

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Thursday, January 11, 1990.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BILL NO. 93 THE FRANCHISES ACT

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood) introduced, by leave, Bill No. 93, The Franchises Act; Loi sur les franchises.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Department of Health Administrative Decisions

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, because of this Government's lack of will and the Minister of Health's (Mr. Orchard) carefree and flippant attitude towards health care in this province, the debate on health care has degenerated to an all-time low. We have a Minister yesterday who was doing everything possible to shift the blame onto the Health Sciences Centre by saying the elevator overhaul was not enough of a priority for the Health Sciences Centre.

It has now become clear that elevator improvements were enough of a priority because today, Mr. Speaker, we learn that the Health Sciences Centre will be getting funding from the Manitoba Health Services Commission. It has now become blatantly apparent that the only person who fails to recognize the problems at the Health Sciences Centre is the Minister of Health for the Province of Manitoba.

My question to the Minister is this: why was the Minister unaware that MHSC had approved funding for elevator repairs with new money the day after he had denied funding to the Health Sciences Centre to overhaul its elevator system? Who is calling the shots in the Department of Health?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to my honourable friend, the Liberal Leader, her question both in preamble and in statement is laced with error.

At the Health Sciences Centre, in the capital budget which was tabled some two months ago, there are \$97 million worth of capital improvements throughout the Health Sciences Centre complex.

Last month the Health Sciences Centre submitted to the Manitoba Health Services Commission a list of capital improvements which totalled, I believe, some \$80 million. Of that they were given the verbal indication, last month, that some \$8.5 million would be made available for those capital improvements and that they could choose their priorities from the number that they had submitted.

Mr. Speaker, that process is completed. One of the projects which has been prioritized in discussion between the Health Sciences Centre management and the Manitoba Health Services Commission is the elevator system along with some \$7.4 million of additional projects.

Health Sciences Centre Emergency Department Upgrading

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): On November 23 and 24 we raised our concerns expressed to us by many in the profession with regard to the appalling conditions in the Health Sciences Emergency Department. Now, Mr. Speaker, the head of emergency has reaffirmed every one of those fears. When will this Minister start listening to the authorities in the health care field and stop relying on his own diagnosis, which is flawed because of lack of knowledge and, quite frankly, arrogance?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, when this issue was raised at the time of the tabling of a \$246.5 million capital budget for this year, the largest ever in the history of the Province of Manitoba, inclusive of \$97 million at the Health Sciences Centre for substantially needed improvements, improvements that were not needed since April 26, 1988 and the election of this Government, but needed for a number of years and not acceded to, Mr. Speaker, at that time, when the Emergency Ward at the Health Sciences Centre was not part of the capital redevelopment, I indicated to them that for 15 years temporary trailers were put in place.

In 1978 a previous administration announced a three-phase redevelopment of the Health Sciences Centre, part of which my honourable friend, the Liberal Leader—if she consults with her Health Critic—will know included the Emergency Department upgrade. Mr. Speaker—

* (1335)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Municipal Hospitals Upgrading

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): The Health Sciences Centre is not the only hospital that has been allowed to deteriorate under this administration. The Municipal Hospital, which we have raised over and over and over again, has many of the same crisis problems: overcrowding, poor ventilation, poor heating, the list is endless. How much longer will he allow conditions to deteriorate at the Municipal Hospital, or is he only going to respond on a day-to-day basis on the basis of major crisis?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the Municipal Hospital has been an issue of

redevelopment before Government for 20 years. I have indicated with all sincerity to my honourable friend, when she has brought questions of capital redevelopment to this House, that were this Government to exist for 15 of the next 20 years in the Province of Manitoba those capital projects would be undertaken.

I fully admit to my honourable friend, the Liberal Leader, I am not a miracle maker. In 18 months I cannot renew every worn-down facility as a result of lack of capital spending in the past. That is a reality, but our record is very, very clear and definitive, over \$350 million of capital redevelopment in two capital budgets over 18 months for the benefit of Manitobans, the professionals and those who need health care services in the Province of Manitoba.

Health Advisory Network Extended Care Report

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, this Minister has created a Health Advisory Network which has become a protective shield for him. It encases him and protects him from ever having to make a decision. He promised this House the report on extended care from this network would be ready by May. It was not. He said it would be ready mid-July. It was not. He told us it would be ready mid-August. It was not. He told us we would get it in mid-September. We did not. He then told us we would get it in mid-December, and we did not. When will this report be tabled in the Legislative Assembly?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, shortly after I receive it.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell my honourable friend, the Liberal Leader, because I think Manitobans have to know. My honourable friend, the Liberal Leader, and her colleagues, joined by the NDP, said last year at this time that their first priority was the reconstruction of Clinic at a cost of \$2.8 million. Because we took time and worked with Clinic, we have a new facility. We have a renewed facility, not a new one, a renewed facility with more space, more parking, at a capital cost of \$900,000, and also renovations to bring it up to a modern facility at a savings of in excess of \$1 million to the taxpayers of Manitoba. That is responsible management.

Deer Lodge Hospital Extended Care Beds

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, but it is irresponsible management to leave senior citizens lying in hospital corridors when there are extended care beds that are waiting with the linens on them to have patients put in them. When will Deer Lodge Hospital beds be open?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I have indicated, as I have in the past on a number of occasions, that the Deer Lodge Hospital have budget assigned and are ready for service, and we will commit them to the most appropriate need in the system.

Mr. Speaker, I find my honourable friend, the Liberal Leader, to be giving one story in the Legislature, and a second story when she goes out to rural Manitoba wherein she said 40 percent of seniors in personal care homes need not be there. Will she make up her—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Health Care Acute Care Beds

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, patients must be given the most appropriate care they can receive in the province. Sometimes that is in the community, sometimes it is within a personal care home, and sometimes it is within an acute care hospital, but the acute care beds are the most costly.

What is it costing this province in acute care costs because he has patients who need extended care beds who cannot access them? Meanwhile, they are using acute care beds.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, the Liberal Leader, said the key word, "appropriate care," which is why we have increased significantly the home care budget to keep seniors well and living in their homes. That is why we have increased the support services for seniors grants to do the same thing.

* (1340)

Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend, the Liberal Leader (Mrs. Carstairs) says it is inappropriate to have 40 percent of Manitobans resident in the personal care home system when she is outside of the Legislature in rural Manitoba talking from knowledge. Is she saying in rural Manitoba, kick them out and in here saying, keep them in? Make up your mind.

VIA Rail Cutbacks Legal Intervention

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, today we had confirmed the number of people in Manitoba that will be losing their jobs in 1990 as a result of the VIA Rail cuts. We are aware that a number of positions in 1989 were also reduced in VIA Rail. We are in the last week of the loss of our national dream and the national vision of a railway, particularly a railway in western Canada that goes on the southern route, Winnipeg, Regina, Brandon, Medicine Hat, Calgary, Banff, to the Pacific Ocean, something that brought our country together and helped Manitoba be established as a province.

The Province of British Columbia has already beaten the federal Government in court and the Provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick are taking the federal Government to court. I would ask this Premier whether he will join the provinces, the municipalities, the grass-roots community groups across Canada in really fighting

the federal Government, and is he too joining against the federal Government in any legal actions that can take place to save VIA Rail and save the workers in their communities?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Member knows full well that we have been fighting the federal Government with respect to the VIA Rail cuts from the time they were announced in last year's federal budget, that my Minister of Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger) has written, telephoned, met with on numerous occasions his counterpart. I, in my meetings with the First Ministers both in Quebec City in August and in Ottawa in November, raised the issue of VIA and its cuts. We had a communiqué passed in Quebec City in August. We again raised the issue in November at the First Ministers' Conference and got the support, I might say, of the Standing Committee of Parliament to say that there should be a moratorium on VIA cuts until the federal Government completes the extensive study to which it is committed.

We believe that the federal Government should take note of the concerns of the regions, of the provinces outside of central Canada, the impact that they have, the devastating, negative impact, Mr. Speaker. We are continuing to go after Ottawa in a political sense to ensure that they know that we do not believe that these cuts are in the best interest of Canada or Manitoba.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the Premier in this House threatened the federal Government with court action on telecommunications, something which of course the New Democratic Party participated in when we were in Government years ago. Tomorrow -(interjection)- Well, we do not want to talk about the Liberal proposition on telecommunications, you are right with the Tories.

Tomorrow the Federal Court of Canada is hearing an application from environmental groups, from the federal New Democratic Party and other municipalities of whether the federal Government broke the federal environmental law similar to Rafferty-Alameda in getting rid of the VIA Rail by Order-in-Council without a full environmental impact study. Why does the Premier not stand up for Manitobans and Manitoba communities affected by VIA Rail cuts and stand up also for our environment and file as an intervener on the side of environmentalists and Manitoba communities against the federal Government? Would the Premier please give us that assurance today in the House, to stand up in court as an intervener?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, we will continue to tell the federal Government that we believe that they are wrong in the VIA Rail cuts and the program that they have chosen without having done the thorough and complete study that they -(interjection)-

* (1345)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable First Minister.

Mr. Filmon: We will continue to tell the federal Government that we believe that they ought to do the

complete study that they are committed to before they make any decisions, final decisions about cuts. We will continue to tell them about the economic impact on Manitoba of those cuts, the negative economic impact. We will continue, both through the offices, the good offices of the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger), the Minister of Tourism (Mr. Ernst), who along with his colleagues passed a communiqué saying that it will have a negative effect on tourism in Manitoba. We will continue to make our views known very strongly, publicly to the federal Government, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, some of the same Premiers that joined the First Minister in communiqués and diplomatic missions to the federal Government and wishy-washy letters now are getting out of the diplomatic side of this fighting, joining the war and going to court against the federal Government. Why is this Premier choosing not to fight the federal Government in court as other Premiers have successfully done and other Premiers are now doing and announcing in this country across Canada, really fighting the federal Government instead of just wishy-washy diplomatic misses across the bow?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the Member knows full well that in the one instance in which there was a successful action in court, there were special circumstances that we do not have in Manitoba. So he knows that is a red herring. The fact of the matter is that we will continue to work, to make it be known to the federal Government that we do not agree with what they are doing and we will not change our position on that matter.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, surely the Premier, who has been directly affected by the Rafferty-Alameda decision, which is the precedent going before the federal court tomorrow, is directly aware of the fact that the federal Government has twice been ruled to not follow the guidelines under their own federal Environmental Act. Surely the Premier of this province, where Rafferty-Alameda is such a big issue, could use that court case and that example as an intervener criteria for Manitoba to fight the federal Government. Why is the Premier not using the environmental success of the Rafferty-Alameda case and the guidelines that were not followed by the federal Government to show tangible and strong action against the federal Government in federal court tomorrow morning at ten o'clock in Ottawa?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I repeat the same response that I have given the Member before. We will continue politically, Minister to Minister -(interjection)- Members opposite think this is a joke.- (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please.

Mr. Filmon: The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) wants to make light of it and we know exactly why he does. For them this is just strictly a political issue that they can have fun with in the Legislature, Mr. Speaker, and I know that the public will judge them accordingly.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Dauphin, on a point of order.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Clearly I am not making light of it. This First Minister, Mr. Speaker, is making light of this because all he will do is stand up and shout—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order. It is merely a dispute over the facts.

VIA Rail Cutbacks Legal Intervention

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Order, please. The Honourable Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, tragically the federal Government of this nation has essentially completely abdicated its responsibilities, its responsibilities particularly to the smaller provinces, its responsibilities even in terms of constitutional issues. I believe that a very strong case can be made that VIA is indeed a constitutional issue. Can the Premier tell us why over and over again, when his Government is given the opportunity to intervene in court action, that he consistently refuses to do it? Why is he unable to stand up to his Tory cousins in Ottawa?

* (1350)

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I thought that the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) was standing up to apologize to Manitobans for having misled them the day before yesterday and alleging that a thousand VIA positions were being cut in Manitoba, a number that exaggerates by more than fourfold, and I am sure threw great concern in the hearts and the minds of the workers of VIA. It is those kinds of exaggerations, those kinds of needless fearmongering and allegations that I think do her a disservice.

The fact of the matter is we take our fight to the highest court in the land. I took our fight to the First Ministers' Conference and told the Prime Minister face to face that what he was doing was wrong.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, but it might come as a great shock to the Premier of this province, but supreme does mean that it is the highest court in the nation.

Why is this Minister unprepared to protect the interests of Manitobans? Why is he unprepared to speak clearly on behalf of those interests when he is given the opportunity to appear in court on behalf of our citizenry as other premiers are prepared to do?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, I speak publicly for Manitobans. I take the views and the concerns of Manitobans to the highest public court in the land, and

that is where people want to know where we stand on the issue.

We have made it very clear and in fact as a result of the initiatives, the meetings, and the concerns expressed by the Minister of Transportation (Mr. Albert Driedger), as a result of the public statements we made, we received the support of the parliamentary committee that governs VIA Rail. They said publicly that the federal Government ought to hold back, put a moratorium on the cuts for a year. The federal Government has not listened. We will continue to fight the federal Government in the highest political court in the land, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Leader of the Opposition, with her final supplementary question.

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, the obvious conclusion to that is the Prime Minister is not listening. He does not want to listen, and he will not listen until he is told to do so by the Court of Canada.

Mr. Speaker, why is this First Minister not prepared to take every single initiative he can on behalf of the citizens of this province and of this nation, and protect our constitutional right to train travel and train transportation for passengers across our nation?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) is on very weak ground when she tries to purport, as a Liberal, her great support for VIA Rail.

I quote from a Winnipeg Free Press article earlier past year, quoting Jean-Luc Pepin, the former Minister responsible for Transportation in the Liberal Trudeau Government, the Liberal Trudeau Government, which she worships—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Some Honourable Members: You do not want to hear the truth, eh?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable First Minister.

Mr. Filmon: —the Liberal Trudeau Government, which she worships, that she wants to see reincarnated through Jean Chretien as Leader of the Liberal Party.

Here it is, Mr. Speaker, and I quote: Pepin accused the Liberal Party of hypocrisy for defending a network it contemplated shutting down completely while in Government. Turner keeps repeating that the Government has broken his dream. It is really quite pathetic, Pepin said.

Pepin said that his case for cuts to VIA Rail was so strong that many of the Ministers of the Trudeau Government suggested shutting down the whole network—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Wolseley.

* (1355)

Rafferty-Alameda Dam Project Construction Suspension

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, the federal Environment Department has demonstrated its unwillingness to look after Manitoba's interests over the Rafferty-Alameda project, and this administration has been, so far, unwilling to stand up to its federal and Saskatchewan counterparts to protect Manitoba's interests.

Mr. Speaker, is the Minister of the Environment aware that on Monday, January 8, George McLeod, Minister responsible for Sask Power, met with Lucien Bouchard in Ottawa and agreed that construction of the Alameda Dam would be halted while the independent panel is reviewing the issue, but construction will proceed on the Rafferty Dam leading to its completion before that panel can report?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Member probably has a short memory, but I stated when the House came back earlier this week that we had contacted Ottawa, we have contacted Saskatchewan, and asked that construction be halted until the proper environmental process is completed.

Licence Suspension

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): Given that this second secret deal represents a gross attack on Manitoba's interests and represents a total lack of commitment at the federal level for environmental protection, will this Minister demand the Rafferty-Alameda licence be lifted, specifically be lifted, and that all construction be halted until the panel issues its report, other than the wishy-washy statement he made a week late?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, as I stated previously, I have already made our intentions and our concerns, laid it out clearly in front of Minister Bouchard, in front of the Saskatchewan Government. We want the construction stopped.

Construction Suspension

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Wolseley, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): Where is the evidence of it? All three Parties in June '89 demanded that the panel be conducted before the project proceeded. Why will the Minister not stand up for that firm, united, all-Party position of the Parties of this Legislature instead of waffle-waffling as he has in face of this federal and Saskatchewan onslaught?

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister. Order, please. Order.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): The Member over there is talking about pussyfooting, and considering my girth, I have not pussyfooted for a long time. Mr. Speaker, both Ottawa and Regina have heard me coming. We have made our position clear, and if he cannot understand that, then that is his problem.

CN Rail Layoff Aversion

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): We have just heard from the Premier as to his lack of action and the massive layoffs at VIA Rail as the federal Government, the Conservative Government in Ottawa, continues to shaft Canadians in the decimation of the rail transportation system in this country. We have seen the massive layoffs at CN in November. We have seen them at VIA Rail now in January. In addition, Mr. Speaker, I have now learned that the CN intends to lay off up to 40 people in Dauphin as a result of the discontinuance of trains through West 353 and 359 on that line as well as East 338 and 354. Up to 40 jobs could be impacted. With a population of 9,000 people, that is the equivalent of 2,500 to 3,000 jobs in the City of Winnipeg, a massive reduction in jobs.

* (1400)

I ask this Minister whether he has opened a dialogue process with CN at least in this province, because he has been left out of decisions in the past, to raise the concerns about these layoffs in the province and try to have these layoffs which will be happening. I ask the Minister if he can confirm that, and whether he can avert those layoffs and make every effort to do that for the workers that would be impacted by this layoff.

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): Mr. Speaker, the question that the Member asked, I would take that with a grain of salt, because some of the questions that he has raised in the past have led to some misconception with the people of Manitoba from time to time, like when he raised the question about the sanders on trains and indicated that it was a safety factor. It was not a safety factor at all. They use sanders on trains to start trains, not to stop trains. I want to indicate that is why I say I want to take some of his questions with a grain of salt.

In regard to the question itself, I met with the vice-chairman of CN, Mr. Campbell, less than a month ago. The understanding that I had with him previously still stands, that prior to any layoffs they will notify myself and that I will have input and discussion with the company.

Grain Transport Study Crow Subsidy Payment

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Dauphin, with a supplementary question.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, clearly when we have raised issues with the Minister he has not been aware of the decisions that have been made. He fails to do his job as Minister.

I ask him, in light of the decisions that are made as a result of the massive cuts at CN, the decisions that are being made with regard to studies on the abandonment of rail lines in this province, by way of the payment of the Crow benefit to farmers as opposed to the railways, whether the Minister has received the

report by Deloitte Haskins & Sells? Will he table a copy of that report and with it a copy of the Government's response and position on that issue in this Legislature?

Mr. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation): The action and activity that has taken place in terms of paying the producer instead of the normal system that we have, we have been on top of that since it came forward with the Alberta group. The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) has formed a committee on which I have an ex officio member. My Director of Transportation is a part of that committee, and we are looking at these aspects of it. We will be having hearings on that issue. We have major concerns. I certainly as Minister of Highways and Transportation have major concerns about the concept of paying the producer, basically because of the impact that it would have on the escalated rail line abandonment as well as the impact it would have on the municipal and provincial road system.

Grain Transport Study Crow Subsidy Payment

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Dauphin, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, this issue is moving along and this Minister again is caught flat-footed. I ask him, in view of the fact that 140 grain elevators would be closed and 480 kilometres of track in that study alone are indicated would be abandoned as a result of this action, where is the Minister's action on this? Why has he not put forward a position, taken this to the people of Manitoba, and raised this issue so that we could protest in a united way to stop this kind of action that will continue to decimate our rural areas in this province?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The question has been put. The Honourable First Minister.

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, the report that the Member is referring to is a Discussion Paper that was developed as a result of an initiative undertaken by the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) in which he set up an Agri-Food Advisory Council made up of people representing the producers of Manitoba, the farm groups, made up of people who have expertise in transportation and economics, with outside expertise, and with staff from various Government departments. Now they have prepared a Discussion Paper giving all of the various avenues open to us in terms of the Crow benefit payment plan. Mr. Speaker, the whole point of the process was to have all of these various groups sit together to put out a Discussion Paper.

The next part of the process is that they will have public hearings on this Discussion Paper, and they begin January 15 in Oak Bluff; January 16 in Carman; January 17 in Steinbach; January 18 in Teulon; January 23 in Brandon and Swan River; January 24 in Dauphin; 29 in Shoal Lake; 30 in Gladstone; 31 in Pilot Mound; February 1 in Hartney. Then, after the consultations with the public, at which concerns can be raised,

questions can be asked. Then they will work toward the development of a policy, Mr. Speaker. That is the whole process, consultation, involvement of the public, involvement of producer groups, that is the process.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

North Portage Development Corp. Cost to Manitoba

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme). The North Portage Development Corporation is facing a very difficult and crucial decision, should it allow the housing project to be put on the auction block, or should it step in and take over the operation.

Could the Minister stop the stonewalling that we have received from him over these last number of days and tell us, once and for all, what are the costs of each of those possibilities to the people of Manitoba?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, first of all, it is not this Minister who is stonewalling, it is the other Member across the way trying to gather points. I explained to him earlier this week that I have three representatives on the board, three of nine. They are having a meeting on Monday to decide. They are gathering the information and that information will come forward as a result of that meeting.

Mr. Speaker, first of all, as Housing Minister, putting it on the auction block does not prevent North of Portage, even at that time, of picking up that particular building. However, we will do the best decision for the citizens of Manitoba and I am sure our representative will do that.

Documentation Request

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): It is impossible for the people of Manitoba to make an intelligent judgment about this decision facing North Portage unless all of the information is made public.

We know that the Minister is only a one-third partner in the corporation. Will he use his leadership abilities, question mark, to pressure the other two partners to make all of these documents available to the people of Manitoba?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing): Speaking of question mark, blank, Mr. Speaker, first of all, I have explained to him—maybe the Member is a little slow. I have explained to him that my particular people sitting on the board will take into consideration all the ramifications of taking over the building. We have an agreement that was adopted by the previous Government in 1986 that at that time showed that particular company was in some financial trouble. However, and it was made public at that time through a release made on October 10, 1986, Mr. Speaker, we

cannot change those agreements. We will do the best of our ability to make sure those agreements work.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Carr: A supplementary question to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme), and I challenge him to give the Members of this Legislature, and through us, the people of Manitoba, one good reason why he will not make those documents public?

Mr. Ducharme: Mr. Speaker, is the Member across the way questioning the capabilities of Dr. Naimark, the people who have been sitting on this board? Is he questioning the nine members, three of them, is he questioning that? Mr. Speaker, I have more confidence in the North of Portage representatives than he has.

Ducks Unlimited Canada Corporate Headquarters

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns).

* (1410)

Despite a lack of information from this Government regarding the proposed Ducks Unlimited corporate headquarters and interpretative centre at the Oak Hammock Marsh, there are many environmental groups opposing this project including groups that are set up to assist the Minister. Groups like the Manitoba Naturalists Society, the Fort Whyte Centre, and the Manitoba Heritage Habitat Corporation have expressed opposition to this project.

Will the Minister agree today to stop all planning and withhold all approval for this project until his department has completed full consultation with all groups and has completed an independent and in-depth study, environmental study, on this proposal?

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have the opportunity to make it absolutely clear that neither my department nor this Government are the proponents of this project.

I have also made it abundantly clear in the discussions that I have had with executive members of Ducks Unlimited that they should expect to go through the fullest and the most complete environmental process that would be required, and that, certainly in my judgment, would include public hearings.

Mr. Harapiak: Mr. Speaker, my second question is to the Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) as well.

An independent study is necessary on this project because of the planning and involvement of the Department of Natural Resources on this project. On Tuesday, December 29, the Minister of Natural Resources said, and I quote: the Government of Manitoba is not, I repeat, not providing \$900,000 for this project. Unfortunately, this is not the case. Through

the Canada-Manitoba Tourism Agreement, the Government is indeed providing up to a million dollars to this project.

Will the Minister now, despite his past statement, confirm that the Government is providing almost a million dollars to this project?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, Ducks Unlimited, and I might say—allow me this moment to indicate my, and certainly this Government's, and I think the people of Manitoba's, appreciation for the work that Ducks Unlimited by and large has done in the rehabilitation of wetlands and concern for wildlife management in our province, they, as they are entitled to, have indicated an interest, made application to my colleague, the Minister of Tourism (Mr. Ernst), to avail themselves of some funds.

No proposal has reached this Government in a form that decisions have to be made upon. When they do arrive on our desk, they will be considered like any other proposal, Mr. Speaker. Again, let me just simply reiterate that Ducks Unlimited are the proponents of it—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for The Pas, with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Harapiak: Mr. Speaker, this morning on the radio program, Terry Neraasen, a chief biologist with Ducks Unlimited, said that they must build their head office at the Oak Hammock Marsh because the Government has made that a condition of getting a million dollar grant on an interpretative centre. Given this, according to Ducks Unlimited it is the Manitoba Government who is provide—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member kindly put his question now, please.

Mr. Harapiak: Will the Government agree today to remove the condition requiring Ducks Unlimited, who ruined the environmentally sensitive area, and straighten out this mess?

Mr. Enns: Mr. Speaker, I categorically deny the implications of that question. There have been no conditions set by this Government to try to encourage or discourage Ducks Unlimited from doing anything. They have come to us with a proposal. They have talked about a possibility of providing a facility in that area and have asked what, if any, available help might be made available to them. It has been indicated that some help could be made available from the tourism agreement.

Mr. Speaker: Time for Oral Questions has expired.

MATTER OF PRIVILEGE

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion, the Honourable Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor), that the alleged matter of contempt reported to this House on October 4, 1989, by the Standing Committee on Economic Development

be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for consideration and report.

The Honourable Member for Inkster has five minutes remaining.

Mr. Kevin Lamoureux (Inkster): Mr. Speaker, I believe that in regard to this particular motion that there is a very serious problem here. The problem is that this Government is not taking what happened on May 1 of last year seriously. They fail to realize what in fact they have done to parliamentary tradition. The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) yesterday said at six o'clock, once we had adjourned, that we in the Liberal Party were just wasting time, just wanting to waste another day by not calling for the question, by not voting on it that day.

The Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) accuses us of just trying to grab headlines. The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), and I want to quote what the Minister of Northern Affairs said yesterday: "Thank God we can get up from a committee if we want to and leave it and we are not chained to that chair or afraid of a police at the door to hold us there at gunpoint—and then there was an interjection—"Yes. Well, no, that is not an incredible statement." Mr. Speaker, it was an incredible statement.

That Minister and I believe the majority of the Ministers that have spoken in respect to this particular ruling are of the opinion that it is not of a serious nature. Mr. Speaker, nothing can be so far from the truth. This is a very serious thing that has occurred, and I wish the Government would be treating it in the manner in which it deserves to be treated.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to pick up from where I left off yesterday. I was commenting on the timing and the will of the committee. Late that evening at 2:10 there was no doubt in terms of the Members of that committee on where or when the committee should meet again. It was made very clear that we did not want to adjourn; rather we wanted to recess till nine o'clock in the morning. We had tried to point that out. In fairness, as I tried to state to the Chairperson, I believe the Chairperson was put on the spot. Albeit that it was not a very comfortable spot to be put into, the Chairperson had a responsibility. He had a responsibility to ensure that he did carry out the will of the committee.

He had at his right hand side the Clerk of this Chamber. He could have consulted. If he wanted to take a 10-15 minute recess break at that time in order to consult, he had that option. Rather, Mr. Speaker, in frustration, the Chairperson put down the gavel saying that the committee is recessed and walked out of the committee. He had in fact, in my opinion, done something that I believe was a mistake, a mistake that does need to be addressed. That is why I am so pleased with the ruling that you have come down, that it go further from here. It is important that it does not come to an end here, that it does go to the committee to discuss at length what needs to be done to correct the action that this Government has taken.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I wanted to comment that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) had no right, no right whatsoever, in order to walk out on a duly called committee. It is unfortunate, whether the rest of the Conservative Members of that committee were aware of the fact, but it was unfortunate that they too decided to walk out of that particular meeting. By doing so, if they did it intentionally, if they knew what they were doing, I believe that they were wrong. If they had walked out maybe to go to the washroom or whatever it might have been—or unintentionally, well, I would extend my apologies to them.

(Mr. Neil Gaudry, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) had no right to walk out. It was very deliberate; he knew what he was doing. Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister of Finance has regretted what he did. He has said that he regrets actually walking out, and the Minister of Finance, through his own admissions to a degree, has admitted that it was wrong to do it. I think the Minister of Finance is moving towards the right direction, but he needs to admit what was done by the Government was wrong, it was unparliamentary, it was unacceptable. A thing of this nature should never happen again.

That is why in the official Opposition we will pursue this until the matter has been resolved fully. We have to restore the respect in the parliamentary system that this Government has seen fit to ignore. On that note, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would conclude my remarks. Thank you.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Acting Speaker, I too would like to put some brief remarks on the record pertaining to this incident, because clearly it has led us to a situation which is unique in the history of our Legislature and perhaps in many other Legislatures, a situation where we are debating a motion to ask the Committee on Privileges and Elections to consider whether the actions of two of our Members in this Chamber were in contempt of the Legislature.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I may have been one of the first people on the evening of May 2 to indicate that I believe the actions of the Minister and the Chair were a contempt of each of the committee Members as individual MLAs and of the Legislature. I was not speaking from any deep understanding of the specific rules of procedure of this House nor of any in-depth study of Beauchesne's, Erskine May or any of the other experts on parliamentary democracy and the rules that flow from it. I was speaking out of common sense that what was taking place on the early morning of May 2 was inappropriate, was antidemocratic, and if it did not technically breach our rules, then it should have.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I have said this to many Members on many occasions when we have discussed this particular matter, and that is, while I have a great deal of respect for both of the individuals who took part in this, and I do not believe that this was a contrived planned event, I do not believe that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) in some devious way planned to subvert the role of the committee or act in a contemptible way with respect to individual MLAs.

However, I believe that even these individuals on sober second thought will come to the same conclusion that Members of the Government, regardless of whether it is a minority or majority Government, cannot act in this way. If they can, Mr. Acting Speaker, then they can truly frustrate the activities of any committee of this Legislature at any time.

It was not just the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) or the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) who were in a quandary that evening. The Minister has explained himself, and I have no reason to doubt the sincerity of his words as recorded in Hansard, he may have been frustrated. The Minister of Finance is not the only Minister who has been held late into the evening, into the early hours, and even into the morning in committee. That has happened on many occasions in this Legislature.

I have been a Member of a committee when that has happened. I have been a Minister when that has happened, and on no occasion in the history of our Legislature, at least to my knowledge, certainly within my knowledge, my years in the Legislature, has ever one acted in the way that these two Members acted, never.

We have to address this in some form. We cannot allow this precedent to forever change the way we behave in committee. We have to do that to protect our rights as individual MLAs, and we have to do that to protect democracy as it is unfolded in Manitoba. We in some ways are unique in that we operate our committees by allowing public presentations. We operate them in a little different way than many other Legislatures, in fact all other Legislatures across the country.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the principle that Ministers are there to answer questions until individual MLAs, individual committee Members, have asked the questions they feel they need to ask, is a principle we cannot abandon. Individual Government Members, Ministers, cannot determine arbitrarily when questions are going to cease, when answers are sufficient, when the volume, the quantity of material, that is on the record is sufficient. That is not the job of individual Ministers or Chairpersons of our committees. It is totally unacceptable.

I did not join this debate, nor will I be supporting this motion in any vindictive way towards either of the Members referenced. I have said to Members of the Government, particularly when it comes to the Member for Minnedosa, that he was left in a very uncomfortable situation, without the experience or perhaps the expertise available to him to deal with it. We as a committee, and I include the Chairperson, were left with no one to answer the important questions that we did have, so I do not believe, although I may not be a Member of that committee, I will not be asking for any particular punishment to be meted out to the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer).

What I do want out of all of this is an understanding by all Members of the Legislature that the operation of those committees are sacrosanct. They cannot be undermined willingly or unwittingly by Members of the

Government or Members of either Opposition Party. We have to have a committee system that works.

Yes, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) may have been frustrated. I have been involved in committee hearings and Estimates debates that are frustrating and seem to go on ad nauseum. That does not give me the right to determine for everyone else when the questions are finished or the answers are satisfactory. That is not good enough, and for the Minister of Finance to determine that, is arrogance. I said it was arrogance at the time, it may have been borne out of frustration, but it is arrogance. For him, the Minister of Finance, to say, I answered the questions and they were all perfect answers and they should have been satisfied, is arrogance. The Minister has said he has answered all of our questions, he answered them in detail. The fact of the matter: he is not. The fact of the matter is: just as we repeated some questions, the Minister repeated some tired phrases when it came to the negotiations.

Mr. Acting Speaker, if the other side of the record is going to be clear, we also have to emphasize that the Opposition Members, my colleagues, had obtained a document only that evening which the Minister said was not available, the Minister said the public could not have access to that document. Mr. Acting Speaker, we found we were given that document and it was obtained through the United States Securities Commission. That document was available publicly, and there were a whole series of questions which that document raised which the Minister indicated he was not prepared to answer, or when he attempted to answer he answered so vaguely that we could not be satisfied.

* (1430)

Mr. Acting Speaker, really the substance of the debate that evening is not the issue. The Minister may not have been happy with the questions and we may not have been happy with the answers. What is at issue is the right of individual Members to ask questions to their satisfaction, not someone else's, certainly not someone in the Government, certainly not the Minister to whom those questions are addressed. We have to find a way through the Committee on Privileges and Elections to ensure that somehow this is addressed, that somehow our rules are amended to make it clear what the obligations of the Minister are with respect to questions asked in Standing Committees, what the obligations of the Chair are when actions like this occur in the future, should that ever happen.

I want to say that my motive in getting involved in this discussion and in pursuing the original motion with other Members of the Opposition is to make sure that we find a way to resolve this, that this incident, by virtue of our neglect, by virtue of the fact that we do not act on it, become part of the precedence of this Legislature. We have to recognize that there was a problem and we have to address it.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I wanted to add just one more thing, and the Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) who may want to talk on this will be given an opportunity. I want to say that one of the most distressing things

about this has been the unwillingness, I guess, of Members opposite, in particular the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) in his remarks, to acknowledge quite clearly the fact that a mistake was made. I know that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) says, I regret leaving the committee. I know the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) has made his explanation.

It seems to me that this issue, this debate could have been foreshortened quite easily if the Member for Morris (Mr. Manness) and the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) and the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae)—or perhaps the Attorney General is acting as House Leader—had stood up and said clearly this is not acceptable behaviour. Never mind the rationalization for why it occurred, it is not acceptable. If they would have admitted that it was an act of contempt in some respect and that it was not going to be tolerated and they would work with us to adjust the rules, rather than this defensive posturing which we have seen, this rationalization which was unnecessary.

When someone asked me how the Speaker was going to rule, I did not have to refer to Beauséne's or Erskine May or House Rules to know that this was a serious matter which had to be addressed. We are into a debate now and I fear that Members, particularly the two Members who have been cited, have left themselves open by entertaining this debate rather than acknowledging the problem and saying, yes, we are prepared to work towards a solution. I hope we are prepared to work towards a solution because we need one. If the Government had acted the way it has acted today in a majority Government situation, we would have been in trouble, because this Legislature could not have ensured that this was addressed in the way that we have.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, in the sense that we are making history today in debating this contempt motion, we are fortunate that it happened at this time in history when Manitoba has a minority Government. The will of the Legislature is going to prevail. It is fortunate it did not happen when a Government was in place which had a huge majority and could force its will on the Legislature.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, let us not lose the opportunity to redress this problem, to amend our rule so that this will never happen again. To the individuals who have been affected, I am sure that I join them in sympathizing and empathizing with their circumstance. As I said, I do not think that any of this was done maliciously or deliberately. It was done foolishly, and it was done out of a certain lack of appreciation for the true role of Opposition Members in committee. I hope that this has enlightened some Members, particularly of the front bench on the Government side, as to the very real need to maintain an open committee structure, giving committee Members unlimited freedom to ask questions until they are satisfied with the answers or too tired to continue, if that be the case. It is not up to the Government or individual Ministers or the Chair to decide.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I leave the debate for other people. I hope that we can deal with this expeditiously

and that there is the will, once we get out of this Chamber, to actually amend the rules. Thank you.

Mr. Bob Rose (St. Vital): Mr. Acting Speaker, I am pleased to be able to rise and put some of my comments as a Member of that committee on the record and hopefully maintain the decorum of this House and take as high a road as I can under the circumstances in deference to the respect of the House, but it is certainly not a pleasure in the true sense to have to come up and make a debate on this type of an issue, particularly when it involves one of your, even though it is somebody on the other side of the House, it is a fellow Member of this House. It is unfortunate that some of the remarks that we heard from the Government speakers were not the high road. They alluded to things that were not true. Certainly we know that. There were maybe some rumours and scuttlebutt, but I think they should have checked that out, but anyway I guess that is what happens in the heat of battle. We find that unfortunate. I think that the public perception of politicians is already certainly in question and it is incumbent upon us in our positions to try and at least keep that perception level and to increase it, rather than having more public cynicism.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I will deal first with the matter of the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), who I consider the principal player here. Unfortunately, in this incident—again I have known this Member for some years and had some contact with him. Indeed after the unfortunate incident after two o'clock in the morning, I kept hoping that the Honourable Member for Minnedosa would do what I thought was the proper thing to do. That would be, in one particular instance, to merely acknowledge a mistake was made.

That mistake now has been acknowledged I think clearly by the Speaker and it is pretty clear, as the speaker before me said, that it is just a matter of morality or of common sense that the Government should have known something occurred that night that should not have happened.

They had some time to think of it over the night, and they could have come back into the meeting at nine o'clock in the morning, and that would have been the end of the matter as far as the night was concerned, and everything would have been reconciled.

Or else he could have even taken a higher road I think and merely acknowledged that in the heat of battle, or the middle of the night—you know we all have our individual circumstances of how we feel on any particular day. Some days we have a lot of high days and some days we have low days. A mere apology, taken the high road, and an apology the next day, or even in subsequent days right up until yesterday morning, would have ended the need for this debate here we have today and yesterday, and the days to follow, and indeed in the committee, and all the time it takes up, the House time it takes up, to debate the matter.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it would appear unfortunately, and I say unfortunately for the Honourable Member for

Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), that somewhere along the line in the night he had his marching orders of what to do. In spite of the fact that he has an impartial position—and in all respect for the Member, who I have already said I have known for some years. It is obvious that he had marching orders and he stuck with them. As far as Party solidarity, I guess we have to respect him for that much. It was a decision he had to make and he ought to live with it.

As I said before I have empathy for the Honourable Member that he was put into this position, an unfortunate position perhaps, and I think it is unfortunate that the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) has to take the brunt of the whole attack. It is very obvious that this was a team game, this was not an individual. I am a little disappointed, Mr. Acting Speaker—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gaudry): On a point of order, the Honourable Minister of Justice.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): When the Honourable Member refers to the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) being issued marching orders, I think it would be wise for the Honourable Member for St. Vital (Mr. Rose) to be reminded that this is about the only place in this province, this Chamber is about the only place in this province, where the Honourable Member for St. Vital can be saved harmless from making slanderous remarks. He might want to remember that before he steps outside this Chamber and says some of the things he is saying today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gaudry): A dispute over the facts is not a point of order.

Mr. Rose: It is interesting that the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) comes up and he is getting in his position to start to feel that he is a lawyer and knows legal interpretation.

My observation of him is he knows absolutely nothing about the law, and that was clearly indicated earlier in debates when he and his colleague, the Minister of Autopac, kept saying that you will prejudice that case, you will prejudice that case. He does not know what prejudice is on a case. I had the permission of my person that I was talking about to do it. I only helped this case and he knows that. By their servant going to the newspaper and spilling all the biased details, that is prejudice. I have not seen the Attorney General or the Minister of Autopac do anything about that.

* (1440)

I do not know where there was anything slanderous or any remark—I said that the Member had marching papers. In fact I will correct that. I did not say he had marching papers, it appeared to me that was it. It was obvious, we saw the huddling, we saw the joking going

on, we saw the frivolous attitude of the Members. I do not want to name them right now, but if you want to get into details. I tried to take the high road, but if we do not want to take the high road, we can take it elsewhere, but I will try to keep it that way.

I would hope that the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) would rid himself of the amount of venom that he showed yesterday. I was a little surprised. I also have a lot of respect for the Minister of Justice in the past, but he lost his cool. He took a vicious attack at our Leader and other people and that was a personal nature, and I personally have been trying to keep away from that. So I would hope that he would keep his remarks.

I also want to correct a misconception, Mr. Acting Speaker, that seemed to be put on the record by the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer). I hope he was joking when he alluded to the fact that because we had a conference in Minnedosa that weekend that we maliciously gave the media some sort of a story. I think that when he makes those sort of remarks, I believe he does a disservice to all the media people in Manitoba, that they do not have a mind of their own, and that they would take a biased approach to something.

In that regard, Mr. Acting Speaker, I think he has impugned and discredited the integrity of that Minnedosa Tribune, alludes to the fact that it was fed by our Party. I said yesterday, and I stand very firmly again, that indeed it might well have been in practice if the quotes in the paper are such that he did talk to Members of our caucus or one Member of our caucus. Indeed he only talked to the reporter, Darryl Kalichak, to only one person in our caucus, whereas there are two NDP Members that are—no, I am sorry, I will correct that—there were two Liberals and two NDP in the article. It also mentioned comments from the Clerk of the Legislature, and so any allegations that he made were certainly without foundation.

I would like him also to provide proof of his later remarks, that indeed when the facts unfolded that the Minnedosa paper printed a retraction and said that the Opposition was only playing politics. I might have missed some edition of that paper. I usually read it every week pretty thoroughly, but I do not recall nor can I research any such retraction, but I do, and Mr. Acting Speaker, may I also say in that regard that if some of our Members did go with a story to the media, is that not a right of Members of the Legislature?

The facts printed in there coincide exactly with the ruling of the Speaker yesterday. They have remarks of a very impartial person, the Clerk of this Legislature. I would not see anything wrong if a Member did approach the media, because if we gave them a biased story we would expect them to sort out the facts and govern themselves accordingly like they always do. I think that is rather hypocritical, Mr. Acting Speaker, that we would be accused of such a thing when it was not even true, because the article is in no way biased; it is very factual and reports the news. That is what the newspapers are there for.

I do notice in researching the article that the Honourable Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer)

has a regular column in the newspaper to advise his constituents. I give him credit for that, that is something that we like to do too. If that is not feeding the media information, I do not know what is. A nice picture of the Honourable Member for Minnedosa and the funding approved for Minnedosa Hospital, great stuff, great political stuff. I guess all politicians have done it. It reads as though it came out of the Honourable Member's pocket which he knows he is only recycling taxpayers' money out to Minnedosa.

As a matter of fact, the Member for Minnedosa knows indeed, better than I do, just how popular that hospital is in Minnedosa. He is fully aware of the talk in Minnedosa, and he knows of the popularity of the new facilities. Certainly, if he would indicate to the Minnedosa Tribune that he was responsible for the funding, which I am not alluding he did, but if he did in this article that would be misleading for the people of Minnedosa and indeed the people of Manitoba.

I am just wondering when we are on the item of the newspaper what they will say now that we have a ruling by the Speaker and that it indicates that our point all along was true. When this ruling by the Speaker does go in the paper, will the Member for Minnedosa again say, well, that was just politicking, that is part of the game. It will be interesting to see what his comments to the local media are in that regard.

Mr. Acting Speaker, in his address the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) sort of indicated—and I may have the remarks a little bit wrong, and if so I stand corrected, but I was listening to him on intercom, and he indicated there was a bit of raucous attitude at the beginning of the meeting. On balance, and the record shows that this was on both sides or all sides, it started out a little stormy, and the reason that it turned out a little stormy was the Government had been withholding a report that they said was not available and that they said was confidential.

All of a sudden, just minutes before the meeting, it turned up in our hands, the two Members of the Opposition, and when this was disclosed their explanation of same was anything but satisfactory. It is amazing that they kept saying they could not get the report, and yet Michael Anderson from the Indian bands got it by a very simple call to Washington.

In other words, it was available to 250 million Americans and in fact North Americans. In fact the whole world was available when it is in Washington, and yet it was not available to the Members of the committee and the Legislature in Manitoba. Now that is just a deplorable situation, but this was a fact. This is why things got a little bit out of hand, and you can see where they were.

Consequently, as a matter of fact, it turned out that the Government knew, they knew in their negotiations that it had to be filed with the Securities Commission. They did not think there was anything wrong at that time. They did not question it, and therefore they knew it would become a public document and it would be released in Washington. Yet that Minister in his comments blamed Repap, his partner in this deal, for breaking a disclosure clause, a thing that they quite obviously did not do.

In my judgment, Mr. Acting Speaker, there is no validity for its confidentiality at all, that document. It turned out to be such, and we do not know what the Government was so afraid of discussing openly, so they showed right from the beginning, even before the meeting, that they were not interested in discussing the attitudes or the information contained in the divestiture document, the agreement with the Repap organization.

Indeed, Mr. Acting Speaker, this Government should have encouraged the broad public scrutiny of the document and the deal to assess the economic and also very importantly the ecological aspects of the deal. At that point, I know that the Free Press' Val Werier said at that portion of the meeting, and he described it somewhat like the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), that the meeting became more or less of a fiasco. I think those were the comments that they made. It was interesting that during that part of the debate the Minister of Finance pointed out, and it is quoted right in the Free Press, he says: Manness lost his temper and shouted, I do not give a damn if it is my signature. I have not seen any retractions of that in the Free Press, and certainly I witnessed same.

We have to assume that there was a disturbance on both sides of the Chamber. We have already acknowledged that there was on both sides. The Minister of Finance seems to be holier than thou, that he was sitting there like Little Lord Fautleroy, not doing anything. Yet at the same time he had lost his temper and shouted: I do not give a damn if it is my signature. Probably nobody else gave a damn if it was his signature either. But then the committee, in my judgment, did settle down to some serious business of finding out what was contained in this, I think it was a 200-page document that we were given a very short time to examine.

I felt that the committee was going along rather well at that point. There were some procedural disputes and arguments which were cleared up by the Chairman or by agreement. There were a lot of questions that we asked. In retrospect, questions that were extremely serious, important for the people of Manitoba and some of them, we had staff there, they were very informed, we got informed answers and we were happy with some of them.

Some of the questions were certainly lacking in their content. Obviously the Government was not even fully aware of what was in the document, and certainly did not have the background information about it. They cared so little that they failed to bring the president of Repap to the meeting. We questioned them about that. Where was the president? They said, oh well, he was just nothing in this thing, we just paid him \$100,000 to be a sort of a figurehead. We know that the president at that time was a good pick by the Tory Government, was a good pick to head up Repap.

An Honourable Member: He was the president of Manfor, not Repap.

Mr. Rose: I am sorry, I correct that. He was the president of Manfor. I appreciate that, thank you for that

correction. He was brought for the divestiture and of course at the last moment. Of course he did not, according to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) he had nothing to do with the divestiture. As a matter of fact, the word out on the street, the reliable word out on the street was that he was no longer the president of Repap. Now either the Government—

An Honourable Member: Manfor.

* (1450)

Mr. Rose: I correct that again, Manfor. Pardon me, Mr. Acting Speaker. The Government that night denied, in fact they just out and out according to the record said, they were not sure of the status of Mr. Paul Demare. Therefore, when we asked questions in regard to his area, we were told that we should have asked those questions earlier, whereas Mr. Demare never was at any previous meetings either. There were lots of unanswered questions that we wanted to ask the then president of Manfor.- (interjection)- I got three times lucky there.

Other questions which myself and Members of the committee, both in the Liberals and the NDP—I think they had some very pertinent and important questions to ask. They asked, for instance, why we were exporting pulp and subsequently losing the paper-making jobs. As a result now in Manitoba even we buy some of our kraft paper from the U.S. Was that taken into consideration?

Why did we give up those—we try in this country to get manufacturing jobs, and here we do the basic wholesale type of jobs, the resource jobs, and we do not get down to the making of the paper. We wanted to know what the rationale was at. It might have been good. It might have been bad. You have to make a decision on some of those things, but we wanted to know the rationale behind it and have our input and at least the knowledge to explain to people.

We wanted to know—and I see that mentioned two or three times in the record—why there were no specific job guarantees in place for Northerners. This is a very important issue for our Natives and our northern people. We also wanted to know, in relation to that, what training programs were in place for those Northerners, particularly in view of the fact of the Government's callous attitude towards the Jobs Fund.

We realize that the Jobs Fund was a bit of a fiasco, but that did not mean all of it where the NTEA portion of it, which was previously the Limestone Training and Education Program, was very important and acknowledged over Canada, a very, very good program.

We were wondering, in light of that, did the Government any longer give a darn about northern training and northern jobs. Perhaps they did, but they were not prepared to come back with any specific plans that were agreed to with the Repap people to ensure a preference for our northern people and our Natives as employees of the new company that took over Repap.

We wanted to know the important things of the financial arrangements that were with Hydro to supply

power. What was the deal? It was a multiyear deal, and it seemed to be very fuzzy that they had some deals tied to new deals. Did this mean they may have rate reductions in future? To that it still remains fuzzy, Mr. Acting Speaker. We do not have any answers to that even to this day.

We wanted to know—and it was not available that night, would you believe at the very last stroke it was not available to the Government, and the record clearly shows that—who the directors of Repap were and what the share structure was.

You will read the record and you will see, Mr. Acting Speaker, that the Government, at that point—and they were to sign it the next day or certainly within 48 hours—did not know exactly who they were going to sign the deal with and what their share structure was, but they would assure us that before it was signed that would all be tickety-boo. We have still never had that assurance. We still do not know really who we signed the deal with. It is still up in the air.

Those are the things that we agreed that we would stay all night to get the answers to if necessary, because I think those were questions, and the answers to them were important to all the people of Manitoba.

Certainly, a lot of our questioning was along the line of the protection of the environment. We wanted to know that. That in itself could have taken a full meeting. That could have taken four or five or six hours, but we knew the deadline was coming. We were trying to keep things moving as fast as possible, but we did not get satisfactory answers on the environment. In fact, we virtually got no answers on what was being done to protect the environment for this very massive program in Manitoba.- (interjection)-

Pardon me -(interjection)- Mr. Acting Speaker, he says you should have gone to the hearings; the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) said you should have gone to the hearings. Is that what you said? -(interjection)-

Well, I was at the hearings. I did get the minutes, and I did study them. I was not at all the hearings, but I was there present at a couple. If the question was directed to me, Mr. Acting Speaker, these are legitimate. You could see, anybody in this House could see that these are legitimate questions, and as representatives of the people, we deserved explanations and we deserved answers to these questions.

An important question we asked, and some time a few days later it came out in an article in the Free Press. I am surprised that they had the same thoughts as I had. Keeping Data from Public Shows Up in Repap Fiasco was written by Val Werier on the 13th of May. He says in the first paragraph, one salient fact that has not emerged in the sale of Manfor, the provincially owned forest industry, is that it made a turnabout and was operating at a profit.

Well, if you read the questions that I asked in regard to that, and you read the answers, then if you were able now to get an audited statement or an unaudited statement from Manfor, you would clearly see how far the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) was off base. Why we continued on that and spent more time than

we should is because we had the information ahead of time, and we wanted to see if we could get the Minister of Finance to come even close to our figures.

We know, and it has been acknowledged now by an authoritative person in this same article, from Manfor, that they were making a million dollars a month. That is the question we asked. It is on the record: we hear that they are making a million dollars a month, is that true? The Minister of Finance responded that he forecasted they were going to lose \$25 million in 1989. We would certainly be interested at this time, and we were promised a report shortly of just how accurate the \$25 million was. Then he said something of the nature of, you know, when we are talking a hundred million, what is another million dollars here or there. It sounds like a remark that we have heard from a Minister across the way previously in dealing with—across the way there.

We wanted to know in regard to that where these considerations—and we even complimented the Government. We gave the Government credit and said you hired the right president, you did the right thing, you turned Manfor around. That is admirable, we appreciate that the Government did that, that is what the taxpayers of Manitoba expected but the thing is, they had a very low starting point because the socialists had had their hands on it for so long that it was just a shemuzzle. We will give them credit that they did an extremely better job than the socialists did on it for years and years and years.

We gave that credit right at the meeting. For instance—and we will give them credit again—the board feet of lumber went up from 270,000 to 360,000 per day. That is good work. The paper mill went up from 360 to 400 tonnes per day. That is good work. Even you acknowledge that, Harry. This is coming from a knowledgeable, authoritative person from the Manfor operation to the Free Press.

He said, and he quotes in the paper it was a good, viable operation, they did this with no increase in staff. They said they could not keep up with the demand. They said they had the best craft in North America. Now Manitoba has none, they just have pulp. They said they have this because they have excellent equipment and high quality wood fibre. He went on to say that this profitability was no flash in the pan. It was going to be on an ongoing basis because it was a good, viable operation.

Listen, I commend my neighbour, Paul Demare, who is the president. I think he should be given a lot of credit for that, and the Tory Government, too, given some credit, because they are the ones who chose him, even though he was a Tory supporter. That is maybe one case where patronage worked out pretty good. We acknowledge that, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Then when he said it was no flash in the pan, he had some concern, this authoritative person, that here we are taking a large operation in Manitoba that was environmentally friendly to one compared with Repap, which is obviously under their process of making bleached kraft, much more harmful to the environment. In that regard, there was a lot of concern on our part

that when they mentioned and we knew that this was not environmentally friendly, we wanted to have answers as to what was going to happen in the operation, both of the chemicals coming in, and the chemicals on site and the chemicals going out of there. Yes, Mr. Acting Speaker, we did ask these questions and many, many more, but we did not get satisfactory answers to most of them.

* (1500)

I am wondering with the advanced time that the Government knew about the divestiture, I am flabbergasted that the Minister did not know this, and that indeed we have to read it in the Free Press later on. Facts we could not get out of the Government, we got from the Free Press. Facts we could not get out of the Government, we got from Washington. I think this is a disgraceful way to treat the people not only in the Legislature, but also the people of Manitoba because this was no small deal, Mr. Acting Speaker. It is a big deal. It involved over 40,000 acres of our standing timber, and I think, environmentally and economically, a very important matter to the people of Manitoba.

Mr. Acting Speaker, unlike the Honourable Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns), I do not have a longstanding time in public life, and I respect his knowledge and history of these places. I do have a few years of experience, and those people with more experience than I could tell that indeed I got my facts wrong. I did sit on school boards, I sat on a city council, and now I have sat in the Legislature. I have never seen such a show as this. As a matter of fact, I think the Speaker described it earlier, not this time, but when he first came on, that this was probably a precedent in all of Canada.

I am sure the veterans in this House and elsewhere, and ex-members, can tell me if that is right, that it is without precedent in Canada, probably in the Commonwealth. It is certainly unprecedented that I ever sat in a committee meeting, no matter where I sat, as a trustee or at City Hall that somebody would walk out. I have seen members walk out, tired in the middle of the night, but there was an obligation once you got down to the quorum figures, Mr. Acting Speaker, to stay there.

In this particular case, I want to put it on the record—Mr. Acting Speaker, I would ask you how much time I have left, please? Half hour? Okay, thank you very much. I think that -(interjection)- Do you want to speak on this?

I think that the Tories really—whatever reason it may be, there may be something that is hidden. That night I sensed they thought that they were above the law, above the Legislature, and they shattered that night their election promises. Of course, it would not be the first time they broke election promises and shattered them indeed, but they broke their promise of open Government and good management.

Indeed, they railroaded, stampeded and trampled the rights of this Legislature. The Members of that committee, they insulted them, the other Members, and

indeed in doing that they put that to all the people of Manitoba.

Now in a previous meeting they had tried to do the same thing, but as the Honourable Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) points out, they did not get away with it because they were not in the majority. What a travesty, Mr. Acting Speaker, this would have been to the people of Manitoba had there been a majority of Tories on the committee or in the Government.

It is very, very scary indeed, and it shows why the people of Manitoba will now stand up and acknowledge what has happened here, acknowledge that they do not trust the Tories and they will never again give them a majority Government because they know how dangerous they are with a minority Government. What they would be with a majority is just unthinkable.

So that gives me some satisfaction to know that in the next few years we will not see a majority Tory Government, because the people will remember this. They remember their other acts of arrogance, and they are certainly going to continue to remember this one.

As a matter of fact, in his own antics after the meeting the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) called it a theatre of the absurd. Well certainly it was a theatre of the absurd, and you know who the players were. The people of Manitoba will remember this, and they will remember what would have happened if they had given the Tories a majority Government and what a disaster it would have been for the province.

I had alluded earlier, Mr. Acting Speaker, to the Minister of Finance saying, you know, what is another million dollars here or there when you are talking about a hundred million dollar divestiture? That was the cavalier sort of approach that was made. We have heard that sort of approach before by the Tories, but that was said that night. I say to you that if a million dollars does not—(interjection)—all of a sudden the Government wants to talk. The Minister, who used to be the Minister in charge of Seniors, is chirping from his chair about something, and I hope he gets up and speaks after me because it is a long time since we have heard any common sense from him. If he wants to put something on the record, there will certainly be time available for him.

I say to you, Mr. Acting Speaker, that if we were not really worried about a million dollars or so here and there, why were we worried about an hour or so here and there, because twice during the evening, and the record clearly shows it, the Minister of Finance said he was prepared, in reply to a question from the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan), who said, we are probably going to have to go through this report all through the night. The reply from the Minister of Finance was, well, so be it, we will. Just a few minutes later, when it was brought up that the meeting would go on, he said, we made a commitment to the people of Manitoba to fully disclose this deal. We never break our promise. We always live up to our commitments, and we will sit through the evening. That is not the exact quote, but if you want that, we can dig it out too.

That was in essence what the Minister said. A short while later the marching orders were given, and boom,

the place was empty, with no explanation. Now, Mr. Acting Speaker, you would have thought that they themselves wanted to have full disclosure for the public, because now the burden is on the Government, 100 percent.

If this deal goes sour, and I hope it does not, I hope it turns out well for the people of Manitoba. You will recall we were for this divestiture, our Party, under the right conditions. We wanted to know what those conditions were. They were never given to us. Otherwise, because they have not given the people of Manitoba and this Legislature full disclosure, they will not be able to come back and say, well, you knew all the facts, you could have helped us correct them beforehand, and you did not do it. The burden now, Mr. Acting Speaker, is on the Government's shoulders, to make sure that the environment and the economics of this deal and all the other aspects of it are proper and kept in perspective.

I want to say, Mr. Acting Speaker, that I appreciate the opportunity to put some of my thoughts on record about not only the Repap-Manfor deal, but some of the events that unfortunately took part that night when the Government trampled on the rights of Manitobans. They set a precedent in Canada and in the Commonwealth with their arrogant attitude. If there is one thing that the Tories are tagged with in this province, it is the word "arrogant," arrogant and lack of respect for people and it is unfortunate. It is unfortunate really that the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) was in the Chair at that time when the marching orders came forward. I take no pleasure from that from a personal standpoint, but it is unfortunate and he has to live with it.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to say that last year in April the people of St. Vital, my constituency, elected me to represent them in provincial affairs and protect their interests. That I was trying to do on that night in the wee hours of May 2.

* (1510)

The Honourable Member for Minnedosa, by breaking the quorum, denied not only my rights, but also as well the citizens of St. Vital. Therefore, I fully recommend a full hearing of this in the Committee of Privileges and Elections, because this Member, to this late date, has not done the honourable thing. The simple thing for him to do is acknowledge the mistake and apologize to the Legislature why he breached his position of confidence and trust in this body. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Gilles Roch (Springfield): Mr. Acting Speaker, we have before us here a very serious matter. We have a situation where the Government had absolutely no respect for the democratic process. We have a situation—well the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz) seems to disagree, but I have to point out to him that given the situation in this House the electorate, in their wisdom, elected a minority Government. That is reflected in all committees. The facts are that night they could have been on any committee, it happened to be the committee studying the Repap deal.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it is customary that when a committee is hearing the Minister is there to answer questions. So no matter whether it is convenient for the Minister or not, whether he feels like it or not or what the time of the day is the fact is the committee had decided that they wanted to go as long as they wanted to get the information they required. Under the guise of negotiations, in my opinion, the Minister was just refusing to provide Members with the information they required.

The unfortunate part, the bottom line to all this is that if Government Members, many of them Members of the Executive Council, walked out, showed a total lack of respect for the democratic process and parliamentary procedure and indeed of Members right to know that was bad enough, but there was still a quorum. Then, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister who is indeed responsible to answer the questions walked out showing his total and utter contempt to the rights and privileges of Members in this House and indeed decisions of all of Manitoba. Notwithstanding that the Chairman of the Committee walked out, which puts into question his impartiality.

I think that is the issue here. Although people are elected in various ridings under various Party banners the fact still remains that once one assumes the Chair, whether it be of the Legislature, whether it be of a committee, he has to apply the rules impartially to all Members there.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I would submit that the Chairman by walking out of the committee that night, after a motion to adjourn had been defeated, showed partiality towards his Conservative Caucus colleagues. Now, outside the committee he has every right to be partisan, outside of chairing that committee he has every right to support and be partial toward his colleagues. But when one is chairing a committee, Mr. Acting Speaker, one must not do that, one must have respect for the rules of order, one must have respect for the privileges of all Members.

Mr. Acting Speaker, one cannot let his own personal bias get in the way of his responsibility. We would have a very dangerous precedent if this motion were not carried, I am referring to the motion which is before us right now. Although we are in a minority situation, it appears that this Government is showing its arrogance by having walked out of that committee. We see it daily in Question Period.

I believe that no matter how many Members a Government has, it should always respect the rights of other Members, Opposition Members and indeed their own Members. The Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) has demonstrated recently that he does not have too much respect for the rights of the Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz), but that is another internal situation that they have between themselves.

An Honourable Member: It is not as bad as the one you had with your constituents when they elected you as a Conservative.

Mr. Roch: Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, the Member for Emerson talks about my election. I had two millstones

around my neck when I ran in 1986 and 1988; one was Gary Filmon, one was Brian Mulroney. I can say I never rode my Leader's coattails here, that is for sure; I got here despite not because of. Two-thirds of the Members of the Government Party felt the same way I did. The Member for Emerson is being very cocky in his seat there, because he has taken the Steinbach seat away from the Member for La Verendrye. He would be surprised at how many people out there are going to be seeking the Liberal nomination, how many people out there are donating money to the Liberal Party.

So he better build those highways quickly. He can leave the road between Lorette and Ile des Chenes in worse condition than municipal roads. It has been like this for several years now and he is doing so intentionally, just to show again arrogance, showing contempt for Opposition Members. He is upset because this Government was breaking all of its election promises, including at the time, although they had done a complete flip-flop on the Meech Lake issue, at the time when I had said in public meetings, that I was not going to support the Meech Lake Accord, I was not going to, he is upset, they are upset that I crossed over because of that, and therefore they have said, although not on the public record, that Springfield will get nothing.

It happened under the NDP administration after I defeated one of their Ministers, and it is happening now under this Government, because I was refusing to be under their thumb like the Minister for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) is of the First Minister.

An Honourable Member: Playing politics with public money.

Mr. Roch: That is right, as the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) said, he is playing politics with public money.

An Honourable Member: We cannot wait to see whether they will vote for you or not.

Mr. Roch: Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, that decision is in their court. Several Members on this side, including myself, have challenged this Government to go to the people.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Member for Emerson says, they love me out there. Well, I hope he is right, but I am willing to respect the decision of the electorate when it comes. As a matter of fact, we do not have a choice. When they make a decision we have to live with it, and that includes the Minister for Emerson, too, the Minister irresponsible for Highways and Transportation.

An Honourable Member: Talk about contempt.

Mr. Roch: Mr. Acting Speaker, to get back, the Member for Gladstone (Mrs. Oleson) talks about contempt. There is a person who has shown complete disrespect and disregard for the people who are involved in the whole child care issue, day care issue.- (interjection)- Mr. Acting Speaker, the Member for Emerson (Albert Driedger) says I should be called back to order. The

whole issue here is contempt for the rights and privileges of Members of this House. These Ministers just have absolutely no concept of what respect is. Dr. Death, the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard), has showed that daily in this Question Period. It is just unimaginable what it could be like if there was a majority in this Government. They are acting completely opposite in the way they talk and act now than they did when they were in Opposition.

I could not believe when we were having the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs meeting, that the Minister responsible for Rural Development, the Member for Rhineland (Mr. Penner), how he had become so manipulated by the bureaucrats with his department that he has lost touch with reality.

* (1520)

Here we have a Government and a Cabinet dominated by farmers, and yet farmers were coming to the Liberal Opposition to air their concerns. Unfortunately, because of the constitutional reasons, we were unable to present certain exemptions to help out those people. Mr. Acting Speaker, this was just one example of the contempt that this Government shows.

I think this is what that early morning of May 2 - (interjection)- The Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz) says, was I at the meeting? Were you? - (interjection)- Well, I was not. That is why we have committees, Mr. Acting Speaker. Obviously here are the people in charge of the province, the Government, and they do not know why we have committees. Yes, well, were you at the meeting?—as if to say there they are showing contempt and arrogance again, as if to say, because I was not at the meeting that I should not even be talking about it.

The fact is, we have committees to be able to delegate some of the work that has to be done. Like the recent Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs that dealt with Bill No. 79. It would be ludicrous if all 57 Members sat on every committee, then there would be no need for committees.

As a matter of fact, it is my humble opinion that possibly the Estimates process could go to a little bit of a smaller committee version to expedite matters, but that is a whole other issue to be decided by a whole different committee. The committee studying the Manfor Report was going to report back to the House, should have reported back to the House in a proper fashion.

This was not possible, was rendered practically impossible although theoretically possible, with the walkout of the the Minister responsible for the Repap deal and the walkout of the Chairman of the committee. I think this is, by the various examples I used a while ago, I think this whole situation highlights and symbolizes the arrogance that has grown into this Government.- (interjection)-

The Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) wants to have the -(interjection)- who walked first, he says. The Member for Emerson seems to think that it is improper for Members, while willing to work all night, willing to work all night, and the Members of the

Opposition were willing if necessary to work all night, and in so doing, in preparing themselves in whatever fashion necessary, people have to eat. There is nothing wrong with that. If you have to work all night you need energy.

Members opposite, Members of the Government obviously had no intention of respecting that. They were hoping to just go through the formalities of having the committee hearing and coming back to the House and getting it through. I do not think that is proper in a majority situation, but at least they would have had the numbers to carry the adjournment motion.

The fact remains they did not have the numbers. They just disrespected the decision of the committee Members, so we cannot have it our way the heck with you guys we are walking out. It was totally improper. I think that in retrospect every Member probably realizes that they have made a mistake, they should not have it. At least the Chairman should have remained there and the committee could have kept on, but that is not what happened.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it seems to me that they have to be held accountable. I think the sooner this matter gets before the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections the sooner the matter can be dealt with and the sooner we can have a precedent here in Manitoba for such situations that they may never occur again. It is very, very important for the democratic process. This is why our system evolved the way it is, to provide checks and balances in this system.

It may be inconvenient at times for Members of the Government. It may make things awkward, but the system works. Churchill once said, democracy is one of the worst forms of Government except there is none better. He is absolutely correct, there is none better. Part of that system is having respect for individual Members. Part of that system is Members having respect for the Chair. If the Chair acts in a contemptible and partial way you cannot have respect for the Chair—

An Honourable Member: How often have you burned the Speaker?

Mr. Roch: The Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) says, how many times have we burned the Speaker. I would suggest not once. We still have the same Speaker in this House as we did in July of '88—

An Honourable Member: And a fine Speaker he is, too.

An Honourable Member: When the Speaker makes a ruling and you vote against him that is not burning the Speaker?

Mr. Roch: Mr. Acting Speaker, again the Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) demonstrates his lack of respect and contempt for the Members. He is saying that because Members do not agree with the ruling of the Speaker they should not have the right to reverse that.

The Members of this House, in their collective wisdom, elect a certain person as a Speaker. That does not

mean you will always agree with his rulings, and if you so disagree you challenge that ruling, which is the right of each and every Member as you can challenge the ruling of a Chair in committee. If that motion is carried, the Speaker's Ruling has been overturned and you go accordingly to the wishes of Members.

Again, that rule is there to prevent one person from becoming autocratic. We have to have those checks and balances. By and large you respect the Speaker's Rulings, by and large you do, but there are certain times when it cannot be done. Therefore, there is nothing wrong, nothing out of order, in overturning a Speaker's Ruling.

What the Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) does not see is it does not point out to—and I wish that maybe he would want to get up and speak after this and talk about the situation, because what happened that night was a motion was made by a Government Member, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) himself I believe, because he did not want to keep on being scrutinized by the committee Members. He wanted to keep information from Manitobans through their duly elected Members. The motion was defeated. The majority of Members on the committee said, no, even though it is 2 in the morning we wish to keep on.

It is not unusual in this Legislature. I have chaired a committee one time which sat until approximately 4:30 in the morning. That was in a majority Government situation. Did that Chairman respect the vote? No. Did the Minister respect the vote? No. Did the Government Members respect the vote? No. They all walked out in contempt for and with complete disregard for democracy.

By refusing to respect the decision of the Members on that committee, a majority decision, they have in fact said, we hold the people of this province in contempt in this respect thereof too, because it was on behalf, whatever information Members get at committee is on the record, becomes public, the media if they so desire may publish it. They did not want the information to get out. Why? That is what I would like to know. Why? If there is nothing to hide, then put it on the table. If you have something to hide, well then why are you hiding it?

It may be more difficult to negotiate at times when you are a Crown agency. The very nature of the fact that an agency is owned by the people tells me that the people should have the right to know what kind of deal is being negotiated. A private company, it is a different matter; they have a certain advantage. But Crown corporations have to be able to be accountable to the people.

* (1530)

It is ludicrous that people of Manitoba have to rely on the United States of America to provide information which is being dealt with here in our province. We have Members in this Legislature who sometimes hold the Americans in contempt, but by and large they have a far more open system of information for their citizens than we do. We may not agree with everything they

do, but at least if we want to know what they are doing, we can get it from them. As a matter of fact, if you want to know what our Governments are doing here, we can get it from them.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it becomes increasingly important to have accountability in this Legislature, in this Government, in this province. Mr. Acting Speaker, it is my utmost belief the sooner this matter is dealt with, the better it will be. I would hope they realize what has happened, what they have done here.

I would hope that after this matter has been dealt with that not just this Government, but all future Governments, whether minority or majority, will respect the committee's right for information, will respect individual Members' rights for information, will respect indeed the result of a vote by committee Members. This motion that we have before us will make a decision which will be precedent-setting. As the Speaker said in his ruling the other day, there is no precedent in the Manitoba Legislature, but there are precedents elsewhere.

I think in retrospect that the, although they may not admit it, Government Members, including the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), probably agree privately to themselves that they have made a mistake. Probably deep down inside, without admitting it, they will be happy to get a, having said those words, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would hope.

I notice the Member for Minnedosa has been listening intently to most of the comments being made today, which shows that he is taking this seriously. I think he is regretting it, what he did that night, and probably he was prodded on by Members of the Executive Council. Probably that is the reason why. Mr. Acting Speaker, having said these words, I would hope that from now on this Government and all future Governments will respect the wishes of the Members of this House. Thank you.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Acting Speaker, we have before us a debate on one of the most significant aspects of our life as parliamentarians, and we are indeed parliamentarians. I think we should take a look historically at the word "parliament." Where does it come from and what does it mean? Well, it is originally of course a French-Norman word "parlement." It comes from the word "parler," to speak. That is what we do in this Assembly. We speak.

Historically, not always were these rights accorded. We take our history from the mother Parliament, Great Britain. The first attempt at any kind of discussion that we can find historically is at King Arthur's round table, where he deliberately, despite being the Monarch of the Land, put himself at a round table, somewhat similar to this round room, and said, I will speak as one of equals despite the fact that I have the power of being the national monarch.

And so began through public process, debate. That public process, that public participation, has evolved over the centuries, and many of the dates that I am

going to use today are familiar to each and every one of you in this room. We begin with Magna Charta in 1215. Perhaps the right that granted there, above and beyond rights, but the one most important was the Writ of Habeas Corpus, the right to know when you were taken into custody, why you were taken into custody, and then the right to a trial, the right to speak on your own behalf at that trial. That is what we are talking about, the freedom of speech.

And why was King John subjected to that? Well, if we look at our history, we know that Richard Coeur-de-lion, Richard the Lion Hearted, had been off in The Crusades and his brother had attempted to usurp more and more of his authority, but the aristocrats of the day said that is not a problem, because Richard will come home. Well unfortunately that did not happen, and so they made the decision that this monarch had to be told that there were certain unalienable rights that belonged to each individual citizen within Britain at that particular time. So the nobles met at Runnymede, and at Runnymede they presented the monarch with a document, a document which said, in that very first Charter of Rights that we have rights. One of those rights is to speak and to speak on our own behalf.

Well shortly after that Britain entered into a period of great prosperity under the Tudors, who first came to the Throne in 1497. Henry VII was the first, but certainly the monarch who received the greatest accolades was Elizabeth I who came to the Throne in 1558 and ruled until 1603. Good Queen Bess she was referred to. She is probably the most absolute of all absolute monarchs in Great Britain. The only limitation upon her authority was the limitation that was imposed on King John in 1215 under Magna Charta. But she did not abuse those rights. She seemed to understand, as many monarchs later did not, that there was a balance. There was always a strength that you could exercise, but you could only go so far.

When she died in 1603, the Tudor family died out with her, and they had to go to Scotland and bring in the Stuarts. Well the Stuarts very quickly got themselves into difficulty, because the Stuarts did not understand that fine distinction between an absolute monarch and an absolute monarch who understands that he or she can only go so far. The Stuarts denied the freedom of speech, and so it was a Stuart that was presented in 1628 with the Petition of Right, and the Petition of Right demanded more authority. The Petition of Right said very clearly, there must be more opportunities to speak. There must be more opportunities for dialogue. There must be more participation of the people.

When the Stuart family no longer governed and had control of the monarchy in Britain, it was because they had gone through a period of a Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell and the Stuart restoration, and they had to look outside of the immediate family.

In 1689, they actually went to Holland, and they brought forth to Britain a Stuart who had married into the Dutch monarchy. Before the British aristocracy, and we really are to a great degree talking about the rights of the aristocracy at this point in historical tradition, the rights of the aristocracy were to be further granted under the Bill of Rights, and so in order for this new

monarchy more powers were given to those that did not possess absolute power.

* (1540)

By 1832, a whole new evolution of powers had begun, because in 1832, in Britain, began the first reform Bill. The first reform Bill of 1832 has often been greeted as a major victory for the people. In fact that victory was still very limited. In 1832, all they did was to say that the upper-income earners could finally get the right to vote, that upper-income earners could finally go to Parliament and speak, and of course women were not allowed to participate in this exercise whatsoever. It took a number of those reform Acts in order for more and more to achieve the ability to speak.

We went through the Reform Act of 1867 and another in 1884. By the end of 1884, every male in Great Britain had the authority to speak in Parliament, but regrettably there was still the dynamic of a House of Commons and a House of Lords, and the House of Lords could override anything that the House of Commons said. That was not changed until 1911 in the Parliament Act.

Throughout all this period of time we saw the evolution of the rights of parliamentarians, the evolution of a Cabinet, the evolution of rules of procedure, the evolution of House Rules, the evolution of words like "privilege," the evolution of words like "contempt." There is no constitution in Britain. It is a series of Acts, but they have never been combined. They have never said exactly what the constitution of Great Britain should be, and so everything is determined on precedent. Precedent shows very clearly how significant are the privileges of those who are elected to offices such as all of us in this room hold.

Canadian historical tradition, which took and borrowed in its Parliamentary system from Great Britain, is somewhat different, but essentially it follows along parallel lines. When we signed the British North America Act in 1867, those of you who have studied that Act may be amazed that Parliament gets short shrift. There is very little mention of it. There is no mention of Cabinet. There is no mention of the way in which a House would function. There is no mention of words like "privilege." There is no mention of words like "respect" or "contempt." It is simply an acceptance that as the system evolved, these rights and privileges accrue to those individuals elected to serve in those offices.

We have gone through a very difficult period in Canadian history, and we are still going through it. The Meech Lake Accord, which was signed in June of 1987, was fraught with difficulties, and this Assembly has indicated, through its Task Force Report, its great difficulties. I think everyone who sat on the task force, no matter what our political affiliation, was struck over and over and over again by the number of individuals who spoke about process, who said: I want as a Canadian the right to speak; I want as a Canadian the right to determine my Constitution, and I am being denied that opportunity throughout this land because people will not let me speak; they will not allow me to exercise that most fundamental of all democratic powers.

In our Meech Lake Task Force Report, we spoke clearly about the necessity of process, the necessity to involve individuals, to involve Canadians, and to say in the clearest possible terms that a Constitution does not belong to 10 Premiers and one Prime Minister. The Constitution belongs to 25 million Canadians, and those 25 million Canadians must have the authority to speak clearly. If they cannot speak clearly in their own representative being, then through those duly elected representatives to the Legislature.

There are individuals in all Parties who have become known as great parliamentarians. I think about Stanley Knowles, who sits daily in the House of Commons in Ottawa at a table that has been given to him out of great honour and respect for his love of parliamentary tradition, and his great knowledge of that tradition, a man who has the utmost respect for parliamentary rights and privileges. Because everyone who served with him recognized those, they greet him and they want him sitting at that table each and every day that he is physically capable of so doing.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I first learned of my own parliamentary tradition when I was quite young. My father was already a Cabinet Minister when I was born, and when I was nine years old I changed schools. There were two ways of going home, one was a direct route from the convent to my house, the other was to use my bus ticket to go from the convent to the Legislative Assembly, stop at the Legislative Assembly, and catch a ride with my dad on the way home. I used to go into the Legislature in Province House, which is the oldest building representing Parliament in Canada because Nova Scotia was the first province to get responsible Government.

I used to sit there from about four o'clock in the afternoon until 5:30 when the House would rise, and I would listen to Estimates, debates and speeches and I got caught up in the tradition. In those days, they used to separate the galleries from lady's galleries to men's galleries. The lady's gallery was now in this House what we call the Speaker's Gallery, and because I was a young woman, although very young, I was escorted to the lady's gallery. In those days the Speaker used to wear striped trousers, a frock coat and a very tall hat. He would spot me up in the gallery, and I would get his silk hat doffed each day that I would attend.

Of course my father does what I have seen the Premier (Mr. Filmon) do often when you recognize someone up in the gallery, and he would wave to that particular individual. I began to understand the tradition, the rules and the regulations, and wonder sometimes why everyone obeys them. Why do they do this everyday? Why is the Mace brought in, in a certain way? Why is it placed in a certain way? Why is it on the table sometimes and why is it under the table at other times? Why does the Speaker sit in the chair sometimes and why do some other Members sometimes get up and go speak at that particular time and move into that chair?

I realized of course that part of the parliamentary tradition was that you had to have rules or order would not prevail, you had to have traditions in order for the heritage to be passed on from generation unto

generation, and that is why, Mr. Acting Speaker, we have the set of rules. That is why we have evolved the way we have.

We have a motion before this House, which is the most serious motion that can be placed before this Chamber. It is a motion, which must not be treated frivolously. It is a motion that must be examined with all of the historical tradition that is known to all of us. I first learned of this incident in the early hours of May 2, 1989, and I was struck by a conversation with the MLA for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) who would be the first to say I think did not clearly understand exactly what had happened. He questioned the process. He was concerned about the process, and so a whole series and chain of events commenced.

I think that when we deal with this issue, we must do so in the proudest traditions of parliamentary debate. We must do so because we are dealing with colleagues. We are dealing with individuals for whom we have great respect. We are dealing with Members of the Legislative Assembly, duly elected by the voters of their individual constituencies. We do it, Mr. Acting Speaker, because we know that it is important, not for the 57 people gathered in this room, but for the whole historical evolution of Parliament, for the freedom of speech, for the right to parley, the right to speak, the right to stand up each and every day and defend the individuals within our society who cannot be here, who cannot speak themselves. I urge everyone to do this with the greatest possible dignity that we can bring to the parliamentary tradition

* (1550)

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): Mr. Acting Speaker, I rise to speak in this debate today after many years in this Chamber, not as many as some, but more than most, because it is a circumstance that in my history in this Chamber is so unusual that it provokes one to speak about the very basic tenets and principles upon which this Chamber operates.

I thank the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) for her comments and the historical context in which she placed this entire debate. I do so because I think there are times when we must truly reflect not upon only the issue before us but upon the history that has brought us to be able to stand in this place and reflect upon issues such as this and many more important issues on a day-to-day basis, and the safeguards that have been built into the system through many different experiences, not all of them positive, that enable us to feel comfortable that when we are elected to be representatives of the people of this province we will indeed be able to represent the people in this Chamber. In order to be able to represent the people in this Chamber we must be able to speak, and that is what this entire event is all about. It is about the attempt of a Government to prevent Members of this Legislature from speaking, and I will go into that in more detail in my comments. I did not want to get into the actual events of the evening in question without having placed it in that proper context.

This is a fundamental matter. It is one which in a large way will shape future Parliaments not only in

Manitoba but across the country and in the Commonwealth. This debate is about several fundamental issues so vital to the democratic operations of the Legislature that we have a responsibility to stand in our place and to ensure that what happened on May 1 never happens again.

This debate is about a number of specific issues. The first, as I indicated, is the ability of legislators to question the Government on issues of concern to the electorate. We are voted into this position by people who expect of us and in fact demand of us the ability to find out from the Government, whether we are a Member of that Government or not, it is not just restricted to Opposition, it is not just applicable to Opposition, it is applicable to all Members of this Chamber, to find out about the issues of concern to them. This debate is about the role of the Opposition more specifically in making this Chamber work to the benefit of all Manitobans. Indeed this debate is about the contemptuous way two Members of this House abused their power and ran from their responsibility, as Members of the Government, to answer those questions to be responsible.

Finally—and I do not think we should just lay all the blame on those two individuals because they acted in concert with all of their colleagues, each and every one of them. While they may not be in direct contempt, as indicated by the Speaker of this House, they certainly are part of a conspiracy that resulted in Members of this House not being able to fulfill the role to which the people of this province have elected them to fulfill.

So the debate is also about the obvious and evident support that these two Members enjoyed from the entire Government in perpetuating and continuing that contempt. I tell you, Mr. Acting Speaker, having been involved in the committee meetings before May 1 and having been involved in that committee meeting, although I was not a Member of the committee I was present for most of the evening, and having been involved in the events of the days following, trying to get this process back on track so that we indeed could ask questions, I can tell you from all that experience that this matter could have been easily resolved had the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) lived up to his responsibility to call that committee back to order so that the questions could be asked.

It would have been done with an apology, and the apology would only have to be one of saying, look, it was late at night, we made a mistake, we were tired, let us get back to doing our job as legislators, and as Government and as Opposition Members and put this aside. It would have been accepted, not without some notice, not without some debate, not without some discussion, but it would have been accepted.

The Government House Leader did not do that. He dug in his heels, as he is so oft to do and said well, they cannot bully me around, they cannot push me around. I am going to make certain that we do not have that meeting, almost out of spite, if not out of spite, out of sheer incompetence and bungling. The fact is, we tried to get this process back on track, and I will go through that in my comments later on. The fact that there was no response from the Government

tells me that they were all in this together, that it is not just two Members that should be criticized for this action, but it is all Members of the Government.

Contempt is a very serious charge. It is probably the most serious offence against this House, because it is willful disobedience of the Rules of this House. Beyond that, it is disdain for all that for which we seek public office. When the Government walked out of that committee meeting, when they refused to call the committee back together in the days immediately following, they showed disdain and contempt. They thumbed their noses in a most arrogant, offensive and ill-considered way at that which we tried to do.— (interjection)— The Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) says yesterday, too. I will correct the Member for Fort Rouge. It is almost every day.

The point I want to make is that as significant as this specific issue, as contemptible as what they did that evening was, it is only part of a larger picture, and it does not stand onto itself alone. It is part of what has become a common practice of this Government. It is symptomatic of the way in which the Conservative Government of the Day in Manitoba operates. They are a disdainful Government.— (interjection)—

The Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) mentions the fact that they are in a minority situation, which makes it almost inconceivable why they would be so disdainful, why they would be so arrogant. It is not a posture befitting a minority Government. It is almost as if they decided that their fate is in the hands of others, and in order to ensure that they show no weakness whatsoever, they are going to continuously thumb their noses at those others and throw away the normal courtesies, the negotiations, the standard ways by which this House would normally operate in even a majority situation.

* (1600)

It is also about a Government that says one thing and does something entirely different. They say they are an open Government, they are not. They say they are a respectful Government, they are not. They do not handle their responsibility or the affairs of this House competently or efficiently, although they say they are a competent Government. Those are not assumptions, they are not just idle speculation on my part. Those are conclusions that any uninterested observer would come to if they were to follow the happenings of this House on a day-to-day basis and the actions of this Government since they have been elected in a meaningful way.

(Mr. Helmut Pankratz, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

This one separate incident is a microcosm of how the Conservative Government thinks about this House, how they operate on a day-to-day basis and what they believe in as a Government. It is a classic example of how they say one thing and they do exactly the opposite. You know they believe I think in their own minds that if they say they are an open Government long enough that by the mere repetition of the statement that they are an open Government that in fact they will be perceived by others to be an open Government. They

believe if they say they are an open Government, notwithstanding all the facts that point to the contrary, and they repeat it often and often enough that the general public will come to believe the rhetoric instead of believe the reality. The rhetoric they say is that they are open; the reality, as we see it and others see it, is that they are not. There is only one difference between this incident and so many others where they say one thing and do the other, and that is this time they have been caught. That is the difference. They have been caught in a prima facie case of contempt of this House.

Let me elaborate a bit upon the rhetoric of being an open Government and the actual facts within the context of this entire affair, the affair being the sale or the divestiture of Manfor to Repap. This Government, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) particularly, says they are an open Government and then they refuse to attend committee meetings. Now I am not talking about May 1. No, I am talking right now about a committee meeting that happened far previous to May 1, but I think it has to be noted in discussing what happened on May 1 because it was in some ways an indicator of that which was to come.

I will read an article, just a short article, so I will read it all, from the Winnipeg Sun, Wednesday, March 22, 1989, previous to the May 1 meeting, and it is under the headline of "Minister mustered to meeting," and there is a picture underneath the headline of that Minister and the caption on that picture is: "Finance Minister Clayton Manness." The article says:

"Finance Minister Clayton Manness had to be ordered to appear before a Legislature committee yesterday morning." Let me reinforce what it said: "had to be ordered to appear" before that committee.

"The committee had been called to talk about Manfor, the recently-sold Government-owned forestry complex at The Pas.

"Jim Ernst, Minister responsible for Manfor, said he could not answer questions about the corporation's annual report, but only Manness, who negotiated it, could answer questions on the sale.

"But the finance minister was in a cabinet committee meeting and wouldn't be available until the next committee meeting Thursday (tomorrow), Ernst said.

"Opposition Members were furious and passed a motion demanding Manness appear.

"Legislature Clerk Binx Remnant strode down the hallways to the Cabinet room to deliver the summons.

"Manness appeared briefly, told Members he would have nothing to say until Thursday morning, and abruptly left.

'Thanks a lot. Come back when you have more time,' Liberal MLA Harold Taylor shouted at Manness as he walked out.

"Liberal Leader Sharon Carstairs said all three parties support the divestiture, 'But we have to find out if it's a good deal or not.'

"NDP House Leader Jay Cowan said the Government is afraid to answer questions."

Well, I said it on March 21, 22, I said it on May 1, I have said it many times since and I will say it again today. They were and they are afraid to answer questions. That is why on March 22, well before the May 1 meeting, we had to have what was another unprecedented action on the part of this Legislature through its committee, and that was to call the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) forward because he would not attend the meeting otherwise, and there were questions that needed to be answered. That is the first indication of the contempt that was to follow.

The second reason that I feel comfortable in saying that their rhetoric is false and hollow is that, while they say they are an open Government then refuse to attend committee meetings, they refuse to answer questions when they are present at committee meetings. They try all the parliamentary tricks at their disposal: they try baffle-gab, they try diversions, they try occupying the time of the committee with irrelevant matters, they try walking out, they try moving adjournment. What they are really trying to do in all those tricks though is to avoid having to answer questions. They are not an open Government.

Thirdly, when they are at committee meetings they refuse to provide information, and that is somewhat different than answering questions. One could understand being afraid of being caught up in the cut and thrust of question and answers in the committee meeting and being afraid of saying something they should not, being afraid of putting their foot in their mouth or being afraid of being caught up in inconsistency, but one should not be afraid to provide information that is provided to others.

We had to obtain this sale agreement through other sources. We asked the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) for it, we demanded it of the Minister of Finance, we wanted it from the Minister of Finance, and yet when we finally got hold of it, it was through other sources, even although it was available outside of this jurisdiction quite freely.

Finally, to confirm or to close the portion of the case with respect to them not being an open Government, finally they resort, after failing to adjourn a committee, to legally walk out, they illegally walked out of the committee, they inappropriately walked out of the committee. What open Government would say that it wants to provide information and then walk out on those who are asking the questions? What Government would say that it is open and then close the doors, only through showing contempt of this entire process in this Legislature? So the rhetoric indeed is hollow. They say they are a responsible Government. Again rhetoric, but how irresponsible can a Government act, how much more irresponsible can they be than to show contempt of Parliament?

The reason that this decision, this ruling by the Speaker, is so important is that it lays the groundwork in an area where never before has that sort of groundwork been required. What that tells me is that it was a difficult decision for the Speaker, but what it tells me as well is that it was an unprecedented action that no other Government had felt compelled to take for whatever reasons in the history of Parliament. No

other Government, no other Members have been brought forward on contempt of this sort.

They act so irresponsibly that we have to summon Ministers to meetings. Never before had that had to be done. Then they get charged with contempt, which is unprecedented, but beyond that, shameful. They say they are a competent Government, but they bungle from day to day as they wobble their way through this minority Government situation, unable to manage this House through the traditional methods of negotiations. They resort to walkouts, they do not call committees.

* (1610)

When was the Rules Committee last called, Mr. Acting Speaker? How many committees have outstanding reports before them because the House Leader (Mr. McCrae) cannot get the act of the Government, or his own act, together enough to get those committees in place? What are they afraid of, those committees being called, or is it that they are just plain incompetent, or is it that they are really contemptuous of the whole process, and do not believe that they should have to go through the normal process of this House, or all three and a combination thereof?

I tell you, Mr. Acting Speaker, from my own experience, not only as a House Leader in Government and a House Leader in Opposition, but having sat and watched this House unfold over the years, this House works best through negotiations. This House works best through a meaningful dialogue between the Opposition and the Government. That is something that has been sorely lacking from this Government, and I would suggest that had they tried to base their entire operation on negotiation, we would not have had this sort of a consequence confronting us today.

The fact is that it is symptomatic, not only of the contempt of the evening, but it is symptomatic of the way in which they cannot negotiate the work of this House in such a fashion so as to allow Government actions to be taken as they need be taken, while at the same time, allow the Opposition to play its traditional, useful and functional role in this Chamber.

The Government says they want to conduct the business of this House, and they want it to move smoothly. We hear a lot of that. You know what we hear lately, Mr. Acting Speaker, is the Government starts to talk more and more about the Opposition frustrating the business of this House so as I believe to lay the groundwork for an election when they get up the courage to call an election. You hear them start to talk about that more and more. They say, well, if you ask a question that is a little bit too long, you are frustrating the business of the House. You are taking too much time. If you speak on Bills, which is what we are elected to do, you are frustrating the business of the House because it takes too long. If you try to ask them legitimate questions in Estimates, you are frustrating the business of this House because you are taking up the valuable time of this House.

The fact is, Mr. Acting Speaker, nothing frustrates the business of this House more so than a Government that refuses to be held accountable through the

traditional practice of arranging the business of this House in a fashion so as to allow for significant, substantive and important input from all Members of this House.

They talk about making the House move smoothly, but they blockade the business of the House by refusing to attend meetings, refusing to answer questions, refusing to provide information and then when they cannot legitimately adjourn a committee, they stand on their feet and march out, so that no business can be done. Let me tell you, the business of this House will be done, and it will be done in spite of the recalcitrance of the Government. It will be done in spite of their attempts to blockade the business of this House. It will be done in spite of their attempts to frustrate the legitimate purposes and roles of Opposition Members. We will not allow them through walkouts, adjournments and stonewalling to stop us from doing our job in this Chamber.

Finally, they say one thing with respect to the business of this House, and they do entirely the opposite. I recall them positioning themselves, patting themselves on the back even as the great defenders of the traditions of this House, that they were the ones that understood the parliamentary system, and put the parliamentary system to work so as to defend the rights of Manitobans. The freedom fighters, they call themselves, the great protectors of the traditions of this House to be able to review the role of Government and what they do. The fact is that I know of no other Member of this House, no matter what political Party they may belong to, in the history of this House that has been charged with contempt in the way in which they have been charged in contempt of the traditions of this House.

I know of no other Minister that had to be mustered to a committee, that had to be called to a committee by a vote of the committee because he refused to attend the committee in the history of this House. I know of no other trampling over the traditions of this House in the history of this House, more so than what has happened under this Government. It is interesting that it was the same Minister that had to be called to the committee in the one instance and then walked out in contempt of the committee in the other instance.

You will note, Mr. Acting Speaker, that I focus most of my remarks on the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), because I believe he is the one that is most responsible.

I do want to address the role of the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gillshammer). I read through the comments from the Member for Minnedosa in his speech yesterday. I, quite frankly, harbour no ill feeling toward the Member for Minnedosa. I question not so much what happened on the evening of May 1, because I know precipitous decisions have been taken and can be corrected in the late night in this building.

I know that, after many hours of debate and particularly hectic debate and emotional debate, it is possible to make a decision that is wrong. Then you try to correct it as best you can. We say things we do not mean on occasion. We do things we should not do on occasion, but we try as best as possible to correct it as soon as possible thereafter.

(Mr. Edward Helwer, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

* (1620)

What bothers me is that, when the Member for Minnedosa had the opportunity to correct it the day following, and the day following, and the day following, he did not do so. That I find more difficult to accept. The only reason that I do not really focus all of the anger, and it is anger that I experienced at that time and experience today even just talking about it, at the Member for Minnedosa, is I believe that he was not calling the shots. I believe he was being a good team player, a good Member of a caucus, a good Member of the Government and that he was doing what was being told to him to do by Ministers, whether it is the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), or the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae), or the Premier (Mr. Filmon), or the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey).-(interjection)-

I do not know. I think they took advantage of his newness to this Chamber and these procedures. I think they used him in a way that was as contemptuous toward him as their initial action was contemptuous toward this House. I think he has a right to be angry. I think he has an obligation to be angry. I think he probably is angry about how he was treated in this affair.

I still want to call question on some of his comments, because he said yesterday that the reason that he left the committee and did not return was that—and I will quote him so as to not take this matter out of context—he said, and I quote him from his speech yesterday: the recessing of the committee was as a result of a procedural dilemma that the Chairman faced that evening. This was not done to frustrate the procedure, and I regret that Members opposite see my actions that evening as actions of contempt, and I regret that. I would like to zero in on the procedural dilemma that the Chairman faced that evening. A motion had been put regarding the time and place of the next meeting.

Then, skipping down through what he said, he said: I also ruled that motion out of order. Then he says: at that time my ruling was challenged, then this is a procedural dilemma and on the advice of the Clerk—I turned to the Clerk for advice—I can tell you that they were not sure what to do, that we were facing an unprecedented situation. He goes on and says: that is why I recessed the committee.

I went back to that committee meeting, in the Hansard of that committee meeting, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I do not see any ruling having been made. I ask the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) to correct me if I am wrong, but if he goes back to the transcript of May 1, he will find that he did not make a ruling. He will find that yes, indeed, there was a motion that did call for the committee to rise, and then you will see the Chairman saying, and I will just read the last part of it, let us make certain that we have it down accurately:

All those in favour? Those opposed? Committee rise. Some Honourable Members: Committee rise. Some Honourable Members: Continue. Mr. Chairman: All those in favour? Those opposed? The motion has been defeated. Some Honourable Members: Oh, Oh!

Mr. Ashton then talks about what had just transpired, and he said: "In keeping with that, Mr. Chairman, I would move that this committee recess until nine o'clock tomorrow morning and further that this committee demand that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) attend the committee meeting tomorrow to answer all questions asked by Members of this committee." You can see where we were still trying to get some answers at that point in time. As foolish as it may have been in hindsight, we did expect that the Government would be responsible at one point or another during this entire affair.

The Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) says, as Mr. Chairman: "I would remind the Honourable Member that the committee cannot set its own schedule, that it has to be done by the House Leader." The Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) said: "No no, we are not adjourning, Mr. Chairperson." Mr. Chairman said: "Excuse me, the committee rooms are also booked tomorrow for Meech Lake hearings. I would recognize Mr. Lamoureux." Mr. Lamoureux moved the motion of a recess. Mr. Angus said something. An Honourable Member: "And have an opportunity for the Minister and his staff to get back here." We are still trying to get the Minister and his staff to answer some questions. An Honourable Member: "We are recessed." Mr. Angus said: "What do you mean, we are recessed?"

I do not see the ruling, I do not see the ruling at all, and I would like the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) to reflect clearly on this, and I think this is why we need this meeting, and soon, a meeting of the Standing Committee of Privileges and Elections, because what he told us yesterday is not in keeping of what is part of the official transcript of what transpired that night, just another question of what really happened that evening. I think that is important to clear up. The fact is he goes on to say in his comments that he had some difficulty about what to do when a motion is made and the Chairman rules the motion out of order and then the ruling is challenged. He says, I have yet been told nor has anyone said how that should be resolved.

Well, the committee is in fact master of its own fate. The committee resolves that particular issue. If the House at a later date wants to resolve that issue, then it can. He uses as an example that he thought we had to come back into the House in order to resolve the matter, an incident that happened to him when another Minister did not want to attend a committee meeting and the committee called for the attendance. There was a ruling made, the committee asked for the overruling of the ruling, the ruling was overruled and we had to come back into the House.

Well, I will remind him that that took place not in the Standing Committee, such as the Standing Committee on Economic Development, which is an entity unto itself, still a creature of the House, but an entity unto itself, but that was in a Committee of the House where Estimates were being debated, and when we are in Committee of Supply, when we have a motion such as that, there has to be a meeting of the entire House.

Now I know that from my experience in this House and I know that the Clerk knows that from his

experience in this House and I know that would be the reasonable reaction to a question as to whether or not we need go into the House. Even if the Member had some questions regarding the process because of an earlier example, the difference between committees meeting in Estimates and a standing committee meeting would be very apparent and should be made very clear to him at that time.

Now the fact that it might not have been made clear to him at that time could lead one to agree that a recess was necessary, but by morning certainly that matter could have been resolved, and the next day that matter could be resolved, and we specifically asked for that Member to come back to attend his duties as Chairperson of that committee the next morning, and we asked thereafter on a number of occasions for that committee to be called. The House Leader would not call that committee, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) would not show up at that committee, none of the other Government Ministers would show up at that committee, and the Chairperson would not come back to that committee. The fact is, as the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor) says and I think it is a good line, it was the no-show Government.

So while I feel somewhat sorry for the position and the circumstances in which he found himself on the night of May 1, I am also somewhat seriously concerned about the fact that he did not attend that committee as a Chairperson when requested to do so after a lengthy period of time, after a period of time when any procedural difficulties could have been cleared up. It did not take until two or three weeks later for those simple procedural questions to be answered.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we found ourselves very frustrated at that time. We tried all sorts of ways to get that committee back in operation. We did so because we felt that there were serious questions that were unanswered because the Government walked out, because they were afraid to answer the questions that we felt that they had a responsibility to answer those questions.

So we wrote to the Clerk on May 3, and maybe that letter should be read into the record because I think it is an important indication of the frustration we felt just the day and two days following.

It is to the Clerk. "Dear Mr. Remnant, dated May 3, 1989. The undersigned Members of the Standing Committee on Economic Development are writing to inform and give official notice to you that the majority of the Members of the committee wish to hold a meeting at eight o'clock p.m. in Room 255 of the Legislative Building for the purpose of electing a new Chairperson to the committee, and to carry on with the committee review of those matters that were before the committee on May 1, 1989.

We are taking this action because we believe that the present Chairperson of the committee is obstructing the work of the committee by his refusal to Chair the committee. We also believe him to be in contempt of the Legislature by that obstruction of the work of the committee through his refusal to Chair the committee despite repeated requests by a majority of committee Members to do so.

We also believe Mr. Gilleshammer and other Progressive Conservative Members of the committee to be in violation of Rule 11, which states: "Every Member shall attend the service of the House, and of each committee thereof of which he is a Member, unless leave of absence has been given him by the House." It is extremely regrettable that Members of the Progressive Conservative Caucus are obstructing the business of the House by blatant and deliberate abuse of Rule 11.

The majority of the Members of the committee no longer have confidence in the present Chair, and wish to meet immediately to elect a Chair who has our confidence and carry on with our work as a committee.

The majority of the Members of the committee are directing you as an officer of the Legislative Assembly to carry out the wishes of the majority of the committee by attending Room 255 at eight o'clock p.m. this evening, and conducting the election of the new Chair so that we can carry on with our work.

We feel very strongly about this matter, and would consider any further delay in the sitting of this committee to be a very serious matter requiring a strong response.

We appreciate your co-operation in this matter. We are also addressing a copy of this letter to the Speaker of the House pursuant to it is his duty to give direction to you under Rule 93.(b)."

Mr. Acting Speaker, what we were saying at that time has been found to be true. I remember the frustration of trying to talk to anyone who would listen, staff and politicians alike, including the Speaker of this House to get that committee back in motion, and the fact that we could not get that committee back in motion. At the time we said it was contempt, and it has proven out to be contempt by the part of the Chairperson of the committee, and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), and indeed in our minds at that time, other Members of the committee and the entire Government as well.

* (1630)

The fact is that we were unsuccessful in those attempts, but I think a lesson should be learned from that, that usually the collective will and the collective knowledge of this body of politicians is an accurate reflection of circumstances that are involved with the operation of this House, and we look to those people who are in positions of authority to help us exercise the appropriate operation of this House. The fact is, had the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) called a committee meeting, the matter would have been resolved; had the Chair attended a committee meeting, the matter would have been resolved. I also think that, given the fact that they did not, there should have been another way to protect the rights of the Members of this House. We tried every way possible to do so, and failed at the time. As a result of that, what happened was this sale went ahead unquestioned to the extent that it should have been questioned.

Can I have some indication of how much time I have tonight?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): Five minutes.

Mr. Cowan: Thank you. I had quite a bit more to say on this issue, but I want to jump then to what I believe is the appropriate purpose of the review that is going to be conducted by the Standing Committee.—(interjection)— No, you have to give notice. I am sorry, as an aside to the House Leader, I could not be designated because one has to give notice, although if one wants to give leave, I would be prepared to speak on.

I do want to get these comments in previous to the end of my comments today. I believe there will be a standing vote on this issue. I believe it is important because I have already heard from Members of the Government differing opinion as to whether or not they want this committee to sit. The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey)—and I do not know why he does not want it to sit, what he is trying to stop from happening, but he said he felt very strongly it should not sit. On the other hand, other Government Members have indicated they believe that it should sit. I think the standing vote will provide them with an opportunity to clarify their position, but there will be a committee, I believe.

I do not want to prejudice the will of this House, but I believe there will be a committee. I believe it should be structured to do this: it should be structured to ensure that no Government, minority or majority, does what this Conservative Government tried to get away with on May 1. In that sense it has a historical task in front of it, just as this was a historical decision that allowed it to begin that work; it must, in doing so, protect the rights of Legislatures and legislators alike to fulfill their obligations, to do their responsibility and to do their duty, the duty that they are elected here to do by the electorate.

The contempt was not only for this House, but the contempt was for all those people who voted, each and every one of us in here, to conduct business on their behalf. I believe therefore that must be the first and foremost purpose of the Standing Committee. I hope it meets very soon so that it can make certain that this does not happen again.

It must protect the rights. It must also ensure that we have opportunity to ask questions, to provide constructive criticism, to offer solutions and alternatives and to hold Government accountable. We cannot do that if they walk out on us when we attempt to fulfill those responsibilities.

I believe, Mr. Acting Speaker, that committee should recommend that there be new rules that anticipate this sort of situation, so that we are not lost in a quandary after it happens again, because having done it once they may do it again or another Government may do it to where we cannot get the business of this House back on track so that we can do our duty. I would see it not only as protecting the rights in a general sense, but shaping a framework through new rules that would then be referred to the Rules Committee or back to this House directly that would ensure that when a Chairperson refuses to attend or a Minister refuses to

attend a committee, this House has some way to rectify that situation and to carry on with its business, so that two people cannot stop what many others may want to accomplish.

Finally, I think that this committee should find out why this happened and why it was not corrected immediately after it happened, because I do not believe that we should place all the blame on the shoulders, or even half the blame on the shoulders of the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer). I think he is as culpable as everyone else in his caucus, but no more so nor no less so. I think the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), on the other hand, is much more responsible for what happened, and the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) as well. I think the committee itself should be prepared to ask questions to define exactly what happened, to determine how it happened so that it can develop rules to ensure that it will not happen again. So that we can be comfortable and the people who elect us can be comfortable that we are going to be able to do our duty when we sit in this Chamber—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Helwer): Order, please. The Honourable Minister of Natural Resources.

* (1640)

Hon. Harry Enns (Minister of Natural Resources): Mr. Acting Speaker, I have listened to considerable debate yesterday and again this afternoon, most of the afternoon, all the afternoon, so no doubt there may be some continuing debate after I have spoken. I move to add a few comments to this motion that is before this Chamber at this time.

Let me say right at the outset that I am certainly aware now today and was aware in the early hours of that morning back in May when the situation, the action, took place that brings us to debate this matter at this time that it is a serious matter and that it was a regrettable action taken by Members. I suppose here is where I will lose some of my audience because I say regrettable action taken by all Members all of committee, and I include myself as having been a Member of that committee.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I say all Members because Government Members are being chastised, committee Members are being chastised, for leaving that committee. I have served on numerous committees of this House, I am well aware that committees can talk and talk and talk as we do here in this Chamber. Sometimes it seems to be all so slow, futile and non-productive, but it has not for one moment in any way tarnished the very strong belief, the very strong love, I have for this Chamber, for this parliamentary tradition that we have set rules to govern ourselves in debate. Rules that have evolved over the years and as slow, cumbersome and as unproductive as they sometimes appear, the alternative simply is not any more attractive and indeed much less so.

In fact when we view the international history as it is unfolding before us even in these times as we debate in this Chamber we ought all to remind ourselves that millions of people in this world are reaching out and

trying to evolve into a system that we enjoy here in this country of Canada and this Province of Manitoba. So I say that in a backdrop that I have a great deal of respect for what sometimes seems to be a very clumsy way of conducting public business.

We have been charged, Mr. Acting Speaker, did I hear this rightly from the Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus), for destroying the system, helping to destroy the system. We are being charged for contempt. I believe somebody even said it was criminal, Mr. Acting Speaker. It was serious. One that deserves the attention that has been drawn to it. I hope the committee will, in the calmer circumstances after the event, be able to reconstruct the events and give some consideration to some of the facts that I wish to put on the record.- (interjection)-

The Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) just indicated that it was inappropriate for this Minister, for this Government, to break off the process of information-giving on an important action that the Government was contemplating, namely, the divestiture of Manfor, signing an agreement with the Repap people.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I can forgive my Liberal friends, none of whom have had the opportunity of at least claiming to have had governmental experience, but coming from the Member for Churchill who belongs to a Party that 15 out of the last 20 years was Government in this province, who himself was a Cabinet Minister and a senior Cabinet Minister, knows full well that is just utter nonsense.

I ask him, Mr. Acting Speaker, when his Government, his colleague, signed an important multi-million dollar business arrangement with Northern States Power, what kind of information was provided to us other than his colleague standing up in the House and announcing the successful conclusion of the sale? We then were given the opportunity at the regular hearings, the Public Utilities where Manitoba Hydro comes before us to explain the deal, to talk about the deal. Indeed we had occasions because a licence was required in front of the National Energy Board. Some of us availed ourselves of talking to and indeed opposing that particular sale.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the deal was struck, the deal was signed by that Government without so much as a reference to any Member of this Chamber, least of all a committee sitting for several days, as my colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), made available prior to entering into the agreement with Repap, prior to signing any papers, prior to going up to The Pas.

Then when it became apparent at 2:30 in the morning and Honourable Members of the Opposition knew that the Minister was committed to being in The Pas to sign this important economic agreement for Manitoba, and when it became apparent -(interjection)-. I do not fault Honourable Members opposite. I have been in Opposition long enough to understand the tactics of Opposition. They deliberately set out to keep that committee running, if need be till six, seven, eight, nine o'clock in the morning, to prevent the Minister of Finance from carrying out the important business of Government that he was committed to.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I suggest that a committee, when it views these events, will have to at least consider

whether or not that kind of debate, that kind of opposition, did not cross over the border to obstruction. Before Honourable Members get too carried away with it, this wonderful parliamentary system has rules that normally apply, that deal with obstruction.

Number one, and we have to remind ourselves of it, these are one of the penalties that we pay, quite frankly, as a minority Government because the question was asked by a number of their speakers: what would have happened if the Tories would have had a majority? Can you imagine? Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, the answer is quite simple. It happens when it has happened time and time again in hundreds of committees of this Legislature, happens in every Legislature in this country.

* (1650)

A Member would have put a motion to the floor and said, I move that this committee now adjourn, and the committee would have adjourned because the Government would have had a majority of Members to make it happen. That is what would have happened. That is what happened when Honourable Members of the New Democratic Party were in Government, and it happened all the time and you know that. Democracy would not have come to an end. Democracy would have merely worked as it is supposed to work, so that would have happened, Mr. Acting Speaker.

There are other well-established mechanisms and tools that wiser heads, over the years that have been involved in the parliamentary system, knew that when important Government business was to be transacted that a legitimately constituted Government be given the right to do so.

So we have the rule of closure in our books. It is applied sparingly by all Governments, but it has been applied. It was applied by the New Democratic Party Government in this Chamber and the Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) shakes his head in acknowledgment. It was applied on other important occasions. Perhaps one of the most important occasions that we remember nationally when the rule of closure was applied in the great pipeline debate by an arrogant Liberal Government in 1956. Governments do that at their peril, but it is a legitimate rule of parliamentary democracy to foreclose, forestall, stop debate. These tools were not available, are not available to a minority Government. A minority Government cannot do that. A minority Government cannot move to adjourn a sitting of a committee. They ought to be able to after reasonable consideration, after reasonable debate has taken place.

At 2:30 in the morning when you realize that the Minister has an important assignment the next morning, that ought to be considered. I am sure, Mr. Acting Speaker, that a committee composed of this House when they look at the facts, at all the facts, will come to some of these conclusions. There is another rule that applies that does what Honourable Members or some Honourable Members have suggested has been so destructive of democracy. They have said that every Member should have the right, if he wishes to make his case, debate an issue, talk to what is important to him in this House, he must have that right to do so.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I am saved harmless myself from the prima facie case that the Speaker has presented to us, and I remind Honourable Members we ought not to loosely use words such as "contempt." No contempt has been alleged. It has been suggested by the Speaker that the actions undertaken by Government provide a prima facie, which means grounds, sufficient grounds for a committee of this House to examine. We have slipped into the use of the word "contempt" as though that is a ruling, as though the Speaker has ruled that my colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), was in contempt, that my colleague, the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), is in contempt. That is not what the Speaker has ruled.

The Speaker has ruled that there is a prima facie case in his judgment that this action undertaken that evening could constitute contempt of the Legislature. Well, Mr. Speaker, why am I saved harmless from that decision, from that judgment by the Speaker? Indeed, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey), who some have accused of having been the perpetrator of this dastardly deed?

I will tell you why, and it is in the Speaker's Ruling. My leaving the committee still left a quorum for the committee. I am not charged with the charge that my colleague the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) or the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) is, simply because my leaving did not affect the quorum of the committee. Had one or two Opposition Members of the committee happened to have been absent at that time from the committee, I would also have been under the same indictment. Correct?

Mr. Speaker, it has happened to us in this Chamber again. It has not happened often, should not happen, but on occasion a Minister has been here wishing to defend or to speak to his Estimates, or maybe a private Member to a Bill, or to a resolution, and for one reason or another, there were not sufficient Members in the Chamber to form a quorum, and somebody has stood up, pointed it out to the Speaker, and the House has dissolved.

Were all those Members who denied that Member from speaking to the issue that was important to him, to the Bill, to the resolution, to the conducting of further examination of Estimates, guilty of the same charge of contempt of the Legislature of which you are accusing the Member for Minnedosa or the Minister of Finance?

You halted the business of the day, you halted the debate, you halted the business of the House.—(interjection)- Mr. Speaker, I am merely pointing out—no, no—let us go beyond, because I was listening to what Honourable Members said. Members used words such as: we are outraged; that we were prevented from carrying on the debate and the questioning in this committee; it was undemocratic to stop the functioning of this committee; it was arrogance to stop the functioning of this committee.

The same thing applies when, for lack of attention, or for prioritizing our presence elsewhere other than this Chamber, this House sometimes aborts its normal sitting

hours for lack of a quorum. I think it does not reflect well on us, our business is in this Chamber, and we ought to be in this Chamber to conduct the business of the province in this Chamber.

I have simply cited for you, Sir, and for Honourable Members of the committee, that there are different ways, parliamentary ways that allow a Government—mindful of the fact that they may well be censured—but nonetheless accepted parliamentary ways at which, when discussion reaches to a point where, in the judgment of the Government or of the Minister, it becomes not discussion, not debate, but obstruction, that there are other parliamentary tools that are used to, in effect, cut off debate.

Mr. Speaker, I said at the outset when I rose to speak, I am not particularly pleased. I regret the method that was chosen by myself, by other Members of that committee, at 2:30 in the morning, after a full afternoon, full evening, into the morning's debate on this question. I was satisfied that the Minister did his very level best to provide the committee and Honourable Members with all the information that he was able to provide, and that it was prudent to provide at that particular time, bearing in mind that a sales agreement, a divestiture agreement, had yet to be concluded, and that obstruction was in the hearts of the Honourable Members opposite, not really the seeking of further information, and not having available to us what is available to most Governments—majority.

We took an action that I would expect the committee to examine seriously. I would expect the committee to look at the salient factors which led up to that decision on that morning, and judge those actions. Censure them if you like, but judge those actions in a manner that is befitting and a manner that is in keeping with the facts, not taking out of context, and not to be distorted in the manner that some of you in your presentations unto this motion have suggested.

(Mr. Praznik, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

* (1700)

I repeat, quite simply again, had this happened during the course of the six years of the Pawley administration, during the course of the eight years of the Schreyer administration, during the course of the Sterling Lyon administration, as it happened time and time and again, there was hardly a day, again at committee or in this Chamber, Honourable Members would debate a point, a motion would be made to resolve the point, and, of course, the majority will would prevail.

If on that evening we would have enjoyed a majority of Members on that committee, the motion to adjourn would have been put at an appropriate time and the debate would have ceased at that time.

An Honourable Member: It was lost.

Mr. Enns: Yes, it was lost.—(interjection)- Well, Mr. Acting Speaker, closure is a tool that I have seen used in this House. It has to be used at times.

An Honourable Member: Not if you do not have the majority.

Mr. Enns: No. Mr. Acting Speaker, I think that is what the debate, that is what the committee will have to debate and will have to consider, whether or not, under these extenuating circumstances, whether or not, wrong as it might have been, and it was wrong, but they will have to take that into consideration into any action that committee arrives at, because surely there ought to be the opportunity for reasonable men and women to come to reasonable conclusions.

A judge recently accepted a parliamentarian's word that he did something that he did not intend to do, and that he was momentarily distracted, and that he would—

An Honourable Member: He apologized for it.

Mr. Enns: I apologize for the actions in the sense that it was an affront to the parliamentary system that I have a great deal of respect for. I can understand and I accept the action. I was part of the action. It was necessary to enable a Minister of the Crown to carry out a responsible function of his office, which Members of the Opposition were prepared to thwart.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I am satisfied to leave it at that, and I am satisfied that any committee of this House will take at least some of these matters that I have spoken to into consideration. Thank you.

Mr. Richard Kozak (Transcona): Mr. Acting Speaker, I had not intended to stand in this debate, but I am motivated by the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) on the proper development of a parliamentary system, to add some comments on what can happen to our system of Government if our parliamentary system does not work in a proper fashion.

The Leader of the Opposition focused her comments on the development of our great tradition of British parliamentary democracy. The development of this tradition went, in general, smoothly. It developed to the benefit of us all right down to the 20th Century, from the time of the Magna Carta. However, I would like to introduce a different perspective to this debate from the one raised by the Leader of the Opposition, a perspective which she stated extremely eloquently to the edification of all this Chamber.

My family, Mr. Acting Speaker, and the families of many Members of this House come from a region of the world that has a much less fortunate, a much less happy history. I would like to place on the record my feelings on some of the consequences, based on historical experience, of allowing our democracy to be ill-served by our unwillingness to stand up and defend it. My family, as did many in this Chamber, comes from a region of the world known generically as Eastern Europe, specifically Galicia, specifically a town by the name of Hosyatin, on the Zbroot River, which prior to World War I constituted the border between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the Russian Empire.

My family has a rather proud history; it dates back to the 16th century. I would like to share a few observations based on that proud history. I would like to do this to the benefit of this debate, because despite

the pride I take in my family's history I would be alarmed to my very soul to see conditions in our province and our country degenerate to the degree that caused so much suffering, so much poverty for hundreds of years in a part of the world that was blessed with resources and that had every possibility of developing constitutionally in a favourable way as our own democracy in Manitoba and Canada has developed.

For, Mr. Acting Speaker, the alternatives to a properly functioning democracy are alternatives which must frighten us. A properly functioning democracy is best described as a polity in which a Government exists to the benefit of the interests of all, rather than simply a select group. The development of a polity depends on a few key elements that were absent between the 16th century and the 18th century in the part of Eastern Europe to which I am referring. These key elements are respect for one's fellow man, or one's fellow woman, courtesy toward one's fellow man and one's fellow woman, and value for a creative and mutually beneficial exchange of ideas. These conditions failed to materialize toward the end of the feudal period in Eastern Europe and, as a result, the people of Eastern Europe faced three alternatives, all of them bad, and all of which in turn they experienced.

The first of these alternatives was a succession of Governments where rivalries among the decision-makers made decisions absolutely impossible. The prime historical example of this failing system of Government is, of course, Poland prior to its partition in the 18th century. Poland's Parliament, made up of the great nobles, clerics and certain other privileged groups, in its folly decided in the late 16th and early 17th centuries that all decisions were to be made on the basis of unanimity of all deputies—unanimity, Mr. Acting Speaker.

* (1710)

As a result, for a period of almost 200 years, one of the major powers of Europe at the time was totally obstructed from constructive Government to the point that, by the late 18th century, this proud nation was subject to being set upon by its neighbours, Russia, Prussia and the Austrian Empire, and did not regain its independence until the early 20th century. This alternative is unacceptable to me, Mr. Acting Speaker, and the principles of respect, courtesy, and free and open exchange of ideas must be protected in this Chamber.

The second failing alternative that faced the people of Eastern Europe at that time, Mr. Acting Speaker, was Government of the majority in the interests only of the majority. The examples I could cite are numerous. I will not cite them because there are such regimes in existence in the world even today, but I would suggest to you, and to my colleagues in this Chamber, that a Government that is responsive only to a select group, be it large or small, is a Government that has no place in the Province of Manitoba. Once again the principles of respect, courtesy and respectful exchange of ideas must be preserved in this Chamber, in Manitoba and in Canada.

Also and finally, Mr. Acting Speaker, the third alternative faced by the people of Eastern Europe as

the feudal system was in decline was the alternative, the hopelessly flawed alternative of Government by the triumph of might. If the actions of the central Government displeased an interest group, the interest group was perfectly free, and saw themselves as such, to raise an armed force and to challenge the authority of the central Government. Central Governments at the time maintained small standing armies, and the strategy frequently worked.

Mr. Acting Speaker, these examples we must avoid. The principles of the enlightenment as enunciated by great thinkers of more modern times such as Voltaire must be respected. Respect, courtesy and free thinking for which others have respect, the exchange of thoughts are essential parts of the effective and honourable functioning of this Chamber or any Chamber in a self-respecting democracy.

The principle that might is right is one that most of us would reject. I would like to take just a few minutes to illustrate where that principle led the region of the world to which my family traces its roots. As early as the 1570s, the feudal authorities of the area in which my family originates formed an alliance with the princes of Transylvania, Stefan Bathory, Christopher Bathory in the 1570s. To advance their own position, in the course of advancing their own position, they trampled what we today view as Northern Romania, and devastated large sections of the Balkans which were then part of the Ottoman Empire, causing suffering, causing death, pillage, rape, all of them totally unacceptable in today's society.

And yet, relative to today's society, Mr. Acting Speaker, because we are not immune from a deterioration of society to barbaric levels, in the 1590s, specifically 1594, the feudal authorities of the neighbourhood in which my family originates, formed alliance with the Emperor Rudolf II of Austria, once again to pillage the Ottomans which were then occupying a considerable portion of the Balkan Peninsula.

I have to admit that the region from which my family emanated benefited greatly in terms of wealth and in terms of prestige from this reprehensible behaviour. Today, in 1989, I still have in my possession a one-ducat piece issued by Prince Christopher Bathory of Transylvania and a one-ducat piece issued by Emperor Rudolf II of Austria which I keep as a measure of pride, I suppose, that my ancestors used the only means available to them, cursed means, Mr. Acting Speaker, to defend their families, their neighbours.

They did not suffer from their participation in these disorders, but my family, despite doing what it had to do, does bear some responsibility for not having tried to bring about a better world, a better system, as opposed to simply following self-interest. Of course, that was a long time ago.

The same pattern of behaviour in that part of the world where everyone was behaving in precisely the same way and where anyone who did not would have been victimized extremely rapidly; this pattern of behaviour continued for approximately 200 years.

In the early 1600s, the early part of the 17th century, the Polish authorities, concerned about the growing

power of the feudal authorities in the portion of the country that my family emanated from, did in fact cause considerable suffering to the neighbourhood. The alliance with Austria allowed the neighbourhood to continue to prosper through the 1630s. During that entire period, assaults, extremely profitable and yet deadly assaults, were launched against the Ottoman Empire culminating in pillage of the Ottoman army in the Battle of Khotyn in 1630.

However, this form of Government, Mr. Acting Speaker, did not produce faithful allies. You could not count on your neighbour to remain by your side as we today here in Manitoba and Canada count on our neighbours to remain by our side. Later in the 1630s, the Poles turned against their allies, the feudal authorities in my family's home neighbourhood, and caused great devastation in the neighbourhood. Devastation and counter devastation bring revenge, and the 1640s and '50s were marked by retaliation that impoverished both Poland and the feudal authorities to the East in the neighbourhood from which my family emanated.

* (1720)

This nonsense continued for more than a hundred more years, Mr. Acting Speaker. There were periods where laudable goals were achieved. In 1683, for example, an alliance of Poles and Cossacks relieved the City of Vienna which was under siege from the Ottomans. But they then proceeded, as was the custom of the time, to devastate the Ottoman territories throughout the Balkans, once again enriching themselves but at the expense of death, suffering, and the backwardness of Eastern Europe that we see to this very day.

I will not belabour this set of points. I believe I have made my point effectively, a point which is related to the comments placed on the record by the Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Our democracy must be defended. Those who fail in their duty, their prime duty, to respect the system of debate that we have in this House must be singled out. Those who neglect the courtesy that gentlemen and ladies exchange among themselves should be singled out. Those who obstruct the free exchange of ideas should be singled out.

Mr. Acting Speaker, we do not want our society to degenerate to the point that led to the backwardness of great areas of the globe that we call Earth. We carry a responsibility not only to get our Party elected in the next election, not only to advance the ideas that we believe in, we carry a responsibility for Western civilization.

As a result, I commend His Honour, the Speaker, on his ruling of Wednesday, yesterday. I urge all Honourable Members of all three Parties to proceed not with vindictiveness, not with partisanship, but with the sole objective of defending the parliamentary system that we hold dear. The parliamentary system that the very lives of the people who benefit from Western civilization and Western parliamentary democracy depend upon.

I hope that we proceed quickly following this debate to debate within our Committee on Privileges and

Elections. I hope that all Honourable Members enter this debate with an open mind but a determination to protect our system of government. Sometimes it has occurred to me that we are a bit too partisan in this House. This is an issue on which we cannot afford to be partisan. We must rather be diligent to the greatest degree to ensure that we deal fairly and honourably with Members who have shown that they are capable of making mistakes but Members who have also shown that they are capable of making a contribution to the functioning of this House.

The vote that we face this afternoon to dispatch this matter to the Committee on Privileges and Elections is a vote that I hope will pass unanimously. I hope that Members of all three Parties will hold one another to observe the principles of respect, courtesy and honest exchange of ideas that will ensure fairness, justice, and a reasonable decision is made by the Committee on Privileges and Elections.

If we fail to proceed in that manner, then we are no better than the 16th century feudal barons that I referred to a few minutes ago in my remarks. We must distance ourselves from the worst examples that Western civilization has to offer. We must instead follow the best example, the example set during the period of the Enlightenment, and that absolutely requires the deliberations of the committee proceed with respect, courtesy, honest exchange of ideas, open-mindedness and an absolute determination to be fair and just in the conclusions which the committee arrives at.

Thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): I had not intended to become involved in this debate either, but I have been provoked shall we say by comments from Members of the Opposition Parties with respect to this issue.

Over the past couple of days we have heard the comments of the work of the committee, the parliamentary privilege of the Members of the committee, the public interest, the desire to get on with the business of the public in this House, the work of the committee, and a number of things of that nature.

Let me refresh the memories of those who were not at that first committee meeting, and I was. I was there because the business of the committee of that time was not the question of the Repap sale at all. The purpose of the meeting was to consider the 1987 Report of Manitoba Forestry Resources Limited. That was the purpose for which the committee was called.

From the first minute the gavel dropped, Mr. Acting Speaker, the agenda was entirely different for some Members of that committee. The agenda was not the question for which the committee was called, the 1987 Report of Manitoba Forestry Resources. The agenda was something entirely different, because about that time it came to public attention, and to the attention of Members of the Opposition, that the divestiture of Manfor was at a point about to go through. From the first drop of the gavel of that committee the agenda was totally different.

The agenda of the Members of the Opposition, in my view, was such that they had no interest, no care,

no willingness at all to deal with the matter for which the committee had been called, but, quite apart from that, proceeded into structural, procedural wranglings over whether the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) would or would not agree to appear before the committee to discuss the question of the divestiture.

The Minister of Finance indicated on that particular day he was unavailable, but had agreed two days later to appear before the committee voluntarily, and no requirement because the committee had not been called for that purpose, but voluntarily would have appeared before the committee to discuss that issue. That was not good enough, Mr. Acting Speaker, because Members of the Opposition, in my view, at that time wanted to do something quite else. They wanted to play cheap political politics with this particular issue. That is exactly what they did.

They adjourned the committee. They demanded that I as the Minister, there representing Manitoba Forestry Resources, go to another part of the building to seek out the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and demand that he appear before the committee. I did that. At the request of the committee, I did that. I went and spoke to the Minister of Finance, who was otherwise engaged in the building at the time in Her Majesty's business.

* (1730)

Quite frankly, when I returned to the committee and indicated that he was not available, could not come on that particular day, they adjourned the committee. The Members of the Opposition adjourned the committee. Pardon me, Mr. Acting Speaker, before they did that, they passed a motion demanding that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) appear for an issue which was not before the committee, because the committee had been called to deal with the report of Manitoba Forestry Resources and had nothing to do with the Repap issue. Despite the fact that the Minister had voluntarily agreed to appear two days hence, that was not good enough. It had to be right then. Playing politics with that issue was exactly what was being played at that particular time.

An Honourable Member: You have got them going, Jim.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Praznik): Order. Order, please. The Honourable Minister of Industry and Trade has the floor.

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Acting Speaker, I treat this as a very serious issue. I did not heckle one speaker from the other side. Let me say this, it is a serious issue. I suspect that the actions of my colleague the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) may not have been correct in the circumstances.

Given the whole circumstance of the sitting of the committee, given the whole circumstance of the actions of all Members of the committee, not just the Minister of Finance and not just the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), but all Members of the committee, no one, I do not think, can suggest before the public of Manitoba, that they in fact were correct, that they

did not have an alternate agenda, that they did not want to do something other than for what the committee was originally called for.

Mr. Acting Speaker, none of us in this Chamber, I do not think, can stand here and pretend to have no guilt, can stand here and pretend to be an angel, can stand here and pretend that somehow they have been absolved of any issues and that all of the blame must fall on my colleague the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and my colleague the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), because that is not what happened.

Mr. Acting Speaker, as I indicated, it may not have been appropriate, but given the frustrations of the entire circumstances of the meeting of that committee, I think all of us collectively need to look at what we did. We collectively, Members of the Opposition benches and Members of the Government, to suggest, did all of us not now make some kind of error, did all of us not somehow create circumstances which in the overall parliamentary process are inappropriate? I think all of us need to reflect on those issues as well as the ones that have been brought forward so far in this debate. Thank you.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Acting Speaker, I will be the last speaker for the official Opposition and I believe for this side of the House. We would be prepared to have this matter come to a vote before six o'clock. I will attempt to limit my remarks so that we have time to bring this to a vote.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the Speaker for this ruling. I want to thank him in particular for the time he took to research and look into what is an extremely difficult, extremely complex and indeed an unprecedented matter in this Legislature and to the best of my knowledge in any Legislature. I have some sense of the amount of time and energy that he must have put into his ruling, because I was putting the same time and energy, although I suspect not as easily or not as well or not with the same access and resources as the Speaker, but I was putting energy into trying to understand that.

I do not have the depth of experience in this House as the Member for Lakeside (Mr. Enns) or even the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). I, like the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), am a newcomer in this House. As I read about it and as I tried to understand what happened, I became increasingly convinced of the seriousness of this matter. This was not simply an event that occurred on one night.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I would like to just review very briefly in as limited a way as I can what happened. There was a committee meeting. It was duly called and it was sitting considering a matter before it. Tempers got hot. A lot of debate occurred. It became fractious. This happens in a Chamber of this sort.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) chose to walk out of this committee. He did, as he has admitted, put the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) in a very difficult position. Actually, I rather admire the

remarks of the Minister of Finance when he apologized in a sense to the Member for Minnedosa for what had happened, and he recognized that he put a new Member in a very difficult position, but that is what happened.

The Member for Minnedosa then acted inappropriately, wrongly and in defiance of the committee, but we could stop and we could reflect on his inexperience in this House, and we could reflect on the very untenable position he was put in by the more senior Members of his caucus, and we could, looking at it from that perspective, forgive him, and many Members in this House have spoken kindly of the Member for Minnedosa on that basis. But that is what occurred, a senior Member of the Government walked out of a committee in defiance of the committee, and the Chairman walked out on the committee, just up and walked out.

Subsequent to that, Mr. Speaker, and after a great deal of difficulty this matter came to the floor of this Chamber and you, after very thorough and very extensive research, made a ruling, and I would just like to re-read one piece of it. You said that with respect to the actions of the Honourable Minister of Finance, and the former Chairperson of the committee, the Honourable Member for Minnedosa, the information provided has established, on the basis of the definitions of contempt cited earlier in this ruling, a prima facie case of contempt or privilege. That is the Speaker's Ruling, that is not my belief, that is not cheap politics, that is the Speaker's Ruling after very thorough, very detailed, very lengthy research.

Now in listening to the debate, and I have spent a lot of time in this Chamber listening to this debate because I am intensely interested in it, and I appreciate the remarks of the Minister of Finance, because he did sit and try to explain his actions in that, and he did not spend too much time engaging in the normal sort of political mudslinging that flies back and forth, as the Member for Charleswood (Mr. Ernst) has just done.- (interjection)- I am going to speak about the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) eventually. The Member for Minnedosa did much the same thing for the most part, he attempted to explain his actions.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I am going to come back to that in a second, but I just want to also refer to the motion. This motion is a simple one, this is not a motion to find these two Members in contempt, this is a motion, I think it is a very responsible motion and it is a traditional motion in matter of privilege, is to refer it to a committee of the House that can, on sober second thought, sit and review what occurred and can then pronounce a judgment, and that is a very serious judgment. It occurs very rarely, but it is a very serious and very powerful decision that committee can render.

Now, Mr. Speaker, what the two Members are being accused of is contempt. A contempt is defined by Black's Law Dictionary, it specifically defines contempt of Congress, Legislature or Parliament, and it defines it as whatever obstructs or tends to obstruct the due course of the proceedings of either House. It goes on to define obstruction of the proceedings of a Legislature, and it says that the term embraces not only those things done in the presence of the Legislature, but those done in disobedience of a committee.

* (1740)

Now I believe that a contempt of the committee occurred. That is not the sole reason why we are debating this today, because the day after that contempt occurred, when we had time to sleep, when tempers had time to cool, there was an opportunity to solve that problem. The week after it occurred there was an opportunity to solve that problem. The month after there was an opportunity.

I personally spoke to Members of the opposite side and said, we have got an extremely difficult situation here. This is not a simple matter. The way to resolve this is for the Members to admit that they made a mistake, to apologize to this Legislature, not to apologize to the Opposition because it is not the Opposition you offend, it is this House.

They would not do it. I said it publicly. I was reported in the Winnipeg Free Press saying, the way they could resolve this is simply stand up and apologize for it. Admit that this House is paramount, admit that this House has the authority to demand the attendance of its Members, and it would have ended.

What we are talking about in this debate, Mr. Speaker, is arrogance, the arrogance, disrespect, the kind of attitude and behaviour we have come to see as normal in Ottawa with the Government that sits there, and the kind of behaviour that has become a norm in this House. This is not a Government that accepts the fact that it is in a minority position. This is not a Government that sits down regularly with the other side and attempts to negotiate and sort out the business of this House.

You know, Mr. Speaker, when we walked into this House, we agreed to take the Deputy Speaker's position because we wanted to work with this Government. We wanted to send a message that we were prepared to, on the important business of this province, work collectively to solve problems. We have yet to see an example of that from the Government. We have a Government that talks about open Government. We have yet to see it. We have a Government that talks about being responsible. In the face of the actions that bring this motion to the floor, how can we even begin to believe that this Government chooses to act responsibly?

Time after time, we have sat while we have been pushed against unreasonable deadlines by the Government that cannot get its act together on legislation and then walks in at the eleventh hour and demands that we pass it overnight or face some sort of horrible, unidentified consequence.

How many committee reports are outstanding? How many committees have not been called? How little business of this House has been transacted?

Mr. Cowan: Whose responsibility is that?

Mr. Alcock: The Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) asked the question, whose responsibility is that? That is the responsibility of the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) who, I feel, along with his entire Government, is as responsible for this as the two Members who are charged.

When the Government House Leader had an opportunity to stand up and speak on this, to correct the record, to talk about what had occurred and to attempt to bring some order back into this House, he gave perhaps the cheapest, most simplistic speech I have seen yet. It was a disgrace, but it is not inconsistent with the way this Government attempts to manage the affairs of this Legislature: bullying, threatening, disrespect not of an individual Member, but disrespect of everybody in this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this action, the actions of these two Members were not simply the irrational or petulant or individual actions of these two Members. That occurred the night the committee met, but that did not occur the next day. That did not occur the next week when the Cabinet had an opportunity to think about this, when the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) had an opportunity to advise the Cabinet on what this meant. Did they sit down, reflect on it and say, okay, now it is time to sort this out, to solve this problem? No, they dismissed it. They dismissed the Opposition and they dismissed this Chamber.

Mr. Speaker, that is exactly how they govern. They dismissed the people of Manitoba, and that is why I believe this Party will never get a majority in this province, because the people of this province know that is how you behave. You have confirmed every negative belief that we hold, and that I believe the people in this province hold about how you would govern.

Mr. Speaker, I want to just make one comment on something that troubles me. I debated at some length bringing it up, an amendment to this motion that would have called upon the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) to ensure that this committee got called in a timely fashion. I did not do that because I did not want this debate to degenerate into a debate about procedure and become a wrangle on whether something could or could not be amended. You had given us very clear instructions as to the motion you would accept.

If I have a fear, it is that this arrogant Government will simply exercise the one power that the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) has, and not call this committee to meet. I think that would be shameful. I think it would be dishonourable. I think there is a very serious charge outstanding against two Members of this House, and I think that charge has to be investigated. I think that a decision has to be made on this matter as quickly as we can responsibly do it, but I say responsibly. We have discussed this matter within my caucus.

There are Members of my Party who have not been present for the debate and who have not spoken in this debate, because we are going to do everything we can—I pledge to the Government that we will do everything we can—to be as reasonable, and as impartial, and as careful, and considerate as we can in deciding this matter, but we will not let this matter go unresolved. This must be decided. We cannot leave this on the record of this House, so I urge the Government House Leader to call this committee as soon as is responsibly possible.

The committee has a task before it. It is to investigate the alleged matter of contempt. I would trust that the

committee in doing that will also look at what amendments can be made to our rules and make recommendations to Rules Committee so that we need not be faced with a situation like this again. We are walking in uncharted waters in this House. We are dealing with an unusual situation. It has been a long time since there has been a minority Government in this House. As all Members in this House, we need guidance, and the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer), who is a new Member of this House, needs guidance, as I do.

* (1750)

So I would like the committee to spend some time addressing that. The committee also has to consider what happens now. If the Members are found guilty of the charge of contempt, what happens? I would like the two Members to reflect on that, and I would like the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) to read the research on that. It is a very, very serious matter. I would like to respond just to one thing that the Government House Leader in his rather infantile diatribe yesterday. He stood up at one point and he talked about: well, how can you be talking on this matter when on the one hand you are still calling the Member for Minnedosa (Mr. Gilleshammer) to sit in the Chair? There is a very simple answer to that. We believe in the process. We respect it. The Member for Minnedosa is not guilty until this committee has decided, and this committee may find that he is not guilty. That is what it is for. So, until that decision is rendered, we respect his ability, his right.

Anyway, Mr. Speaker, with that I would like to recommend this motion to the House. Again I would like to urge the Government House Leader to proceed as quickly as possible, and I would now call for the question. Thank you.

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is that the alleged matter of contempt reported to this House on October 4, 1989, by the Standing Committee on Economic Development be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections for consideration and report.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion? Agreed and so ordered.

Mr. Reg. Alcock (Opposition House Leader): Could I have the Yeas and Nays on this, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Call in the Members. The Honourable Government House Leader.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): If I may, Mr. Speaker, I believe the calling in of the Members happens after the voiced vote.

Mr. Speaker: All those in favour of the motion will please say yea. All those opposed will please say nay.

In my opinion, the yeas have it. The Honourable Opposition House Leader.

* (1740)

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): May we have the Yeas and Nays, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Yeas and Nays. Call in the Members.

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

YEAS

Alcock, Angus, Ashton, Burrell, Carr, Carstairs, Charles, Cheema, Connery, Cowan, Cummings, Derkach, Doer, Driedger (Emerson), Driedger (Niakwa), Ducharme, Edwards, Ernst, Evans (Brandon East), Findlay, Gaudry, Gilleshammer, Gray, Hammond, Harapiak, Harper, Helwer, Kozak, Lamoureux, Maloway, Mandrake, Manness, McCrae, Minenko, Mitchelson, Neufeld, Oleson, Pankratz, Patterson, Penner, Roch, Rose, Storie, Taylor, Wasylycia-Leis, Yeo

Mr. Clerk (William Remnant): Yeas, 46; Nays, 0.

Mr. Speaker: I declare the motion carried.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, shall we call it six o'clock?

Mr. Speaker: Is it the will of the House to call it six o'clock?

HOUSE BUSINESS

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): Before we deal with that, just a matter of House Business.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Thompson, on House Business.

Mr. Ashton: On Bill No. 79, the amendments had not been translated so we could not deal with that Bill today. I would just like to ask the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) whether we will be dealing with the amendments translated appropriately tomorrow on Bill No. 79.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): My understanding, Mr. Speaker, that the report of the Standing Committee on Municipal Affairs will be translated and available tomorrow so that we could deal with further stages of Bill No. 79.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Government House Leader.

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