

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, January 26, 1990.

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS AND TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I have two reports to table, plus a very brief ministerial statement.

First, I would like to table the Annual Report for the Department of Finance, 1988-89. Second, Mr. Speaker, I would like to table Volumes 1 and 2 of the Public Accounts for 1988 and '89. Also, I have six copies of the statement I am about to read. Again, it is very short.

Mr. Speaker, these accounts were originally scheduled for release in mid-November 1989, but could not be printed until after The Fiscal Stabilization Fund Act was passed. Once that Act was approved on December 13 we could finalize the accounts with the Provincial Auditor and have them printed.

When the Provincial Auditor released his 1988-89 report to the Legislature on December 22, he indicated the delays in passage of the legislation would require him to issue a supplementary report on the financial statements when they are released. It is anticipated that this supplementary report will be released after the printing of Volume 3 of the Public Accounts, since the Provincial Auditor wants to include comments on Volume 3 in his report.

Volume 3 of the Public Accounts was introduced last year, at which time it was indicated that the purpose of these new summary financial statements was to reflect the consolidation of all organizations integral to the overall operations of the Government. The Department of Finance has established a phasing-in process, wherein the 1988-89 summary of financial statements will combine the results of several major Government organizations with those of the province.

This is a significant undertaking that involves extensive analysis of the financial statements of these Government organizations and the development of a presentation format that will make the summary statements understandable and useful to Members of the Legislature. For this reason, we do not expect to have Volume 3 available until early March.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, I should start by thanking the Minister for at least tabling Volume 1 and Volume 2. This information is long overdue and I am pleased to receive it, but I am very concerned about his statements about Volume 3. I question, frankly, some of the statements he just made. Volume 3 is the

summary of all of the financial activity. It is through Volume 3 that some of the defence for the Fiscal Stabilization Fund existed, because it is through Volume 3 that we see the true financial picture of the province.

The fact that we will not have that for another month or longer I think is absolutely unacceptable. I think we need that and I think it is going to demonstrate the very concerns that the Auditor raised in his report about the real purpose of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund and about the real bottom line for this province.

* (1005)

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, we thank the Minister for tabling the report and giving us this information. We will be studying the documents and look very carefully at Government spending. We are very concerned about this Government not spending what it said it will in terms of health, education and social services. We are concerned about cutbacks, particularly in health care, and I am interested very much in what had happened to the five-year budgeting that this Minister said he was going to get into when he was in the Opposition.

It is very difficult to do five-year budgeting. I do not know whether the Minister knows what he is going to do five weeks from now, particularly, I presume, dealing with the federal Government that we have.

Mr. Speaker, we will be examining these reports and asking questions in due course.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Can we have leave to revert back to Presenting Reports by Standing and Special Committees? (Agreed)

PRESENTING REPORTS BY STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES (Cont'd)

Mr. Neil Gaudry (Acting Chairman of Committees): Mr. Speaker, the Committee of Supply has considered certain resolutions, directs me to report progress and asks leave to sit again.

I move, seconded by the Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus), that the report of the committee be received.

MOTION presented and carried.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Labour Adjustment Strategy Government Initiatives

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, this is the third day that we have been asking questions based on the recently released report from the City of Winnipeg on the future of the economy in Winnipeg. In that report

they go on to identify winner and loser of businesses in the City of Winnipeg. Of particular concern to us is the fact that furniture and clothing manufacturers are identified as losers under the Free Trade Agreement. These two industries account for one out of every five jobs in manufacturing in the City of Winnipeg.

My question today is to the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings). Why do they continue to support the Free Trade Agreement in light of the information received? Why do they refuse to table a labour adjustment strategy for this province?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Deputy Premier.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the Liberal Party in Opposition wants it both ways. Their federal leadership are all hedging on their position on free trade—

An Honourable Member: Except Lloyd Axworthy, who they would not support.

Mr. Cummings: Well, that is another matter. The one Member who appeared to be as solid in his opposition of the Free Trade Agreement cannot get enough money to run.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Deputy Premier.

* (1010)

Mr. Cummings: Mr. Speaker, the one thing that we do want are more jobs and more opportunity for the people of Manitoba. We also know that right now there are 400 job openings in clothing wear.

Bankruptcy Rate Job Loss Statistics

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Mr. Speaker, the report tabled by a committee, chaired by one of their prospective candidates, says there will be less jobs in the City of Winnipeg. Part of the reason for that is their inaction. Three hundred and ninety-two businesses went bankrupt in this province. They left \$105 million in liabilities.

We asked on Wednesday, to the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond), how many jobs were lost as a result of those 392 bankruptcies. They refused to give us an answer on last Wednesday. Perhaps the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) can give us an answer today. How many jobs were lost as a result of those 392 bankruptcies?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the answer I am going to give is going to please the Member opposite or not.

I have not had the opportunity, as I would have wished, to have gone through in complete detail the Winnipeg 2000 report. I say, in the little bit of chance I have had to review it, to me it obviously leaves as a legacy to all of us a blueprint for failure if you want to destroy economic activity, and it lays that right at the feet of the former NDP Government.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, let me say, with respect to some of the industries mentioned by the Member in his earlier question, this Government has supported free trade because we saw major countervailable actions developing south of the border. We sense they would have tremendous negative impact in the future upon our employment force. We are aware that there are some pressures, but we are also aware that Palliser Furniture, for instance, continues to find its places in exporting to the United States. We are also well aware that we have a number of unfilled employment opportunities within the garment industry, that today, if it could be filled, would obviously make great contribution to the economy in this province.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Mr. Alcock: This was the Party that was whining about decorum yesterday.

I would just like to correct the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) on one brief point. The report goes - (interjection)- on

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I would like to remind the Honourable Member, this is not a time for debate. The Honourable Member for Osborne has the floor.

Mr. Alcock: Thank you for that reminder, Mr. Speaker.

This report attempts to paint a bleak picture during the NDP years. They were pretty bleak, but when you read the background material it shows that they were even more bleak during the Lyon years.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I am sure that the Honourable Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) will get an opportunity to get some of his remarks on the record later today. Right now the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) has the floor.

Mr. Alcock: The Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) referenced job opportunities in the province. My question is, how many jobs were lost as a result of the 392 bankruptcies and the \$105 million in liabilities left in this province in the last year?

Mr. Manness: I cannot give a definitive response to that question, but I can indicate that with respect to

employment numbers, globally for the province, as related to the national average, that we still are at the national average or slightly below in unemployment statistics. We would like to do better, unquestionably. We recognize what we inherited. As far as the inherent problems with a very highly taxed economy, we have tried in two short budgets to try and provide relief wherever we could.

I challenge the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock), I challenge his Leader too possibly, given the fact that they have voted against tax relief to individuals in this province, given that day after day they have indicated that we should increase spending in the social services area, given that they seem to be against a deficit increase, maybe they would like to lay out in some detail the path that they would take to immediately, magically be able to create wealth. We know we have confidence in our approach, and maybe the Member opposite would rise to his place and the challenge I have thrown out to him and tell us his approach.

* (1015)

Mr. Alcock: I can understand how desperately he needs an idea, because he has not had one in the 20 months he has been in Government. He will hear from us soon enough.

On job creation -(interjection)-

Mining Tax Revenue Estimate

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Honourable Member for Osborne.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): It is interesting to note, Mr. Speaker, that the Scotiabank, in their review of job creation in the western provinces, indicates that Manitoba is the only province in western Canada predicted to have negative growth next year.

Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister responsible for mining (Mr. Neufeld). Nickel metal prices have dropped 61 percent during the past year. As a result, Inco has just announced that it will be cutting back production at the Thompson mine. This Government budgeted for a substantial increase in mining tax revenue. Can the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) tell us what his estimate of mining tax revenue is now?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I challenge the Finance Critic to lay out his approach. I say to you that silence speaks volumes, just volumes.

Mr. Speaker, specific to the question, as I indicated in tabling of the Second Report, mining revenue is not going to achieve the \$180 million forecast that we laid before the people of Manitoba. That is most unfortunate. That is going to put severe pressure on the Government through the final quarter of this fiscal year. I can indicate also to the Member that the forecast for next year, although I will not provide it to him because it is too

preliminary at this point in time, would indicate a significant reduction from the \$180 million forecast in last year's budget.

Impact Thompson, Manitoba

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): This time, to the Minister responsible for mining (Mr. Neufeld), what will the impact of these cutbacks be on the community of Thompson?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, if the Member has read the article in the paper which indicated that nickel prices are dropping to the realm of \$3 U.S. a pound, he would also read where Falconbridge and Inco are not wishing to provide overtime, that indeed they are talking to their employees—indeed they are talking still about maintaining production at 95 percent levels.

Mr. Speaker, I would submit, from some distance I agree, that there is going to be a very limited negative impact on the City of Thompson. Thank goodness the North for the most part is booming and we expect that will continue.

Premier's Council Economy

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

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Let me end this morning by reminding the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) of a question that the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) asked in November, based on the Round Table on the Economy, which called for the establishment in this province of a Premier's council on the economy.

At that time the Premier (Mr. Filmon) refused to commit to that. Given the path that we are on and the incredibly destructive news that we have received, is it not time to establish a Premier's council on the economy in this province, and why will they not do it?

* (1020)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I remember well the answer provided by the First Minister (Mr. Filmon). He indicated at that time, of course, he has a council of the environment and the economy. I can also indicate to Members opposite that I am at this time considering the development of an economic council around the ministry of Finance. I can also indicate to Members opposite that they should keep in tune with what the Government will be doing in the not too distant future with respect to an economic thrust.

Economic Growth Job Creation Strategy

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have similar questions to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). Last week we had bankruptcy

numbers. Last week we had the Scotiabank predictions of low employment growth and negative employment growth in western Canada. The Government has revised their predictions from a 3.3 percent growth in December down to a 2.3. We believe the Toronto Dominion Bank is accurate with a 1.3 percent growth, which is a 300 percent decrease in the economy, a massive decrease in the economy in terms of opportunities and jobs. Last week we had Canada Mortgage and Housing saying extreme out-migration and loss of population was a major contributing factor to the lower economic growth in Manitoba.

This week, again, another federal agency has just come out and said that there is no growth at all expected in 1990 in Manitoba. It does not look good, a federal agency, another second federal agency, passing judgment on the economic performance of this Government.

My question to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is, given all the jobs we have lost, given the fact that we are 10,000 less jobs now than we were a year ago in our economy, what specific job creation and opportunity strategy will the Government put in place in 1990 to deal with the reality of what is going on in the Manitoba province?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, first, I say it takes some considerable courage for the Leader of the third Party, particularly, to rise in this place and be somewhat critical of the Government, particularly given the blueprint for failure, of course, which I believe will brand that Party and their economic strategy for decades to come.

First, with respect to the forecast of the economy into 1990, I reported on this issue two weeks ago to the House. Let me say there is some new information in from some of the independent forecasters. The provincial estimate of growth is sliding down but not as quickly as the national forecast. Today I can report to the House that the growth in 1990 from seven independent forecasters, as we average all of their results, is 2.1 percent for 1990 compared to 1.4 percent for the nation. We still, by the estimate of all the forecasters, will be in the top two as far as provincial economic growth in Canada in 1990.

Furthermore, I can reassure the Member opposite that we will not borrow money for short term job creation such that we have to go to New York and borrow money for the next 10 years ad nauseam in support of jobs that no longer exist.

Mr. Doer: Your numbers are going to keep tumbling down. They have gone down almost 50 percent of growth in five weeks. Your words are cold comfort to the workers at Ryder Machinery. It is cold comfort to the Red River Brick & Tile families that depended on that work. It is cold comfort to Burns Meats office employees. It is cold comfort to the VIA Rail employees, it is cold comfort to Lynn Lake.

Government Strategy Sessions

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is this: when is he going to admit that we have zero population growth in this province? We have massive increases in unemployment or people not working in the workforce. Will he call together and recommend to the Premier (Mr. Filmon) that we have an economic summit in this province of business, labour and Government to start putting our collective heads together as we did when we were in Government in the early '80s to get the economy going and get people working in this province again?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I find it passing strange that the Leader of the NDP (Mr. Doer) would talk about cold comfort. Manitobans have no comfort in knowing they have the second highest tax level anywhere in this country. We have the second highest level of debt, all courtesy, for the most part, of this Government and some of their economic development plans they have put into place in the early '80s. Those plans were purely based on borrowing for short-term job creation. Of course, the legacy of that debt is \$600 million in interest today. That economic development plan was solidly rejected by the people of this province in 1988.

* (1025)

Mr. Speaker, specific to the question, I can indicate to the Member opposite that certainly the Government is taking seriously many of the comments coming forward from the business community. To that end there will be, as there always has been, further discussions to see what Government, in concert with private investment, taking the lead from the Government, putting into place a proper climate for an investment in job creation, what it is we jointly can do to help Manitoba improve even more so than the national average.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, here we have the fundamental problem with the Conservative Government. They are only going to meet with their business friends to deal with this problem. Business is voting with their feet, people are leaving the province. Why will the Government not include the other sector in our economy, the working sector, the men and women who are working across this province? Why are you only going to meet with your business friends? Why will you not have a co-operative approach with business, labour and Government to get our economy going? Why do you just want to sit in the back rooms with a few business friends while the economy goes down and workers are being laid off across the province?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Honourable Minister of Finance.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I guess this is the different approach we take. When I say business people, to me

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that is the generic, that represents everybody involved in creating wealth and employment in this country. I do not profess to set up a class system where indeed business people are set aside from those who contribute of their time, their energy and their talents with respect to the creation of wealth. I say to the Member, if he feels that we are just going to be reaching out to, so-called, the owners of wealth creation, he is definitely wrong. This Government will reach out to all.

But let me say the Government ultimately will make the decision in the best interest of Manitoba. We will not skew all of the decisions in one way, as the former Government does, which is described in such great detail in the Winnipeg 2000 Report.

Mr. Doer: I want the Member, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), to know that any report that does not talk about population growth and zero population growth has no credibility with us, because the facts have been gerrymandered in that report.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, the population grew in this province, 58,000 people in the period of time in that report, and there is zero population growth in this province right now. Those are not our statistics. Those are Stats Canada numbers.

Interest Rates

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My final question to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is: will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) be raising the high interest rates with the Prime Minister when he meets with him this weekend, will he be raising the absolute devastating effect of having a spread on the high interest rates in this country versus United States, and will he be raising with the Prime Minister the real reality of the devastating effect that those high interest rates are having?

* (1030)

The interest rates went up again yesterday and many economists are saying we are going into a recession because of it—the devastating effect of those high interest rates on Manitoba businesses, on Manitoba consumers and Manitoba agricultural community.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is a major revelation by the Member opposite when he attacks this report. He may be correct. I do not know. We do not keep the figures, but I can say, who he is imputing as playing around loosely with numbers, is Mal Anderson, Chief Executive Officer of the Credit Union Central; Ed Blackman, President, Local 500, Canadian Union of Public Employees; Richard Frost, Chief Commissioner, City of Winnipeg; Chris Lorenc, City Councillor; Bill Mackness, Dean, Faculty of Management, the University of Manitoba, besides others. That is who he is accusing of playing around with numbers.

With respect to interest rates, let me tell the Member opposite this Government shares his concern, indeed has been leading, in many respects. When we have met as Ministers of Finance I can indicate that this Minister has again and again called upon Finance Minister Wilson to bring pressure to bear with respect to John Crow and moderate these rates, because central, indeed prairie Canada is paying an unfair cost—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Public Accounts Committee Crown Corporations

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): My question is to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). Over the past three weeks we have witnessed the unraveling of a failed public enterprise. The failure of Place Promenade and the risks taken with \$26.7 million of public funds have the citizens of Manitoba scratching their heads with confusion and with suspicion. This Government did not negotiate this failed deal. It was negotiated by the NDP Government, a Government which gave away possibly millions of taxpayers' money to a failed developer. It is now this Government which is left to pick up the pieces.

Will the Minister of Finance, a man who prides himself on accountability and responsibility, immediately call a special meeting of the Public Accounts Committee so we can sort out the mess that was created by the NDP Government and a mess which has deepened under the Tory administration?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I take the question seriously. As the Member knows, the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) has been delegated by the First Minister (Mr. Filmon) of this province to be responsible and to report fully and openly to the Members of this House.

Crown Corporations Accountability

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question to the Minister of Finance. There are millions of Manitoba tax dollars spent by the North Portage Development Corporation and by The Forks Renewal Corporation. At no time is the Legislature of this province given an opportunity to question how those funds are spent. I find it odd that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) would not immediately embrace the concept of responsibility and accountability to this Legislature. So I ask him, will he ensure that routinely, at least once a year, the officers of the North Portage Development Corporation and The Forks Renewal Corporation are brought to task and accounted in front of the people of Manitoba through their elected representatives?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I will look into that. I make no promises, but given that this Government has done everything it can over the first year and a half to make more accountable those agencies of Government, to come forward before

committee to a larger extent, that will really begin to be noticeably happening after the next budget comes down, particularly in the area of lotteries and some of the other agencies that have escaped scrutiny. I have no problem in looking as to whether or not we have a claim in calling forward those organizations which we do not totally fund but indeed share-fund to see whether or not there is some precedent and whether there is some legal opportunity for us to call them forward for greater accountability.

Mr. Carr: Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance has 18.5 million claims to call those people in front of a legislative committee.

Public Accounts Committee Crown Corporations

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Would the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) give this House one reason why he will not call a special meeting of the Public Accounts Committee to hold the North Portage Development Corporation to account for the expenditure of the taxpayers' money of the Province of Manitoba?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I know the Member opposite has been on this soap box now for three weeks and has gone nowhere, and I realize he is desperately trying to coup something out of his attack. Let me say—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is suggesting that the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) has some reason, other than attempting to get to the truth in this matter, for raising these questions, and I think that is a clear imputation of motive and I would ask him to withdraw that.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. There is no point of order.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I would choose to believe, as all Honourable Members of this House should, that every response provided by the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) has been truthful.

I can indicate to the Member opposite that at this point in time, and I hesitate to even speculate, but if the Government has ways and means, if there are certain allegations that are made—and I challenge the Member opposite—if there are certain hard allegations that he wishes to make, let him make them, and let him put them onto paper to me, because my role then is—if I deem that they are serious, I will call in the Provincial Auditor. Let him make the hard allegations to me on paper, and that is what I can work in within my powers as the Minister of Finance of this province.

Winnipeg Education Centre Native Instructors

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, Judge Murray Sinclair rather passionately explained his concern for the needs of Natives in Manitoba. The necessity for Native teachers as role models for all children is obvious, and it would indeed be a most positive move to see an increase in the number of Native educators.

Out of 2,300 teachers in the Winnipeg No. 1 School Division, only 36, or 1.5 percent, are Native. The final report of the results of the comprehensive audit of the programs of the Winnipeg Education Centre, dated December 13, 1989, which the Minister refuses to table—another example of his lack of concern for core area and Native individuals; I would like to do that today—indicates the concern that graduates from their programs are not being hired by our school divisions.

Mr. Speaker, can the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) tell the House what actions his department are undertaking to promote and encourage the hiring of graduates from the Winnipeg Education Centre?

* (1040)

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Mr. Speaker, I regret that the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) perhaps missed the question by the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) when he asked whether I would table the report done on the Winnipeg Education Centre, and I said, yes, indeed that I would.

In fact, that report is now being run off and, as soon as we have a sufficient number of copies, that report will be tabled for all Members in this House and in this Legislature. There is a required number that need to be tabled.

With regard to the question on Native teachers in this province, Mr. Speaker, there are several things that have been done with regard to attracting students, if you like, to the education programs in the province, not just in Winnipeg, but indeed in rural Manitoba and in northern Manitoba. This Government has moved the BUNTEP centre, for example, in Thompson, to give it a better profile, a more independent kind of approach where students can go to the centre to be trained as teachers for the Province of Manitoba.

I have been in consultation with the University of Manitoba, the Winnipeg Education Centre, with regard to moving students out of the inner city and into other areas of the province so they can indeed get experience in other schools as well. We are doing everything we can to encourage as many students as possible to enter the area of the teaching field, because we—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Funding

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): Will the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) act quickly this time to assure that the \$50,000 promised in a letter of January 3, from

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the Department of Family Services to the Winnipeg Education Centre, will be made available, in that there is a deadline of February 28 and grave concern that this funding may well be in jeopardy?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): I do not have any jurisdiction over the Department of Family Services, and I will take that question as notice and get back to the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo).

Construction Delay

Mrs. Iva Yeo (Sturgeon Creek): Mr. Speaker, when will the Winnipeg Education Centre receive the green light to begin building their new centre, a plan that has been on hold pending the results of the study, the study that was completed on December 13?

Hon. Leonard Derkach (Minister of Education and Training): Once again the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) asks a repetitive question, because that question was indeed posed by the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) last week. We indicated, and the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) says that they did not receive an answer, and yet in the House I indicated that the report will be tabled as soon as possible and that indeed—(interjection)—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Derkach: Mr. Speaker, I indicated that I would not only table the report, but because the report was so positive about the program that indeed we will be proceeding as soon as possible with the plans for the Winnipeg Education Centre.

Crow Benefit Payment Plan

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, in previous questions I have asked the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay)—and we have established in this House that the Minister's own report forecasts a devastating shortfall of some \$75 million if the Crow benefit is paid to producers on the basis of all arable acres. That is on page 17 of Report 2, and it is a fact according to that report. We have established that there would be acceleration of rail line abandonment in this province, particularly in the Parkland area of the province and the Rossburn subdivision and many other areas of this province. Yet this Minister persistently refuses to aggressively oppose the pay-the-producer method.

I ask the Minister—his Party has stated that there are opportunities, his studies say there are opportunities for Manitoba producers and for processing—where are those opportunities going to occur in Manitoba?

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): The Members opposite talk about gloom and doom and lack of economic opportunity in this province. We have in place a process that is going out and analyzing where there might be possible economic opportunities. Three discussion papers have been put out. He reads the

gloom and doom figures of the negative side of the report. He refuses to read the sections that have some positive potential opportunities.

We are now out putting that information in front of the farm public and the agribusiness community of rural Manitoba, in fact all of Manitoba, so that they can analyze it and make judgements to relate back to us the directions they believe are positive for them and for the economy of the Province of Manitoba. I would ask the Member to do justice to those reports, to read them in their entirety rather than try to draw gloom and doom all the time. We have opportunities in this province. Because of them, they are trying to destroy them.

Mr. Plohman: No opportunities are listed nor identified by this Minister. He has a responsibility to ensure that producers understand the negative impacts, how this can hurt the Manitoba economy and producers.

Impact Livestock Industry

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): The Minister's report, Mr. Speaker, talks about increased livestock production. Can the Minister explain how this can happen? If Alberta is going to subsidize by an additional \$100 million, how is there going to be a level playing field? How can he ensure there are going to be any markets in the U.S. when they are upping their inspection fees by 1,000 percent and when it is simply going to be—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The question has been put. The Honourable Minister of Agriculture.

Hon. Glen Findlay (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, what the Member says is absolutely unbelievable. I would love to see him go to a farm community meeting and put that on the record and then hear what they have to say back to him. I mean, he thinks we are going to die, go away, wither up and blow away in the dust. It is absolutely unbelievable.

They destroyed the livestock industry in this province, consistently, steadily. They closed Canada Packers. They drove down the feedlot industry. They drove out the packers. Now he says we are trying to bring it back, and he says it is wrong.

Alberta, \$100 million of additional subsidy—yes, we are totally opposed to it. What we are doing is developing a basis to oppose that, Mr. Speaker. That is the message we are going to take to Alberta and to the federal Government. We want a level playing field in this country—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that it was the NDP Government that put in place a livestock program, a stabilization program, that rescued the beef industry in this province, contrary to what the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey) did when he was Minister of Agriculture.

This report, Mr. Speaker, also identifies loss of production in alfalfa and dehydration plants in this province. Forty employees are jeopardized in Dauphin—

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

Mr. Plohman: I ask this Minister, is he going to stand by and let those employees be put out of a job in Dauphin and Minnedosa and other areas where these plants are operating at this time, in view of his support for the pay-the-producer method?

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

Mr. Findlay: Mr. Speaker, there is no question that there are some challenges to the agriculture industry with regard to what is going to happen in the future, regardless of whether he says no to any method of payment change. That is exactly what he is saying—no change, put your head in the sand, build some walls and we will not allow our producers to compete in the international market.

Our producers can and will be able to compete. We identified some barriers. We will find ways and means to work around those barriers. To have your head in the sand and say the future shall not be analyzed is totally irresponsible on his part.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Dauphin (Mr. Plohman) and the Honourable Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay) have had your opportunity to get your remarks on the record. Now I am sure Honourable Members would like to give the Member for Kildonan (Mr. Cheema) the same opportunity.

Health Care Policy Consultants

Mr. Gulzar Cheema (Kildonan): Mr. Speaker, each year millions of taxpayers' dollars are spent in the Department of Health to provide this Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) with top-notch policy people. This Minister of Health also has a \$500,000 Health Advisory Network to advise him to draft policies in Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, now he has hired outside consultants for \$10,000 to develop a policy paper on health. Can he explain why?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, from time to time within the ministry, over the last 20 months, we have engaged people from the medical community, in and out of this province, to develop specific issue papers to help guide us in formulation of policy and direction of health care for the betterment of care delivery to the people of Manitoba. I make no apology for that.

Mr. Cheema: Can the Minister tell us why the Minister did not find a qualified person in Manitoba to develop a policy made in Manitoba for the people of Manitoba, why he has to hire somebody out of Toronto, why he

is wasting \$10,000 for someone? He should be hiring people from Manitoba.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, within the Province of Manitoba the Department of Health, with its \$1.65 billion budget employs more Manitobans than any other single initiative undertaken in the Province of Manitoba. That employment continues to rise because we have continued to fund higher and higher levels of health care delivery in the Province of Manitoba. I make no apology for that because that is the mandate, to provide care and to do it with Manitobans.

Mr. Cheema: In October 1988, this Minister stated we do not need another huge stack of studies. Now is the time to act. Can the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) tell this House what aspects of health care this paper is going to study, why he is wasting another \$10,000 of taxpayers' dollars when people are waiting for necessary surgery in Manitoba? Why is he hiring somebody outside Manitoba?

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Speaker, I guess we now have the new Liberal policy on health as of January 26, 1990. It has changed again because on Tuesday of this week they said the policy was not as their Leader enunciated in Minnedosa, to throw 40 percent of Manitobans out of personal care home beds.

My honourable friend, the Liberal Leader (Mrs. Carstairs), said she never said that. I want her to deny the direct quotation in The Minnedosa Times and say it is not factual where she said they—

* (1050)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. Time for Oral Questions has expired.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, will you call the Bills in the following order - (interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I am sure all Honourable Members would like to hear what the Honourable Acting Government House Leader has to say.

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, would you call the Bills in the following order today, please: Bills Nos. 31, 59, 60, 65, 81, 77, 78 and 39.

HOUSE BUSINESS

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): I would also like to announce that a Law Amendments Committee will meet on Tuesday, January 30, 10 a.m., in Room 255 to consider Bills Nos. 63, 64 and 83.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Second Opposition House Leader): On a matter of House Business, I am wondering if the Acting Government House Leader (Mr. Manness) can indicate the Government's intentions in terms of the

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Committee on Privileges and Elections, following from the resolution that was passed by the Legislature, when they intend on calling that committee.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. On that point raised by the Honourable Member for Thompson, I believe that House Leaders can get together at another time to discuss that matter.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 31—THE LABOUR RELATIONS AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond), Bill No. 31, The Labour Relations Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les relations du travail, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak), the Honourable Member for The Pas.

Mr. Harry Harapiak (The Pas): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise and participate in the debate on Bill No. 31, The Labour Relations Amendment Act, a Bill that I believe should never have been brought into this House.

I think it was because of a philosophical bent of the Conservative Party, we have made a commitment to his friends and from the Chamber of Commerce and the business community that they would eliminate this Bill if they ever formed Government. I think they had no choice but to bring it in, even though it shows very clearly they have never done any critique of how well the Bill was working because of the previous Minister of Labour's philosophical bent. He has insisted on bringing the Bill in.

I am not surprised that the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) will bring the Bill in because I can see where he sits by the comments he makes of where he sits when it comes to supporting working people. Very clearly, you could see why he would bring it in.

What I am surprised about is the new Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond) continuing to bring this Bill in. You would think that she would have done an assessment of how well the Bill is working, and do a critique on how the number of cases that have been brought before the final selection board have been resolved or how the strikes have been averted, or how the labour relations have really improved in this province since that Act was brought in, rather than just continuing on to repeal the Bill as they had promised they would do.

Mr. Speaker, I come to speak on this debate from a particular point of view. I guess that is understandable, because I do come from the labour community. I worked as a miner for many years. I have been involved in labour relations from that perspective, and I have been involved in some lengthy strikes when I worked for International Nickel at Sudbury. I was involved in a lengthy strike when Mine Mill at that time was a union and International Nickel got into a labour dispute. It went on for pretty near a year. The strike went on for

nine months. I know how vicious a strike can be. In that particular strike, there were families at that time who came to fisticuffs in many cases and to this day there are hard feelings that exist in families, in communities and within the working people.

I think any tool that we can bring forward to improve the manner of negotiations is something that we should be bringing forward. In this particular case very clearly the final offer selection is not being imposed on anyone, but it is an additional tool that can be used for bargaining. It has been very successful, and it is unfortunate the Government continues to insist on repealing that Bill, which has worked very well since it was brought in.

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

Mr. Acting Speaker, I also was involved from the other side of the negotiating table as well for many years as I served as a member of a school trustee in the Town of The Pas. I was a chairman of the school board and I was also chairperson of the negotiating committee. I know how difficult negotiations can be. Anytime you can have some additional instruments that you can use in the whole process of negotiations, I think it would be appreciated on both sides. I think it quite often does prolong the negotiations, and does lead to poorer relationships. I think the students in that case are the ones who would be affected when the negotiations get pretty tough.

I think some of those cases would have been much easier to deal with if they had the final offer selection option to them. I know in Ontario, where there were prolonged negotiations in dealing in the field of education, if they would have had a final offer selection process there, I am sure it would have been resolved at a much earlier stage than it had been.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I also want to bring up the fact that there is a sunset clause in this final offer selection. The final offer selection process came into being on January 1, of 1988 and if it was not working, it would have gone on for a five-year period. Surely, we have gone through two years now of positive results from final offer selection.

The Government is afraid of how well this final offer selection is working. That is why they are attempting to repeal it before there is too much of a history to show that it is working. They are making good on their election promise to the Chamber of Commerce and other members of the business community that they would repeal this Bill. That is why they are moving on their election promise to repeal that.

During the time of our debate on bringing in final offer selection in 1987, it was very clear that the Member, who is Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) at this time, was the critic for Labour, was leading the fight against final offer selection ever coming into being. I know, when they were looking at the final offer selection Bill, they certainly were not concerned about the benefits of the final offer selection to the working people.

It is unfortunate that they did not look at it from that perspective because I have often heard the Member who is Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae) at this time say

that he is a working person himself. He is always speaking out for the best interests of the working people, but it certainly did not show during the debate. When you look at Hansards during his debate, he certainly was not concerned for working people. He was just trying to fearmonger and trying to show that labour relations in Manitoba would break down. That is why he was speaking against the final offer selection process ever coming in.

I guess I am not surprised that the Conservatives are speaking in support of repealing this Bill, because they come from a particular philosophical bent. They have that perspective, but I am surprised at the Liberal Party who are not supporting the working people in this process, because quite often they pretend to speak for the working people. I know that -(interjection)- yes, some of them make the comment that it is the limousine Liberals.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I know many examples have been brought forward recently of how they really are limousine Liberals. They are not speaking for the working people in this province. They are speaking for the Chamber of Commerce, the same as the Conservative Party is.

An Honourable Member: Whatever are you speaking for, Harry?

Mr. Harapiak: The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) wants to know who I am speaking for. I have clearly—when I have got up and spoke, I said that I do come from a labour background. I certainly am speaking for the working people of this province.

If the Minister of Northern Affairs had been paying a little closer attention, he would have also realized that I did spend time on the other side of the negotiating table as well. I spoke for the taxpayers of this province too.

I agree that there have to be serious negotiations, but I think there needs to be fair negotiations. Fairness is one of the things that we are talking about when we talk about continuing to carry on with this final offer selection.

* (1100)

Mr. Acting Speaker, as we continue on with this debate, we can promise this House that we are going to be using every tactic that we have available to us to continue this debate. I think it is unfortunate that the coalition between the Liberals and the Conservatives are going to be not supporting it. It is unfortunate that we do not have the Liberals standing up and giving their position on this Bill.

Their critic for Labour got up and spoke on it very briefly. In his speech he indicated quite clearly that he was speaking for the Liberal Caucus when he said that they are opposed to improving the labour relations in Manitoba. Therefore they were supporting the Chamber of Commerce and the Conservative Government in making sure that this Bill was repealed, because they did not feel it was helping the working people. I think that they probably have been getting some information which will hopefully change their mind.

I have to give credit to the Member for Radisson (Mr. Patterson) who when he spoke up recognized that there were some benefits to the final offer selection the way it was working in the Province of Manitoba. I think if the Member for Radisson had his way that they would be supporting this Bill. Of course, if the Member for Radisson had his way they would be supporting many of the amendments that our Consumer Critic was bringing forward in Bills No. 63 and 64, but when the amendments were brought forward to the Liberal Caucus, he apparently got shot down very quickly because he had given indication that some of these Bills were worthy of support, some of these amendments are worthy of support, but when they went to the Liberal Caucus the right wingers in that caucus came forward and they very clearly shot it down. They shot the amendments down or they were not able to support them.

I think it is unfortunate. They should take advantage of some of the years of experience that the Member of Radisson (Mr. Patterson) has had in speaking in support of some of those amendments.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gaudry): The Honourable Member for Radisson, on a point of order.

Mr. Allan Patterson (Radisson): Mr. Acting Speaker, I would like to just point out that some of the remarks of the Member for The Pas are imputing motives that are not there.

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

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gaudry): The Honourable Member for The Pas.

Mr. Harapiak: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker, I was not imputing any motives. The Member for Inkster is very sensitive because I guess he has not had an opportunity to stand up and speak to this Bill. His Leader gave the position of the Liberal Party in 1987 which showed they were very clearly against the working people in this province and they are supporting the Chamber of Commerce and big business in this community. They have shown it at every opportunity. She has shown it and now she has told the Liberal Party no, you cannot speak on this so none of the Liberal Members have been getting up. I was not imputing motives, I was just stating facts.

I think it is unfortunate that the Member for Radisson's (Mr. Patterson) leadership was not followed, because I think he had some good points when he spoke on this Bill. They should be taking advantage of his years of experience and his years of wisdom and follow his leadership and speak very positively about this Bill and support it.

Mr. Acting Speaker, this Bill reminds me of another situation that we are faced with at the federal

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Government level when you were dealing with the goods and services tax. The Liberals again are falling down and they are too preoccupied with the leadership race that is going on. They are not having an opportunity to speak on the goods and services tax. It is being left to the New Democrats in the federal House to try and stop the goods and services tax. Our leader at the federal level is using every tactic that is available to him to try and stop the goods and services tax. That is the same process that we are going to be using here when we are speaking on this final offer selection, because the Liberals have abdicated their responsibility as Members of the Legislature. They are blindly following the leadership of their Leader the Member for River Heights (Mrs. Carstairs) and not speaking for the working people of this province.

They have formed a coalition with the Conservatives and the Chamber of Commerce. They are very clearly going to be going ahead and speaking against the working people and not supporting the working people in this province and going to go and support the Member for River Heights because she has very clearly put her opposition to the final offer selection. She was clearly on record as being opposed to final offer selection. Since that time she has not allowed her Members to come forward and put their positions.

I am sure that there are surely some Members of the Liberal Party who are going to speak up for working people in this province and get up and support this - (interjection)- the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) says we always speak for—they certainly must have different types of working people in their constituency than I have in mine. The working people that I have spoken to have said that they are very pleased with the way this Bill No. 31 or the final offer selection has been serving the people of this province.

They have pointed out that since this final offer selection process has been in place that it has been used 69 times. Forty-eight of those cases have reached agreement. I think there are some interesting results, Mr. Acting Speaker.

First of all, only five have gone to the final selection stage. Of the five that have gone to the final selection stage, it is important to note that three of those applications were ruled on in favour of the bargaining unit for the labour people. Two were ruled on in favour of management. I think that is a fairly even split. I do not think that there is that fear that the Conservative Members were bringing forward when this Bill was first being debated in 1987 that it was going to be clearly favouring the labour unions in this province.

I think it is unfortunate, Mr. Acting Speaker, when the debate was going on on this Bill in 1987 that they very clearly got into personalities rather than debating the principles of the Bill. They got into personalities, where they were saying that certain union members were being favoured by supporting this Bill and it was very clear they were being bought off to pay off political favours. I think where the political favours are being paid off is with the Conservatives blindly going and repealing this final offer selection when it very clearly has been working well. It was brought out to be a further tool that they can use when there is going to

be a strike situation. I think it was an additional tool which would be used to resolve the disputes that are going on without carrying on with a lengthy strike.

We said that would happen when we openly debated this Bill in 1987. Our predictions are coming true, Mr. Acting Speaker. It is being used as an innovative tool and it is a new mechanism for negotiations in Manitoba. There are many jurisdictions that we can point to to show that it has been previously used. I think you can go back to the United Kingdom where it was used at the beginning of the century to resolve disputes during that period of time.

* (1110)

During our debate, we have indicated that there are jurisdictions in the United States who have had the experience of dealing with labour disputes and negotiations by the using of a tool of final offer selection. I know that in the United States, in New Jersey, in Massachusetts, in Wisconsin, Oregon, Michigan, and other locations in Canada, this innovative mechanism for resolving collective bargaining disputes has been used and now we have shown that in Manitoba it can be used, and it is used very effectively.

I think that we should be looking at it again. I would hope that the Liberal Party would do some research on this, because they seem to have the capacity to do research on other areas. I think in this particular case their Leader has very clearly indicated, no, you cannot even speak on this, our position is clear, I stated in 1987 where we stand.

So it is a matter of principle with them so they cannot take the initiative to think on their own. They have to follow the Leader, because she has given them the order of where the position is.

I had indicated, at the beginning of my comments, that I had the experience on both sides of the negotiation table, and I think it is important that we have all the tools that are possibly available so that we can sit down and work out the differences when there are negotiations going on.

I know through experience that there is sometimes very difficult bargaining going on to settle not only wage disputes but also working conditions, and I think it is important that we have every opportunity to sit down, negotiate and come to some agreements that are serving both sides. We cannot have a system where one side is favoured. I think that sometimes when you are dealing with settlements that are difficult to come by it is helpful to have a set of tools, any kind of tools, to help us through very difficult bargaining.

Some of the tools that I talk about have been developed over many, many years. I talk about collective bargaining itself and some of the other situations that have been developed over the years to make bargaining more amicable as a mediation conciliation. Sometimes it is not possible for two sides to get to a bargaining table and resolve it, and I guess that is why they have come up with a tool of binding and non-binding arbitration. Of course then there is always the ultimate weapon that we hoped that we would never need, but that is the right to strike and to lock out.

I know that in my own constituency, in The Pas, in the last little while, even though there is a process of final offer selection in Manitoba, I guess this points out that negotiations are not always fair. They say that only the employees have the opportunity to vote on the implementation of the final offer selection.

I would like to point out for the Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) in The Pas at this time, during the Christmas period there was a hotel that locked out their employees. Is that fair? They would not even discuss, they would not even negotiate with their employees.- (interjection)-

Well, the Member for Fort Garry wants to know how many other provinces had it. Ontario has had it and it worked very well during the time it was in. Therefore, if the Member for Fort Garry has some particular hang-ups, I guess it is because of the fact that his Leader has told him they were opposed to it and they were not going to, the fact that it is available and it is working well, then the Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) should give it an opportunity to work. It is going to be in for another period of three years. It has been working well in the 69 situations that it has been used in now. It has worked very successfully. Then why not leave it in? It is in right now. Why do you want to repeal it?

I guess the Member for Fort Garry is getting very exercised about this and I am not sure why he is so upset. I guess it is the fact that his Leader has told him that he cannot speak on it and really express his real opinion on it. It is unfortunate that she would not give him a little bit of rope and let him put his opinion on record here. Therefore it is too bad the Member for Fort Garry would not get up and state his position there.

Once the critic for Labour got up and spoke then they said, we are opposed to this, so they have spoken for all of caucus. It is unfortunate that the Member for Fort Garry, I can understand why he is frustrated because he cannot get up and put his true feelings on the record because the Leader has told him he cannot do it. I have spoken for the Liberal Caucus, she said, and therefore you will follow my position.

I was in the process of speaking about this labour dispute in The Pas that went on over the Christmas period. The employees of the Wescana hotel were locked out. Is that a fair process? They would not sit down and negotiate and locked out their employees. I guess there is still some unfairness in the labour relations in Manitoba. I would hope the employer would reconsider his position. Obviously he started to reconsider it because they have agreed to let the employees back in. At this time they are now going back into bargaining. The employees have gone back to work and they are continuing the bargaining process. I think it is good that he has reconsidered and gone back to the bargaining table.- (interjection)-

Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister of Municipal Affairs asked me if I watched the news. Unfortunately, I was out and had other commitments so I did not have the opportunity to watch the news, but I am sure he has some words of wisdom that are going to help me in speaking to this Bill so maybe he would like to give me some advice as to what transpired in—

An Honourable Member: I just wanted to know whether you did that by free choice or not.

* (1120)

Mr. Harapiak: Free choice is something that seems to be bothering both the Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) and the Minister of Municipal Affairs. We have put this in and it is free choice to use it. The employers can ask for it and the employees can ask for it. I think it is a free choice if they want to use it. It has been used in 69 situations in Manitoba. Of the ones that have gone through their final analysis then it should - (interjection)-

Well, the Minister for Municipal Affairs says, should it be left to free choice? If it is left to free choice then it will not be here. If this legislation passes then they will not have that choice to use final offer selection, so then they will not have a choice of using it. The choice is there now, we have the choice now, if they want to use it or they do not want to use it and the employers as well can use it. Nobody is forced to use it, it is up to the employers to ask for it. The employees are not forced to, when they see that negotiations have broken down then they can use this as a tool in collective bargaining.

I know that collective bargaining is something that has evolved over many years. I think this is a natural evolution of collective bargaining. I think it has shown in the results we have had in Manitoba that it was a good decision we made back in 1987 when we passed this final offer selection.

I think they should reconsider and continue to let this stay in place and we have time to do a proper evaluation of the whole process. I think the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond) should put some resources towards compiling all the statistics and results of how the final offer selection process has been used. I am sure they will see that it was a process that served the public of Manitoba well.

I think during the time that we were debating this resolution in 1987 there were several strikes going on in the Province of Manitoba. I know that since that time labour relations have improved.

I guess that is one of the things the Conservative Members used quite readily in their speeches in 1987, that there was going to be doom and gloom for labour relations in Manitoba. They always say, it is working well, why bring something in which is going to destroy those relations? I do not think it has destroyed it, if anything it has made it better. There have been less strikes, less labour disputes, in this province since the final offer selection process was brought in to serve the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I think there are many questions that have come out in many other jurisdictions about how many other jurisdictions have used final offer selection as the way to improve the process of the negotiations. First, it is important that we put the complaints that have been brought forward by both the Liberal and the Conservative Parties in proper historical perspective, because what they are saying

today is no different from what they have said at other times, that an NDP Government that brings forward progressive and innovative labour laws, that every time new labour relations are brought before this Legislature by the NDP Government—it was the last time—that the Tories respond in a predictable way. They say every time they oppose the progressive labour laws, because they bring it out, they are saying they are anti-labour, but they believe that new legislation gives the union too much power over business.

I think that is one of the main reasons the Liberal Party is also opposed to it. The Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) said it is Draconian and it makes it much more balanced towards the union people, towards the working people. I think it is not so and it has proved in a period of time that it has been, that it has not led to reduced labour relations in this province, but it actually has been a positive result of working men and women in this province having another tool in their closet when they go to negotiations.

One of the things that has been raised by some of the speakers that have just spoken from the Conservative ranks is that they say that it is not the working people who will benefit by progressive changes to labour legislation but rather it is, to use their words, that the union bosses will benefit at the expense of the ordinary people. I think when the discussions were going on in 1987 some of the Conservative Members very clearly pointed out this is one of the main reasons they were opposed to the final offer selection process because they said that the heads of those unions will be dictating to the employees just when to use this final offer selection process and when not to, but it still goes to a vote of the general membership so the union bosses are not going to be dictating to the employees when they should be using it. I think that it has shown very clearly that employees have become much more versed in the whole field of negotiations. They are very much informed at every stage of the negotiations.

The days are gone when the union bosses are going to be dictating to the employees just what to expect, what they are going to be fighting for. Rank and file memberships are involved at every step of the way. They are giving direction to the union leaderships as to what they should be fighting for. I think the Conservatives and the Liberals can stop worrying about the union bosses having too much of a hold or too much of a control over the general membership, because the general membership has been very involved in discussions.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it is interesting that any time that there is some labour legislation brought in to improve the labour legislation or employer-employee relations in the Province of Manitoba, the Tories come very quickly and say, they call it gloom and doom of this province, this is going to be the end of this province because we have good labour relations in this province and bringing in an Act at this time would just destroy that whole process. I think that they talk about gloom and doom, but every time there is some legislation brought forward then they talk about the good record we have had. It is surprising, because we have been

the Government for 15 of the last 20 years and there has been a lot of labour relations legislation brought in. It has improved the whole process in the Province of Manitoba. I think that it will continue if this final offer selection is allowed to stay in. It will continue to serve the people of Manitoba in a very positive way.

I would hope that the Liberal Party would come to some agreement and have a look at the results we have had in this province with final offer selection being in place. We should be leaving it in and letting it go for the full five years that we said it would be in place. Then if it is not working at that time then let us exercise the sunset clause which would let it come to an end at that time.

Mr. Acting Speaker, it is surprising that the world, the whole labour relations in the Province of Manitoba have not come crashing down as the Members of the Conservative Party have predicted when we were debating this Bill in 1987.

We have heard from some quarters in unexpected areas that we are getting support for the final offer selection process. I am referring now to the health workers in the Province of Manitoba. The doctors of this province have come forward with some support for the final offer selection process in the Province of Manitoba. I am sure that would surprise the Conservative Party when there was support from this area for the final offer selection process.

In December of '88 the doctors came out with a letter of support for the final offer selection process by writing a letter to the then Minister of Labour, the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery). They asked the Minister of Labour to withdraw the proposed legislation dealing with the repeal of final offer selection. They go on to say that we think the final offer selection was not perfect but on the other hand it is a better option than strike option. We feel that the health care in this province is a trust, and we still hold that arbitration is a reasonable method of settling disputes in the health care field—

An Honourable Member: Who wrote that for you, Harry?

* (1130)

Mr. Harapiak: Mr. Acting Speaker, the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) wants to know who wrote that for me. I want to let him know that this comes from the Free Press. It was a letter sent to the Minister of Labour by the doctors who felt the final offer selection process was one that was working and they should be preserving it rather than going to the strike option. So I think that—

An Honourable Member: Here is to the little guy.

Mr. Harapiak: The Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) seems to be worried about the little guy. If he is genuinely worried about the little guys, then he should speak up in his caucus and tell them they should leave this final offer selection process in place because it is serving the little guys in the Province of Manitoba, it is helping remove some of the strike situations we have had with the doctors.

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We were pleased to see the doctors come onside and support this. We also remember an advertisement that was put in the newspaper during the time that we were bringing in this final offer selection process. There were people against it too, sure. In 1984 there was an advertisement by the Winnipeg and Manitoba Chambers of Commerce and the Mining Association of Manitoba and another employers group that spoke of the threatening of the dark cloud over Manitoba and the peril of the Bill dealing with final offer selection that was more labour relations legislation for all of Manitoba, and they again predicted that there was doom and gloom for the province.

I will quote from that so the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) does not ask me where it is coming from. The ad said: up to now our management and labour relations in Manitoba have been in relative harmony. Indeed, our record for solving problems through discussion at the bargaining tables is outstanding compared to other provinces.

Well, it is not surprising it is outstanding, Mr. Acting Speaker, because we, as a New Democratic Government, brought in some progressive labour legislation in this province. It has helped resolve some of the difficulties that exist in that.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I think one of the things that were predicted in this was that you would not be helping the little people with this process. I know that the big unions or the big businesses do not need this final offer selection. But I think that it helps equalize the negotiations, because there are instances where there are big unions negotiating against the little business people. I think it helps equalize those negotiations. There are times when the little unions are negotiating against big business. I think it also helps to level out those negotiations.

Mr. Acting Speaker, before closing I wanted to comment on some of the people who have done research on final offer selection. It is Hugh Grant from the Economics Department of the University of Winnipeg, and it is unfortunate that the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond) would not take advantage of the opportunity to read this information and just show how effectively it is working in Manitoba. The report goes on to say that in 1988 there were 42 applications for the final offer process. Again it showed that only five of them went to the final process. In the five, three of them ruled in favour of labour; in two of the cases it ruled in favour of the employer group.

So I think, in conclusion, it is clear that the final offer selection process is working well in Manitoba. I would hope that both the Liberals and the Conservatives would reconsider the position that has been taken by the Liberal Leader (Mrs. Carstairs) and read some of the research that is available to show that the final offer selection process is working, and speak up for the working people of Manitoba and give this process another three years to work. If there is not some great turnaround in the meantime, if it continues to work, then let it stay as a negotiating tool in Manitoba, rather than repealing it at this time.

So, Mr. Acting Speaker, I would urge you to speak to your caucus Members and try to get some common

sense brought into that process and have them reconsider their position and not repeal this law that has been working well for the working men and women of this province. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Mr. Acting Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for The Pas (Mr. Harapiak), that debate be adjourned.

MOTION presented and carried.

BILL NO. 59—THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS AMENDMENT ACT

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gaudry): On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), Bill No. 59, The Public Schools Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur les écoles publiques, the Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker. I would like to speak and have the Bill remain standing in the name of my colleague from Logan (Ms. Hemphill).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Gaudry): Is it agreed that it remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Logan? Agreed. The Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Storie: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) for sharing with the Opposition Critics, myself and the Member for Sturgeon Creek (Mrs. Yeo) the amendments that he intended to introduce with respect to The Public Schools Act, and Bill No. 60, The Education Administration Act.

The time we spent, I think, gave us, certainly gave me, a better understanding of what the intentions of the Minister of Education were, where the motivation, the impetus for these changes originated. I think it was quite useful in terms of determining the purposes, at least the overt purposes of these amendments.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I want to say that while I appreciated the discussion of the Minister of Education, and I appreciated his input, we did have several disagreements about the strength of the amendments that are proposed, about the necessity for some of the amendments. I did take the liberty, obviously, of discussing these amendments in detail with the Manitoba Association of School Trustees and the Manitoba Teachers Society, both of whom obviously have a stake in the amendments as proposed.

I have also had the opportunity to discuss this with individual teachers and discuss this with others who have a deep interest in the public school system. I want to say that while much of what is being proposed is supportable, there are some major weaknesses in this legislation. I would like to begin by addressing some of those.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the first amendments proposed deal with, I think, some unusual circumstances in our

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largest school division, the Frontier School Division, and with the circumstances in some of our smallest school districts. Those special circumstances of both Frontier School Division and school divisions like the Whiteshell and Snow Lake School District in Lynn Lake and a number of others are quite unique. The amendments, as proposed, with respect to those circumstances, I think have received general approval.

I was in Snow Lake only a week ago, had a chance to meet with the principal there and the teachers and talked about the necessity for some amendments to help them deal with the unique situation that they find themselves in, where the principal also acts as the chief executive officer, or the superintendent, for the school board. Clearly there are occasions when there are conflicts of interest, internal conflicts of interest, when certain matters are discussed. Part of the amendments we have before us today deals with that conflict.

Unfortunately, after discussing it with some superintendents and discussing it with some teachers and people who are going to be affected by this legislation, it is not at all clear to me that the amendments, as proposed, are going to clear up all of the problems. I think, unfortunately, while this will solve some of the problems, with respect to those conflicts, how does a principal, for example, discuss the budget, the potential for layoffs with the school board and yet not discuss it with his colleagues and teachers, his staff who are clearly going to be affected by it? So he wears two hats at the same time. It is very difficult.

* (1140)

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

But the amendments, while they will make it easier for half of the duties that these individuals who serve two roles fulfill, they are going to make it more difficult for the half that they apparently now have or will apparently have abandoned.

So it is a dilemma, and I am not sure that the proposed solution is anymore palatable, if you will, Mr. Speaker, than the current status quo, the current circumstances. Clearly, we will have to wait and see.

The other amendments that are being proposed deal with the appointment of official trustees and the ability of the Minister to designate additional areas within the province that may be considered part of the Frontier School Division, part of the Northern School Division. Those amendments are, I think, quite positive and they represent really what has been taking place in the Frontier School Division.

Frontier School Division has been acting like any other school board although the election of its officers, of its board, I should say is quite unique. They have been operating very much like a school board and have grown tremendously in terms of sharing the responsibilities of operating that school division over the past few years. I think the changes that were made back in 1983-84 were supportive of the new direction for Frontier School Division and I know these amendments take it a step further, and that is to be desired.

We also have some amendments which deal with the question of residency, particularly when it deals with individuals who are under the supervision, the care of an agency under The Child and Family Services Act or The Young Offenders Act.

This clears up some problems that school divisions have been having where for reason of geography or accident, school divisions are faced with circumstances of children in care, there being great numbers of children in care in their particular region. I know areas like the Kelsey School Division in The Pas have experienced this problem, others perhaps like the communities of Dauphin and so forth have experienced problems, as have some school divisions in Winnipeg, probably most notably the Winnipeg School Division itself, the largest school division in the province.

I noticed that MAST has indicated its support for these amendments. Obviously their concern is that this change in definition, this change in reference to resident pupil does not impact negatively on their budget. It is certainly their understanding that the provincial per pupil grant would be provided to the schools in which these new resident pupils are designated. I am hoping that is the case. The Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) obviously will want to answer that, because the school divisions I think need to have a fairly clear understanding of what the Minister's intentions are before they could finally approve this particular amendment.

The Minister is also, as I say, giving himself authority to establish under the section that allows him to create school divisions, to add schools to school divisions in the Northern Affairs area actually, and those amendments will give the Minister the power to take individual schools or school districts, those small school districts I was talking about earlier, and make them part of a larger operation.

It is quite conceivable that some of the small schools in eastern Manitoba, I am thinking of the Falcon Beach School, of the school in the Whiteshell school district, and others may become part of the Frontier School Division. This gives him the authority to do that, and I am assuming that authority will only be used with the consent of the school district affected or the school affected and with consultation and the appropriate discussions with local residents as well.

It seems to me that authority should be there because I am aware, and I am sure other Members in this Chamber are aware, of some of the difficulties being experienced by those small schools and the need for them to be a part of a larger school district with greater resources for their students and for staff as well.

Mr. Speaker, another principle of this Bill relates to the election of school trustees. One of the proposed amendments deals with the definition, I guess, of who is qualified to be a school trustee. There was, several years ago, a great deal of uncertainty surrounding a particular case which was quite prominently discussed in the local media, about who was qualified to be a trustee and under what circumstances these certain individuals could be trustees.

This amendment simply brings The Public Schools Act in line with The Local Authorities Election Act.

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People will recall that particular Act was passed several years ago which provided for ground rules for the election of municipal councillors and town councillors, et cetera. This simply makes sure that The Public Schools Act and the elections of trustees follow the same principles with respect to who is qualified to run for office as The Local Authorities Election Act. I think it is a good amendment and I know that both the teachers society and the Manitoba Association of School Trustees support that amendment.

Mr. Speaker, the Bill goes on to make some recommendations with respect to home schooling. Home schooling, as Members of the Chamber know, has increasingly become a concern of school divisions across the province, (a) because every time parents choose to school their child or their children at home, the school division loses revenue. So one of their concerns, clearly, has been the loss of revenue to the school division where this has occurred.

In some school divisions the problem has been particularly acute. In some school divisions the loss of per pupil support from the province for 10 or 15 or 20 or 30 or 40 students, is a significant change to their total overall operating budget. It is certainly a legitimate concern. The Minister is now proposing to implement some quite serious changes. The Minister is proposing to make some changes which are quite onerous as far as the school boards are concerned.

I know that the trustees association has also met with the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach). They have made it very clear that, with respect to this amendment, they are not satisfied. There is a great deal of concern among the school trustees about the obligations that these amendments will place on school divisions. They are concerned about the costs of following up on these amendments, because the amendments give the school division a lot more responsibility, both with respect to tracking pupils who are being home schooled and providing information, assessment, monitoring the activities of these home schooling incidences.

The school divisions through the Manitoba Association of School Trustees, along with the Teachers Society, had actually made recommendations earlier that were substantially different than what the Minister is proposing. Back in 1987, the committee had been formed. In fact, I was the Minister responsible for Education at the time. A committee was formed to make recommendations on home schooling and those recommendations did come forward some time after I had moved from the portfolio, the final proposals, but they were substantially different than what the Minister is proposing.

Of course, the school divisions always are faced with the dilemma of rising expectations, rising costs for implementing provincial policy. The school divisions, I believe, were anxious to have the province assume more authority for monitoring these situations. I know as well that those involved in home schooling—in fact, there is a home schooling association in the province, and they were also anxious to have the province assume responsibility for monitoring home schooling situations.

Mr. Speaker, I am prepared to go out on a limb and support the school divisions on this matter. First of all,

I want to make it clear and I believe I made it clear when I was Minister of Education that home schooling is a parental right. It is a serious, serious undertaking. I believe that there are parents home schooling who are home schooling with the wrong motivation, with some misapprehensions about what goes on in public schools, or what the public school system is about, but clearly that is their right to choose.

* (1150)

I do not believe, incidentally, that the school divisions or the province is obligated in any way to provide support, or tremendous support, to those who choose to home school. But it is their right and it is important that they maintain that right. However, our obligation and the Minister of Education's (Mr. Derkach) obligation, Mr. Speaker, is to make sure that those children are obtaining an appropriate level of education, that there is actually home schooling going on, that it is not another form of truancy, if you will.

So the province's obligation, I think, should be to provide feedback to those who choose home schooling as to the success of their program, and in many cases they can be successful. But, as I say, it is a tremendous responsibility and it is an onerous responsibility. Not all of the parents, clearly, who desire home schooling for whatever reason—because they do not like the school that their child may be attending, or there are disagreements with the program that is offered, or whatever their reason—we still have an obligation as a society to make sure that system of home schooling is not abusing or putting at a disadvantage these particular students.

So what I would like to do and I had suggested at the time was a twofold system: one where it was clear that the school divisions had responsibility for monitoring the choices of parents in their school division, where the school division had the responsibility for keeping track of the number and the location of home schoolers in their division, but the responsibility for making sure that the home schooling was actually meeting its objectives would be up to the province and the parents. I think that is the position that was taken by the Manitoba Association of School Trustees. I think that is the position that was taken by the home schooling association. I believe that it is consistent with common sense, given the fact that the parents have already chosen, for whatever reason, not to have an involvement with a particular school division.

Mr. Speaker, I think that there is a need to act quickly on the issue of home schooling, but I am not sure that simply pawning off the problem to school divisions is the appropriate way to go. I think that this has been done carelessly. It is not one of the areas that I will find it particularly easy to support, given the fact that the trustees are saying they are strongly opposed to this amendment. That is their words. They are strongly opposed to this amendment. I think the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) should wake up and perhaps rethink this particular amendment.

Mr. Speaker, there is another amendment in this Public Schools Act proposal which deals with parental

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access and the right of access to information pertaining to children in the public school system, in our schools. The fact is that the amendment proposes to give parents the right, the unqualified right, and I think it is important to say that, the unqualified right to access school records and files respecting their own children or those for whom they have guardianship.

I think that is a legitimate right, and something that I had proposed—in fact, had met with groups like the Parents for Educational Rights on numerous occasions and discussed how we could make amendments to The Public Schools Act to bring this about.

These amendments I think are a step in the right direction, and I can say that I will be supporting those amendments. I believe that, despite the fact that, again, the Manitoba Association of School Trustees has some concerns, I believe that there are some ways to amend the current proposal that would make it satisfactory. It may be simply a drafting problem that is creating concerns on the part of the Manitoba Association of School Trustees.

I think it is important that all parents, regardless of what school division they are in, have right of access to information pertaining to their own students. It is interesting because I had many discussions with teachers, the Manitoba Association of School Principals, educational administration association, et cetera, about this requirement, this need, the concern that parents' groups seem to have about access to information.

Frankly, I did hear some horror stories. I did hear of situations where individuals were sent for psychological assessment. The parents were either notified late or not properly informed of the school's, the teacher's decision to have this assessment done. I am aware of circumstances where the parents were denied access to the results of such assessments. Clearly that is wrong. As a teacher, as an educator, I believe fundamentally that the school's and the teacher's job is a shared responsibility with parents. That is the only way that it can function adequately.

If it is going to be a shared responsibility, then parents have to have access to all of the information pertaining to the skills and the abilities, the aptitudes, the psychological profiles of their individual children. They need to know for two reasons: No. 1, they need to know because clearly that information affects the way the school system deals with that individual pupil but also because that information can be wrong, that information can have consequences for the subsequent placement of students in educational programs, it can have consequences for future opportunities for those children. So the parents have a right to know that information. What I found interesting and what is certainly interesting is that in most circumstances schools, individual principals and teachers willingly shared that kind of information with parents.

In fact over my tenure in Government and as Minister of Education I found that the overwhelming majority of concerns about parental right of access to information came from a few school divisions, but in fact there seemed to be some roadblocks thrown up in some school divisions unnecessarily, but the majority

of schools and the majority of schools divisions were dealing quite responsibly and professionally with the need for parents to be involved and have access to information pertaining to the progress of their students in the educational system. So I think this is good.

There may be some ways to strengthen this amendment and these provisions even further and I believe, because the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) has brought forward this amendment, that he will be willing to contemplate to countenance amendments which are friendly amendments, which will strengthen the right of access to information of parents. The only concern, I think, from the teachers and the trustees association, which has some merit, is the question of, I guess, confidential information, personal information that is in the files and what sharing that with parents who do not have custody of a child might have. So there are some questions that will have to be answered, but I believe that, in the main, for 99 percent of parents who are having difficulty with accessing information, these amendments will serve to eliminate that problem and will make access a certainty.

Mr. Speaker, the Minister also is introducing some amendments which would give the Minister responsibility to share information with school boards with respect to teachers who have been charged under the Criminal Code. Clearly this is an Act that is attempting to deal with the problem of child abuse or abusive behaviour from professionals and the only additional suggestion which I will make to the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) is that this amendment be broadened so that it includes, obviously, all of the employees within the purview of the school division. This deals with teachers employed in the school division.

The Act refers specifically to teachers, but clearly there are custodians, aids, et cetera, who are also in the employ of school divisions. The trustees association raised the question, why would it not apply to all. Obviously, there are going to be groups representing custodians, et cetera, who are going to have some legitimate concerns about including these people because their responsibilities are clearly different. It is something that is perhaps worth considering, perhaps making the obligations with respect to people serving our school systems, giving the Minister the power to share information about the backgrounds of people involved in the school system. It is a difficult issue. It is a thorny issue because we clearly do not want to have school divisions involved in a practice which would be seen by many to infringe on individual rights, the right, for example, of citizens to make a mistake and not be penalized by employers for that mistake. On the other hand, we have the obligation of protecting the children in our public school system, and we have to find the balance. The amendments the Minister is proposing deal only with the teachers in the school system.

Mr. Speaker, the school trustees have also proposed another series of amendments to the Minister to deal with problems that the school divisions have been experiencing with school bus drivers, the regulations under which school bus drivers are hired, released, the obligations for training, maintaining good driving

records, et cetera, the licencing of school bus drivers, amendments which have not been found in the amendments put forward.

* (1200)

Obviously, the Minister chose for his own reasons not to make those amendments, and we may actually want to introduce some amendments to see if we can assist school boards in dealing with those problems.

Mr. Speaker, there are also some quite interesting amendments that deal with the public right of citizenship of teachers to become involved in the political process. Much of this particular series of amendments deals with the application for leave, the period of leave for those who seek political office. I think generally the Manitoba Association of School Trustees are supportive. I know that the Teachers Society is supportive.

The only concern that was raised with me was the question of the reinstatement of teachers who either were not successful, retired or whatever after a period of time. The current amendments suggest that a five-year leave would be granted, but the Act also requires the school division to reinstate the teacher into a position held immediately prior to the date the leave of absence was granted under a section of the Act.

The trustees are requesting that there be an amendment to say that he be reinstated in a comparable position. I do not think that is an unreasonable request, because we know that the positions may or may not still exist. There are many school divisions who are faced with declining enrolment and consequently declining staff numbers, and this may be a requirement that is not easy or not possible to comply with. It may be reasonable to make an amendment to that. The Trustees Association has proposed to the Minister some changes. We will see, I suppose, whether there is support in committee for amendments to the amendment, if you will.

Mr. Speaker, I have left till last the amendments which concern me the most. Those amendments are both in The Education Administration Act and in The Public Schools Act, and they relate to the relationship of the provincial Government and the taxpayer to private schools, because the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), under the guise of putting more stringent requirements on the use of taxpayers' money in supporting private schools, has introduced amendments which I believe are almost totally without teeth, are certainly totally inadequate, which provide a veneer of accountability which in fact will not exist.

I say that partly because the particular amendment that the Minister introduced uses the word "may"—the Minister may. I want to go on record right now as saying that is not acceptable. It is not acceptable from the trustees association, and I have had their comments with respect to this section. It is not acceptable to the 12,000 or 13,000 teachers in the Province of Manitoba. It is not acceptable. Accountability can only be true accountability, a) if the legislation outlines what that accountability is. Accountability is only accountability if we are clear that the obligation of the Minister is subject to the will of the Legislature. We only can have

accountability if there is true public accountability in the operation of the school in question.

All of that begs the question of whether the people of Manitoba are prepared to have funding increased to private schools. I have done my own survey, conducted a survey last fall. The results were 83 percent of the people that I contacted were opposed. Public surveys, general surveys, say 70 percent are opposed to an increase in funding. The St. John's-Ravenscourts of this world do not have the support of average people. Where the tuition is from \$7,000 to \$12,000 and the public is adding that support—well, we cannot build a school in the inner city of Winnipeg. We cannot build a school in the Member for Burrows' (Mr. Chornopyski)—the Member for Burrows and his Party say, oh, gosh, we need that school. They are prepared to give \$30 million a year to private schools, to the St. John's-Ravenscourts of this province.

Mr. Speaker, Manitoba teachers are outraged—and the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) knows what his local municipality thinks. He knows what the Manitoba Association for Urban Municipalities thinks. He knows what the Union of Manitoba Municipalities thinks. He knows what the Manitoba Association of School Trustees thinks. He knows what the Manitoba Teachers Society thinks. He knows what the Manitoba Association of School Superintendents says. He knows what the Manitoba association of business education officials know. He knows what those people say. They represent tens of thousands of people across the province. They represent 95 percent of the pupils attending the school. They say no. They say enough is enough.

Mr. Speaker, I want to answer some of the catcalls from the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), who is clearly injured by these comments, because I am telling the Member for Lac du Bonnet right now that 70 percent of his constituents are going to tell him, no.

Mr. Speaker, I am going to tell the Member for Lac du Bonnet today that before the New Democratic Party approves these kinds of amendments which are wishy-washy, a thin veneer of accountability that the Liberals are going to support, because they want to move even quicker than the Tories to a two-tiered system of education in this province—

An Honourable Member: Who supports this Government? Who props up this Government?

Mr. Storie: The Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) says, who props up this Government? We heard all the brave talk from the Liberals about dropping this Government. They have not introduced anything to drop this Government—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet, on a point of order.

Mr. Darren Praznik (Lac du Bonnet): Will the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) accept a question?

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Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, with leave of the Legislature, when I finish my remarks, I will answer questions ad nauseam for the Member for Lac du Bonnet; they are usually quite nauseous.

Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on the Member for Fort Rouge. Obviously the Liberal Party is a little insensitive about their elitist views when it comes to our public school system, their elitist views. They start with the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), who taught in a private school, one of the best schools in the country, whose children attended private schools, and this Member, the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr), who teaches at a public school, a publicly supported university, is now prepared to undermine the whole system which gave the Province of Manitoba the absolute best education system in the country. The Liberal Party should be ashamed of itself. Its elitist views on education are going to be its downfall.

But, Mr. Speaker, I want to answer the call of the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) who said, yes, and this was started under the Schreyer administration. I want to say at the outset that private schools in this province have a role to play, they have had for many, many years. What I am concerned about, at this point in our history, is whether we have had a serious public debate about how far we want this to go.

This Government has doubled funding to private schools in the last two years. They say they cannot build Margaret Scott School; they cannot do renovations in the inner city of Winnipeg; they do not have enough money to make sure that our elementary schools are not overcrowded; they do not have money to make sure that the teachers teaching English as a Second Language in Winnipeg No. 1 are properly paid; they do not have money for public school needs; they do not have money to make sure that pupils can be transported; they do not have money so the school divisions in rural and Northern Manitoba can offer equivalent programs. They do not have money, but they have money to give to the St. John's-Ravenscourts of this world where the tuition is already \$12,000, where it is a school for the rich, a finishing school.

* (1210)

Mr. Speaker, it is time we in this province had an open public debate about the directions we want to take with respect to the private school system. We in the New Democratic Party and the teachers and the trustees are concerned that the direction that the Liberals want to take us, and the Tories want to take us, is going to create a two-tiered system in the province. It is going to undermine the public school system.

Mr. Speaker, there are two concerns. One concern is the financial concern. Do we have enough money to fund this two-tiered system? Do we want to fund this two-tiered system? Seventy or 80 percent of the people say no. But the second question, I would think, should tug at the heart strings of Members in the Liberal Party and the Conservative Party as much as they do at the hearts of the Members of the New Democratic Party Caucus, and that is the question of what is the role,

has been the role, of the public school system in our province.

The public school system is the single most important institution that is teaching tolerance and understanding in our society, the single most important institution. The Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) who lives in an area where there are all kinds of races and religion should understand that more than anyone. The public school system brings people together. It makes them work together, co-operate together, live together, and learn together.

That is the kind of vision that was in this province in 1890 when The Public Schools Act was first introduced in this Legislature. It is the kind of vision that Manitobans have supported for more than a century. It is the kind of vision that is in the New Democratic Party. It is the kind of vision that is shared with the Teachers Society, and the Trustees Association, and parents across this province. But apparently it is not shared by the Liberals and the Tories and their elitist view of education.

Mr. Speaker, I am putting on notice, on behalf of the New Democratic Party, that this is going to be a fight that we are going to ask the public of Manitoba to have a say in this matter, to raise the question about whether this direction that we are taking is any good for any of us, because I do not believe it is.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I believe the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) had agreed to, with leave, answer a couple of questions.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave of the House? Leave? The Honourable Member for Lac du Bonnet.

Mr. Praznik: Mr. Speaker, I ask the Member for Flin Flon who has continually made reference to St. John's Ravenscourt which is clearly, traditionally been known as an upper-income school, if he would have those same remarks made or applied to St. Alphonsus School in East Kildonan in the seat of the former Member for Rossmere, Mr. Schroeder, of Holy Ghost School on Selkirk Avenue in the North End, of Christ The King School in St. Vital, of St. Ouens Christian Academy near Beausejour, Manitoba, the Roblin seminary near Roblin.

I would also like to know, Mr. Speaker, from the Honourable Member, if his comments about funding education for the rich, he would also like those to apply to many of the middle- and low-income families who send their children to those schools with no assistance whatsoever, and if he wants those comments directed to those families as well?

Mr. Storie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, and I want to thank the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik). To ask a rhetorical question to the Member for Lac du Bonnet, does that mean that the Conservative Party,

and maybe the Liberals want to join in here, have changed their position and now acknowledge that it is a travesty to provide taxpayers' money to people who are sending their children to St. John's Ravenscourt. He asked the question.

Mr. Speaker, I will answer the other part of his question, and that is the question of those schools which do not charge the same kinds of tuition. Clearly, I have never said that the New Democratic Party was prepared or inclined to withdraw support from private schools. The question that we had raised, and I raised as Minister of Education, was at what level the support for the existing school.

I want to say quite frankly I am not anxious to see additional private schools in the Province of Manitoba. I say that categorically, I have said it since the first day I was elected to this Chamber, I am not anxious to see a dual system develop. I recognize the historical reality that the private schools do exist in this province and we, as a Government, recognize that to support them because of the decision back in the '70s to support private schools in a more direct way, that we would provide some support to those schools.

Mr. Speaker, that does not answer the question of where the new Conservative policy, which historically has not supported the giving of taxpayers' money to private schools, that does not answer the question about where does any additional increase in support to private schools take us. I believe that is an important question for public debate. It should not be buried in some facetious attempt by the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) to pass amendments regulating private schools when they do not accomplish anything. We need the debate, and we intend to have it.

BILL NO. 60—THE EDUCATION ADMINISTRATION AMENDMENT ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach), Bill No. 60, The Education Administration Amendment Act; Loi modifiant la Loi sur l'administration scolaire, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans). Stand.

Is there leave that this matter remain standing? Agreed. The Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flin Flon): Well, is it not strange, Mr. Speaker, that I would be speaking again?

An Honourable Member: Let us hear the sequel.

Mr. Storie: Mr. Speaker, it is quite ironic that the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik) asked those questions because the next Bill, The Education Administration Act, deals in essence with some of the same material.

Mr. Speaker, the previous Bill, as I suggested, the parts of it in particular that dealt with the relationship of the Government and the taxpayers and hence with their relationship with private schools, was an attempt to convince the trustees and the teachers that there

was going to some accountability. As I suggested in my remarks, it glosses over the problems that we are going to be creating for the public school system.

I recognize that this is going to be emotional debate, because I think the Liberals and the Tories recognize that they are on the wrong side of this issue. I would like those Members—and I have spoken to, for example, the former Liberal Minister of Education in Ontario, the Honourable Sean Conway, the Tory Minister of Education in Newfoundland, the Honourable Loyola Hearn. I have spoken to both of those individuals about the kinds of educational systems they have in their province.

I can tell you that the history that has created the kinds of systems they have in Ontario, the twin public system in Ontario and the multipublic system they have in Newfoundland, are viewed with horror by those who have to administer those systems today. They are complex; they lead to a diversity of directions in the province when it comes to education, and it creates a funding nightmare because of the duplication and the complication of the educational system.

* (1220)

The fact is, Mr. Speaker—and the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) was a public school trustee at one point. I cannot express my dismay and, I am sure, the dismay of trustees everywhere when they find that this Member, this Tory-Liberal, whatever he happens to be philosophically at the moment, is now supporting the open-ended taxpayer support of private schools. It boggles my mind. It shows that the thinking that this Member has done in the past has been pretty superficial, to say the least.

Mr. Speaker, the Member for Springfield (Mr. Roch) raises the exact question. The public school system is not perfect. The Liberal proposal to fund 80 percent of private schools will ensure that not only is it imperfect but that it will fail for those who cannot afford the two-tiered system the Liberals want to put in place. That is the problem.

Mr. Speaker—

An Honourable Member: Ideology.

Mr. Storie: Ideology—Mr. Speaker, common sense. The amendments proposed in The Education Administration Act also refer to the Government's role in private schools. I want to point out just a little flaw, a little problem that the Minister is trying to address in this amendment. One of the amendments in this Bill deletes the words, pertaining to, by adding the amendment, and the welfare of pupils, at the end of the clause, eliminating a section which refers to school divisions and school districts.

That is all this amendment does. You say, why is the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach) eliminating reference to school divisions and school districts? Why is he doing that? You have to go back to the full Education Administration Act and look up the particular clause, Subsection 3(1), and all of a sudden you find that clause deals with the retroactive payment of monies

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from the province to school divisions and school districts.

But of course, what the Minister of Education has done is to retroactively give money to private schools, a huge chunk of money back in 1988, giving St. John's-Ravenscourt literally tens of thousands of dollars additional money. He did not have the legislative authority to do it. He did not have the legislative authority because the legislative authority said he had the right to give payments to school divisions and school districts, but made no reference to private schools.

We have this surreptitious, hidden, secret agenda of the Minister of Education (Mr. Derkach). He introduces this innocuous amendment that says, let us just eliminate these words, and we will all be happy. He is eliminating those words because he finally recognized, someone perhaps told him, that what he was doing was technically illegal. Mr. Speaker, I will acknowledge that it had been done previously, but it was technically wrong.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments as well deal with the ability of the Minister of Education to examine matters in private schools that relate, and he is adding the words, relate to the welfare of pupils enrolled at private schools. This amendment is also quite inconsequential. The Minister of Education, by The Education Administration Act and The Public Schools Act always has had the authority to tend to the welfare of pupils in our school systems, pupils being home schooled, pupils in private schools. This amendment is really quite redundant. Again, it is designed to give the appearance that something was happening, that the Minister of Education was really wanting to regulate private schools.

Mr. Speaker, the amendments, as we see them, are totally inadequate to the task even the Minister of Education and the Liberal Education Critic say they want to achieve. It is inadequate to the task. The amendments as proposed are totally inadequate. It is a subterfuge. It is an attempt to make the public of Manitoba believe that something is being done in terms of this particular problem that we have seen over the last couple of years, where students in private schools are being paddled and teachers being charged with child abuse, a whole series of problems relating to the expenditures of public funds in private academies. There are serious problems out there, and they need to be dealt with.

Mr. Speaker, what I am concerned about is that somehow both this Act and the Act that I previously spoke to are an attempt to convince the public that these matters are being addressed. My concern again is not simply with the financial aspects of control and accountability that we want as legislators, with taxpayers' dollars given to private schools. My concern is with the long-term survival of the public school system.

My concern is the need for a province like Manitoba and a country like Canada to have an institution like the public school system which brings people together. I believe that the public school system has done that admirably. There is no doubt. There is no doubt that there is room for improvement, but I believe that the

improvements have to take place within the public school system.

The introduction of multicultural education policy, the requirement and the attempts to educate and to produce teachers from every cultural background, the need for school divisions to have a division teaching staff that reflects the population at large, are all ways of addressing the need to have an educational institution that is also part of the acculturation process that Canadians, new Canadians, all Canadians, must go through if we are going to live in harmony in the 1990s and the years beyond.

Mr. Speaker, I put on the record my concern for my children and my grandchildren, a vision of a system that has been created by the Liberals and Tories, a decision that was created by the Liberals and Tories out of political expediency, political expediency rather than any true philosophical or intellectual discussion of the objectives of a public school system, a system where we have a religious school of one denomination over here, whether it be a Protestant sect, a fundamentalist sect, a Hindu school over there, a Sikh school over there, schools based on cultural differences. We have a national school over here, a Philippine school, a Chinese school, a whatever school based on the cultural differences that exist or, Mr. Speaker, perhaps even more to the point, schools based on the ability to pay, schools for the rich over here and schools for the less rich over there. Where is this policy going to take us? Do we want to go in that direction?

It is not good enough for the Liberals and the Tories to gang up, to gang up and say, well, let us do away in an underhanded way with the public school system. Let us do away with it because we want some special consideration at election time. I believe it is an important public debate. We have had a strong public school system in the Province of Manitoba since 1890. I want there to be a strong public school system to the year 2090.

The only way we are going to ensure that happens is if we have a legitimate debate about our goals for a public school system, our willingness to fund a two-tiered system, the need for a consensus on this issue. The amendments that are introduced are leading us down the path of a two-tiered educational system, in my opinion, without having any of that important public debate.

Mr. Speaker, whatever we in the New Democratic Party can do to make this a public debate, I can assure Members in the Liberal Party and Conservative Party that we are going to make it a public debate because I believe the vast majority of Canadians, the vast majority of Manitobans, regardless of their political affiliation, their religious affiliation, their cultural affiliation, their other associations, believe that the public school system has to have primacy in Manitoba. I believe that very strongly. I believe that as we get into this debate, people on all sides of this Chamber are going to find that view is the predominant view and the publicly supported view in the Province of Manitoba.

Mr. Speaker, I am not likely to be able to finish my remarks on this particular Act. There are a couple of

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other amendments relating to the appointment to the Education Advisory Committee, some relatively minor amendments.

I wanted to spend most of my time discussing my concern over the amendments related to the responsibility of the Minister to the pupils who are attending private schools. Certainly the evidence of the last several months and several years has indicated that responsibility has to be taken more seriously. The amendments that we see before us do not show any evidence of taking that responsibility seriously. They are vague, toothless amendments. Certainly, before the

New Democratic Party supports the amendments, we will want to see in writing what the Minister's intentions are, what new responsibilities he is going to put on those operating private schools -(interjection)-

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. When this matter is again before the House, the Honourable Member will have 28 minutes remaining.

The hour being 12:30 p.m., this House is now adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m., Monday.