to the Minister of Labour, following a previous question earlier in the Question Period. It has come to my attention that the equipment used by the province as of two years ago was not of sufficient quality to detect small fibres of asbestos in the air. Can the Minister confirm that that equipment is still being used and that small fibres of asbestos in the air are considered the most dangerous, and can he indicate if there is any way in which that equipment will be updated in the near future so as to make accurate tests in the school systems?

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order please. The question is repetitive.  
The Honourable Member for Roblin.

**MR. J. WALLY McKENZIE:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder, could I direct a question to the Minister of Northern Affairs? Mr. Speaker, I wonder, if the Minister of Northern Affairs has seen the very exciting and interesting pages that are in both Winnipeg newspapers today, devoted to the economic development of northern Manitoba and the thrust that's shown in those pages. Very interesting stories.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister of Labour.

**MR. MacMASTER:** Mr. Speaker, I am also aware of other developments that are taking place in northern Manitoba which aren't within those papers.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for St. George. The Honourable Government Opposition House Leader.

**MR. SIDNEY GREEN (Inkster):** Yes, Mr. Speaker. On a point of order. I know that it's a problem for you, Sir, and I'm not making any criticism, but sometimes a member wishes to speak to a point of order which takes precedence, and I believe the Member for Churchill had a point of order and wishes to raise it.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Churchill on a point of order.

**MR. COWAN:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker, and the question I had asked the Minister earlier in the Question Period was: if there had been any upgrading of the equipment in the past three years. And I believe the question or the intent of the question that I had asked just recently was: if there is any inclination on the part of the government to take into consideration the defects of that equipment which might exist, and if so, to upgrade the equipment. So I feel that the question was not repetitive, but if you wish I would be glad to rephrase the question so as to meet your requirements.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Churchill.

**MR. COWAN:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister indicate if there is any inclination on the part of his department to upgrade current equipment that is being used to test for asbestos fibres in the air under the jurisdiction of the Department of Labour?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister of Labour.

**MR. MacMASTER:** Well, Mr. Speaker, the first question was: Has equipment been upgraded in the last three years? And I said that I wasn't aware of that.

The next premise of the Member for Churchill was that he had a report somewhere that said that the equipment wasn't capable, and I had already answered and told him I didn't have a report on it. Now he's asking me if I'm prepared to upgrade something that I don't know what the grade of is on a report that he isn't prepared to tell me who gave the report. So it becomes rather difficult, sort of a run-around. I can assure the Member for Churchill that the Workplace Safety division is in place, working well and very dependable and we're reasonably pleased with the work that it's been carrying out.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, the Member for Brandon East asked a question, if I could get him some rounded-off figures of the number of students that we feel are in place under the various programs, and I've rounded the figures off. They're not that far out. In the private sector youth program they're chasing 3,000 at this particular moment. The in-government step in government program they're pushing 900; we expect approximately 300 people involved in a Northern Youth Program in the north. The Hire a Student Job Centre Program, of course, involved 40 people initially to set them up. We understand they've been getting a good response, and I don't have the numbers on that. But generally speaking, there are somewhere in the neighbourhood of 4,200, 4,300 that we're assured of and the indications are that the Job Centres are doing a very credible job. So that's the rounded figures that he had asked me to give him and I've now given him.

**MR. COWAN:** Yes. To the Minister of Labour then, Mr. Speaker. Can the Minister confirm that the Employment Standards Division has advised the International Moulders and Allied Workers Union that their complaint to them in regard to the closing of the Canadian Bronze plant in the city has been rejected, and can the Minister indicate if he is, as he did previously, if he is willing to help initiate a quick hearing from the Manitoba Labour Board if the union so decides to pursue that course of action?

**MR. MacMASTER:** Well, Mr. Speaker, I met with the Moulders Union. I was aware that they were applying to the Manitoba Labour Standards Division. I was aware that if that was not successful that they were going to the Labour Board. The business agent of that particular local has received a letter saying that they were not successful in their endeavours at the about Itandards. He's put an article in the paper which I'm sure he either personally talked to the Member for Churchill or the Member for Churchill read the article, so the first part of his question is sort of redundant, and I am aware now that they're allegedly seeking legal counsel and retaining that and they'll be appealing to the Labour Board. That's all I know of the circumstances, which is exactly where it's at today.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Churchill with a final supplementary.

**MR. COWAN:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. Well, according to some quick figuring, and it may stand corrected at a later date, this layoff has cost the workers involved anywhere from . . .

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order please. Has the honourable member a question? The Honourable Member

for Churchill.

**MR. COWAN:** Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that this layoff has cost the workers involved some \$30,000 to \$40,000 already, is the Minister prepared to do whatever he may do within his mandate to expedite a hearing before the Manitoba Labour Board and a decision from the Manitoba Labour Board so as this matter may be clarified as soon as possible?

**MR. MacMASTER:** Mr. Speaker, we're blessed in Manitoba with an excellent selection of individuals sitting on that Labour Board. I understand that the waiting period to get on is very minimal. I understand that the new procedures that I implemented as Minister of Labour is very acceptable to the Board and is helping them greater acquaint themselves with the jobs and the problems that people come before them with, and I'm sure that they'll get a quick and fair and equitable hearing.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Swan River.

**MR. DOUG GOURLAY:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Highways, to ask him if any decision has been made to increase the speed limit on Provincial Trunk Highway No. 10 between Swan River and Dauphin?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister of Highways.

**HON. HARRY J. ENNS (Lakeside):** Mr. Speaker, I believe amendment to the Highway Traffic Act, No. 2' that is just in front of us will facilitate the Highway Traffic Board to make that kind of decision. Apparently it required a small amendment to the Highway Traffic Act; the request had been made to the Board some time ago. It is considered advisable that, and particularly remote stretches of the highway, both on No. 6 and on No. 10, perhaps on certain stretches of No. 83 to consider a somewhat higher speed limit.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for St. George.

**MR. BILLIE URUSKI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to direct a question to the Minister of Agriculture, and ask him whether he could use the offices of his department to assist the farmers in the community of Beulah in terms of assisting them in developing their elevator concept on the main line of the CNR Railway, whether his department is involved, and if they are not, whether they would be good enough to assist that community?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

**MR. DOWNEY:** Mr. Speaker, the community to which the member refers, certain representatives of that community have met with me.

At that particular time, they were looking for some form of financial assistance or grant, which we did not have within the department.

However, the services or the resource people within our department are available to them to develop a structure or to plan some form of structure which they may require. But as far as the actual granting or financial assistance, there isn't any program available in our department for such a type of program.

I think it would be a precedent-setting type of a move if the provincial government were to get involved in granting or assisting building of grain storage or elevator capacity in any part of Manitoba. I think we have grain companies and individuals now with the capacity or capability of obtaining financing and doing that kind of work, and do not foresee the Department of Agriculture getting into that kind of a program.

**MR. URUSKI:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Would the Minister indicate whether it would be possible for the farmer's group, the local co-operative board, whether a loan or financing could be obtained through the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation, whether that's a possibility?

**MR. DOWNEY:** Mr. Speaker, I believe they have been referred to the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation and I would leave the decision to be made by the Board of Directors and the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation. There could be a possibility but I would only think it is meant for farm operations and not for other types of agricultural services. There aren't agriculture service loan grants, or loans available to the communities.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for St. George with a final supplementary.

**MR. URUSKI:** Yes, Mr. Speaker, on another matter, could the Minister indicate what the policy of the government is in terms of farmers who are under the Land Lease Program but are of retirement age? Are they able to exercise their option to purchase the land that they had under land lease, but are of retirement age, meaning 65?

**MR. DOWNEY:** Mr. Speaker, as far as I know at this particular time, there are no restrictions on individuals whether they be 50, 60 or 70. I think it is up to the individuals themselves when they decide when they want to retire and if they want to buy the land and continue on or handle it in any manner.

While I'm on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I would like to go back to a question that was asked some time ago by the Member for Inkster who knew the answer to the question prior to asking it, and that was in regard to the The Farmlands Protection Act where, when he asked the question if we had legal counsel look at regulations that were drawn as far as The Farmlands Protection Act was concerned. I would say, yes, we did have legal counsel.

As far as the second part of his question, whether in fact the regulations were legal or whether the board was able to operate legally, the report that I have is, yes, they are and if he considers that they aren't, it's a matter of legal interpretation.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Attorney-General.

**MR. MERCIER:** Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. Just a brief response, Mr. Speaker, to the Member for Kildonan who asked twice earlier this week as to whether or not my department would be appealing a sentence of \$500.00 in a particular case that he referred to. I wish to advise him that Crown Attorneys have been instructed to appeal the sentence in that case.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

**MR. DOERN:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question to the Minister of Cultural Affairs. Will the government be providing financial support to the Winnipeg Folk Festival which is held annually at Bird's Hill Park?

**HON. NORMA L. PRICE (Assiniboia):** Yes, they will, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. DOERN:** Mr. Speaker, I would ask the Minister whether their request for a \$30,000 grant has been approved?

**MRS. PRICE:** Mr. Speaker, their request was for \$15,000 and they sent in an audited financial statement and our department went over it and it was a very sound request and we have agreed to the \$15,000.00. But that is what they requested.

**MR. SLEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Elmwood with a final supplementary.

**MR. DOERN:** Then I would ask the Minister whether that cheque for \$15,000 will be forwarded before the Festival opens on July 8th?

**MRS. PRICE:** Yes, it will, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

**MR. LEONARD S. EVANS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask a question of the Minister of Health and Social Services, and ask the Honourable Minister whether the government has established, or is about to establish, a commission or task force to review the operation of the Children's Dental Program as it has been modified by the Minister, now using the dentists as opposed to the previous scheme that had been established?

**MR. SHERMAN:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. A Dental Review Committee has been appointed consisting of five members under the chairmanship of Dr. A. T. Storey of the Dental College, and a public announcement has been made on that subject. I believe it should have been distributed by now; it was made very recently.

**MR. EVANS:** Well, a supplementary then, Mr. Speaker. Could the Honourable Minister indicate when this particular commission or task force will complete its work, and whether one of the options of recommendations may be to either continue the existing system or to go back to the previous system? Is that one of the option tradeoffs that they might possibly consider?

**MR. SHERMAN:** I'm not sure when the review committee will have completed its work, Mr. Speaker. It may take some considerable time. We would hope to have some substantial conclusions by mid-August or late August for application in the coming school year, but that does not mean that the review committee's work would be completed by any means. It may well prove desirable to have them operating for a year or two or more.

The alternatives and options open range across the complete spectrum described by the Honourable Member for Brandon East, all the way from virtually universal involvement by the Manitoba Dental Association to virtually universal operation by government.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Transcona.

**MR. PARASIUK:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My question is directed to the House Leader. In view of the fact that some months ago this Legislature unanimously passed a resolution calling for the establishment of a Legislative Committee to look into the whole matter of public access to government information, is the House Leader in the waning days or hours of this session, prepared to indicate whether the government will be establishing such a Legislative Committee?

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Government House Leader.

**MR. JORGENSON:** As my honourable friend knows, that matter can be referred to a committee at any time and we're giving the matter some consideration.

#### ORDERS OF THE DAY

**MR. SPEAKER:** Orders of the Day. The Honourable Government House Leader.

**MR. JORGENSON:** Mr. Speaker, will you call Bill Nos. 60, 62, and then 70.

#### ADJOURNED DEBATES ON SECOND READING

#### BILL NO. 60 — THE ENERGY RATE STABILIZATION ACT

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill No. 60, The Energy Rate Stabilization Act in the Amendment, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Kildonan. The Honourable member for Kildonan.

**MR. PETER FOX:** Mr. Speaker, I adjourned this bill for the Honourable Member for St. Johns.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

**MR. CHERNIACK:** Mr. Speaker, I want to express my regrets that the members of the government side have not accepted a debate on the challenge which was presented in a blunt, forthright manner by the Member for Inkster, and their failure to respond, as the record shows, until now is, I believe, a failure to face up to the challenge that has been met.

Mr. Speaker, in today's newspaper, and I didn't make note of which one and I think it's academic which of the two newspapers said in dealing with this motion before us, "Seen as an NDP strategy to limit the political fall-out should they vote against or abstain on the popular five year freeze, the rare Reason Amendment was introduced by Inkster MLA to formally condemn it as a blatant attempt to dupe the public."

Mr. Speaker, I believe sincerely that anyone, anyone who says that a vote against this bill is a vote against a popular freeze of the rates of Hydro rates is not telling the truth. I believe it will be an outright lie for any person to claim that a vote against this bill is in opposition to the five year Hydro rate freeze. Because, Mr. Speaker, as was pointed out, this bill does not guarantee that there will not be an increase in rates; this bill does not mention rates; this bill does not in any way freeze rates. What it does, Mr. Speaker, is take out of Hydro that portion of its speculative life, and almost everything in Hydro is speculative, but takes away from Hydro that aspect of

which affects the foreign exchange rate fluctuation, up or down, Mr. Speaker.

I can't help but comment on an editorial that appeared in that great Free Press newspaper yesterday. The editorial is a short one. It was near the bottom, and I won't read it altogether, but it starts out: "Good news is so rare in the world of government finance that it deserves comment." It then reports on the renegotiation of the \$67.2 million loan in Switzerland and the reduction in interest rates. In the first place, a very first error by the Free Press is calling it a \$67.2 million loan. It was not. It was a hundred million Swiss francs loan, and anybody who does not realize that is displaying ignorance by calling it a \$67.2 million loan.

But then the editorial goes on to say: "No financial deal is without risk." A very profound statement. It says the low interest rate obtained takes into consideration the relative value of Canadian and Swiss currencies. Now, that's exactly the point, and Mr. Speaker, I know not of any loan made by Manitoba in its history that should not be commended on the basis that advantage was taken of low interest rates, taking in mind the risks that were involved. And what was said in this editorial could apply to every loan made in the past because no one at any time can, with any certainty, predict the fluctuation rate of foreign exchange, or predict the inflation rate by the time the loan has to be paid off.

And the Free Press then reveals its complete ignorance in the editorial by saying, and I quote, "But for Manitoba to lose on the deal, the Canadian dollar would have to climb spectacularly during the next 12 months, something that is not likely." If the Canadian dollar climbs, then it will be able to buy Swiss francs for less, couldn't it, Mr. Speaker? And if it buys Swiss francs for less Canadian dollars, then it would gain tremendously on the deal — Manitoba would. If the Canadian dollar declines, as it has over the last few years, that would create the problem that was seen as a problem by the government and Hydro in the last year. So the Free Press editorial, and one can speculate only as to what brilliant person wrote that editorial and I won't speculate because I don't know enough members of the editorial staff to be able to, one would have to say that that person misunderstands completely the problem that is purportedly being dealt with in the bill before us.

Mr. Speaker, we were told last night that the Minister of Finance was leaving the city this morning. I want to remind honourable members that the Minister of Finance promised at the Committee stage of this bill we would not only have a complete breakdown of each loan and the impact of the effect of this bill on each of Hydro's foreign loans, but another important promise was made, Mr. Speaker, and that was made by the Minister, supported by Mr. McKean of Hydro, or was made by Mr. McKean, supported by the Minister — I don't quite remember the sequence in which it was done — but the undertaking was that the form which was given to us, dated February the 22nd last and which to us was a tremendous revelation, would be updated to June 1st in order to give up-to-date information because at the meeting of last Saturday, just a week ago tomorrow, it was already known to Hydro that the projection of sales on the average basis, was justifiably, and with a sense of proportion, was going to be substantially greater, that therefore the revenues would be greater; Therefore the potential loss would be less, and indeed the surplus would be greater.

The only other problem might be that between February 22nd and June 1st that the Canadian dollar may have dropped more vis-a-vis other foreign currencies. So we're not really clear on what it is, but my impression from what was said last Saturday was that the June 1st would show an even more favourable position than was shown then. I put it on the record that that was clearly promised for us, Mr. Speaker, and I hope that whatever — well, I hope that the note that the Minister of Public Services is making is to remind whoever it is — or whomever may be listening behind my shoulders, that there is that promise, and that we expect that it will be met and that the tables that were undertaken to be produced will be produced, because Mr. Speaker, we should have the updated information whether or not it favours the arguments that we are having about the effect of this bill.

Let me just remind honourable members of the statement made by the Member for Inkster where, according to the calculations that we arrived at Tuesday based on this February 22nd statement and influenced only by the known fact, not the projection but the fact, that in place of a \$10 million deficit for the year which has just concluded, that instead of that \$10 million deficit there would be a \$7 million surplus, which means \$17 million clearly added to the five year projection would show a \$45 million surplus of moneys provided without any increase in rates; and provided after taking in account all losses over the next five years of all foreign currency payments to be made based on foreign currency rates during the next five years, based on the then known value of the dollar in relation to the foreign currency, which means again, Mr. Speaker, there's no use repeating — the Member for Inkster and I have no desire just to make speeches again and again — but it means, very clearly that Hydro states itself, that it could (1) proceed for the next five years without an increase in rates. (2) It could pay all its obligations for the next five years, including those to be paid in foreign currency and take into account the losses that were known as of that time, because

of foreign rate exchange, and it could at the same time, increase its surplus over the year ago surplus of \$40 million to \$45 million, at least Mr. Speaker. That is why I feel absolutely justified in accepting the word used by the Member for Inkster in his amendment — “hoax”, because it is absolutely false to suggest (1) that the bill before us freezes rates; (2) that it guarantees a complete levelling of rates; (3) that rates at all are the objective of the bill, although clearly it is stated that the objective is to help stabilize rates, and that I understand, but that’s not what is intended and what the newspaper I quoted from interprets what I believe Conservative Party people will be saying, and I say that will be a lie, Mr. Speaker, and that is that this bill brings in a rate freeze.

I use the words carefully, because when I accuse, when I say that it is a lie in advance of it being spoken, I have to spell out clearly what is the lie, and the lie is the suggestion, not what the government intends to do, but the suggestion that this bill freezes Hydro rates.

Mr. Speaker, I therefore have regretted that members opposite have not spoken on this amendment, nor indeed on the motion before the amendment was put, and I would hope and there is still time for members opposite to speak on the amendment before us and on the motion.

Mr. Speaker, I say that in the full knowledge that we are, I hope, in the last day of the Session, although not necessarily so. We have worked very hard and diligently, and no one has accused anyone of shirking in the work before us, three times a day, and have done so with a mutual and I would guess, almost unanimous, desire that we complete our business as quickly as possible, but Mr. Speaker, I don’t know of any bill that we are dealing with in this Session, and I think there are 70, I can’t think of any one that is more important as a statement of government policy than the bill on which I’m speaking now, Mr. Speaker.

I don’t know whether anybody can remind me of anything more important of the 70 bills, but this is, to me, the greatest thrust which the Conservatives conceive they have made in their Budget Speech and in the whole Session.

And that is the why the word “hoax” is such a challenging one, because if one reads their Budget, if one reads the changes they’ve made, we’ve already dealt with some of them and they are really insignificant both in amount and in impact, but this is where they’ve laid their entire stress; this is where they talked in millions of dollars; this is where they talked about guaranteeing the economy of Manitoba; and this, therefore, has to be their most important policy statement of the year.

For us, it is, again, insignificant except in the sense that it being their most important policy statement, it is important that we indicate to the people of Manitoba that it is a false statement.

What we said was that if the government wanted to freeze Hydro rates, it could do it in a very simple way. It could guarantee, in writing, by legislation, with money behind it, that in the event that Hydro cannot comply with its obligations under The Hydro Act, that is not to carry forward — create and carry forward a deficit, if it could not do so in the next five years without a rate increase, that the government would supplement the moneys of Hydro to such an extent that Hydro would not find itself trapped by being unable to function without a rate freeze.

That’s all that had to be done. What this government has done is made the statement, and it’s legislated to the extent of this year, that it would pour \$31 million this year, not in payment, Mr. Speaker — that became clear; \$5 million, maybe \$6 million in actual dollars, in actual cash, but through its bookkeeping, and I use that word because that word is what we agreed upon in the Estimates Committee with the Minister of Finance; by bookkeeping, would recognize the rate loss for this last Swiss renegotiation, as they call it, rollover as I call it, and that, in a bookkeeping sense, it would be shown now as a debt of the province, and not a liability or a contingent liability of Hydro.

That’s all they were doing, but nevertheless, the people of Manitoba are, according to legislation, going to be \$30 million more in the hole than they were and more in the hole than was predicted by the government for this year. And, the projection is I think about \$110 million or more over the next five years. Then that would not be the amount which government would, at all, have to pay to Hydro, if it carried out our suggestion from this side. Guarantee to supplement whatever moneys are needed to prevent a rate increase.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I think it would be wrong for a public utility that is not designed to produce a profit, that is supposed to be selling power at cost, and we know it isn’t, we know that it’s getting tremendous revenues from the export of power; it would be wrong for it to be building substantial reserves if it has the people of Manitoba behind it to say, in the event of a turndown of various factors, the speculative factors that take place in Hydro’s operation, in the event of a turndown, we the owners of Hydro, who have an estimated \$3.5 billion — \$4.0 billion, maybe more billion dollars of equity in Hydro, will stand behind it to see that there shall be no rate increase in the next four years.

We know that there was a rate increase within the five year period that was being discussed, but that is this last, still in 1979 but I think it was in February of 1979. So it would have been

very simple, and that would have been a rate freeze, Mr. Speaker, and then one might think that we be embarrassed to vote against it, and frankly, Mr. Speaker, I would not have voted against that kind of a rate freeze, because I have complete confidence that it would not come about, be necessary, and if on the other hand it became necessary, I wouldn't have any hesitation whatsoever to support the objective of guaranteeing that rate freeze.

The point I am making again to media people who state that we find it difficult to vote against this bill because we would be voting against the freeze, is to appeal to them, not just to hear what is said, but to read what is said in the bill, and see for themselves that there is no guaranteed freeze in this bill.

There's no reference to rates in this bill; I repeat only that the only aspect of this bill, which is rather lengthy, but it all boils down to the government saying, "We will take over the complete potential loss of the foreign exchange rate fluctuation, which is down now, as at April 1st of this year, and we will take the benefits and we will take the losses that would otherwise have accrued to Hydro, and one more important thing, . we will charge Hydro according to Canadian interest rates and not the interest rates that were already negotiated, which we know clearly for this year with the latest load of government means that Manitoba will be paying 3 ¾ percent on this Swiss loan, and will be collecting, we don't know, but it's probably 10 percent from Hydro." We know that that is an immediate impact, and that will be revealed when we deal with this in Committee.

Mr. Speaker, it should be apparent that my reason for rising was not just to repeat what was said so clearly and ably by other members on this side, but to express regret that government has not spoken to meet this challenge. And if I judge the Minister of Highways properly, he may yet speak on this, but other than that there are five members of the Conservative Party present in the House, maybe more than just one will say that he or she will speak on this question because if they don't consider this the most important policy bill before us in this Session, then I seriously mistake what they think is important in what has been accomplished this Session. I won't reflect on what has been accomplished, or otherwise, in this Session, but I don't believe that any Conservative on any side of this province could deny the fact that this is their attempt, their most important thrust or their most important attempt at a policy thrust in the Session, and on that basis it would be a pity if they're not prepared to speak on this issue.

The other one is to again bring to the attention of the media, and I hope through the media to the public, our firm denial and our conviction that we are not being asked to vote on the rate freeze, and I think that that is the truth, and I think that it is important that people should not be confused by any suggestion that this is a freeze, and I challenge members who may yet speak to spell out to us how this bill itself is a freeze. And I am confident about my position because when the Member for Inkster said that, the Minister of Finance said, "We're guaranteeing against a freeze", and the Member for Inkster said, "Show me", in effect, show me where it is, and the Minister of Finance says, "We said so in the Budget." Well, Mr. Speaker, what you say in the Budget isn't the law; it is only an indication of what we want to do. And you and I know, Mr. Speaker, we've been around long enough, that what is said in the Throne Speech and what is said in the Budget Speech is only a statement of intent, which is not binding in any way whatsoever. And the fact that the Minister of Finance, in his Budget Speech said, "We will guarantee that rates will not rise", is not yet brought forward in a legislated or material way — I mean material in the sense of money bill — to back up that statement by the Minister.

I have just said that I would vote for a true guarantee such as was expressed — and I spelled out how it could be done — and I hope I'm correct in saying that the Member for Inkster said from his seat that he, too, would do so and I think between the two of us we might persuade other members of this House to give such substantial support to the government that they could say that the people of the Legislature of Manitoba, representing all of the people of Manitoba, are prepared to guarantee that there will not be a rate increase. We do so with the conviction that it really isn't much of a gesture. We believe it won't be necessary to honour such a guarantee, but we will make it, but not in this contrived, incorrect presentation as in this bill.

And that's why, Mr. Speaker, if I'm not prompted to speak again on this bill, then I would just let it be that way and say, "I can vote for this amendment, and if for some reason or other the government votes down the amendment, I can vote against the bill with complete conviction that I am not voting against the rate freeze, but rather I am not being party to a false presentation to the people of Manitoba of what this bill really means.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Minister of Highways.

**MR. ENNS:** Mr. Speaker, I needed no particular prompting from the Honourable Member for St. Johns to rise to speak on this bill and on this subject matter. I was hoping that I would have an

opportunity to do so. I have a passing interest in the matter.

Mr. Speaker, as individuals or as governments the most appropriate way of judging individuals or governments is by their actions, and it's by this government's actions on this particular matter that we will be judged this year, next year, three years from now, and if in those three years there have been no Hydro increases, not simply because somebody promised it in a Budget, not simply because a politician sent out letters to that effect to his constituents, but the individuals receiving the monthly billings will know, without any prompting from this Chamber, without any politics attached to it, whether or not the commitment made in this bill, the intent expressed in the Budget — that is that there shall be no increase in Hydro rates for five years — is real or not.

And Mr. Speaker, I can understand and I can commiserate the problems that my honourable friends opposite have. I can understand that, and the fact that it was never even raised in their minds. Think about that. That's the problem that they have. And they also have an immediate track record to follow that is held up against them. And Mr. Speaker, that track record is all too clear and all too easily understood by most Manitobans. That 150 percent increase in Hydro, Mr. Speaker, in a few short years of their administration, that frittering away of our most tremendous resource, and one of the few advantages, where all of a sudden Hydro did not become so attractive any more to domestic and industrial users, that is well imprinted in the minds of everybody who receives a Hydro bill. And so, Mr. Speaker, of course, the members opposite, the former government, has to resort to all kinds of devices to try to deflate that problem that they have.

So the Honourable Opposition House Leader comes up with amendments that calls the bill a hoax. Well, Mr. Speaker, if he wants to call a bill that is going to stop all Hydro rate increases to every senior citizen home, to every farmer, to every user for the next five years, if he wants to call it a hoax and I — will have copies of that amendment made. It will appear in the Co-operator; it'll appear in every country newspaper, because we want it understood that after 20 percent increases coming as automatically as your next month's billing just about, per annum, we finally put a stop to that — and you call it a hoax. You call it a hoax.

Mr. Speaker, the true tragedy of all this is that what is lost in this is, that in those intervening eight years, nine years, Hydro should not have risen more than 30 percent. We are paying 120 percent; every user of Hydro today is paying 120 percent more than he ought to, and that is going to go on. He's getting that bill, has received those bills for the last three years and will receive them forever. That is the legacy, Mr. Speaker, that the New Democratic Party administration has left for the people of Manitoba. —(Interjection)— No. I won't get into that argument. The Honourable Member for Inkster knows it. It's a question that, I suppose, may or may not become clear. I rather suspect it will when the Tritschler Commission reports. —(Interjection)— No, Mr. Speaker. No, Mr. Speaker. I personally don't need it. I know that had we proceeded with the \$48 million at Missi in 1968-69 instead of the eventual \$175 million to \$200 million there; I know if we would have proceeded on that route we would have been building the dams coming in at \$300 million as they were required, instead of the \$300 million that we have invested on Lake Winnipeg North, and then having compelled us with that decision to build the billion dollar dams that we're doing.

You see, Mr. Speaker, what is always lost in this argument is that all of these projects needed to be built at some time or other but it's the sequential order of their construction that has put such a heavy front-end loading of capital on the Hydro system. That's why I say with complete conviction that our Hydro bills today should be at minimal 100 percent, half of what they are today. But thanks to the administration that was in their hands for some years, that is not the case.

Now, that is your legacy on Manitobans, and we can't undo that, Mr. Speaker. This bill can't undo that. No way we can undo that. Manitobans will be paying to Swiss and to Tokyo bankers and to West German bankers millions of dollars of hard-earned Manitoba dollars. 42, 43 cents on every dollar of revenue that Hydro receives is paid out on interest. That needn't be, but it is, and we can't change that and this bill is not changing that. But what this bill is doing is, it is providing the government a means, a mechanism of taking out some of the speculation that Hydro utility faces and of assuring us that we can make that commitment and we can make that promise.

Now, honourable gentlemen, you can vote in any way you please. I give you advice; I shouldn't be worried about giving you advice. But you know, the track record that honourable gentlemen opposite particularly have been displaying in this session, you know, have denied the farmers of Manitoba \$25 million to carry on the good works of the Manitoba Agricultural Credit Corporation. That's for one. They to a man stood up and said, "Fie on the farmers". And to a man they're now going to stand up and vote against and call it a hoax, call it whatever you want, but by your actions you'll be known. By your actions you'll be known.

Mr. Speaker, it's just like the other day when the Minister of Finance, you know, had to explain to honourable members opposite that if, in fact, a tax measure that he was bringing in with respect to Sales Tax — you know, there was this argument going on between the Member for St. Johns that it was going to cost a million dollars or so, our conservative estimates were and his estimates

were that was a super-inflated figure, it was not the proper figure to use. Well, that is no embarrassment to us. If it is less, don't we all benefit? If it is less, don't we all benefit, those of us who need and have the responsibility of gathering in funds from the public from time to time to carry out the good works of government? Is not the same question the problem here? While you have argued, you've argued, you've made your speeches about the bookkeeping or when do you show a debt and when do you revolve it, but isn't the central question here a question of whether or not you can support the principle behind a five-year halt to rising Hydro bills? And you want to diffuse that issue. You want to let the Member for St. Johns so totally confuse the issue that nobody will understand your position. But they will understand our position. They understand it now. They understand it now.

Mr. Speaker, they understand it now. The First Minister has said it. The Minister responsible for Hydro has said it. He said that "Thss is what we are doing. We need this mechanism to do it." Now if you want to confuse the issue, fine. That's your problem. I assure you gentlemen it's no problem with us. In fact, it makes it somewhat easier for us to be able to report home to our constituents, to report home to our farmers, to our people, our senior citizens living on fixed incomes in homes, those working at the low income levels, that we have finally said something, "Enough is enough." Hydro rates shouldn't go up 15, 20, 18 percent every year as they went up every year while you had control of Hydro. Now finally this government says, "That's enough. We're not going to do it any more, and we're prepared to put our money where our mouth is." We estimate that it's going to cost us in the neighbourhood of \$31 million. We estimate that it's going to cost us in the neighbourhood of \$31 to do that. Now you want to argue with us whether that's a bookkeeping entry? You want to argue with us that that should only be \$26 million? You want to argue with us that it should only be \$4 million? Or do you want to argue with us that it's not going to cost us a red cent? Go ahead and argue. But you're arguing against the principle of no Hydro rate increases at the same time. And you can't ride that horse on both sides of the fence. You can't do that.

So, Mr. Speaker, I'll desist or defer from belabouring the point, except that I had wanted to make the one comment, and particularly the one that I'm most concerned about, and that is the fact that we are all paying, overpaying far too much for Hydro by at least 100 percent. And goodness knows, perhaps even with my friends the socialists opposite that had our Hydro rates, one of our basic economic generators, been in line, they might have even attracted a bit more industry and job development in our province, even during their administration, but Mr. Speaker, just the mere announcement that was made about this matter has rippled far and wide across this continent. Inquiries are coming in, you know, from all parts of the world, because Mr. Speaker, in an era, in an age where every alternative energy source is constantly rising, there is hardly a month or six-month period that doesn't go by where we hear of some reports — the price of oil rising by another dollar a barrel; the price of nuclear energy is in question, the problems associated with it, just the rising costs with it — but here in Manitoba we are saying firstly to all our citizens, to all our farmers, but also to those who need the energy to run our factories, to encourage those high-intensive energy users into the province, that you can at least, in a sea of uncertainty, be assured of a stable energy cost.

Now, that message rings with particular interest to many people from all parts of this continent, for sure. Mr. Speaker, I didn't really expect that we would be granted that extra lift, you know, of being able to go back to our constituents, being able to tell the business community, and being able to tell the farmers that the Conservatives are determined to stop future Hydro rate increases, and my socialist friends, the New Democrats, just weren't prepared to support us on that. Mr. Speaker, that's the reaction to this matter. It bothers honourable members opposite tremendously, no end, that that thought just didn't even occur to them. I would have expected though that occasionally even the members opposite could have made all the speeches that they wanted to make, for different reasons, but then surely recognize that the principle was right, surely recognize that those senior citizens who are living on fixed incomes don't need an annual rate in their Hydro bills every month. They don't worry about that, and they are now going to vote against that. It's hard to understand.

You could have made all the speeches about whether or not that's fudging the books or whether that's a bookkeeping entry or whether or not the Canadian dollar is going to rise or going to fall and what one-cent fluctuation means or doesn't mean, whether the commitment in this bill is \$31 million or \$26 million or \$5 million could have made all those speeches, but I would have — assumed that you would have shown a bit more political judgment, particularly from the Member for Inkster, to come up with an amendment that will haunt him and his party, and, Mr. Speaker, I might say, will deny once again the leadership of that party from him. Because it's by making mistakes like that, Mr. Speaker, that you are remembered within the ranks of a party, particularly when one should not be making those mistakes, when he is the last one that you would expect from that group

to be making a serious faux pas, Mr. Speaker — just in preparation for bilingual entree into this House, I wanted to say that. Mr. Speaker, it grieves me somewhat that this should happen to my friend, the Honourable Member for Inkster, but he has brought it on his own head and he will have to live with it.

Mr. Speaker, we are very proud on this side of having brought in this measure. We are very pleased that the Minister of Finance saw fit to press through with this. I can indicate to you, Sir, that there was a great deal of caucus concern and urging and work towards this end. We all knew — we didn't have to sit in this House or we didn't have to hear any speeches — what the political purport of this measure would mean and you now are making it somewhat easier for us.

The Member for Ste. Rose the Member for St. George, 'farmers, you're going to vote against this Hydro rate freeze and I wish you well.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

**MR. MILLER:** Mr. Speaker, I listened with a great deal of interest to the Minister of Highways and, you know, I think the most important sentence he spoke during the half-hour that he was talking, was his criticism of the members on this side for lacking political judgment, and he is right. If we were straight political opportunists, we would vote to a man for this so-called measure, and if we were to be guilty of anything, it is that we are not political opportunists, Mr. Speaker. I agree, this will indeed help the Minister in his constituency when he walks around the constituency and says to his voters, "We have frozen Hydro rates; the New Democratic Party voted against it." And that's how he will interpret the entire exercise, and it's ready-made for him. I wonder what huckster dreamed this one up because it certainly is a masterful political ploy. It is beautifully done. An advertising agency should hire whoever it was on your side that dreamed it up because frankly, he is wasting his time here; he belongs on Madison Avenue.

The political purport of the measure is what the Minister talks about, and he is right, it has political pizzaz. But you know, Mr. Speaker, the Minister has been here many years, I have been here a number of years, and there are times when you have to look just behind the political pizzaz and you have to do something which isn't going to pay dividends immediately and may even be understood on the street. So be it. I have taken many unpopular positions in my time and I have survived them; maybe I'll survive this one too, I don't know, but if not, so be it.

But, you know, if the government had really been concerned, as they seem to be, and said Hydro bills should be one-half of what they are, or 100 percent too high, then that government should have been very straightforward and said, "Our intention is to protect the consumer, to help the consumer. Our bill will include a rollback to the most recent increase." Mr. Speaker, you notice they haven't done it. You notice they haven't done it because that, Mr. Speaker, would indeed be a positive step towards helping the consumer that they are crying these crocodile tears for. But they haven't done it.

Mr. Speaker, I will deal with any bill put before me; I will vote on the merits of it. This one doesn't deserve the support because this one is window dressing and the Minister knows it and he said so. He said this requires political courage to oppose. He said so. He says it's a very politically motivated bill; it's an opportunistic bill, I grant him that. Mr. Speaker, if they were consistent, they would roll back the most recent rate, then, in fact there would be an easing of the burden of Hydro rates, if indeed there is a burden, to the consumer, to the ones he mentioned, the pensioner, the elderly, the farmer, the low-income earner, all of these people that his heart is now bleeding for — it doesn't always bleed, as a matter of fact it usually doesn't bleed, but today it's bleeding. Well, then, do something about it. Why didn't you roll it back, then you would have been consistent?

And he talks about it's all the fault of the former government, they went off to Switzerland and to Germany and they went God knows where else and they're going to have to pay all these foreign interests, all this heavy interest. Mr. Speaker, since his government took office, they have been on the foreign market, and I don't mean the most recent rollover. —(Interjection)— No, the yen issue was American dollars in Japan. It's foreign, but I'm talking about foreign, offshore, off North America. They were in Switzerland and they had an issue of Manitoba bonds there too. Part of it, only part of that, went to Hydro; others were for other utilities. And, Mr. Speaker, I predict they'll be back; they will go again because, Mr. Speaker, as their own press release by the Minister of Finance indicated, 150 guests from as far away as Germany, Switzerland and Japan are expected to be at the opening tomorrow. Why are they being invited? To show them what we built, that what is there is worth investing in and what's more, they know that it's worth investing in. That's why they have been invited, so they can see for themselves, so when the Minister of Finance goes to Germany or Switzerland again, it will be much easier to talk to them and he'll get even better

rates than they have been getting.

The Minister of Finance was pleased to announce on this rollover that the interest rate was reduced from, I believe it was 8-¼ to 3-¾. I'll be very honest with you, I was surprised at the 3-¾ rate, it's high for one 12-month loan, because three months ago, I know that the Swiss market was making moneys available at under 2 percent on a 12-month loan. But I guess they missed that opportunity and they are now at the 3-¾ level. And last year they missed the opportunity to prepay and convert from the 8-¼ to perhaps 3 percent. But they didn't, and for the Minister to get up and say the former government was responsible for all this heavy interest to Germany, to Switzerland and to Japan — Mr. Speaker, their plan is to go back to the date when a loan was made, whether three years ago or four years ago or seven years ago, to go back and impose on Hydro the equivalent Canadian rate. Today that's what — 11 percent, maybe 10-½, as compared to 3-¾ in Switzerland? They're going to go back and they're going to recalculate the debt, payable at the Canadian rate which is higher than the European rate. So don't talk to me about interest. The only area where there is any question is on the foreign exchange. My prediction is it's pretty well bottomed out. It has been pretty well bottomed out for some time. There will be fluctuations, but it has pretty well bottomed out. For that reason, I tell you, they'll be back in Switzerland, they'll be back in Germany, they'll be back in Japan, they may even go to other areas to raise funds because there are far better interest rates in those countries than you can get in Canada or in the United States.

Mr. Speaker, this is not, as has been said, a guarantee against rate increases. This is a bill which says we are going to cover the foreign exchange. We're going to charge Manitoba Hydro the Canadian rate, going back to year one, and we're going to cover the foreign exchange. And because we're going to cover the foreign exchange fluctuations, we think it will lead to a five-year freeze on rates. Well, Mr. Speaker, I am absolutely satisfied there would have been no increase in rates; there was no need for an increase in rates. The fact of the matter is that the heavy capital which was put into Hydro is now in place; the plant is in place; it is generating — there is a big opening tomorrow. Manitoba has sufficient for its own needs. The estimates back in the early Seventies of a 7 percent increase in the loan annually held true for about two or three years and then dipped and as a result there is an over-capacity. Mr. Speaker, if the construction had been delayed, inflation would have meant even higher costs.

I am proud of the fact that our government put in place a facility, a hydro-generating electric facility which, in fact, today's government, the Conservative Government, can take credit for and say, "We have something that will attract the world. We have something that will pay dividends to future generations." And there's no doubt that's what Manitoba has. Manitoba has something unique. It has water, and therefore it has power — electric power — either for its own consumption or for sale. What it doesn't need it can sell. And last year there was \$83 million worth of sales to United States, which is paid for in American funds, by the way, and this year it's anticipated \$100 million, and that can continue because I'm absolutely convinced that the demand for the energy Manitoba can export will be needed in United States because I'm satisfied that Iran isn't suddenly going to call on the Shah to come back and start exporting cheap oil, or any oil.

I'm convinced that the oil prices will go up, and as the Minister of Finance, as a matter of fact, would like them to go up to make the Athabaskan Tar Sands more viable. So Mr. Speaker, when the Minister stands there and he says, Aren't they embarrassed to vote against the u bill? No, we're not. We're not embarrassed because as the Minister correctly said, it is a bill which is politically opportune, and which he's criticizing us for not having the wisdom and the acumen, political acumen, to show more political judgments by supporting the bill. That's what he's really asked us to do — show more political judgment and support the bill.

Mr. Speaker, I can't support the bill simply on political grounds obviously they can. I don't think the public is that stupid that they're going to be taken in by what is obviously a political manoeuvre, cleverly done I admit, and whoever dreamed it up belongs on Madison Avenue —(Interjection)— That's right. And you will no doubt keep saying to people — the Member for Emerson will keep saying to people, they will remember every time they pay their Hydro bill, they'll say, thank you, thank you, that it didn't go up.

They also know that it would not have gone up, and they also know: there isn't a word in that bill which says they will not, or shall not go up — not a word. It's all a matter of the handling of the foreign exchange, and I say to you that in my opinion the Canadian dollar has bottomed out; it hasn't changed appreciably in the last few months. It's going to pretty well remain, if not improve, and they'll be in the foreign market, and they'll be paying interest rates in the foreign market which are preferable and better preferred rates than the Canadian market or the American market. Manitoba Hydro will pay the higher interest rates; they will benefit with the lower European interest rates, and as a result it is a bookkeeping proposition, and they may show it on their books and they may increase the dead-weight public debt, and they'll say, "We had to do this because

of Hydro", but they didn't have to, but they'll do it and they'll blame it on the government. And they'll go around and they'll say to consumers, "If it wasn't for us, the Progressive Conservative Party, your Hydro bills would be higher still", and I know that members, in case one of them gets up to speak, will say, "Yes, but your former leader said to anticipate an increase of 15 percent." He said it at a time just after the most severe drought in 50 years in Manitoba, and there was no assurance that would end, and that's the context he said it in. But that has changed. From drought in '76 to the kind of flooding we've had this year, and if you get any break at all in the weather and the precipitation, any break at all, you're home free. And for the benefit of the people of Manitoba I hope you are. Not for your benefit, but for their benefit. So Mr. Speaker, those are the few comments I wanted to make on this bill.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Are you ready for the question? The Honourable Member for Churchill.

**MR. COWAN:** Yes, Mr. Speaker. Thank you. I do intend to be brief in addressing my remarks to this particular bill because I think that it has been said before, and it has been said probably much better than I can say it, but I'm enticed to my feet because of the remarks from the Minister of Highways, and I recall rising to my feet during the Budget Debate following the Minister of Highways, and enticed to my feet for much the same reason because at that time he had indicated that we on this side would be shortly standing up and voting against all sorts of goodies that his government had brought forth in their Budget, and I had to rise to inform him, although he should have known, that we would not be voting against particulars of the Budget, but that we would be voting against the budgetary policies of the government, and I felt comfortable — I felt comfortable in that vote.

But I do have to admit that, given the political gimmickery of this particular move by the government, his remarks do cause me some concern when he says that in a short while we'll be standing on this side and I will have to vote against, if I am to believe him, my political future.

But Mr. Speaker, I have more faith than to think that I will be doing that. I have more faith in the political judgment of the people of Manitoba. I think that they decide, they make their decisions on the issues, and they make them in an informed and positive manner. I have more faith in the people generally than to think because I stand in my place and vote against this hoax that I am voting against my own political future, because I would really be voting against my own political future, and my own private future, if I did not stand and vote against it, because then, Mr. Speaker, I would have remained silent when it was incumbent upon me to speak to disclose the falsehood, or to attempt to disclose the falsehood of this bill, and I would not have had the strength of my convictions; I would have sold my convictions out for political opportunism, and I don't intend to do that on this bill, and I don't intend to do that on any bill or any issue. Those convictions are what I base my whole political future on, and so when I vote in this regard, I will be voting in fact for my political future and not against my political future.

The Minister of Highways said that a government is judged by its actions, Mr. Speaker. Well, that is only part of the equation. It is also judged by its words, and its legislation is its way of speaking to the people of the province, and the legislation in this instance is a falsehood. It has misrepresented what it intends to do.

It has been said by the members opposite, by the members of the government that this bill will freeze Hydro rates, but it has been quite correctly pointed out by the members on this side that there is nothing in this particular bill about freezing Hydro rates, not one single word, not one clause. So I must stand, and I must make that point, and I hope that people will listen.

But it's also judged by not only its word — in this case I don't think its word is worth much — it is judged by its integrity, and I think what we have seen in the Budget, what we have seen in this bill' what we've seen in the first 20 some months of this government's reign, what we have seen particularly in this Session, is that that government lacks integrity — that that government and many of its supporters lack integrity, Mr. Speaker. And history will judge, and the people will judge, but I don't think that we will have to wait very long for the people to judge, and I don't think, given the blatantness of their lack of integrity, that it will take very long for history to judge.

I've been, Mr. Speaker, on a personal level, disappointed by that lack of integrity because albeit we have our philosophical differences, I had some respect for them. I had more respect for them at the beginning of the Session, and I think this bill, among others, is just one of the ways in which it has been brought to my attention that they do lack integrity.

You know, in their Budget, in their legislation, they had an opportunity to do something for the people of Manitoba. That was not only an opportunity, but it was a responsibility, to do something positive, to do something concrete, not to come up out of a hat with political chicanery and con

games and hoaxes. That's not their mandate. That's not why the people put them in office. The people put them in office to govern, and what do they do? They want to play magic tricks instead of govern. They want to shuffle their cards instead of setting about to solve some of the problems that they had, in all due respect to them, they had no part in causing. They had no part in causing.

You know, I consider myself a bit of an amateur card magician. You know, I do a few tricks here and there — pick a card. And when you do that, Mr. Speaker, you talk a lot. It's called the Con. It's called the Sham. It's called the Patter. You develop a patter. Go ahead. Pick a card, any card, any card. You know what that's for, Mr. Speaker? That's to distract the attention of the person that you are playing a trick on. That's the purpose of that patter. And that's what we've heard time and time again from that side over there — patter, patter, patter. We've heard hate mongering from many of the members — hate mongering, Mr. Speaker. I don't use that term unadvisedly. That's what it's been. They've created an atmosphere of hate to try to distract the people of this province from their own inadequacies, and that's the wrong way to go about it, dammit. Why don't they just try to pull themselves up and do a good job instead of trying to trick and deceive and distract? Why don't they try to do that? Are they so afraid of their own competence? Are they so insecure that they can't vet about to facing the very serious problems that the times that we live in, have brought on to this province.

I do not blame them for the problems, Mr. Speaker. I do blame them for their inadequacy in dealing — I blame them for their failure to face the problems slowly, and to try to attack them in a positive and rational manner. Mr. Speaker, I find it non-understandable why they would want to resort to patter instead of positive programs and policies, why they would want to do that.

So I stand to speak against the patter, the patter of Bill 60 which, after the person's picked the card and looks at it, and thinks they have an ace, and they put it back in the deck and it comes out a deuce, and the person says, "My, how did you do that?" It's all in the patter, Mr. Speaker, it's all in the patter, because while you're feeding them a line, you are also feeding them a different card than they think they are getting. And that's unfair. It's unfair to the people of this province, and I think that they will — I have great faith and great trust in the people of this province — I think that they will see through the patter. I think they've already seen through the patter.

You know, Mr. Speaker, this is a hognosed snake bill. I don't know if you're aware of a hognosed snake, but what a hognosed snake does, when confronted with a danger, it puffs up to look like a cobra. It puffs up to look like a cobra and it spits — does its own little patter. It has its own little routine. It's doing a card trick on you. But if that fails, Mr. Speaker, if that doesn't scare away the intruder or the enemy, then do you know what the hognosed snake does next? Do you know what its next action is? It rolls over and plays dead. It rolls over and plays dead.

And that's what we've seen on this bill before May 22nd' because they were faced with an enemy on May 22nd, and they knew it, an enemy that they had made, and that enemy was the people of this province who were going to vote against their party in the largest numbers ever. They were faced with that so they brought in their hognosed snake bill. We are going to freeze Hydro rates for five years. We are going to do that. Political gimmickery, Mr. Speaker, and nothing more, nothing less. Unbecoming to government, but they did it nonetheless. Because I believe them to be an opportunistic government. I don't know if they can escape that pattern. One of my colleagues suggests that they are a one term government. Well, Sir, that is too long, but I think he's correct.

But what happened after May 22nd when this hognosed snake bill didn't drive the wolf from the door? What happened then? They rolled over and played dead, Mr. Speaker. And we have seen that they could not defend that position. You know, there was a reason for bringing it in so close to the election. There was a reason for waiting. We were sitting on this side saying, "When will the Budget come in?" The Budget should have been here. In my newness to this Chamber, I knew that the Budget should be here already. I knew it was late, and I wondered why.

Well, Mr. Speaker, the reason in retrospect, in hindsight, is obvious. They brought it in at that time so that people wouldn't see through their patter by the time of the election, but it didn't work because the people are smarter than they give them credit for. The people are smarter than that, Mr. Speaker. And, as I said before, the people will judge. And they're a harsh judge. They're a fair critic but they're a harsh judge; they don't play around with politics; it's very important to them and this government will find that when they play around with politics in this manner that they are playing around with fire, Mr. Speaker.

The Minister of Highways accuses, and he accused this side of confusing the issue. Mr. Speaker, I have risen in my place today, not to try to confuse the issue because I think it is confused already — I think it was intended to be confused, I think that was the sole object of their patter that accompanied this, their promo, their hype — I rise here to clarify the issue because, when I do

stand and vote against this bill, and vote in support of this amendment, if necessary, Mr. Speaker, I stand, not to vote against the Hydro freeze, Mr. Speaker, I wouldn't do that, I wouldn't do it for myself, I wouldn't do it for my party and I wouldn't do it for the people of this province. I do not stand to vote against the Hydro bill; I stand, Mr. Speaker to, in my own way, as I know my colleagues intend to do, to expose falsehood; to expose the falsehood that is built into this whole bill.

You know, they're going to freeze Hydro rates and they couldn't even figure out how to write a bill to do it because there's nothing in this bill that does it. —(Interjection)—

Incompetence, incompetence at the best. But I think it goes beyond incompetence, and I don't mean to be unkind, but I think it goes beyond incompetence; I think it's chicanery, trickery, con, hustle, hipe, all of that and more, Mr. Speaker.

But, Mr. Speaker, what this amendment intends to do is to expose Bill 60 for what it is, Mr. Speaker, for what it is — a hog-nosed, snake bill, opportunistically brought before this House, put before the people of this province. We have to question the timing; we can do not otherwise; we have to question the timing, and we do question the timing. But let me tell you, Mr. Speaker, the questioning doesn't stop here, they're questioning out there, because I was worried, when I sat here and listened to the minister say "There's going to be a five-year freeze on Hydro."

I was worried for my political, my political and immediate future, and that's what was going to happen in northern Manitoba on May 22nd. You know, for a second there, I'd lost my trust in the people. I said, "Migosh, they may be fooled; migosh, they might be tricked," and I was concerned. So I went up there and I started talking to some of the people, because Hydro rates are of great concern to northerners, as they should be. Hydro is expensive in the north, because a lot of the homes are using Hydro heating, electric heating, and winters are longer, and the winters are harder, and I thought that "Migosh, the people are going to fall for this," and I have to apologize right now and here publicly, forever doubting their wisdom, their infinite and their common wisdom. Because they knew better; they knew better in Churchill; they knew better in Lynn Lake; they knew better in Leaf Rapids; they knew better in South Indian Lake, Mr. Speaker, they knew better in St. Theresa Point; and they knew better in Norway House; they knew better in Thompson, — oh, did they know better this time than last time; they knew better in Fliin Flon, Snow Lake, The Pas; they knew better in the Interlake, Mr. Speaker, they knew better in the city because the hog-nosed snake routine failed; the card trick failed.

You know, I consider myself an amateur magician, as I said previously, and every once in a while, my tricks fail. Pick a card, pick a card, pick a card and they picked a card and I say, "Aha, ace of diamonds," and they say, "No, that's a jack of spades." Well, my trick failed because my patter wasn't quite good enough, my hands weren't quite fast enough, and the con wasn't working. And that's what happened to them, that's what happened to them — the con wasn't working, and the con isn't going to work, because people, like the Member for St. Johns and people like the Member for Inkster and the others who have stood on this side to speak on this bill, had the courage of their convictions to stand and, in light of what would appear to the doubters to be political suicide, had the conviction, had the courage to stand and expose falsehood for what it is. And there can be no finer act that we perform in this House, no finer act than to expose falsehood, whether it be from this side, that side, or outside of this House, Mr. Speaker. And I will stand committed to that; that is a commitment that I intend to keep.

So, what we have before us, Mr. Speaker, is a dilemma of a sort. Do we stand and give ammunition to the members opposite, to the Minister of Highways, to run back to his constituency, and if he was only going to go to his constituency I'd be less worried, but somebody's going to make it into mine, somebody's going to make it into mine and use this against us, or attempt to use this against us? Do we do that? Why, certainly, Mr. Speaker, we must do that, we will do that, we have no other choice. We may have a dilemma, but we have no choice because, if we were to seal our lips, if we were to remain silent in this matter, we would not only betray our own principles, betray our own conscience, but we would betray the electorate who have placed their faith and trust in us to be the guardians of their welfare and good-being. And that is not a trust that I intend to betray for political opportunistic reasons, for the sake of a cheap card trick, for the sake of a political con. It is a trust that means far too much to myself and to my colleagues to sell off, to sell off for the political expediency of the moment, because the moment is short; the moment passes quickly, but we must live with what we do in this House.

We must live with the record of what happens in this House, and therefore, Mr. Speaker, we must stand by our convictions, because it's all that we have to carry us through our tenure in this House.

So, I intend to vote for this amendment because I believe that it does attempt to expose the hoax and because, as a Member of this Legislature, I do not wish to participate in, nor be a party to, the conning of the electorate; I do not wish to participate in, or be a party to, a hoax that is perpetrated for votes on one, or perhaps they'll use it for two or three, election campaigns; I

do not intend to allow this bill to go unchallenged, unchallenged for what it be, Mr. Speaker. I can't remember the First Minister's exact words, perhaps the Member for St. Johns can help me — snake oil philosophy, is that the proper term, snake oil? Yes, that's sort of sideshowism, eh? Yes, that's what it is, sideshowism. It's a freak, it's a freak in a sideshow, Mr. Speaker, but I can't stand here and let that sort of hog-nosed snake oil philosophy go unchallenged, Mr. Speaker.

So, let the Minister of Highways know, in specific, and let his colleagues know a number of things that we hope to demonstrate to that side and to the people of this province when we stand and vote against their political card trick.

We intend to demonstrate that : (1) We have conviction, but it's easy to have conviction, Mr. Speaker. (2) We intend to stand behind our convictions; we intend to have the courage of our convictions; to cast aside the first natural tendency that one would have on a bill like this we tend to cast aside, or at least I do personally and I don't intend to speak for my colleagues on this, that initial doubt that I had of the electorate that they might be fooled; we intend to expose them for what they are, and that's a government that rules by chicanery, trickery and hog-nosed, snake oil philosophy. That's what we intend to do and, Mr. Speaker, we intend, by that action, not to destroy our political future, that's not anyone's purpose, but we intend in the long run, in the long term because that's what matters, to ensure our political future, because the people know that those on this side have the courage of their convictions, and the strength of their integrity to stand and vote against such blatant con and blatant chicanery.

So, that is what you will witness and that is what the members opposite will witness, and the people of this province will witness in a few short moments when we have opportunity once again to prove that the New Democratic Party is a party of conviction, integrity and honesty.

**QUESTION put on the amendment, MOTION lost.**

**MR. GREEN:** Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Call in the members.

The question before the House is the proposed motion of the Honourable Member for Inkster in Amendment to Bill No. 60.

**A STANDING VOTE** was taken, the result being as follows:

**YEAS:** *Messrs. Adam, Boyce, Cherniack, Cowan, Doern, Fox, Green, Hanuschak, Jenkins, Malinowski, Miller, Parasiuk, Uruski, Uskiw.*

**NAYS:** *Messrs. Anderson, Banman, Blake, Brown, Cosens, Domino, Downey, Driedger, Einarson, Enns, Ferguson, Galbraith, Gourlay, Hyde, Johnston, Jorgenson, Kovnats, MacMaster, McGill, McGregor, McKenzie, Mercier, Minaker, Orchard, Mrs. Price, Messrs. Ransom, Sherman, Steen, Wilson*

**MR. CLERK:** Yeas 14, Nays 29.

**MR. SPEAKER:** I declare the motion lost.

On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance, that Bill No. 60, the Energy Rate Stabilization Act be now read a second time.

The Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre.

**MR. BOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, I suppose if I wanted to be crucified I would move a six months hoist and we could go around again on this bill, but I'll be very brief. I just want to put on the record the government's position relative to this bill, and it has been drawn out by many members on this side that the bill itself says absolutely nothing about the stabilization of Hydro rates. But it should go on the record, Mr. Speaker, when taken into consideration that other things which have happened in this session, that the public should be aware that the net effect of this policy is to transfer from Hydro to general revenues certain liabilities and certain potentials. The bill says nothing about what will happen if the exchange rate improves. For example, I'm advised that one cent increase will net Hydro \$25 million and if a person extrapolates that to some of the suggestions that the Canadian dollar will stabilize somewhere in the next few months at around 88 cents.

But Mr. Speaker, much has been said about this bill, but it is passing strange that the government wants to transfer to government Cabinet control absolutely certain prerogatives but yet wants to divorce themselves from other responsibilities. When we were considering Bill 18 recently, and I don't want to reflect on a vote except as a matter as it relates to policy, that the government abdicated their responsibility and transferred it to the courts in dealing with matters pertaining to

marketing. And it should be obvious to the citizenry that what the government is doing is transferring those things which they want to have absolute control over to the Cabinet, but anything which smacks of something difficult in the political arena, they want to divorce themselves from that responsibility and transfer it to the courts. So that they will be in a position that they say that these decisions which are made by the courts we are not responsible for.

Mr. Speaker, in our society it has been an underlying fundamental principle that we can delegate authority but we cannot abdicate responsibility, and I just wanted to bring this point and put it on the record that the government is not being consistent in their policy overall, and this is but another manifestation of their approach to governing of the people of the province of Manitoba.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Are you ready for the question? The Honourable Member for Logan.

**MR. WILLIAM JENKINS:** Yes, thank you, Mr. Speaker. My remarks on this bill are going to be very brief. I think everything that has been said about this bill that can be said has been said. You know, Mr. Speaker, you've heard that political chicanery and everything else. This is quite true, because this bill that we have before us does not deal with the stabilization of the rates of Hydro. If this government had been honest in its approach to this matter it would have been a very simple matter to make a change to the Manitoba Hydro Act, not bring in an Energy Stabilization Act, but a simple change to The Manitoba Hydro Act. And a very simple phrase, Mr. Speaker. All this phrase would have to say, that the government of Manitoba — I believe 8 the date of this bill when it takes effect would be the 1st of April, 1979 — the government of Manitoba, from the date of April 1st, 1979 until April 1st, 1984, sets the rates of Hydro at their current level. That would be a rate stabilization bill for Hydro in this province. What we're getting here is a bunch of nonsense, because if profits rise — and it seems that profits are going to rise for Hydro — then it's going to cost the government of Manitoba and the people of Manitoba — and I hope that they rise — but it's going to cost them nothing. But in the meantime they're trying to play a cheap political trick, and the people of Manitoba are not being fooled. They're not being fooled one bit. They were not fooled on May 22nd and they won't be fooled in the future.

So Mr. Speaker, in order not to be part of a trick, to play a hoax on the people of Manitoba, I, in no way, shape or form can support this bill. And I say to the government that if they were honest, honest in their approach to this matter, that the way to deal with this matter would have been a change to The Manitoba Hydro Act, not come up with this here gobbledegook that we've got here in front of us today. They can't even defend their position. Because they are the inheritors of the legacy that was put in place by the former government. You wouldn't be in the rate structure that you are today, and if the chances that you're going to recoup and make money, because if we do make money, and I hope we do, and I hope we make lots of . money on the Hydro utility that we have. There's nothing within this bill or nothing in what you said that you would reduce the rates and that's a possibility.

So Mr. Speaker, I'm not going to be part of a scheme to play a cruel hoax on the people of Manitoba.

**QUESTION put, MOTION carried.**

### **BILL NO. 70 — AN ACT TO AMEND THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ACT**

**MR. SPEAKER:** Bill No. 70, An Act to Amend the Legislative Assembly Act. The Honourable Member for Kildonan.

**MR. FOX:** Mr. Speaker, I adjourn this bill for the Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Order please. The Honourable Member for Inkster.

**MR. GREEN:** The Leader of the Opposition indicated that he wished to have this bill stood until he got back, if the Member for Seven Oaks wishes to . . .

**MR. MILLER:** No, I cleared it with him.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks.

**MR. MILLER:** Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition indicated before his departure that he would not mind if I spoke on this bill. Mr. Speaker, I asked for this consideration on his part because,

unfortunately I will have to be leaving town very shortly and will not be here tonight or tomorrow, and for all I know you won't even be sitting tomorrow, in which case I'll miss my opportunity. And I did want to speak on this bill, Mr. Speaker, because it is the sort of bill which I, for one, wouldn't want to be absent when the vote takes place. I do not want anyone ever to consider that I dodged the vote, and those who know me I think know that I wouldn't do that, but these things occur sometimes. And so I asked for the permission to speak on this bill.

Mr. Speaker, the bill, and I haven't read it all, but I want to generally approach it from the fact that this bill deals with benefits to people elected to public office. And if I were here to vote I would support the bill. I would support it because I have never been one of those who believes that people in public life had to make all the sacrifice which public life entails — and it is considerable — I don't believe that people in public life are entitled to everything; at the same time I think that people in public life do give an awful lot in the execution of their duties, whether it be school board level, municipal level, provincial level or at the federal level. And the day is long gone when the British system prevailed back at the turn of the century, and I think up to the '20s when it was considered that people serving in the House of Commons in England, the Mother of parliaments, did that under a sense of duty and obligation, and people with means and large families, one of their sons or daughters would sort of fulfill the obligations of their position in society by serving in parliament. That led, of course, to a situation where the only people that could therefore run for office or hold office were those people with means who could afford to give their time.

That changed over the years, it was inevitable, and today it's recognized that people in public office should get compensation. But it's always, always difficult when people have to vote on their own compensations. It's always difficult, and that's why, a few years ago, we moved — when we were across the aisle — to introduce a formula whereby the formula would, of itself, take into account the cost of living, the inflation rate, etc., etc. The present government when they came into office chose to freeze that and simply set it aside for last year. That was their decision and I suppose they thought that they were going to get hurrahs and pats on the back, and I do believe that very often people in public life shy away from anything dealing with compensation because they're fearful of what the press will say or cartoonists will say, or the public will say, very very sensitive about it. Frankly, I share that sensitivity but I've never let it stop me.

And for that reason, I say I wanted to speak in order to indicate my support for the bill, although I don't know all the details of the bill, I haven't really had a chance to look at it and so the question can be, well, why would I support a bill that I haven't really examined? Because what I'm talking about is the idea, the principle of recognizing that compensation for public office has to be recognized and paid for as part of a cost in a democratic society and if we back away from it, if we're fearful of it, if those who have to stand up and be counted, are afraid of what the electors back home are going to say, then in the long run I think democracy will be hurt, not the individual, I think democracy.

Now, I know there are probably — I don't know, I assume — there will be differing views than mine expressed, and some of it will be pointed at government and I think with great validity. I don't feel bound by those views because I feel differently from members opposite. I did not vote to keep the minimum wage down. I did not vote for budgets that asked the public of Manitoba to make sacrifices. I did not support Thone Speeches that talked about tightening belts. I did not make statements in this House saying that one should not demand of people asking for salaries and wages, should not demand too much from society, take too much out of the economy. And so I have no compunction since I did not take that position in supporting a bill which will, in many cases, I suspect, exceed the talked about level which the present government endorses, something like 6 percent, and last year even less.

So I can understand why on the street there may be dissatisfaction and I can understand why some people may be very critical of members opposite for on the one hand calling on people, moderate, low-incomes, or any, to demand less from the economy, to ease up on their wage demands, their salary demands. On the one hand, they have been saying this now for 19 or 20 months, and on the other hand, come in with a bill which I suspect increases if not the indemnity — it doesn't deal with indemnities but with some of the benefits beyond that formula of 6 percent. And members opposite are going to have to live with that and if they can live with it, then that's their business.

I don't have that problem because I didn't agree and I don't agree with the government that to ask people living on \$12,000, \$10,000 or \$18,000 or a \$16,000 a year to limit their demands, their wage demands this year, to 6 percent or they'll ruin the economy, that that sort of argument that has been put forward by members opposite, I did not support. I thought it was wrong. And so they have to live with that inconsistency, that anomaly, I don't.

I don't want to speak too long on the bill, because as I say, I don't know the details. I gather that there are changes in the pension scheme and what little I know of it, I do endorse. It is not

a matter of larger pensions, it's a matter where the pension, the extra time, whether it be of a Whip or a Speaker or Deputy Speaker or a Cabinet Minister, is translated into years, and so one reaches a magical age of 55 sooner if one has added additional duties than being an MLA.

**MR. CHERNIACK:** Wouldn't you like to reach that magic age?

**MR. MILLER:** Well, it isn't going to apply to me because I've achieved that magic age and passed it a long time ago. I'm talking about some of the younger ones. But the formula — that's why I say I didn't read it, because I knew the formula couldn't apply to me.

Also, what is interesting is the fact that the pension limit has not been changed; it is still 70 percent. So whether one achieves it by many longer years in the Legislature, 23 years, or by a combination of somewhat less years but extra duties, extra obligations, extra appointments, the 70 percent limit still pertains and that therefore you will not have someone building a very high pension and others with lesser. I think that is a good move on the part of government, and a sensible one which I think should receive general consent, not just in the Assembly but generally through the community.

So, Mr. Speaker, I don't want to take up the time of others who may wish to speak, I just wanted to say, go on record because unfortunately I won't be here and I didn't want anyone to think for one moment that I was avoiding this vote. If I were here and if I am here when the vote takes place, I would support the bill.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Are you ready for the question? The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

**MR. EVANS:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I only wish to speak a few minutes as well on this particular matter, and I want to say at the outset that I share many of the views of my colleague, the member for Seven Oaks in this particular question. This is no doubt that when you are talking about compensation, remuneration or any matter such as contained in this particular bill, you do so with some hesitation, some trepidation. It's always a very difficult matter to deal with a subject that has a direct bearing on your own compensation or on your own particular situation. But I don't think it is a new problem, Mr. Speaker. All jurisdictions, all responsible governments have to grapple with the same type of problem and indeed, when the New Democratic Party Government was in office some years ago, we had to face and ask ourselves similar questions as to whether or not certain payments were reasonable, whether they were in line or what have you, and adjustments were made.

I, too, agree with my colleague, the Member for Seven Oaks, when I think he inferred that probably no matter what you do in the way of some adjustment, upward adjustment, you will be subject to some criticism by members of the public, as well-meaning as that criticism may be, and of course this applies at all levels of government, no matter whether it's provincial, federal, or municipal. There will always be some outcry, some concern.

I would be much happier, as my colleague indicated, if this particular government was a bit more generous to those people on the minimum wage and also to certain people in various institutions that are supported by provincial government funding and members opposite know very well the stand of the New Democratic Party in this respect. We have always, throughout this Session and throughout our term in Opposition, we have always been urging adequate funding of hospitals, adequate funding of nursing homes, adequate funding of universities, and certainly adequate compensation, adequate wages, adequate remuneration for all of our people. I, for one, I must say, my one large interest in becoming interested in politics, I guess one of the main reasons was my concern for certain groups in our society who are disadvantaged and I think one has an opportunity to help certain disadvantaged groups in society through the political process.

I want to comment for a moment on the role of a person going into public service through the bureaucracy, the Civil Service, and I use the term bureaucracy in the very best sense of the word, what it really means, a large organization. In this case, I'm talking about the public bureaucracy, the public Civil Service which incidentally, in my view, in Manitoba is probably one of the finest Civil Service organizations, one of the finest bureaucratic organizations you will find in any jurisdiction. So I use that term "bureaucracy" in the best sense of the term, Mr. Speaker, in the proper dictionary definition of the term. I'm not using that in any demeaning sense whatsoever.

But when you explore and make comparisons of persons attempting to perform some public service by entering the Civil Service, the public bureaucracy, versus someone entering the public service through the Legislative Assembly, or indeed any parliament, I think by and large my observation is, and I don't suggest that it applies to Manitoba alone, it applies to Canada, other provinces, indeed perhaps in many other countries, but that generally speaking, you find that a

person entering, deciding for some reason or other on a career in the bureaucracy versus a young man or young woman who decides on some sort of a public career in this type of forum, I think by and large, if you could compare their career paths, if you want to call it that, over a period of years, the person who enters the Civil Service, from my observations, has tended to get off a bit better. In fact, I would say tends to have an experience which provides him with a considerable recognition of his or her service. What I'm saying very specifically, Mr. Speaker, is that in the public service, normally — I'm talking about 98-99 percent of the public service — there is such a thing as tenure. Most people who enter the public service do so with the full expectation that if they do their job well, they will have security. And of course that is not a fact of life as we all know in this Chamber, of public life. You go into it, you may serve to the best of your ability for years, and then at one election, find that you're out on the street because for some reason or other the people decided to vote against you and your party and for whatever reason, there you are.

So there is certainly no question in my mind that the person who tends to be interested in politics and gets into politics and enters the Legislature or a Parliament, finds that that is something that certainly is a fact of life and I guess you could argue that you should know that when you go into it, but I was just saying, in making a comparison of persons going into the public service versus the Civil Service versus the services as a legislator, one certainly has a considerable amount of security and tenure providing he or she is doing their job, whereas a person, no matter how good a legislator, how good a parliamentarian, how hard that person may work and how wonderful his speeches may be or here speeches may be, the fact is that there is just the reverse; there is certainly little, if any, security.

I would be fair to say this because I had the opportunity some many many years ago to serve in the Public Service of Canada. I had the opportunity to work for Statistics Canada for many years in Ottawa and I can say, from my experience, that young people, particularly at my age — this is some few decades ago — who went in are doing very nicely in terms of their remuneration, in terms of expense accounts, in terms of office facilities and so on. And I think that by and large, for whatever reason, our system seems to — I don't like to use the term "reward" but seems to treat or be prepared — society seems to be prepared to treat people in the public service a bit differently from those who are prepared to serve in the political arena. I don't really think that the average person appreciates the differential.

I, for one, cannot understand why there is such a large discrepancy between senior Civil Service salaries and salaries of Cabinet Ministers. I'm not talking about Manitoba, I'm making that as a general statement. I think it is ridiculous for a Deputy Minister to make \$10,000, \$15,000 — I don't know what it is, but it's a lot of money — more than a Minister. The Deputy Minister may be there a short time, but he may be there for 20 years, 30 years, whereas a Minister who comes, does his best, may be out on his ear four years, eight years, whatever, but sometime he or she will probably be going.

Regardless of the contribution, regardless of how hard that Minister worked, regardless of how dedicated he or she was as a Minister of the Crown, well, I guess the argument to that is — well, you have a great opportunity to serve the public, you know what you're getting into, so you should accept that.

But, really I think that there's something wrong with our system if we seem to be prepared to pay — I'm not talking about the average civil servant, I'm talking about the senior civil servants — we're prepared to pay the senior civil servants very good salaries indeed, relative to what is paid to people who are in the Cabinet and other senior political people. I think that somehow we are out of whack somehow; that there's something wrong with the way we operate.

I believe that we have a lot of good people in politics, we have a lot of good people in this Legislature, but I think also that a lot of good people would never consider getting into the political arena in our society in Canada, or in many of the other western democratic countries that we know. They wouldn't consider it, I think one reason, because of the whole insecurity of it — what it might do to a person's career, and quite often too, the sacrifice you have to make in terms of your family, the sacrifice you sometimes make in terms of your health, indeed, particularly if you're in the Cabinet. I think many Members of this Assembly who have been in the Cabinet or are in the Cabinet know what I am talking about.

So, I know we are not discussing remuneration of salaries; I know we're not talking about that type of compensation, but I throw it in because I've said this long before I got into politics. Having served as a civil servant in Ottawa, I felt that we in the Civil Service, who had security, were far better off in many, many ways than a person who is prepared to dedicate his or her life in the political arena.

I don't want to get into the details of commenting on the adequacy or fairness of what's being proposed here; I would make a general observation though, that I think what is proposed, as the Premier said, is relatively moderate and it is not unreasonable, and particularly when you compare

Manitoba with the other provinces. I don't think it's out of line, at all; I think it's quite modest and quite reasonable.

I would add one other point, and that is that I believe we would have a better Assembly, regardless of which party is on which side of this House, if there was some provision for more research assistance. I know that we've gone a bit in that direction. Some years ago, I believe, we agreed to put, I think, \$1,000 per member and that would go to a research fund, and indeed, that is what we have done in the New Democratic caucus. So that is a step in the right direction, but I think there is room for emulating the experience of some other provinces and Ottawa, to some extent, in providing more funds for research, not only in the Opposition, but even perhaps for some backbenchers on the government side, and again, regardless of which party.

And I also believe, Mr. Speaker, that there is an argument to be made for adequate service facilities, office facilities and so on. I know that up until a few years ago there was no such a thing as an office for a Member of the Legislature. He or she sat in the general caucus room, and of course, I guess the thought was, well, you're only here for a few months and then you go your own way, back to your farm, back to your business, back to your school or wherever you go back to, and you didn't need one. But, it seems to me that government, whether we like it or not' has become more complicated and for whatever reasons, we seem to be around more for sitting special sessions, committee meetings and other work that goes on in the Legislature.

So I think it was a very good move on the part of my colleague, the Member for Elmwood, who was then Minister of Public Works, in working to provide some office space, modest as it is, inadequate as it is, for the Members of the Legislature.

I would like to take this opportunity to suggest that we should perhaps go another step and provide MLAs with some space and facilities that would enable them to serve their constituents better, that would enable them to serve the people of this province in a more efficient manner.

I suppose that you could always point to other Assemblies, perhaps other governments, other jurisdictions and say, well it's not as good there, but from the information that we received last night and from a little bit of my own reading, I don't think that Manitoba's in the forefront in most of these services. I think we tend to be dragging, if anything else.

So, I apologize, Mr. Speaker, if I've sort of rambled on here. I hadn't really prepared very much, but I've had these thoughts for many a year, and I repeat, I have always thought, long before I ever dreamt of being in politics, before I ever dreamt that I would be a Member of the Legislature, I had no idea — I remember arguing with students at Brandon University, not arguing, but maintaining quite categorically that in our society, our democratic society, if anything needed strengthening, improving, it was the Parliament, it was the Legislature, and there are many things that one can do to help improve that institution, to ensure that the people's representatives do indeed control government, do indeed have a handle on those that work for all of us, do indeed have an opportunity, if you're in opposition, to have information, to do your job, to have the time to take and do your job, and question, criticize and so on.

And I think that this is something worthy of all of our considerations; how we might strengthen our democratic institutions; how we may ensure that government is not run by a large bureaucracy that is perhaps responsible ultimately in a lot of detail to no one but themselves, but that we ensure the bureaucracy does its job under the firm guidance of those people that were democratically elected by the citizens, by the voters of that jurisdiction.

So, on that note, Mr. Speaker, I guess I'll sit down and simply say that I, too, may not be here, because I have an appointment with the Member for Seven Oaks, but I'm on the record with this speech as to where I stand. Thank you.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Leader of the Opposition.

**MR. PAWLEY:** Mr. Speaker, I would like at this point to deal with various items in this bill and, in particular, Mr. Speaker, I must, I believe, at the outset indicate that I will be voting against the legislation proposed.

Mr. Speaker, first I would like to indicate that insofar as reference that was made by the First Minister to discussions that had been held pertaining to the formation of a committee, and in fairness to the First Minister, I know that there was no implication left on his part, but I do wish to make it clear that there has been no agreement and no discussion as to the formation of any committee to further examine various benefits, etcetera; and I believe that that is certainly fully understood insofar as the First Minister is concerned.

Mr. Speaker, what we find to be difficult insofar as the legislation before us is that there are omissions; omissions that, I believe, are very fundamental in order to ensure that a Member of the Legislature does that job which it is intended that the member do.

Specifically, Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer to the entire question of research; research grants insofar as Opposition caucus, government caucus, but particularly, an Opposition caucus. I believe it is extremely important that if Opposition is to do the job that is expected of it on the part of the general population, then in fact, it must be able to ensure that there is the best possible output.

And I would hope that Honourable Members of the House would see to it that, in fact, the grant insofar as Research, would be an item of top priority insofar as any bill involving the Amendments to The Legislative Assembly Act. I believe that that ought to be our paramount concern if we are to do the job which we are entrusted to do for Manitobans.

Secondly, Mr. Speaker, I believe that we do have a problem insofar as constituency offices are concerned; I believe that there is one criticism that one hears frequently throughout the province and, I'm sure, throughout other political jurisdictions as well, is the fact that there is a failure on the part of so many elected representatives to be accessible, to be available, and to be able to deal with the many case problems that are brought to their attention by constituents. I believe, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that this is the number two area that requires much greater consideration than that which is expressed through this legislation. So that I believe, before Mr. Speaker, we deal with the question of remuneration, and I will deal with that later. But I believe that those two items are of top priority.

There was a third item which I believe to be of importance, and I believe has not been properly dealt with insofar as this legislation is concerned, and that is, the problems which are encountered on the part of northern members of the Legislature, the huge, the vast, the spacious ridings, and the necessity, I believe, that northern members are able to visit the communities which they represent. And I know, for instance, that it will be very, very difficult for, for example, the Member for Churchill, the Member for Rupertsland, and other members, to properly serve those that they are trusted to serve, unless we do something much better in that regard. And Mr. Speaker, I want to, not for a moment, imply that the government of this day is at fault there. I believe that in the period of our government, 1969 to 1977, that there were serious omissions on the part of our government, the New Democratic Party Government of those years, in ensuring that members of the Legislature, particularly in the northern areas, could properly carry out their functions.

There's another item, Mr. Speaker, that I want to make very clear, that I've always had reservations insofar as the appointment of Legislative Assistants. I believe that the inherent danger of the appointment of Legislative Assistants, and I have expressed this, and I will mention it today, I've expressed it when we were, in fact, in government, when the door was first opened, and therefore I must openly accept responsibility on this side for the fact that that door was opened. Legislative Assistants — I believe that the weakness is that we create a two-tier relationship within the non-Cabinet members of a Caucus, and I believe, rather than ease tensions and frictions that may occur, there is the potential for intensifying those tensions with a two-tier situation. I regret, therefore, Mr. Speaker, that we have here a situation where the number of Legislative Assistants are being increased from four to six. I believe that we should not have opened the door in the first place, and I regret that that door is being further opened in the legislation that is before us.

Mr. Speaker, insofar as the increases in remuneration, the pensions, and the question of additional items, such as a car insofar as the office of the Leader of the Opposition is concerned, I do really believe, Mr. Speaker, that the timing is not right in this respect. I believe that no citizen of Manitoba could criticize an adjustment which would relate to the general pattern, the general pattern of increases insofar as grants are concerned that we have witnessed over the last year or two by members across the way, but if hospitals and personal care homes and health programs and educational programs, and the programs which involve our northern people, our native and Metis, are to be restricted to 6 percent, or if those programs are to be frozen, then, Mr. Speaker, I must say that I find it very difficult, very, very difficult, and in fact impossible to support in the final analysis, remuneration which increases the level of pay for members of this Chamber by some 40 to 50 percent insofar as members on both government side and on this side of the Legislature. I believe it is inconsistent, and I believe if we are going to restrict those on minimum wage to 10 cents an hour, and if we're going to restrict the necessary assistance to those in health care to 6 percent, then it is very, very difficult for us as political leaders in this province to justify the extent and the nature of the increases that are provided for in the legislation before us.

And I say, Mr. Speaker, insofar as pensions are concerned, that in principle I do believe that pensions ought to be paid on the basis of full salary, the full salary, MLA and Cabinet ministerial salary, salary involving other various posts that are held, so that I do not take issue with the principle, but what I must do, and I cannot prevent myself from doing, Mr. Speaker, under these circumstances, is take issue with the timing of those increases and benefits in view of what has happened over the past year.

I find therefore, Mr. Speaker, that insofar as the legislation — I say this with some reluctance

because it's a measure of legislation which we all feel awkward in dealing with, but it is legislation that I do not believe will contribute, contribute to the better representation of Manitobans by their elected representatives. I do not believe it will help insofar as the constituency office is concerned. It will not help insofar as the northern member is concerned, attempting to serve vast, spacious, constituencies, and it will certainly not help insofar as improving the quality of research that is so important and so necessary if opposition is to perform the role that is demanded of opposition by the democratic system. Therefore insofar as the personal benefits are concerned to elected representatives, Mr. Speaker, I believe that those benefits, stripped of improvement, improvement insofar as service to constituents are concerned, make the legislation itself impossible of support after due consideration.

So Mr. Speaker, with those words I have to express my own personal intention to vote against the legislation.

**MR. SPEAKER:** The Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre.

**MR. BOYCE:** Mr. Speaker, the only thing in this bill that appeals to me as a degree of fairness is the rural representation allowance. That's the only thing, and if there was some way of spinning that out I'd probably vote for it. But, Mr. Speaker, rightly or wrongly, my understanding of the government's intent in presenting this particular motion is as a preamble to increasing Minister's salaries to \$20,000 plus, which of course can be done by Order-in-Council after the Session closes.

The idea that, you know, this has been brought about by some type of negotiations, as has been done in the past; in fact, the former administration set up a committee to review the indemnities paid to members, the report of the committee, and of course the former administration didn't reach those recommendations. They didn't bring in the recommendations as high as that that was recommended.

But nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, this government, after having the audacity to call us into Session, and for the First Minister arbitrarily out-of-hand to establish that which he would pay members of this Legislature, with absolutely no consultation whatsoever, in my mind was just one of the pieces of evidence which goes along to support the type of manipulative government that we have in the Province of Manitoba at the present time, and I say the only thing I apologize to any member in this House for, in voting against this motion, is that I think the rural allowance is inadequate, as I think the minimum wage is inadequate, but nevertheless the presentation of the government of this bill, Mr. Speaker, as I said, is but a ploy once again, as it was with Hydro rates, is to increase the Ministers' salary by Order-in-Council after the Session, to over \$20,000 plus.

**MR. SPEAKER:** Are you ready for the question? The Honourable Member for Logan.

**MR. JENKINS:** Mr. Speaker, it's 5:30, and I won't finish in two minutes, I can assure you. Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for Winnipeg Centre that debate be adjourned.

**MOTION presented and carried.**

**MR. SPEAKER:** The hour being 5:30, the House stands adjourned until 8:00 o'clock this evening.