

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Tuesday, September 19, 1989.

The House met at 1:30 p.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

READING AND RECEIVING PETITIONS

Mr. Speaker: I have reviewed the petition and it conforms to the privileges and practices of the House, and complies with the Rules. (Request for legislative changes to The Workers Compensation Act)

TABLING OF REPORTS

Mr. Speaker: In accordance with Section 55 of The Freedom of Information Act, I am pleased to table the First Report of the Ombudsman for the calendar year January 1, 1988, to December 31, 1988; and also in accordance with Section 54, The Freedom of Information Act, I am pleased to table the Annual Report of the Ombudsman for 1988.

Hon. James McCrae (Attorney General and Minister of Justice): It is my duty to table the Annual Report for 1988 of the Manitoba Human Rights Commission. It is also my duty to table the Annual Report for 1988-89 of the Manitoba Police Commission; and the Annual Report for 1988-89 of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table the Annual Report of the Manitoba Health Research Council, and I have Supplementary Information for Legislative Review of both the Department of Health, and the Manitoba Health Services Commission for Honourable Members.

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to table the Second Quarterly Report of the Manitoba Telephone System.

Mr. Speaker: I jumped the gun. I have already tabled mine.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: Prior to oral questions, may I direct Honourable Members' attention to the gallery where we have from the Daniel McIntyre Collegiate ten Grade 12 students under the direction of Ms. Udow. This school is located in the constituency of the Honourable Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray).

On behalf of all Honourable Members, I welcome you here this afternoon.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Goods and Services Tax Revenue Neutral

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I listened with absolute amazement last evening. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) spoke for 10 minutes on the GST. It is absolutely no wonder he did not raise it with the Prime Minister, because he did not have anything to say about the tax and clearly gave evidence to this Assembly that he had no problems with the tax and in fact had no good arguments to put forward against the tax.

Hopefully, the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) can be a little bit more definitive this afternoon. Can the Finance Minister tell this House if the studies that have been conducted within his department prove once and for all that this tax, as outlined by Michael Wilson, will not be visible and will not be revenue neutral?

* (1335)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I did not quite catch the essence of the question. The studies, if I heard the Leader of the Liberal Party correctly, seem to indicate that the studies prove that the tax would be invisible or not invisible. I am saying that right now within our department we are trying to ascertain the best way to ensure that the federal goods and services tax, as proposed, should it come forward, indeed be visible.

Tax Credits

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): While one would assume that if a study had to be conducted they have to first of all determine what the tax as proposed by Mr. Wilson actually says. Obviously they have not gone to that position yet within the Finance Department. The Finance Minister's political cousin Dorothy Dobbie, the Tory MP for Winnipeg South, states that there should be no tax credits or rebates of GST. Is this a position which is shared in Manitoba by our Finance Minister?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Well, Mr. Speaker, if that were the case, we may have done away with the sales tax credits that are available to Manitobans at this point in time. We chose not to do that, matter of fact, we support those. Indeed, some of the commentaries like to say that the GST is regressive certainly at the lower income levels. That is one of the reasons why sales tax credits, as I understand, are built into the federal proposal. We have no desire to do away with the sales tax credits that are in place in Manitoba and indeed it was one element of the GST, in a sense, that was acceptable to this Government.

Mrs. Carstairs: So much for Dorothy Dobbie and her credibility.

Indexing

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the question that becomes critical now is the de-indexing provisions. This tax that Mr. Wilson is proposing will not be indexed with inflation. The maximum level is \$25,000 where one receives tax credit. Over 557,000 wage earners in Manitoba earn less than that amount of money. What is the position of this Government on indexing of the tax credits?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): We are concerned about the de-indexing aspect of the sales tax credit, but let me say we have some greater concerns with respect to the 9 percent rate, with respect to the visibility or the lack thereof of the proposed tax, with respect to Manitoba's revenue position before and after the tax. Those are the main areas that we have seen fit to be critical of at this point in time, indeed, Premiers across this country, through their joint communique, directing Ministers of Finance to key in their emphasis into these areas. This specific item brought up by the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) today is also one that we are mindful of.

Mrs. Carstairs: It is not enough to be mindful. This is an issue which is critical to over half of the population of this province all of whom will live below that level.

Position Paper

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Is this Government prepared to present a Manitoba position paper to the House of Commons Task Force on the GST? When will this presentation be made, and was a summary statement filed last Friday in order to become eligible?

* (1340)

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): We have requested an opportunity to make a presentation to that committee when it visits the province.

Rebates

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Hospitals, schools, municipalities—all will eventually receive rebates according to the federal Minister of Finance. However, they must pay the GST up front. Can the Finance Minister tell the House who will bear these additional up-front costs and to what effect to the taxpayers of Manitoba when a hospital has to pay 9 percent goods and services tax and then has to wait six, seven, eight months for its rebate?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I was in attendance yesterday when the Leader of the Opposition made her presentation during the emergency debate. If she had been in attendance while I had made my presentation, she may have heard me make specific reference to that area.

We are in the province—indeed all provinces across Canada—concerned about the mechanism that the federal Government is contemplating with respect to, as we call it, the mush factor—the municipalities, the universities, schools and hospitals. The federal Government at this point is a little silent as to how the methodology, indeed the method, of rebate with respect to any shortfall that may be put into place. We have asked on several occasions, as have all other provinces, and we still are awaiting response from the federal Government as to how they will ensure that the mush factor, again as we call it, will not be paying any additional funds. Indeed, that there will be no additional cash requirements because of the implementation of the GST.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, thank you, Mr. Speaker, but mush is a perfect example and definition of this tax.

Departmental Impact Studies

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Will the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) tell this House today which departments in Government and all the front benches in co-ordination with Finance are now conducting specific studies to evaluate the impact of this tax, and will he provide the House with a list of all individuals involved in these studies in each and every department?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I could understand why it is that the Leader of the Opposition, who has not had the opportunity to be in Government, may from her viewpoint believe that that information is readily available in the fashion in which she asked.

Let me say that virtually all the lead analysis is being done within the federal/provincial division of the Finance Department. Let me say that the areas of focus are within the areas of tourism, within the area of transportation. Those are two of the areas that the Department of Finance is looking at very, very closely to determine the impact of the GST within those sectors. Let me also indicate that because this analysis requires a great understanding of the multistages as to the impact, as indeed to the inputs, that it is just not an easily done analysis within any department. It requires a laid-out strong methodology in place to try and fall through the whole theory of the impact of the tax.

Finance Minister's Position

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question is also to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness). Does the Minister of Finance in his in-depth review of this proposed tax still stand by his statement that consumption taxes are a fairer form of taxes, and does he still stand by his position in terms of Manitoba? Manitoba, the Minister of Finance, is still the lone supporter of this tax. Does he still stand by those statements on the fairer tax being consumption taxes?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, there are two questions contained within the

question. I never ever was a supporter of the GST. The fact that there is a headline in the Winnipeg Sun indicating that I was I think—and if one wants to search the basis of the headline you might be interested in the fact that it was picked up somehow through a CP story.

Nevertheless, Mr. Speaker, with respect to consumption taxes, let me say that I have always been a supporter of consumption taxes. I have been in the past and I continue to be so, because they are eminently more fair. The rich pay more, and the regressive aspects of a consumption tax were readily understood by the former Government. That is why they put into place a sales tax credit for those with lesser means. I stand by what I have said in the past and I have not changed my mind.

* (1345)

Corporate Benefits

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): Today we have tabled in the House of Commons, and to Canadians, a report of the Conference Board of Canada, a Conference Board of Canada report that states the big winners in this 9 percent tax—and this is a Government appointed body, not exactly the most objective group—will be corporate profits, before taxes will go up and consumer spending will go down by \$7.3 billion. Does the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) still feel this is the fair way to go in this country in terms of a tax reform system?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): As the Leader of the NDP is wonton to do from time to time, he likes to selectively quote. I also have the report with me that was presented today to the committee of the House of Commons studying the GST. The report says this, and again I do not quote this as my support or indeed the Government's support for the GST because that does not exist, but I would like to quote this, "The GST will provide long-term benefits to the Canadian economy by replacing the MST, the manufacturing sales tax that is, with the GST. It will improve economic efficiency by encouraging better allocation of resources." He may want to address that aspect too of the Conference Board report.

Mr. Doer: Yes, I will address that aspect, because it says it is absolutely necessary because of the Free Trade Agreement, the Free Trade Agreement that the Members opposite supported contrary to many wishes of Canadians in terms of this country.

Finance Minister's Position

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): My question to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is—and he has not answered the question of whether he thinks it is fair the corporations would get the best benefit out of this tax and consumers would be hit by \$7.3 billion, whether he still stands by his statement on the consumption tax is fair. Why does he not support a position to get rid of all of this tax and have a minimum

corporate tax so we can have a fair tax system in this federal tax system in this country?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the NDP is not naive. He knows that we are all consumers, rich and poor and middle class; however, he wants to classify the economic status of Canadians that we are all consumers. He also knows that corporations ultimately pass on any additional tax burden, any additional cost to consumers. He knows that. That is basic economic theory.

With respect to the quote that he uses, let me say I also remember what the Consumers Association said to the senior committee, that they in essence support this tax without exemption. That is what the Consumers Association of Canada have said.

Mr. Doer: Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe the Minister of Finance will not support returning to a system that was even in place in 1965 where corporations paid 20 percent of the taxes in this country. We went down to 11 percent under the loopholes of the former Government; we are down to 9 percent under the present federal Government. The Minister of Finance, if he reads the bottom line, Table I of this report, will know that when you look at the bottom line numbers, inflation will go up higher than what Michael Wilson predicted, unemployment will go up, disposable income for Canadians will go down by \$7.3 billion—(interjection)—and the winner is going to be the federal Government—

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

Mr. Doer: —and corporate profits. How can the Minister still stand by in fairness of his taxes?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, I have no trouble with corporations paying more tax, but today they pay 50 percent before tax value, 50 percent. So, Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the NDP (Mr. Doer), who believes that corporations are the welfare bums of the business activity in this country, if they believe that, then tell us how high they want the tax rate on corporations to go. Do they want it to go to 80 percent? Do they want it to go to 90 percent? Then can they tell us ultimately how many jobs they will want to see lost because of the fact that invested capital will obviously leave the country? So have they thought through their proposals?

* (1350)

Family Services Minister Premier's Support

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) has created one crisis after another in her 16-month tenure. We started out with a threatened moratorium of foster children placements because of intimidation and incompetence by this Government.

We moved on to charges from the child welfare community of lack of consultation and autocratic decision-making, on to rallies at the Legislature from

parents of the mentally handicapped, from child care workers, all because of ministerial indifference, and now an unprecedented threatened work stoppage by child care professionals.

Mr. Speaker: And the question is?

Ms. Gray: My question to the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings) is, given the abysmal record of this Minister, how does he justify his continuing confidence in her abilities as Minister?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Deputy Premier): I notice applause over there for criticism of a Minister that is presiding over a 45 percent increase in day care. Is that what the people in this province expect from a competent Opposition? I have confidence in this Minister. She has inherited a mess from the previous Government that has been enhanced. A child care system is being enhanced by additional funding from this Government. We are prepared to work consistently on a continuous basis with the child care people of this province and she has no grounds to be talking in terms of the competence of this Minister. She is bringing forward what the child care system needs.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Ellice, with her supplementary question.

Ms. Gray: You may have confidence in her, but thousands of Manitobans disagree with you. Your Minister has insulted child care professionals by giving them a 24-cent-an-hour increase.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Day Care Workers Salaries

Mr. Speaker: I have recognized the Honourable Member for Ellice with her supplementary question. Would the Honourable Member kindly put her question now?

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): I have a supplementary question to the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings). What does he believe child care workers, child care professionals who care for children, are worth?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, the Premier (Mr. Filmon) has stated consistently, we as a Government have stated consistently, that we are prepared to work to resolve the child care issue that is being raised regarding salaries. We have put forward our priorities, we have made the child care more accessible, we have increased the number of spaces, and we will continue to work to solve the question of reimbursement for those who work in child care agencies.

Fiscal Stabilization Fund Day Care

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Ellice, with her final supplementary question.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): The child care workers' salary enhancement increase is less than 7 percent, not close to 45 percent. Can the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings) justify establishing a \$200 million slush fund when many child care professionals live below the poverty line?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, the words "slush fund" sound very interesting, coming from the Opposition, but she obviously does not know what is involved in that fund.

We have consistently said that we have put forward money for spaces. We have never said that we will not deal with the child care workers of this province. We have put forward the funds in that area for this year, and we will continue to work with them towards satisfaction of their concerns.

Day Care Workers Salaries

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings). This morning we determined that men and women who clean cages at the zoo and who otherwise care for the deer and the antelope earn a salary range between \$23,000 and \$30,000 a year. We have just heard the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings) justify a salary base of \$16,000 a year for professionals who look after our children, and all the while this Deputy Premier and this Government pays 15 to 24 percent for the political staff in the Premier's Office. I challenge the Deputy Premier to rise in his place today and justify that outrage to the people of Manitoba.

* (1355)

Hon. Glen Cummings (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, the response from the Liberal Party is that they want to be involved in this issue, but they are not really sure why they are there. They think there is an issue here and they had better be angry about it.

We have put \$13 million additional, up front, into child care. We have never said that we are not prepared to deal with the salary side, but we have put forward priorities on the spaces and the accessibility and the services to the young people of this province that are required to get that service from the day care system. We believe that is a fair and reasonable way to approach the system and we will work with all parties that are involved to make sure that we continue to develop a very good day care system in this province.

Mr. Carr: Mr. Speaker, but this Deputy Premier and this Government is both confused and confusing. We heard from the Premier (Mr. Filmon) yesterday and from the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings) today that we are on the slow road for child care workers, but we are

on the tarmac piloting a 747 for political staff in the Premier's Office. What are the Government's long-range plans?

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, over and over and over again, you, Sir, have risen to your feet, and I to mine, to ask Honourable Members in the Liberal Party to obey the Rules of this House in terms of putting questions during Question Period.

Over and over, Honourable Members opposite complain about the length of answers and yet they expect to have brief and concise answers at the same time as giving long preambles to their questions. I suggest Honourable Members keep that principle in mind when they are complaining about the length of answers given in this House.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Government House Leader. Point well taken, and I might quote from Beauchesne's 410(7) which says, "Brevity both in questions and answers is of great importance."

Premier's Staff Salary Cap

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, kindly put your question now.

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): I will be simple and brief in my supplementary question.

Is it the intention of this Government to cap salaries of political aides in the Premier's Office, or shall we expect 24 percent increases next year as well?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, in reference to the salaries of day care workers, the Premier has committed this Government continuously to working with all of the stakeholders in this system.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: I am having some difficulty in hearing the answer. The Honourable Minister.

Mr. Cummings: We have committed ourselves continuously to working with all of the stakeholders in the child care industry. We give that commitment today, the Premier gave that commitment before, we will continue to work towards the resolution of the problems and to developing the best child care system that we possibly can.

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

Mr. Carr: Mr. Speaker, but the question was about salaries in the Premier's Office, not about child care workers. Now, the Orders-in-Council of these child—

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader, on a point of order.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Honourable Members opposite, as do Honourable Members on this side when we were in Opposition, know and knew that supplementary questions require no preamble. Now, I think, Mr. Speaker, we—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

Mr. McCrae: Mr. Speaker, I have tried to avoid getting to my feet every time there is a minor breach of the Rules.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Laurie Evans (Fort Garry): Try harder.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. McCrae: The Honourable Member for Fort Garry (Mr. Laurie Evans) suggests I try harder to ignore the Rules. I do not think that is good advice, Mr. Speaker. I think all Honourable Members should be mindful of the Rules of this House, and the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) was just reminded a moment ago about how—and he is in his second Session now—to ask a question in this House, and here he is on a second supplementary engaging in a preamble. Now if it is a short preamble, the Honourable Members opposite will not likely hear very much from me, but I think if they are going to complain about the length of answers we are going to have to make a point about the way they ask their questions sometimes too.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Government House Leader. It is a point well taken, and I would ask at this time that I am going to request a meeting with the three Government House Leaders after Question Period and I think we will be able to resolve this among the four of us.

* (1400)

Orders-in-Council Release

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, kindly put your question now, please.

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): The Orders-in-Council approving these increases were signed in July and made public in September. How many more such increases are they hiding in the drawer and when will they make them public?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Deputy Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice.

Day Care Workers Pay Equity

Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I would begin my question by appealing to this Government, the Government of the Day, to set aside the baloney in dealing with this issue and deal with the fact that this is an emergency situation, a crisis looming on the horizon, when it comes to the wages paid to day care professionals.

My question, Mr. Speaker, given the fact that the serious situation is growing every day and an emergency situation is looming on the horizon when it comes to day care professionals in this province, I would ask the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Hammond) and the Minister responsible for pay equity if she and this Government support the MANSIS Comparative Worth Study which said that the average salary of day care workers in this province should be in 1989, \$23,567, and if she and her Government support the pay equity settlements of

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I have reminded Members numerous times that multipart questions do tend to have longer answers.

Hon. Gerrie Hammond (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, the position that we take in Government in helping with the present day care is that we have put \$13 million in, in less than two years. The day care workers today, and we recognize that their salary is not as high as it should be, no one is disputing that, but we were left with a position where the NDP—and this Member has the nerve to stand up and talk about day care salaries at a time when she capped them so low that now they are in a desperate situation. We have helped out, we have given and we are going to be meeting with them and giving more support as time goes on.

Salaries

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. Johns, with her supplementary question.

Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I will get right to the question. I want to know, simply, coming from the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Hammond), who is supposed to be concerned about female-dominated professions that are receiving incredible low wages, what role is she playing to move her colleague, the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) and her Premier (Mr. Filmon) to get off their insensitive, right-wing regressive approaches and deal with day care workers as an important profession, recognize child rearing and pay them fairly?

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

Hon. Gerrie Hammond (Minister responsible for the Status of Women): Mr. Speaker, there has been no one more supportive on women's issues than we have

on this side of the House. We have shown that in every issue. Now, we recognized that the day care workers need more money. We have given them what we can this year and we will continue to work on a plan to give them more. It was our Government that had to raise the crisis shelter per diems from \$13 a day and \$6 a day to \$45 a day.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Order, order.

Mary Humphrey Removal

Mr. Speaker: Honourable Member for St. Johns, with her final supplementary question.

Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (St. Johns): It is a sad day when this province does not even have a Minister responsible for the Status of Women standing up for day care professionals.

My question is to the Minister, to the same Minister, in her capacity as Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission (Mrs. Hammond). I want to know from her, is there anybody in this Government standing up for Mary Humphrey, anybody ensuring that she is not moved out on a political basis and ensure that responsible bureaucrats who have contributed to this province are allowed to continue in those positions?

Hon. Gerrie Hammond (Minister responsible for Civil Service Commission): Mr. Speaker, from time to time people are moved from one position to another. It is not the responsibility of the Status of Women Minister or the Civil Service Commission Minister (Mrs. Hammond) to stop that sort of thing.

We will make sure that these moves are made in a fair and equitable way, and instead of expounding on this person's move, she might be more helpful and let us get on with our work. Maybe she could be more supportive of the day care community by giving them some moral support and some more help than just yelling about what is happening, what is not happening.

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please.

Day Care Lead Exposure

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): My question is for the Minister of the Environment (Mr. Cummings).

Last year this Government put its head in the political sand when it came to the issue of lead exposure to Manitoba children. It refused to conduct any testing at Weston School and depended on five-year-old data. It did not take serious the issue of lead in the drinking water.

Now we have another issue that the Tories are pushing away from. It is another lead issue dealing with our children, but this time in a day care. This Minister has a responsibility, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that public

supported play areas, schools and day cares are lead safe.

My question is what program has he put in place in the Environment Department that will assure parents, school boards and day care operators that children of Manitoba are not being exposed to toxic levels of lead?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, the Member referenced the tests and the lead levels that were found in a school playground a few years ago. As a result of tests that were done, some of the soil was removed. Any area where there has been identified concerns, the Department has been involved in making sure that the testing was done, but I suspect he perhaps has a specific request in mind, and I would be interested to hear what it is.

West Broadway Day Care Lead Exposure

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

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): Sorry, the data we just had was not accurate, but what has the Minister done about the chronic problems of lead in the sand and soil of the West Broadway Day Care play area? Are his officials taking action on a referral from Manitoba Housing, the property owner, at Broadway and Young?

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): Mr. Speaker, that is not a request that had been brought to my attention, but certainly if the department has not actioned that request or if it is something that just arrived in my office, we will certainly be prepared to examine it and be involved.

West Broadway Day Care Lead Exposure

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

Mr. Harold Taylor (Wolseley): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Housing (Mr. Ducharme) explain why his staff have refused to deal over the past year with the issue of lead and people contamination of this particular play area, and will he guarantee that the day care will not be threatened with eviction again as it was last year when the matter was brought up?

* (1410)

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am confident in the Minister of Environment (Mr. Cummings) that he will handle the situation as he has notified the Member for Wolseley (Mr. Taylor).

Free Trade Agreement Plant Closures

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I would like to address a question to the Minister of

Industry (Mr. Ernst). Last year, I would remind the Minister, I raised concerns about the threat of free trade to Campbell Soups at Portage la Prairie, and at that time—this was on Monday, November 7—I asked specifically: will there be a plant closure at Portage by Campbell Soups? The Premier got up, instead of the Minister of Industry, and reassured us that this would not be the case. He had talked to executives who were going to invest, probably expand and, of course, we know what has happened. They have expanded all right, they have certainly expanded right out of the Province of Manitoba. Since then we have had Ogilvies, we have had Marrs, Leisure Products in Brandon, Molson Breweries, and so on.

I would like to ask the Minister if he can tell this House what other closures that this province can expect to receive. What other closures will we obtain in the next six to eight months because of the Free Trade Agreement?

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, that question was extremely hypothetical obviously. Let me say with regard to the Free Trade Agreement and some statistical information that is available to all Members including the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) relating to manufacturing shipments that are up 8 percent, second highest in the country; private capital investment is up 14 percent, third highest in the country; manufacturing investment is up 105 percent; commercial and industrial building permits, in the City of Winnipeg, 578 percent. That does not indicate to me that there is a problem with free trade.

Industrial Development Strategy

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans), with a supplementary question.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): My next supplementary is this. I cannot be assured by those comforting statistics of the Minister. I ask him, what plans does he really have to cope with the declining situation as described by bankruptcies? Business bankruptcies are up by 50 percent in August, doubled rather, doubled in August, and they are up by 33 percent over the first eight months of this year, and that makes Manitoba the second worse of any of the provinces in Canada.

Really, what plans does the Minister of Industry (Mr. Ernst) have to help industrial development in this province?

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sure the Honourable Member for Brandon East would like to hear an answer. The Honourable Minister.

Hon. Jim Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): Mr. Speaker, 13,000 new permanent long-term jobs in the Province of Manitoba—that is an

industrial strategy. Thirteen thousand new long-term permanent jobs, not jobs created at the expense of the taxpayer, not like the Jobs Fund that had a job that was here today at taxpayers' expense and gone tomorrow. These are long-term permanent jobs for people in Manitoba so that they can raise a family and live a reasonable life.

Employment Programs Job Creation

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Evans), with his final supplementary question.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): This is my supplementary. How many jobs, can he tell us what the job situation will be in the next six months? Because the first six months of this year there were absolutely no jobs created in the Province of Manitoba according to Stats Canada. I do not know where you get your figures, but there was absolutely no growth in employment in Manitoba in the first half of this year.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

POINT OF ORDER

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Government House Leader.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I know my friend from the neighbouring constituency always likes to bandy about figures before the House, but in his second supplementary question I am afraid maybe he sits too close to some of the Members of the Liberal Party. He seems to have fallen into the same habit today of extended supplementary questions, and I would ask the Honourable Member to be called to order for that.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Member for Thompson, (Mr. Ashton), on the same point of order.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Mr. Speaker, I believe if the Government House Leader will check with Hansard he will find that the supplementary, that the Member was quite in order. He began his question with a direct question, no supplementary whatsoever, which I think the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Evans) should be commended for his brevity in comparison to the extended answers of the Members opposite.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Member, the point well taken. It was a point of order, but the Honourable Member for Brandon East (Mr. Evans) has put his question to the Honourable Minister. The Honourable Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism.

Hon. James Ernst (Minister of Industry, Trade and Tourism): At great personal risk, Mr. Speaker, could I ask the Member for Brandon East to repeat the question?

Mr. Len Evans (Brandon East): Very specifically, in view of the fact that there were no jobs created in the first half of this year according to Statistics Canada, will the Minister venture a prognostication as to what is going to happen to the jobs in this province, the number of jobs in this province, for the second half of the year?

Mr. Ernst: Mr. Speaker, I indicated a moment ago 13,000 new long-term jobs. I reject quite frankly the notion from Statistics Canada that no new jobs were created. As a matter of fact, I can prove that they are wrong.

Manitoba Data Services Freedom of Information Act

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): My question is to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) and concerns the announcement in the throne speech of the sale of MDS. Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister of Finance, on what authority did he override The Freedom of Information Act when he prevented any individual citizen in the Province of Manitoba the kind of confidential information that MDS processes?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, in response to the question, I had to make a decision in the best interests of the shareholders of all Crown corporations, in this case Manitoba Data Services, that therefore being the taxpayers and the people in the Province of Manitoba, with respect to sensitive negotiations that are occurring at this point in time. It was under that basis that the decision was made to not provide certain information.

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

Mr. Angus: I respect Cabinet privilege and Cabinet confidentiality, but I would like the Minister to explain what does the type, not the specific information, but does the type of information stored in the computer banks of MDS have to do with the negotiation of the sale?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, as I indicated publicly in a press article two or three weeks ago, it became evident to the Government that there were some people who were more preoccupied with stopping the sale than they might be in the interest of safeguarding certain secretive, supposedly secretive files. As I laid before the House in late June the criteria of a proposed, a potential sale of MDS, one of the criteria listed was indeed that whoever might buy this would maintain the secrecy of certain files, of certain headings.

Mr. Speaker, that was the commitment we made to Members of this House, to all Manitobans, that secrecy

would be prevented, but once it became apparent that the certain objective of groups were to try to frustrate the sale, obviously then we sensed it would be wiser, on behalf of good negotiations, to prevent some of the information from becoming public.

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

Mr. Angus: Mr. Speaker, notwithstanding the overriding of the clause of The Freedom of Information Act, if the Minister has concerns about the confidential information in those data banks, how on earth is he going to give or assure any Manitobans any protection for the privacy of that information once he has sold this corporation off to foreigners, if you like?

Mr. Manness: Mr. Speaker, we have no intention to sell off MDS to foreigners. We have no intention to sell it at all if it does not provide for major economic growth or certain guarantees to the work force. Indeed the major assets of Manitoba Data Services are the work force that are there in place. With respect to providing the information to the people of Manitoba, that will be provided in due course.

Mr. Speaker: Time for oral questions has expired.

MATTER OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Mr. Speaker, I would like to move a motion under Rule No. 27, that motion reads

WHEREAS salaries paid on behalf of each child care worker are woefully inadequate; and
WHEREAS inadequate salary enhancement grants threaten the quality of our child care system; and
WHEREAS the Government's own task force agrees that the current salary schedule for Manitoba's child care professionals is inadequate and does not reflect the level of service provided or the level of education required for the position; and
WHEREAS the Government's own task force recommends an immediate salary increase this year; and
WHEREAS the Conservative Government's 1990 salary enhancement grant of 24 cents an hour is an insult to their profession; and
WHEREAS a province-wide withdrawal of services by Manitoba's child care professional looms; and
WHEREAS the director of the Child Care Office has been removed and the assistant director has resigned; and
WHEREAS the Government has an obligation to ensure that children attending private for profit day care centres such as the Ness Avenue Raggedy-Ann Child Care Centre and the Jefferson Avenue Mini-Skool are provided with other arrangements; and

WHEREAS the Government has refused to release the details of the investigation into the Raggedy-Ann centres; and
WHEREAS an assistant to the Minister of Family Services has attempted to apply political pressure on the staff in the Child Care Office in an attempt to compromise standards.
THEREFORE I move that under Rule No. 27 that the ordinary business of the House be set aside to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely Manitoba's child care crisis and its effect on child care workers, parents and children.

* (1420)

Mr. Speaker: Before determining whether the motion meets requirements of our Rule 27, the Honourable Member for St. Johns will have five minutes to state her case for urgency of debate on this matter. A spokesperson for each of the other Parties will also have five minutes to address the position of their Party respecting the urgency of the matter.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, while it may be unusual in this House, it is not unprecedented for motions to set aside the ordinary business of this House in order to provide Members of this Chamber the opportunity to speak to issues of urgent public importance and to have that debate follow one day after the other as the case with my motion.

I have brought forward, Mr. Speaker, this motion on this day because I believe the emerging crisis in our child care centres across the province is as important as yesterday's debate on the goods and services tax, and more importantly is both urgent and preventable. As a matter of fact, I believe this crisis in child care in Manitoba has been made even more urgent and needs the actions of this House to respond to the actions of the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) who along with her Cabinet colleagues from the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and now today to the Minister responsible for Labour, the Civil Service Commission and the Status of Women (Mrs. Hammond), have done so little to deal with the growing concerns of the entire child care community.

This Minister and this Government have collectively turned their backs on the children in child care centres and the parents who entrust their children to those centres. The staff and management of those centres, who are proud of the fact that over the years Manitoba has developed one of the best child care systems in the country and probably on the continent, are not only proud of that system but they are committed to it, Mr. Speaker. They are committed to fighting to defend that which Manitobans have built over the years by their innovation, foresight, courage, dedication and hard work. Those parents and staff will fight anyone who threatens the quality of child care that Manitoba families have come to rely upon when they bring their children to those child care centres. The NDP will fight as well to protect that system and that is why this motion has been brought here today.

It has been often said that our children are our most precious resource as both a province and a country.

That important observation, Mr. Speaker, is worth repeating because it is exactly what this debate is all about. Our request today is not just that of a parliamentary tactic or a debate procedure, it is part of an urgent and extremely important collective effort to provide the best for that precious resource, to provide for our children, to strengthen our families, to strengthen our social fabric.

This debate is indeed urgent, of extreme importance and required. There is precedent to guide your deliberations today. I believe it is worth repeating briefly a debate that happened back on May 28, 1986, when a previous Speaker ruled a motion from Mr. Gerry Mercier for an emergency debate to be in order because, to quote Madam Speaker Phillips, the matter is so pressing that the public interest will suffer. If this debate did not go forward at that time and there was no other ordinary opportunity, it would be necessary to debate this issue because it could not be determined as to when the Estimates for the Department of Community Services would be before the House. That debate was about protecting our children, just as this motion today is about protecting our children.

I know that we will have some opposition, I expect, I hope not, but I expect from the House Leader of the Conservative Government (Mr. McCrae). I would like to remind him of his own words in that debate when he said, Madam Speaker, I, too, would like to commend the Chair for recognizing the importance of this debate. I am glad to see the Honourable Members opposite have seen the value of having this debate. He says, Madam Speaker, the debate today is all about the safety of our children, of our province, and I say that if this debate should somehow result in the saving of even one life or the health of even one individual, I think it will have been worthwhile.

Mr. Speaker, children are at risk today. We may be able to prevent further problems by convincing the Conservative Government today to listen and to respond to the child care community, to the child care staff, to management and to the tens of thousands of Manitoba families. This Legislature is a legitimate vehicle to force the Government to act and to debate, to bring to pass, that is within the finest traditions of this House. We must act now if we are to be successful in that important task and this is the first opportunity to do so.

That is why the NDP, today, is asking you, Mr. Speaker, to do what Madam Speaker Phillips did several years ago. We are asking you to help protect Manitoba families and their children by allowing this debate to go forward and giving us the opportunity to convince the Government to prevent an entirely preventable tragedy to our role as legislators.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Opposition House Leader (Mr. Alcock) also has five minutes.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Opposition House Leader): There is, indeed, a crisis in the management in the Department of Community Services. This is a problem that emerged many months ago; this is a problem that we faced and attempted to deal with in Estimates last year as we

slowly became aware that this Minister did not have a grip on her department and this Government did not have any understanding of how to manage the social service system in this province.

We have seen what has happened with the foster parents. We are watching the deterioration of the child welfare system. We see problems in the services to the mentally handicapped and we see this emerging crisis in the day care system. We see a lack of communication. We see a dismissal of legitimate concerns raised by all sorts of people across this province.

Mr. Speaker, we said yesterday that vulnerable Manitobans are being placed at risk by the actions of this Government, that no matter where you go across this province you can find problems in the services to those people who are incapable of helping themselves that are not being addressed by this Government. They do not understand the issues; they have no feeling for the kind and type of problem that needs to be addressed; they have no foresight, they have not thought it through; they have no—they have just not considered it in any way. They prefer to sit back and watch what is happening out there and believe that if they throw a few dollars out, that somehow that will keep the wolves at bay. That is not the problem. This problem with the day care workers never needed to arise. This problem could have been solved by continuing communication and negotiation that was begun under the previous Minister.

I am concerned about one thing, Mr. Speaker. This is indeed a crisis, this is indeed an extremely important matter and those individuals who should be here to answer for that may not be available today, but the person who can make the decision and who ultimately jumps in at the last moment after they have tried their Nazi tactics and they have failed, the person that jumps in—

An Honourable Member: Oh, come on. Get off it.

Mr. Alcock: What did you do with the day care workers or with the foster parents? You are doing the same thing with the day care workers. It is absolutely unacceptable, absolutely unacceptable. I have never seen anything like it in all the years I have worked in the system.

Mr. Speaker, it needs debate, it needs to be addressed. I would like to just call your attention to one ruling in Beausnesne, Beausnesne 387, because the House Leader for the Government (Mr. McCrae) yesterday went through Beausnesne and talked about the normal kind of references to controlling matters of an urgent debate in this House.

* (1430)

Beausnesne 387 says, "But most decisions based on these conditions are bound to be subjective and few clear-cut decisions can be made. In making his ruling the Speaker may, on occasion, take into account the general wish of the House to have a debate." Mr. Speaker, there is a need to debate this issue.

We in the Opposition are concerned that important individuals who have a role to play in this debate are

not present today. We would be, should the third Party withdraw this motion today, prepared to jointly support the reintroduction of it tomorrow when the Members who can answer to this problem are present.

Mr. Speaker, I simply would like to close by saying that this issue cannot go on. It has to be addressed and this Government has to take action, replace this Minister and see that we get somebody in this department who can manage the very important issues that it faces on a daily basis.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Government House Leader will also have five minutes.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, certainly every Member on this side of the House recognizes the importance to Manitobans, to Manitoba families, to Manitoba children, of a quality system of child care for those who need those services in our province. All Honourable Members, I suggest, in this House recognize the importance of that. All Honourable Members recognize also, or should recognize also, that this Government has been doing its job in this area in a way that could be only described as much better than has previously been done in this province.

Here again, Mr. Speaker, today I find it strange that the matter should be raised in this House in this way, when—and I am not betraying any confidences here between my colleagues, the House Leaders and myself—no one has asked me to try to arrange, for example, that the Estimates of the Department of Family Services be brought forward on the list. That has not been done. That is the obvious—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. This is an extremely serious issue. The Government House Leader has the floor.

Mr. McCrae: Of course this is an extremely serious issue, and it is too serious for me to see opposition Parties fighting with each other to see who can outmaneuver the other in out-opposing everything that this Government happens to be doing, even though what this Government is doing is better than has been done, and better than could be done by any other Party in this House.

Mr. Speaker, we understand the importance of this issue, and let that not go misunderstood by Honourable Members in this House. Playing parliamentary tricks in the Legislature is always fun for politicians, but we are talking about something that is very important here. I impress that upon Honourable Members and ask them to stop all the fighting amongst themselves and amongst Members of the Government side to bring some reason to this whole debate. It is an important debate and nobody denies that, but the issue at hand in this five minutes is the issue of urgency.

I refer you, Sir, to Beauchesne Citation 390 which says, "'Urgency' within this rule does not apply to the matter itself, but means 'urgency of debate,' when the

ordinary opportunities provided by the Rules of the House do not permit the subject to be brought on early enough and the public interest demands that discussion take place immediately."

The issue, Sir, is urgency of debate. We all know the matter is an important matter, and this Government is moving co-operatively with all sectors in providing support to the extent that is reasonable at this time.

I would like to refer you to something said in 1986, Mr. Speaker, by my friend and colleague, the Honourable Member for Churchill (Mr. Cowan) at a time when he was Government House Leader, he said: "So while the matter is pressing, the public interest is being considered and is being acted upon by the Government." Well, we say that today, Mr. Speaker.

Another citation in Beauchesne I would like to refer to you, Sir, if I could have the attention of the House, is Beauchesne Citation 394: "(1) A general question of the maladministration of a department cannot be considered for debate under this Standing Order."

Mr. Speaker, while we totally and categorically reject some of the allegations coming across the floor, we see here 10 WHEREASes in a motion under a Standing Order 27, ten talking about what Honourable Members opposite would suggest and which most people would disagree is the maladministration of a department. Neither can that, Mr. Speaker, form the basis for a discussion in a debate brought on by a motion of the kind brought in today by the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis).

As I said, at no time, Mr. Speaker, has anyone approached me, as the Government House Leader, to ask that the most obvious opportunity for debate, Estimates Review, be brought forward on the list. I see the opposition House Leaders, both of them, fighting amongst each other as to who negotiated these things in the first place. I remind the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton) that those negotiations took place last June. A number of the items complained of now by the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) happened very recently, but I say they happened long before last June. They happened long before this Government came to office at a time when the Honourable Member for St. Johns and her colleagues were turning their backs on day care workers and the day care operations in this province. I say to the Honourable Member for St. Johns, where was she when day care workers needed her? This year the day care in Manitoba is receiving, as you have heard before, significant increases in their budgets.

Now, Mr. Speaker, I appeal to you to review the arguments made this afternoon and to make the appropriate decision.

SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order.

There are two conditions to be satisfied for this matter to proceed. The first condition has been met, that the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) has provided me with the notice required by our Rules.

Beauchesne Citation 389 provides that for a matter to be debated under our Rule 27 it "must be so pressing that the public interest will suffer if it is not given immediate attention."

Similarly, Citation 390 states, and I quote: "'Urgency' within this rule does not apply to the matter itself, but means 'urgency of debate,' when the ordinary opportunities provided by the Rules of the House do not permit the subject to be brought on early enough and the public interest demands that discussion take place immediately."

The throne and budget debates have been concluded. There is no certain knowledge as to when the Estimates of the Department of Family Services will be before the Committee of Supply. They are tenth on the list of consideration in the Chamber.

I am aware, as the Honourable Member has pointed out to the House, that in 1986 Madam Speaker Phillips ruled in favour of debate on a matter of urgent public importance respecting "The Crisis in the Child Care and Protection System," on the grounds of urgency of debate. I note there are 42 Private Members' Resolutions on the Order Paper which would appear to close off this means of dealing with the subject. Based on the references quoted, and the facts mentioned, I am satisfied that this matter does satisfy the conditions for debate on a matter of urgent public importance. I am, therefore, ruling that it is in order.

* (1440)

Therefore, the question before the House is shall the debate proceed? All those in favour of the motion, please say yea. All those opposed will please say nay. In my opinion the yeas have it.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. Johns.

Ms. Judy Wasylcia-Leis (St. Johns): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I sincerely appreciate your ruling on this matter and appreciate the support of parts of this House in recognizing the urgency of the day care situation before us in this province today.

Mr. Speaker, as the intention of my motion stated, we are embarked on a critical course of action. We are facing an emergency situation in the Province of Manitoba, in the day care community of this province, in the working families of this province, and in the process the lives and health of children are at risk.

Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity today to engage in the discussion, in a dialogue, in this Chamber to help convince the Conservative Government today that they are moving in the wrong direction when it comes to child care, when it comes to day care policy in this province.

Nobody is suggesting for one moment today that the record of the NDP is absolutely perfect, and we achieved everything overnight. We are saying, Mr. Speaker, that a very good framework was put in place, and very important steps taken to ensure quality child care, to

ensure recognition and appropriate remuneration for day care professionals in this province, to ensure a service for working families to be able to combine the onerous responsibilities of work, and the onerous responsibilities of child rearing.

Mr. Speaker, everything we have seen in the last number of months from the Government of today, the Conservative Government in Manitoba, tells us we are going in the opposite direction. This Government is dragging us back in time, it is eroding the system, it is taking it apart, it is ripping it at the seams and day care workers, parents, and children are suffering as a result of it. We have a number of crises looming on the horizon; we have a number of urgent and pressing situations facing us today.

Let me start with the most critical. The most critical is that this Government's refusal to address the request, the interest, the demands of the day care professions in this country is putting in jeopardy the entire system. Mr. Speaker, this Government has been able to underspend in the Department of Family Services by \$4.4 million. This Government has been able to find over \$7,000 increases for its political and personal staff in the Premier's Office. At the same time, it has said it is not able to find anything more than 24 cents an hour for day care workers who work, having trained for over two years, who have put in extra time taking night courses, who work under very stressful, emotional, physically-demanding circumstances, who offer a very critically important service to the future of this province.

This Government is saying it cannot even find more than 24 cents to pay day care workers and to respond to them in a meaningful way. They are not asking for this Government today to arrive at the levels identified in pay equity settlements, the levels identified arrived at the University of Winnipeg by September 30, 1988, of \$26,000 at the bottom end of the scale for day care workers. This day care community is not expecting this Government today to arrive at the money recognized in the MANSIS Report of twenty-three-thousand-and-some dollars, but it is expecting this Government to put on the table some meaningful increase to show it is committed to child rearing, and it does expect this Government to sit down and negotiate a long-term plan, a three-year plan recognized and identified in its own task force report to arrive at those identified salary levels in both the MANSIS Report and in recent pay equity settlements.

Mr. Speaker, the intransigence of this Government in failing to even discuss the issue is forcing day care workers, professionals, parents, working families to seriously consider such drastic action as withdrawal of service.

(Mr. William Chornopyski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, this Government is putting caring professionals who want to be there caring for kids, working with families to support the future generations of this province, this Government is putting them in the most difficult, the most awful position imaginable, forcing this profession and the parents behind that profession to consider something as drastic as

withdrawal of service, and that is unacceptable. That is criminal.

When this Government has a \$200 million rainy-day fund, well, as my Leader has said over and over again, it is raining now in Manitoba, so let us negotiate today a fair increase, and let us sit down and arrive at a fair settlement for day care workers.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the result of that kind of situation is devastating. We are looking at potentially 16,000 children being left without adequate care. That translates into something like 30,000 working parents in this province faced with the option of taking sick leave or going home with their kids because there is no service. That leaves us with 2,000 caring professionals faced with that difficult decision of walking for a day or more, however long it takes to move this Government.

Please, I beg this Government, consider the difficult position you are putting those workers in, consider that difficult position when you can come up with the kind of money you found for political staff in the Premier's Office.

Surely to goodness there is nothing more important than child rearing in this province. There is nothing more important than working with families to help them provide a good family life and be good productive members in the work force.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are other elements to this crisis. We have heard them day after day, we have heard the incompetence of the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) in response to them, we have heard the weakness of the Premier's answers, and today we have heard the lack of concern on the part of the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Hammond). The crisis consists of an incredible low morale going throughout the whole bureaucracy because of the callous treatment of a very important civil servant in this Government who has pioneered day care, who has actually worked to put in place one of the best day care systems in this country, Mary Humphrey, and the treatment of this Government in regard to Mary Humphrey is deplorable. It should not be, and I would expect the Minister responsible for the Status of Women and the Civil Service Commission (Mrs. Hammond) to have said something about it and done something about it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have seen the results of the political interference of a Member in the Minister's own staff trying to tamper with the standards and regulations, the highest in the country, trying to tamper with them because he is getting pressure from friends of the Minister, from private operators who expected something more out of this Government and they did not get it.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have other crises in this system. The Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) heard about the closing of Mini-Skool on Jefferson at the end of July. She received that information; she did not act on that information. As a consequence, 84 children and the parents of those children received notice on September 6 that their day care would be closing September 29.

I would like to know if any one of the Members of that Government can tell me how anyone can find alternate arrangements in that short a time and respond to that kind of crisis situation. This Government has done nothing. It is absolutely unacceptable. That Minister should be gone today because she did not act on the information she received at the end of July. She has left those children and those parents in a most difficult position.

She has not acted, and they are left today scrambling, and worse, this Government has not even offered to put in place a service to help those parents, has not given them any assistance to convert to a non-profit day care, even though they have asked for that, even though they have demanded that of this Minister. This Minister, this Government, has sat on their butts day in and day out refusing to act on behalf of parents, on behalf of children, and on behalf of day care professionals in this country. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that is not acceptable.

* (1450)

It is not acceptable to drag down the best day care system in this country that is sensitive to the needs of working families everywhere, to take it back decades and to ignore the changing needs of the family; to ignore the demands on parents and to ignore the rightful recognition that day care professionals deserve. So I hope, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that today we can convince the Government today—the Conservative Government of Manitoba—to change its mind, to stop taking the system back down in time but to keep going steadfastly forward and respond to the day care workers, to the parents affected by closures of profit centres, and to the children who are really at the heart of this matter.

Hon. Gerrie Hammond (Minister of Labour): Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am not pleased to be having to stand here today to talk about the day care system and pay of day care workers that was left to us to correct.

All along we have been saying that this is a good system that we have and I believe that it is, that the regulations that were put in place were good, that the former Government had done a good job to do it. What we did not realize until we got into office was how badly under funded that they kept the whole system. So it was left to this Government to put money into the system as fairly as we could. While we recognize that day care workers certainly are not making the salary that they probably should be, this Government has put \$13 million in less than two years into the day care program.

We have wanted to bring in a flexible, quality day care system, something that was not just a 9 to 5 in institutional day care. We really needed a day care system that covered part-time workers, that helped shift workers, and those were the types of things that we tried to do.

This Government on January 1 of this year, 1989, brought in an increase of \$500 for the day care worker. This is a salary enhancement grant and I want to emphasize that. It is not supposed to be in place of a

salary increase. It is an enhancement grant. So it is to help the day care worker and it is to help the day care centres to give funding to their day care workers. We are presently talking to the people that are in the day care community. I recently met with them myself. We are going to be working on salary enhancement and funding that will be good for everyone.

What is not helpful is for the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) to be in that community stirring it up and saying the only thing that you can do now is to go out on a one-day strike or a strike. That is not helpful. That does not help the parents and it certainly does not help the children. When I see that type of thing I consider it to be irresponsible.

I understand that the Member wants to help the day care workers. What I do not understand is somebody getting in there and saying, look, this is the way to show it, is you can march on the Legislature. That is fine. We can all take that and we welcome talking to the day care workers, but what I do not understand is someone here who is in a responsible position who is purposely saying to the day care community, the only way that you can show your contempt for what we are doing is to go out on strike. That certainly does not help the very parents that she is trying to help and the very children that we are trying to help.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Member for St. Johns, on a point of order.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Deputy Speaker, on a point of order. I distinctly heard the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Hammond) suggest that I was purposely going around stirring up day care workers and whatever in this province. I think that the Minister—and the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has concurred with that statement—I think that, first of all, is contrary to the Rules, when Members should not be reflecting on other Member's motives; and secondly, a terrible distortion of the facts when it was this Government, through its Task Force on Day Care, that has been stirring up day care workers and creating all kinds of expectations and has left them in the lurch.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: In my opinion the Honourable Member does not have a point of order. The Honourable Minister of Labour has the floor.

Mrs. Hammond: I would like to mention also that this year we are making one-time equipment grants to enhance quality in all non-funded day care centres, nursery schools and funded day care homes, that there is an increased start-up grant for new funded family day care spaces from \$225 to \$300 per space, 345 new day care spaces. As the former Government when they promised new spaces, these are not "hope to," these are what we plan to do this year. This is not a "hoped for" type of program. This is something that we are planning to do.

We are also planning capital funds for workplace day care centres. Now, this was something that everyone feels is necessary, because what better place than in a workplace to have day care where the mother or the

father is there to touch base, to nurture their own children through the day? All these things we have been trying to do this year. We really feel that without the constant outside interference we probably could get down to some really good workings with the day care community.

The Minister also has appointed a Day Care Advisory Board, and on that advisory committee there are people from all the communities in the day care community. The president of the present day care MCCA is on that. All the parties are there and these people are working with the Minister. That is why they are there, to make recommendations so that we could bring in a long-term plan on funding for the day cares. Now, the MCCA has mentioned that they would like to be looking at different types of funding, funding that may include the block-funding type of funding so that the boards themselves could create the salaries and we would not be running into this type of instance.

There is no one in this community who is wanting to hurt the day care system. We have a good system. What we want to do is enhance it, and we are really sorry the day care workers did not feel they were getting enough this year, because we really have plans to enhance their salary as the years go on. We want to make this system work as well as possible.

The other thing we need to do as well is to create more spaces, and we need to create more spaces in the communities. We want to make sure that family day care gets a chance to get going so that people do not have to—because very often if it is single parents especially, they do not have the opportunity to get into cars and take their children to a centre that is far off. It is on and off buses early in the morning and after dark at night. It is pretty hard on them. We would like to see more family day care where women will have the opportunity in their communities to place their children. We want to see that shift workers have a chance for day care and this is another area where family day care can come into place.

Sir, there are many things that we are doing to enhance day care this time and, although this is the one issue that has come up on day care, I really do feel that we have made a very good attempt to enhance the day care system. We want to broaden it and not just have a 9 to 5 in day care centres. We know there are more needs. We know that we need flexibility. We heard that in the Women's Initiative, that flexibility is one of the things that is needed. It is needed in the farm community. These were things that were not touched by the former Government to any extent and so it has been left to this Government to try and do these things.

* (1500)

I really do want to say to the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) that we are working with the day care community. The Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) has been working very hard. She did a good job in bringing in so much extra money. Thirteen million dollars is not a paltry sum and it is not a—she had to do a lot of work to come up with this plan and although

it does not fit the needs possibly of the day care workers at this time, we are working with them at all times. We have the Advisory Council now, to the Minister, who will be bringing forth recommendations and we are going to be working with them. So I think if we allow the Minister to get to work meeting with the community that this issue will settle down and the parents, the children and the day care community will all profit in the long run.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to participate in this debate. I think it is very unfortunate that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) are unable to appreciate the emotion and the sincerity with which the Opposition will debate this issue today.

I find it quite interesting to listen to the third Party talk about the \$200 million slush fund, the unaccountable slush fund, which they decided to support in early June. I find it interesting that the third Party talks about removing people in the Department of Family Services and the political salaries paid to political staff when no one did it better than the NDP, but the Tories are catching up.

I think the debate must centre around the unwillingness of this Tory Government to take responsibility for the fact that they have been the Government for over 16 months, and that they have created two budgets. When are they going to quit talking about the NDP as Government which is now history and when are they going to start taking responsibility for their actions?

I listen to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Hammond) and I listen to the Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings) today talk about the wonderful job that this Government is doing in day care. Well, if they are doing such a wonderful job how can this Government explain the unprecedented, angry Family Day Care Association, Independent Quality Day Care Association, Manitoba Child Care Association, thousands of parents who are willing to walk out with the child care workers, to support the child care workers and their need for salary enhancement, thousands of letters that are starting to pour in to this Legislature to all three Parties? How can the Government explain, how can this Government explain and actually rely on the platitudes that the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) is doing a good job when there is such an angry backlash in this entire province?

Then we have the Tory Government, who is more concerned about who is stirring up trouble in the community than actually trying to look introspectively into themselves and perhaps figure out why they have such trouble out in the community. If they stop to think about it for one minute, and they are so blind when we talk about wanting the Minister of Family Services' (Mrs. Oleson) resignation, what we are saying, nothing to do with her personally, but she is incapable of being a good manager for her department, and what we are hearing over and over and over again, from the child care workers and from the advocacy associations is it is not just a money issue, but it is an issue of we have not been treated with respect; we have been pushed aside.

We have been told that \$16,000 is an appropriate amount of money because there is no plan in the next two or three years to move that salary up. There is no plan at all, so obviously we must be worth only \$16,000, no matter what they say in lip service, that they believe the salary enhancement is low and that the child care workers should be paid more.

Why do they not put some action into those sentiments? Why do they not develop a multiyear plan? Why do we have a Minister of Family Services who says in meetings to the Child Care Association, "cannot do anything about it, one-year budget, there is nothing I can do." My goodness, someone should teach that woman how to negotiate with the public. It is absolutely incredible how she can get the backlash and the anger of so many people in the community and not just in this issue of child care workers, but every other community group that she has some responsibility for in her department.

Then we have a Government who believes, according to the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Hammond), we believe in the enhancement of day care. We believe in quality day care, we believe in standards. In fact, that is why we have removed Mary Humphrey because she worked on that for 14 years and did an excellent job, and if the Minister responsible for the Civil Service Commission (Mrs. Hammond) can stand here in this House and say to us that she has been moved because she is incompetent and there is documentation to prove it, I would like to see that documentation, because you do not move people from job to job unless you can cite there are disciplinary problems or that you can cite there is a major reorganization. You are not supposed to move people.

This Government is so silly, it is so blind, that they do not realize that their secret survey they did behind the Foster Parents Association had exactly the same backlash as the removal of Mary Humphrey as Director of Child Care. They do not realize that Mary Humphrey's removal as director has had even more of a backlash than the insulting salary increases that the child care workers had, because we know we have been getting the phone calls every day. Since we found out about her removal we have been getting the letters every day from parents, from child care workers who are saying, "Why have they removed Mary Humphrey, why have they used her as a scapegoat?"

That is not the only example, because there are lots of people in the Family Services Department who are directors and they have all been told they are on their way out too. So it is certainly something that is going to be happening again and again.

It is unfortunate when you have a Government take over power who is so paranoid that it refuses to trust the civil servants who have done a good job and who are their civil servants. They do not care who the Government of the Day is, they are there to do a good job, they are there to make appropriate recommendations, and then it is up to the Ministers to make the decisions. There are civil servants there who have done good jobs, and to remove those people when you have a Minister who does not have a clue about the issues of her department and to remove those

people is not only criminal, it is absolutely irresponsible and will come back to haunt this Government and has come back to haunt them and will day after day after day.

All the child care community is asking for and all the parents are asking for is some respect, a willingness for a Minister and a Government to negotiate openly and honestly, to say, okay, we have a \$6 million increase in the day care budget this year. We know that we are not going to meet all the needs as set out by the task force which cost \$400,000 so let us meet with the associations. Let us talk to them, let us find out how best can we use this amount of money, what are the priorities taken into consideration, what the task force has said.

Now did that logical approach occur with the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson)? One Member in the back row says, yes. In fact, it did not occur, so perhaps you should go back to your Minister of Family Services and ask her what exactly goes on.

What happened was that the Minister chose to ignore the task force recommendations. She chose to not inform the advocacy association about her announcement that was forthcoming and she dumped it on the media and on the associations in one day. Everyone was upset because they could not believe that she had not taken the recommendations of her own task force—\$400,000.00. What a waste of money when you are not going to believe what is written on a piece of paper.

The Minister of Natural Resources (Mr. Enns) said there are many reports that come in that you do not listen to day after day. Well, then would you quit spending money on all these reports because you are not listening to them. That is a waste of taxpayers' money. If you are going to make arbitrary, autocratic decisions, make it before you spend \$400,000.00.

* (1510)

I would love to send this whole Tory Cabinet back to school on how to be managers because you people do not have the first clue on how to manage departments. It is absolutely incredible. Common sense must not be in the vocabulary of a Tory. I cannot believe it.

Someone has just said communication skills are a bit lacking, and that is true. I mean, the problem can certainly be resolved: communication, openness, respect for the child care community, but this Government, rather than looking at salary increases and saying we can only give a certain amount of money this year but we have a commitment to you, we believe your salary should be increased, this is what we are going to do in year two, this is what we are going to do in year three, why can there not be that multiyear planning done? The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) preached about multiyear planning, yet there has been no example of it whatsoever.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, in closing I would like to say, if only this Government had used some common-sense approach and openness with the child care community

and it can really show the people of Manitoba and the child care workers that it respects them, then they should go back to the drawing board, the negotiating board, with the associations and look to some decent salary increases for this year and in the coming years. Thank you.

Mr. Bill Uruski (Interlake): I am very pleased to participate in this debate this afternoon, a debate and an issue that has been looming in Manitoba for over a year, an issue that really flies in the face of responsible Government. What we see in this issue is a philosophical fixation of the Government and the Opposition in terms of turning our day care program, which is recognized as one of the best in North America, and putting their philosophical imprint on a system to try and dilute the presence of co-operative and community run day care centres and shift the whole system into a for-profit day care system, so that the system can be operated at arm's length from scrutiny within the Government.

What we have seen in the last several months in this debate is really, I guess, the deepest of political interference in an issue by none other than the Premier of this Province (Mr. Filmon). I say that as we have seen the assistant director of the day care centre resign, and we have seen the director of the day care centre be moved by this Government.

We have also seen allegation upon allegation from civil servants who are afraid for their positions indicating that there is political interference in the lack of administering of the regulations that have been put into place several years ago. Who is the head of this liaison between the complainants in the day care centres, the profit for profit day care centres, and the Minister's office, and the Premier's Office? None other but the political, I would call him, friend of the Premier. I mean, who organized the Premier's political leadership campaign in the City of Winnipeg? None other than his friend, Seech.

This man has been put into the Minister's office, the Minister who her colleagues now say knows how to run the show, is a good administrator, so what have we had? We have had the Premier plunk his political hack into the Minister's office, and as soon as there is a phone call of complaint from a private day care operator, what happens? The political hack at the Premier's office starts phoning the Civil Service and saying lay off. Lay off because these phone calls have come in. Is this what has happened, is that what has happened? You know, if I was a civil servant in a department, I would be saying hold it, I want to keep my job, I do not need this hassle, I do not need someone from my boss's office, not only my boss's office but from the Premier's Office, saying to me lay off, or not saying lay off, starting to question my integrity in the ability of my enforcing these regulations, because that is what is happening, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in this debate.

We have the philosophical approach of the Tories supported by the Liberals saying it is okay to have a day care system for profit, and we now have the Premier's Office being involved in this system by directing how the complaints of making sure that the regulations are kept, how the complaints will be

managed. We have a Civil Service that is, I would say, not only frightened, they are probably frightened out of their wits. We have the director being moved or shuffled aside, we have the assistant director resigning, saying I cannot take this political interference any more.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, for a Government to say they are supporting families and day care, this is a sham. This is nothing but a total sham in terms of the children of this province. We have had the Minister of Labour, the Minister responsible for the Status of Women (Mrs. Hammond), accusing my colleague of saying she is going around this province stirring up the day care people. I am glad that there is a Member like the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcyia-Leis) who is prepared to stand up with the people who are providing the care for our future, our children, and if she is going around the province and saying I support you in demands in bettering a system that we worked so hard in setting up, then I give her all the credit in the world, because she is standing up for the people of this province.

It was the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond) in her capacity as a backbencher who headed up a task force, who went around this province and raised expectations and said look, we are going to do all these wonderful things to improve the system of day care in this province. They produced a report, a report that said day care workers are underpaid, as one of the recommendations.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we are still getting the opening of the second envelope where the first envelope blamed the former administration for all our ills. I think their time has fast run out, about opening the first envelope. The day care system under our administration and our beginning was viewed as a model in North America. Now nobody said that we were perfect, and I do not say that we were perfect, but what I want to say is that we were prepared to sit down and not have to negotiate, to sit down in meaningful dialogue and discussion to say look, how do we work this process out to make sure that there is integrity in the system and that we build on the model that we have started? What we see is a reign of terror.

* (1520)

We have the Premier (Mr. Filmon) injecting his political advisor in his leadership campaign into the Minister's office, the Minister going out and saying one thing, I think I want the regulations to be enforced, but someone else who is at the other end of the telephone telling civil servants or questioning the civil servants when they say here is the kind of infractions and saying how are you handling this process, doing another thing.

What kind of message is being sent to the community? A message that the system is in chaos, and that chaos is caused right from the Premier's office, down through the Minister's office, down into society. That is where the chaos is being caused. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I say to the Government, get Seech out of there, tell your own Premier to hide his political hacks, put them back in the backrooms, let him do his planning, get him out of the front offices, from answering the

phones. That is the first thing that they should do. If they have all that confidence in her Minister, then let her reinstate the manager of the day care office as No. 2 and let her do her job, in the process sit down with the day care community and not negotiate, sit down and say how do we work this thing through because the day care people are not rabid radicals that want something that no one can meet. All they want to do is to provide decent caring service for the future of our society, our children.

Three things that have to be done and this Government is blowing it and have blown it, and that is why this Minister should go.

Hon. Glen Cummings (Minister of Environment): I want to say that I think it is about time we started to address with some ration in this House just what the concerns are in the area of day care. Well, I see that there is all-Party support on that concept. Let us have a look at it.

First of all, I think no one in this House would argue with the fact that we need accessibility and that we need increased availability, and we need to have a continued enhancement of the services that we have, an ability to provide for, within this province, to those parents who need day care services.

Let us not get bogged down on one side of the issue by saying that because there is one part of the puzzle that has not been completed or one part of the puzzle that Government has not yet actioned on, that this Government or any other of the Members in this Legislature would be prepared to start throwing the baby out with the bath water. I accuse the Members of the previous Government of being hypocritical in their approach on many occasions, but this is an issue where I think they really must feel on the horns of a dilemma. They stand up and they say about how they built the greatest day care system in North America. That is one of the things that they consistently put forward, that they say they created this system and that it is one of the best in North America.

Now, because they are desperately trying to avoid associating themselves with the fact that they refuse to deal with the cost of salary enhancement for workers within this province, they are now conveniently distancing themselves from the creation of that system, because you cannot, when you are in Government, separate yourself from the creation and the funding of the system that is in place. We are accepting the responsibility for the funding that needs to be in place for this system. We are accepting that responsibility.

We have also had to, because of resources within the Government, make sure that we put the money in areas that would do as much good as possible. We are prepared to deal with all parts of the concerns that are being raised in the day care issue, but with \$13 million it can only be cut so many ways. That does not mean that one side of the system is more important than the other, it means that there has to be a combination of efforts that are put forward. We put forward the dollars into spaces. We did put forward a fair bit of money into salary enhancement.

Obviously, I do not think there is any question that people, no matter where they come from, and looking at the salary levels that are paid within day care, would say that it is not an issue that needs to be dealt with. It is an issue that will be dealt with. When you look out there and you have parents who are looking for spaces, they are coming forward and saying we need spaces for our children. I am a single parent, how can I find a space? I am a low-income family or I am a family with real needs for special care for certain children, we need spaces.

How can a Government not say that increasing spaces is not a priority with us? It has to be a priority with us. You have to make more spaces available so that the people who really need that help can access it. That does not mean that we are neglecting or rejecting the concerns of those that have to work there. It is most hypocritical for those who stand up and say, we created this system. Now you have to take the responsibility because the workers that are working there are being underpaid. It is part of a long-term program that this system has to go through for development and enhancement. That is what is happening.

The Minister responsible has spent countless hours working with various organizations in this province and she is certainly one who is capable of understanding the problems of families that need day care. She knows what the concerns are. She made strong representations to Cabinet for the concerns she identified within her department but, as we sit and make decision, as the Minister and her department have to make decisions, they have to look at the issues as I just described them whether or not there are even spaces available. Do we want a limited number of spaces staffed by very highly paid personnel? That is not the only way to look at this issue.

I would like to describe to this House something that occurred on our Central Manitoba tour last week. We met at one of the centres with a group of people. There were people there who were directors of the shelters and working on the group that was looking after wife abuse and battered women in the community. There were also directors on the day care board, and they came on pretty strong to me. They said, what is the matter, day care workers are not being paid well enough? I said, nobody has ever said that day care workers are paid too high, but let us look at what is happening here.

In the last two years we put an increase in place of 45 percent into this area. I said, you can criticize the fact that there is not enough money to pay the day care workers, but you certainly cannot criticize the motivation and the direction and the leadership that we are showing and the fact that we have recognized the needs and the aspirations of those who want access to day care. They thought about it for a little while and they asked me a few more questions. They said, yes, we believe you are sincere. We believe that you do want to deal with this problem, and we are now going to hold you to your word that if this is the first step in a multistage process of dealing with this process, then we believe that you are doing the right thing.

Now, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we stand in this Legislature to be held accountable for the decisions that we make in Government. I am not apologizing for the fact that we added in excess of 300-some additional spaces this year. That is very important, 325 I think the number is. We are looking at an increase of 44 percent or 45 percent in two budgets. One budget, mind you, that we revised from the previous administration, revised upwards, I believe, if they were to check their records, but that is not something they are going to bring up in this Legislature.

They see an opportunity. The Member for St. Johns sees an opportunity to go out and make sure that she provides the day care workers with a reason to be upset. She sees this as an opportunity for political activism. If somebody comes to you and says you have a reason to be upset and gives you one, two, three reasons you have got to get out and raise hell about this issue, after a while you start to say, well if that is the only side of the story that I am hearing, then there must be something wrong.

The other side of the story has not been out there, Mr. Deputy Speaker. It is our job as a Government to make sure it gets out there, and that is one of the reasons that we stand in our places here to be held accountable for the expenditures that we are making. We believe that we can be very reasonable in the position that we have taken and that the people of this province, when they see what we have done, can expect that we will continue to deal with them in a fair and honest manner and that refers directly to the day care workers of this province. We will work with them. The Premier made that commitment on behalf of this Government; that is not a commitment that we can in any way back away from.

* (1530)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are many things that I think need to be put onto the record, but there was a couple of things that went onto the record here today. I refer to what I consider as the ulterior motive of the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylcia-Leis), but I also have to point out that I have some concerns with what the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) indicated when she said that there were directors all over the province that have been told, be worried, you are on your way out. If she has any way of substantiating that, she had better put it on the record because she is spreading scare tactics and innuendo. They simply are not true. While she has not stooped to the level of the Member for St. Johns, I am concerned about her credibility in making statements of that nature.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I make one last comment to this issue. We put forward \$13 million in this area of day care in the last two years, \$13 million. Now, how much did the NDP put forward? How much did they put forward in the last five years? How many dollars are we talking about? I think the Leader of the third Party (Mr. Doer) knows. He probably does not want to hear the answer because in five years, it took them five years to put together slightly more than one million more than what we have done. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I rest my case.

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): I see the Leader of the third Party (Mr. Doer) would like his chance. He will get his chance, I assure him. Just because they start the debate does not mean they are the only ones who can participate in it.

The fact is that our Party is the Party that has brought the day care issue to the attention of the public in Manitoba responsibly and forcibly and throughout. Back when I was filling in for Ms. Gray this summer when she was on vacation, I had an interesting opportunity to get to know more about this department and about this Minister. I see that the Minister says scare tactics are being used. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I can assure you after being through the events of the Raggedy-Ann Day Care scandal, I can tell you those scare tactics are fully warranted.

The public in Manitoba should be scared that this Minister is in charge of this very important department because the fact is I really believe after going through those events that led to the revocation of the licence, mind you for the wrong reasons, that the children in Manitoba are at risk with a Minister who has no grasp of what is going on in her department and really does not know the laws that bind her and bind that department. She has very little familiarity with the regulations. Her answers in the press conferences during that Raggedy-Ann affair were woefully inadequate, assured no one. The fact is that the Winnipeg Sun reporter, and through our efforts as a caucus, were able to turn up information which came as a complete surprise to the Minister and she had no idea how to respond.

The other thing that was mentioned by my friend, the Minister, when he just spoke was that a political opportunity was being exploited here somehow by the opposition Parties. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, the political opportunity, in my view, was lost by this Government when they failed to work co-operatively and effectively with the day care workers in this province. Let us be clear that from the very beginning, the day care workers went to this Government I believe with an open mind and said, we want to work with this Government, we want to educate this Government, we want to work together for a long-range plan.

In my experience in speaking to day care operators in my constituency, the fact is that really is the root of their problem with this Government. They see no commitment for the long term and they see no commitment to work together. What they see is a sock thrown to them to get them to go away and to shut up. The fact is they are not going to and I think we have heard that loud and clear. Just like the foster parents did not, neither will the day care workers; and unfortunately, very unfortunately, it takes a crisis to get some action out of this Government. That really is a shame and it is very irresponsible because I believe that day care workers and directors in this province do not want to shut their doors. They do not want to strike; they do not want to cause that inconvenience to parents; they are only doing it as a very, very, last resort.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, what we in our Party support is affordable accessible day care, and we want to do everything possible to ensure that. We have seen - (interjection)- I will get to that, I see the Leader of the third Party (Mr. Doer) wants to talk about profit and non-profit and I will get to that. I promise him that if he gives me the time to do it. The fact is we have seen a federal Government after making massive commitments, back in 1988, all of a sudden desert the area of day care. They said, well, I am sorry, but the deficit prevents us from spending this money on day care. As if the deficit was created between November of 1988 and April of 1989, but that is their line. They know they have three years left in Government, they can answer for this later. They are going to do things like the GST and cut out free trade now, and that is the way this Government works. That is the way they worked last time.

What we need in this province is a Minister and a Government which will pick up the slack because there is a lot of slack to be picked up. Mrs. Oleson, while I have met her and had meetings with her many times and I think she is a very nice woman, I have no problem saying that I really think that she has integrity. I think she is a nice person. She is just way over her head. The fact is she does not have a grasp on the issues in her department, and I think that this Government knows that full well. Perhaps one of the reasons she is still there is because none of them has the guts to take that department on. They do not want to go near that department and they are using her as a scapegoat. She can take the hits, because the fact is I really believe that when she goes to her Cabinet in those Cabinet meetings she gets no support. To that extent I feel sorry for her, because I just do not think she has the support of Government, and I think that the Cabinet is in large part responsible for the crisis we are facing now, because everybody knows the Cabinet runs that department anyway, she is a figurehead and she takes the front line hits.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, getting now to the private versus the public issue. That was an issue that was brought up during the Raggedy-Ann debate. It was very interesting to me to see when standards were the issue, that the NDP jumped on this and said well, what this proves is that private day cares have to go, never mind the large number of people who use private day cares, they are not rich, they use private day cares because they are accessible, because they are the only ones that provide infant day care, and because they are the people in the community.

* (1540)

That is the consistent line of the NDP, and quite frankly it ignores and it mocks the major issue which in the Raggedy-Ann debate was standards, and in this debate which is affordable accessible day care.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am going to ask you to quiet the House. I am having a hard time. Quiet the House.

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

Mr. Edwards: Well, I will just have to shout a little louder. The key aspect in allowing affordable and

accessible day care, in my view, is to make it fair to everyone who uses it. One of the problems with the present system is that a subsidy continues to exist for the people who are very rich, and that is unfortunate, that is wrong. The fact is that if you have lots of money you should pay the whole cost, and if you have no money you should not pay at all. The subsidy should be increased, because the subsidy for the very rich is wrong. If you are rich and you can afford to pay, you should pay—(interjection)—The Leader of the third Party (Mr. Doer) says who is rich? In my books, probably he is rich. He says he makes \$38,000.00. The fact is his family income is a lot higher than that, we all know that. If you have that kind of income you should pay fully for day care; if you are very poor you should not pay at all.

(The Acting Speaker, John Angus, in the Chair)

The fact is we now have a situation in Canada where without the contribution from a second parent—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Angus): Order. A little less heckling, a little more paying attention by all Honourable Members will help proceed the debate to a higher level. Thank you.

Mr. Edwards: There is a situation in this country, and times have changed where without the contribution from a second parent in two-income families, it is estimated today that the number of families living below the poverty line would increase by 62 percent.

Mr. Jay Cowan (Churchill): I wonder if the Member would entertain a question.

Mr. Edwards: Absolutely, absolutely.

Mr. Cowan: Okay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Angus): He has two minutes left.

Mr. Edwards: The fact is that day care is necessary in our society today, and I have a lot of my constituents who say gee, I raised my kids without day care, why should we have day care subsidies for people? I have constituents who say that and I think we all do. I think we have to say to them look, society has changed. The fact is that we would have an increase of 62 percent in families below the poverty line if we did not have affordable accessible day care. It is estimated that more than one in 10 families are headed by single parents, and that six in every 10 female headed families live below the poverty line. That is why we need day care, that is why this Party stands for affordable accessible day care, and that is why we will continue this fight until we get a Minister who can handle the job.

Mr. Acting Speaker (Mr. Angus): Does the Member have leave to ask a question? (Agreed)

Mr. Cowan: Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker. We have enjoyed that spirited defence of private sector day care by the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards). My question to him—because he has indicated very clearly

that he believes that some Manitobans should not have access to a subsidy for day care if they are rich—what specifically does he, in his own mind, think to be rich? In other words, at what point would he take away the subsidy?

Mr. Edwards: It is my view that if you have sufficient funds to pay, and I am talking about a needs test, and if the Member is asking where on the scale of salary, family income, how you work that out, if that is what he is asking, frankly, Mr. Acting Speaker, I think it is an irresponsible question. The fact is, that question comes from the Party that has chosen to support the rich, the very rich, and by giving them subsidies for their children in day cares and this is the Party that brought that into place. The fact is you need a scale that covers the whole spectrum. If they do not understand that, they do not understand the same thing that they always say when they say tax the rich, tax the corporations. That is the principle I am asking them to be held to. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Angus): The Minister of Health.

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Angus): Does the Member for Concordia (Mr. Doer) have a point of order? With the leave of the House we will recognize the Leader of the second opposition Party, the Member for Concordia.

Mr. Gary Doer (Leader of the Second Opposition): I think it is very important to rise on this emergency debate. One of the great things about an emergency debate, it does have sometimes the ability to edify and articulate the positions of various political Parties on this issue.

I have heard the Member from St. James (Mr. Edwards) make more mistakes on child care and the child care position of his particular political Party than I have heard the Minister, quite frankly, of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) make. I think he has been taken to the woodshed by the Liberal House Leader (Mr. Alcock) and I do not blame him. I have heard the Member from St. James (Mr. Edwards) make more mistakes in a 10-minute speech on child care than any Member I have ever heard in my life.

Now, if I had said that even Sister Teresa could not be the Minister of Community Services and do a perfect job, Mr. Acting Speaker, but boy, the Member from St. James is sure not Sister Teresa, I tell you, with the questions and answers we had today. We not only got a defence of the profit child care system in this province, which I thought is totally inconsistent with the public school system and the non-profit system in our province, we also received a clawback position on our child care program in terms of the subsidies that are given to our citizens in Manitoba. It is very consistent with two other positions the Liberal Party in Manitoba has taken before and I really think we should put those in the record.

One is they have supported a means test for home care in the ill-fated press conference that was held by a couple of the Members of the north end when they were defending the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and his cutbacks on the elderly and handicapped. Members of the north end, they got up and said, we support a means test, and we will kick the crutches out from underneath the elderly if they do not have enough money in terms of the Home Care Program.

Secondly, Mr. Acting Speaker, no, even the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) did not suggest—even the Member from Pembina did not suggest a means test, but the Liberals from the north end of Winnipeg did. Now, three months ago in Selkirk, Manitoba, the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs), stood up and said, yeah, she supports the clawback program for old age pensions. Sure, as long as that money goes to the—it is the same line that Mulroney and Wilson use—as long as that money goes to the poor. Now, today we get the third clawback in the third attack on a universal health care program and a universal child care program from the hypocrites on my right in the Liberal Party of Manitoba.

Shame, Mr. Acting Speaker, and I am pleased we have that on the record because I guarantee you in every child care centre in this province we are going to be asking Manitobans, who is rich and who is going to lose the subsidy from the Liberal Party of Manitoba. We believe in a universal child care program like we believe in a universal health care program, like we believe in a universal home care program. We believe those programs to be universal and we will go to the doorstep for that when it is time.

Mr. Acting Speaker, on to the topic of the ministry of Family Services today, I would like to offer some constructive comments about where we are because I think it is a very serious issue. I believe that the Government of the Day, and the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) quite rightly pointed this out, had an opportunity for a partnership with the child care community. We had had a system of developing a partnership with the child care workers in Manitoba, to have a long-term way of dealing with the child care challenges that were long term, were very challenging. It affected salaries, it affected spaces, it affected the rural and northern accessibility, it affected occupational child care and we had a partnership generally with the child care community and that is why, where we had our disagreements, we did not have massive public confrontations.

Secondly, we had a senior public employee, of no particular political stripe that I am aware of, who was directing the program, that also acted in a partnership way in a liaison with the Minister of the Day and with the day care and child care community which consists of children, parents, boards of directors and the child care workers themselves. This Government chose a partnership in a different way. They decided to establish a task force on child care, and that was their way of going and there was a great deal of good faith in the child care community, generally, of the attempts and efforts of the task force that was proposed.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the expectations were raised to a very high level with this partnership with the day care

community because the task force was established, it was a full range of representatives appointed by the Government and the child care community and there was going to be a set of recommendations that people were putting their hearts, their minds and their trust in, in terms of that report.

* (1550)

So all those expectations were raised, that process was set up, the report came out, there was a number of key recommendations and from that point on the whole partnership has been fumbled and some of the key and important recommendations have been totally neglected. Now we have a situation where the child care community, generally, feels it is totally out of the picture and must resort to front-page fights and TV on every fight and those kinds of confrontational approaches with the Government which, quite frankly, they want to get along with. They want to get along with you. You sign the cheques, you've developed the programs, you established the spaces, they want to get along with you. They do not want this fight, they do not want this confrontation, they do not want the walkout, they want to work with children, they want to report and be accountable to parents.

Secondly, Mr. Acting Speaker, the second way your partnership has been broken is in the dismissal, not dismissal, in the shift of the director who has a tremendous field of credibility in the child care community. You know, you cannot do that, you cannot take an important brick out of the corner of a building in a critical time and expect the building not to fall down, and that is what it has done.

So I would like to make two constructive recommendations to this Government—and many Members of the Cabinet are sitting in this room and many Members of Caucus are sitting in this room. Get back your partnership with the child care community, dust off those recommendations and take them seriously because they are the key to your entry back into the door, a partnership that you had for the first 12 months and which we had for a number of years because we were working with that community.

Secondly, acknowledge that you made a mistake in moving sideways the director and put her back. It would be a tremendous—I know we do not admit to make mistakes, we all make mistakes, but moving that person is a mistake and I believe that is going to hurt you dearly because you are going to again lose—and the Members are shaking their heads. Somehow this has become a bit of a vindictive issue and I think that is unfortunate because I do not believe that person is anything more than a very competent, capable non-partisan advisor to the Government and a liaison to the child care community. It is tough enough being a Minister in Government, believe me, but it is a lot tougher being a Minister in Government when your underpinnings with the community you have to work with are totally removed.

How would the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) be, if key people in his department were removed sideways for alleged political reasons, or whatever else, and the

persons that had credibility were removed holus-bolus? I do not know whether the decision is made in the Premier's Office or the Minister's office, but that would leave the Minister in a terrible situation.

So two tangible ways for restoring your partnership and, hopefully, an ability to sit in a room and solve this problem, rather than all of us throwing grenades at each other, and the community throwing press releases at the Government. We would like nothing better, Mr. Acting Speaker, for this issue to be a non-issue in this House, that you have got a partnership back with the child care community and that there is some resolution to this problem. The Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) feels very strongly that if the recommendations are implemented, and the key personnel are returned, then you have got some solution to this impending impasse which is much greater than you may anticipate. We can all play games with statistics and numbers and whether it is \$13 million or only \$2 million in new funds, or whether it is an X percentage increase, or really a 3 percentage increase, or whether it is 24 cents an hour versus the Premier's staff getting 20 percent, we can all play those statistical games but, Mr. Acting Speaker, you have lost your fundamental partnership with this very, very important community. You have to do something to get that partnership back, not for political reasons but for the sake of our children, our parents, our Boards of Directors who are are volunteers, and for the child care workers themselves.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Angus): It is time.

Mr. Doer: Am I finished? I have a lot more to say, Mr. Acting Speaker, but the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) got me off on a side bar, but I think it is germane to the issue of where Parties stand on universal child care in this province. Thank you.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Acting Speaker, I appreciate my honourable friend, the Leader of the third Party's offer that we restore the partnership because that is exactly what is in process with this Government and this Minister. It took some substantial time and effort on many dedicated people to fact find in terms of child care in the Province of Manitoba to give us some direction, to give us some course of action for the future in terms of child care, and how we approach it as a program and a policy issue of Government.

That report was, I believe, made public approximately three months ago, four months ago, and a number of the recommendations are in process of being acted upon and others are certainly completely acted upon.

(Mr. William Chornopyski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, there is no one in the Province of Manitoba except the very narrow few who expect that all of the recommendations in that, including some salary enhancement, would be achieved in three-and-a-half short months. What has been pointed out is that there are those in the Opposition for the third Party, namely, the one proposing this resolution, who would think the greatest amount of gain politically for that Party would be to foment a one-day strike among child

care workers taking advantage of the very children they stand up and want to protect.

You see, that is the problem with this issue. We are in this House debating pure crass political motivation because this Government has been in office for 16 months. You cannot play with the numbers, the budget figures, as the Leader of the third Party of this House says, we do not know if it is 2 million, 3 percent, or 45 percent. The numbers are there, go to the Estimate Books. There are \$13 million of additional funds to day care in the Province of Manitoba in 16 months of Progressive Conservative Government which represents a 45 percent increase from assisted, inherited, and tutored by the sponsor of this resolution that let many things die on the vine. Now that Member wishes to foment a strike in the day care system.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Ms. Gray: I wonder if the Minister of Health would entertain a question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Honourable Minister has the floor.

Mr. Orchard: Mr. Deputy Speaker, if the Member would write her question down, I would prepare to answer it after I finish my remarks.

This issue has already been convoluted in terms of the information that has gone out via statements made by theoretically responsible Members of the opposition Party. We believe and people believe that \$16,000 is what the average urban day care worker gets paid. That is not accurate. That is not accurate at all. It is a little over \$18,000 annually. Now that is only out by \$2,000, but let us have the integrity to speak the truth when we debate this issue. It is \$18,000 and it was increased by \$500 on January 1, 1989, \$550 on April 1, 1989, in four months, an increase of over \$1,000, but my honourable friends in the opposition Parties in wishing to foment a strike at the expense of the children in day care are saying it is \$16,000.00. Now let us be honest with the people of Manitoba. But I do not sense that either of the opposition Parties want to be honest with the people of Manitoba. One Party does, pardon me, one Party does.

The New Democratic Party today has said that they believe in universal day care. That has been their philosophical position from Square One, and the Leader of that opposition Party just now said that he was willing to take that issue door-to-door in a provincial election. Well, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I challenge him not to do it with a half-hearted explanation of what universal day care means, but go there and tell Manitobans what the system will cost and where the money will come from because every single day in this House, members of the Treasury Bench are asked by those same proponents of a universal day care system for more money in health care, more money in education, more money at universities, more money for job creation, more money for almost every program Government has.

* (1600)

So when my honourable friend, the Leader of the New Democrats (Mr. Doer), takes it as a platform in the next provincial general election that universal day care in the Province of Manitoba is something they would implement, have the honesty and the integrity to tell Manitobans, a) what it will cost, and b) what taxes will go up to pay for it and where the money comes from because everybody is in favour of something that is free. Mr. Deputy Speaker, let us tell Manitobans where these free programs, these universal programs are paid, and how the resource of the Manitobans is going to be used to pay for them. That is the honest approach to Government. I do not sense that honesty in my honourable friends in the third Party of this Legislature.

We in this Government, without anybody who can argue or equivocate against the facts, have added 45 percent in 16 months to the budget of day care. We have created spaces. We have provided salary enhancement grants so that now the salary is \$18,000 in Winnipeg, not \$16,000 as reported by Honourable Members in the opposition.

Our day care advisory task force has given us targets that we in Government, given time and budgetary exercise, will implement in a reasoned and responsible fashion on behalf of the people of Manitoba. My honourable friends, particularly in the third Party in here and a sponsor of this resolution, wish to foment a work stoppage, a withdrawal on the backs of the babies and the children of this province to make a crass political point, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That, at some point in time, will be recognized by the people of Manitoba as crass political manipulation on the backs of children.

This Government will address the issues in day care as we have addressed issues in many other parts of Government. We will address them because they matter to the context of quality of life in the Province of Manitoba and where a Progressive Conservative Government has its aims and ambitions to take this province over the long haul. We will not accomplish instantly overnight any solution to problems that were there 16 months ago. We will work on them in a diligent and responsible and reasonable fashion as we have done in many areas of Government. To now go out and to foment strikes by day care workers in the Province of Manitoba does not serve the purpose of responsible opposition, quality life in Manitoba, and caring for children and parents who need day care in Manitoba. Fomenting those kinds of job actions and strikes does nothing but prove that you are so desperately low in the poll that you will crassly manipulate the future of children to make a cheap political point, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Reg Alcock (Osborne): I wonder how you can foment a strike, if people out there are not ready to strike. It is really interesting, actually. I am glad I get a chance to come after the Member for Pembina (Mr. Orchard) because in listening to what he has to say, his feeling that this is simply an example of pure crass political motivation could not be further from the truth.

The issue today that brought about this particular debate is day care, but day care, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is only one symptom of what is an extremely difficult problem. This is probably the most difficult department in Government to manage. In fact when the Member for Brandon East (Mr. Leonard Evans) was the Minister, he used to comment that it was the department of human misery. It was a department for human misery because it provides services to those people who are so desperately in need they have nowhere else to turn because it provides a vehicle in this province to protect people. It provides a means for wives to be protected against husbands who abuse them, for children to be protected against parents and others who abuse them. It provides a measure of financial support for people who cannot afford to feed themselves and to care for themselves. It provides care for children and adults who are so mentally handicapped that they cannot care for themselves. Mr. Deputy Speaker, I think this department, more than any other, needs a Minister with a sense of vision and needs the support of a Government with some vision about where this department can go and where these services should be best directed in order to best meet the needs of as many people as possible.

I have wondered, as I watch the actions of this Government in trying to deal with the many problems in this department, about how confused they must be. I mean, they are throwing money at it. You see some increases in various departmental lines that are actually quite good, and in fact in some cases above the increases that were given by the previous Government, but they are having far more problems with this department than the previous Government ever had. They are having far more problems in communicating with the people that provide the services, in relating to the community not-for-profit boards. They seem to have no idea of how to deal with the thousands of Manitobans who give of their time to provide services to other Manitobans who are in need.

It is surprising to me, Mr. Speaker, that after eight years in opposition they have not figured out how to deal with this department, and they do not have some kind of vision that they can put before us, that they have not figured out this is not a collection of folks who are somehow Members of the New Democratic Party and rallying around every call that they make. It is astounding to me to hear the Minister talk about the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) fomenting this whole problem, because it could not be further from the truth.

It is interesting that it is—what?—14 months since we were in this Chamber debating a strike of the foster parents. Exactly the same thing happened then when a group of people who were being paid less than the cost of kennelling a dog to care for children, came forward and said we cannot keep doing this. This Government, instead of sitting back and talking to them and negotiating with them and trying to work out a solution to that problem, treated them like they were some kind of radical-left union organizer and sent in spies and called for secret surveys and did everything they could to undermine the confidence in that collection of people who were just trying to do a better job of caring for children. That is what you did.

Now, at that time everybody sat back and said well, this is a new Government, they are not familiar with governing yet, give them a little time. We went through the Estimates process with a Minister who seemed to have no understanding of the policy issues in this department, who seemed to be really at sea much of the time. Many times some of us said to her privately we feel sorry for you, it is a very complex department, but we felt if she had some time she could learn, and if the Government had some time to adjust to being in power it could learn. I think there was a fair bit of holding back and watching and trying to be supportive. I know of Members in this House who got involved in negotiations with external groups to help damp down the pressures, because nobody wins when we fight over services to these people.

We are now a lot further down the road and we have seen a Government that stands up and talks about—well, let us take a more recent example—services to the mentally handicapped as being a priority issue, and then does not put anything into the budget to support that issue, a Government that talks about, or pretends in a sense, or maybe even with the best of intentions, wishes to provide some support to these organizations by just continually time after time cannot deliver. So what do they do? What do they do when the crisis comes, or what do they do when the pressure comes? Do they sit down and try to think through why they have this problem? What they seem to be doing is simply identifying victims. They get rid of the Deputy Minister, a Deputy Minister who frankly came in after the mess was created under the previous Deputy Minister in that department and was actually taking some very concrete and careful steps to clean up things in child welfare. Now that began under the previous Minister of Child Welfare, and there was a lot of work being done that I, as an observer and as someone who works in that field, felt pretty positive about. I was very disturbed to see Con Hnatuk let go. I think that was a major mistake on the part of this Government.

* (1610)

We tend to treat Deputy Ministers a little differently because we do see them as being somewhat politically appointed, and they come and go often with Governments. I think it is unfortunate, but it has happened. When you moved to replace Mary Humphrey I think it is absolutely insane. Mary Humphrey has worked in this field for all of her working life; she does not have a political bone in her body. Mary Humphrey cares about one thing and that is quality day care, and she has worked all of her life to see that we build this kind of system, and for you to victimize her I think is quite unconscionable.

I think, frankly, and our Party believes that it is time for a change in this department. This is not political grandstanding, because the Government seems to be unwilling to decide that. The Member for Emerson (Mr. Albert Driedger) asks why do we not allow the Government to decide that. I would have expected the Government to have made that decision some time ago. You need to assist—(interjection)—If you go back into Hansard you will find that we have called in the past and asked you to assist this Minister, to provide

her the support and assistance she needs in managing an extremely difficult problem. She has not been able to manage it and you have not been able to help her, and it cannot go on. This situation cannot go on.

I will tell you one other thing. You have another problem coming. You have another crisis coming in child welfare. It will be here very soon and it is exactly the same kind of thing. It is a lack of communication with the system. You set up a process, you put all the window dressing in place to negotiate with the system, with the child welfare agencies about their protection budgets. It was working and the boards were beginning to say maybe we can work with this Government. You just cancelled that two weeks ago. All the boards met and they are saying, what is going on. On the one hand they are talking to us, we are beginning to get some work done, and they cut that off midstream. I expect that you will find someone else to victimize, maybe it will be the Director of Child Welfare this time, maybe there will be somebody else in that department, but it is not going to change what is happening. You are going to continue to face this problem until you face up to what the problem is, and that is no understanding of what the issues are in this department, and a Minister who is too overworked, and perhaps too underbriefed, to cope with it. Thank you very much.

Mr. Cowan: My colleague, the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), and indeed our entire New Democratic Party Caucus has called for this emergency debate today with one major objective in mind. That objective, our goal in this debate, is to convince the Government to listen to Manitoba families, to listen to day care workers, to listen to day care managers when all those individuals come forward to Government to express their concerns, to share their hopes and their aspirations and their ideas and, yes, from time to time to be critical and to complain about conditions in the day care system. That process, including the constructive criticism, can be a constructive process if in fact the Government listens.

So our goal in this debate today is to encourage the Government to listen and to respond to those concerns, ideas and complaints as expressed by Manitoba families and day care workers.

The debate is necessary today, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and we thank, through you, the Speaker for allowing the debate to proceed, because the Members opposite, those who make up the Conservative Government, have not listened to the child care community to date. Had they listened, had they responded, there would not be a threat of a major walkout by child care workers, but unfortunately that threat is a reality.

I have to tell Members opposite, that is not a threat that is fermented or fermented outside of the day care community, that walkout is not something that is conceived by others and imposed upon the day care community. That walkout is not as a result of outside agitators, as they would suggest and have suggest today in their speeches; that threat of a walkout is there because we have a Government that has refused to listen and to respond.

You see, for the day care workers and managers to take that decision to walk out was a difficult process

for them, it was not an easy decision. Listen to what they had to say about that walkout. If you do not choose to believe what we have had to say today, listen to what they have had to say. Their comments are illustrative, and I believe if the Conservative Government had listened to them, yet perhaps had listened to them previously and had tried to understand more what had been said to them, they would not be in the circumstances they are to date, but unfortunately the Conservative actions to date have shown that they have not heard or maybe it is they have not understood what is being said to them.

Listen to the child care workers and managers, Mr. Deputy Speaker. Almost two weeks ago, Sharon Olson, Director of the Storybook Day Care Centre said, and I am quoting from the Free Press of September 7, she noted previous letter writing and telephone campaigns proved unsuccessful in getting the province to act on the funding issue. We are not going to take this anymore, she warned. She warned that they were not going to take that anymore because they had not been listened to or responded to.

Listen to what Pat Wege, Director of the Machray Day Nursery says in the same article, talking about a walkout. She said it is a definite possibility and "If it is the only thing left, you have to be prepared to look at it. It is not something we take lightly."

Listen to what they are saying. They are saying in those comments that firstly, the Government is not listening to them, and secondly, that attitude and that insensitivity and that deafness on the part of the Minister and her colleagues is threatening the system. It is not the day care workers that are threatening the system. It is not the day care managers that are threatening the system. It is not the Members of any opposition party that are threatening the system. They themselves are telling that it is the attitude of the Government that is threatening the child care system in this province.

Thirdly, they are saying to the Government that we, they, all of us are not going to take it anymore, that they will fight to protect their system even to the extent of a walkout, a walkout that they do not want. They do not want to walk out, and they would not walk out if there was any other way as they said in the article to get the Government to listen to their concerns and to respond to their needs. This is not a voluntary walkout. The Government is forcing them out of the child care centres and onto the streets because the Government refuses to listen to them when they bring forward their concerns or hopes or aspirations and their ideas.

I can understand on principle that the Liberal Party through the Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray) has said that they do not support that walkout. I can understand that and appreciate that position. I can tell you that our position, the position of the New Democratic Party, is that we will fight alongside the child care workers in the centres and outside of the centres, if necessary, in this House and outside of this House, if necessary, to protect one of the best systems in the country if not on the continent. That is why we support them in that walkout. We no more want to see that walkout than do they, but we just as strongly want to have them

heard as they do. That is why we will be on their side even if the Liberals choose not to be under those circumstances.

Those workers are not walking out, they are being pushed out. They are being forced out by an insensitive, by an uncaring, and by a belligerent Conservative Government. That is why that debate is needed today. The debate is needed to force a Government to listen before the Government forces day care workers to walk out on their jobs. Let us hope that they finally begin to listen as a result of today's debate, although the comments by a number of the Conservative Ministers during this debate today does not give us much hope.

I want to talk about those comments for one moment because I think it is illustrative of the problem that day care workers and Manitoba families are facing under this Government. I am quoting the Deputy Premier in his comments today, and I hope I have it accurate. I believe I do. He says that sure they would like to give money to different needs, but they also, and I am quoting, the Government also has to be certain because of the resources of the Government, that we put the money where it will do the most good. Well, we agree with that. The Member for La Verendrye (Mr. Pankratz) says "right," and we agree with him.

Where we disagree is we do not think that money does the most good in the Premier's Office staff increases because if they are making decisions on where resources should go, then they are making wrong decisions when they say that it should go to highly paid political staff in the Premier's Office and it should not go to day care workers who require that level of funding to earn a decent wage. That is where they are wrong. So we agree that they have to make resource decisions. We just disagree as to what those decisions may be.

The Minister has said that the Minister of Community Services (Mrs. Oleson) knows what the concerns are, and that she has made strong representations to Cabinet but there is no more money flowing. What that tells me is that the problem is not only with the Minister of Community Services, but the problem is with that entire Cabinet who are making those collective resource decisions that put the needs of political staff in the Premier's Office ahead of the needs of Manitoba families in child care centres across this province.

* (1620)

Listen to what the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond), the Minister responsible for the Status of Women said. She started off her remark by saying that the Government is really sorry, and I am quoting, that day care workers think they are not getting enough salary this year. Well, they may really be sorry that day care workers think that, but they are not as sorry about the plight of the day care workers as they were sorry about the plight of their political staff, because when they had two competing needs coming forward they found the money to give to political staff and they could not find the money to give day care workers. That tells me that they are more sorry for their own political future than they are for the future of Manitoba's children and Manitoba's family, and that is shameful, shameful,

indicative of a Government that is more concerned about its own political survival than strengthening the social fabric of this province.

They say that they put money into the system as fairly as they can. That was something that the Minister of Labour (Mrs. Hammond) said. Well, if they think putting money into a system is fair, when they give more to political staff than they do to day care workers, then I think they have their priorities all wrong and I think they have an unbalanced view and perspective of what fairness is really about. I think that is why this debate is so crucial and important today so that perhaps we can convince him of the wrong-headed approach and the wrong priorities that they have.

They counsel us, they plead with us, and I am quoting from the Minister of Labour again to allow the Minister to get to work, meeting the community, and this issue will settle down. Well, they have had 16 months to meet with the community and the issue has not settled down, the crisis has worsened, and has worsened because they are paying lip service in those meetings instead of listening to and acting upon the advice and suggestions, complaints and concerns that are provided to them.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, I also would not want to let the opportunity pass to make a comment on what the Liberal Leader (Mrs. Carstairs) said when this issue was brought to her attention, the difference between the ability of the Government to find money for political staff and day care workers. Did she side with the day care workers? No. What she said, and I am quoting from her interview on CKY TV of September 14 is, there are essentially 20 people in the Premier's Office who are paid better than any of the salaries that we can offer to any of our staff personnel and I think that is intolerable.

Well, what is intolerable, Mr. Deputy Speaker, is that she would want to put her own staff salaries ahead of that of day care workers along with the Government. I hope that they are listening as well during this debate so that they can get their priorities a bit better and they can understand the unjustness and the unfairness of the system, and perhaps back the day care workers instead of turning their backs on them when they threaten to walk out, which may be required, or turning their backs on them when the pay salaries that are provided to the Premier's Office are more than provided to their own office.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): I am delighted to join in participation of this debate today. I just think that it is deeply regrettable, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that the two individuals who would in fact have the most to say on this particular issue are not available to say it. I think that it is critical that we hear from the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) with regard to this critical position that we now find ourselves in, in the Province of Manitoba.

I have in the past, and I will do it again today, given the New Democratic Party credit for establishing a very fine day care program in this province, one that has

been looked at by other provinces and, indeed, by states in the United States as a model, but even they would admit that it was not perfect, and that it had problems and that a number of those problems have yet to be solved.

One critical area is, of course, the lack of adequate pay for those who work within the child care field and it is ironic that we have, for years, worked in my profession at building up salaries of teachers and then we watch regrettably that a child can go from a day care centre where they receive very professional care but where the salary is about \$16,000 a year, over to a kindergarten class where they also receive excellent care but where there is an incredible differential in salary. I think that is a salary differential that must be closed within our society in order to provide for adequate care.

Why do I say "adequate care?" Well, let me say very quickly. It is not because they are getting inadequate care today. If one visits a day care centre in this city or in this province one remarks at the high quality of care that each and every one of those children receives, but we cannot keep the workers, Mr. Deputy Speaker, in the same way that we are having increasing difficulty in keeping nurses, because we do not value the profession and the occupation. We do not place sufficient emphasis on it. We do not say, regrettably, that the nurse who works in critical care is of value, we need her, and we are prepared to pay for her. We do not, unfortunately, say to the day care worker that that day care worker is of value and we need her or him within our society because, although it may not be right, Mr. Deputy Speaker, we place value in our society by the reward we give by way of salary. That may be deeply regrettable, but that is the reality of modern day society. It is the money they earn that makes jobs attractive and if they are not adequately paid, people simply do not continue to work within that field.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we have a crisis facing the day care situation. We have a crisis because of mismanagement. We have a crisis because this Government did not realize when they went into power that they had problems, problems which the previous Government did not sufficiently address, salary enhancement problems, sufficient space problems. When they brag about the amount of monies that they have put into day care, they fail to understand that the need is still not being met.

I would like for a few moments to address some of the earlier remarks which were made by the Leader of the second opposition Party (Mr. Doer). He seems to feel, perhaps because of his total lack of understanding of day care, that there is not a means test in day care. There is, and the New Democratic Party established it. It is a means test which has been established by this Government who eschews means tests, but they forget that they put it in. You have to pay a means test in day care in order to get the subsidy of \$13.80 a child if you are aged two to six. At some magical point, that means test ceases and desists, so somewhere in the \$35,000 range you pay as much for day care as the person bringing home \$150,000 a year,

and I do not believe that is fair and that is not equitable. That is a legacy of their system, that surely if we can have a gradual means test up to a certain level of income, that means test can be continued, because if you have come to the acceptance as they came to it, as they established it, that it is perfectly all right to have a means test, then surely that means test should not benefit the wealthy and be a disincentive to the middle income Manitoban, which is what it presently is.

They took exactly the same attitude to those people who need housekeeping services, not home care services, not medical services, but home care services in the sense of housekeeping. What did they do? They established the so-called independent cleaning services, but they made no attempt to find out, none whatsoever, if people were falling through the cracks and if people were forced to leave their homes because they could not maintain them because they did not have the income to pay the \$5 or \$6 an hour that the NDP demanded they pay, no attempt to find out if those people were falling through the cracks. We found out that there were indeed people falling through the cracks and that they were being forced to move out of their apartments and out of their homes because they could not afford housekeeping services. That is the issue that we want addressed in the Province of Manitoba. So they speak from one side of their mouth and they do quite a different type of thing, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (1630)

Let us return to the issue of today. The issue of today is a Minister out of control in the Department, and the sad reality is that there are children in this province who are not going to have day care spaces. What impact is that going to have on the family? That is going to mean that a mother or a father or both, depending on the day, are going to have to return—they are going to have to leave their jobs, they are going to have probably jeopardize in some cases their employment opportunity because they have to stay home and look after their own child, if day care service is cut to that particular family. That will be a most unfortunate tragedy. It will be a most unfortunate tragedy particularly for that single-parent mother or father.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, we need a Minister who is prepared to act, who is prepared to, in decent conscience, sit down and negotiate with day care workers in good faith. That has been what has been fundamentally lacking on the part of this Minister. She has not been willing to talk with people in good faith. She does not like the message so she fires the messenger. That is a terrible indictment, not only of this Minister but of that Government, and it is time that both were replaced.

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): I stand here to speak on this emergency debate with real concern and care, I suppose, for the children of our province. I do know that there are many of us who have children who do need to be looked after while we go out to work that, really, if we had the opportunity or had to use day care, could not even access the system, because my working

day is much longer and much more inflexible than many women who work.

I am sure that the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) can relate to the long working hours that are put in by a Minister of this Government and how difficult it is for a woman who in many circumstances has to be the one to organize and get child care in place for her family when she is out at work, that there is not a day care system in this province that would accommodate my family or my needs.

Fortunately, Mr. Deputy Speaker, I do not need to access the day care system as such, because I have someone who comes into the house to look after my children. So I am fortunate enough that I can afford to pay for that, and I can afford to have my children looked after in my own home so that they can be put to bed in their own beds when it comes bedtime and their needs can be met and their dinner can be prepared for them.

I do want to say that there is not anyone in this House, I am sure, who does not agree that day care workers are underpaid. Yes, very definitely they are when it comes to looking after children in a quality way throughout our province. There is not anyone on this side of the House or on that side of the House who does not agree with that, but there are some facts that really do have to be clarified.

One thing that has never been mentioned in the whole discussion or issue around day care funding is that Government does not provide the total salary for day care workers. Mr. Deputy Speaker, there are salary enhancement grants, but it is up to the day care association or the day care centres to provide the funding and the salaries for those workers.

One thing that has not been brought forward is that the salary enhancement grants over the last four months have increased by \$1,050 per year. Salary enhancement grants have gone up under this Government and this administration from \$2,800, before we became Government, to \$3,850 in the last four months since we have been Government.

So there have been major moves to increase and enhance salaries for day care workers. Nobody is saying that it is enough. I recognize that it is not enough, because I know that when I need my children to be looked after, I want them to be looked after in the best manner possible by the most experienced people possible, so that I can come to work and work the long hours that I do work and ensure that they are being well looked after, just like everyone else throughout this province wants. There is not any mother who does not want her child to be looked after in that manner and in that way, but things cannot happen overnight and things cannot change overnight.

Yes, our day care system here in Manitoba has been touted as one of the best in the country, but I will tell you that the salaries are not the best, and they are not adequate, and they are not satisfactory; but that did not start when we took over Government some 16 months ago. That has been an ongoing problem with the last administration, and we have worked by our

commitment and our commitment of \$1,050 over the last four months to enhance the salaries of day care workers. It is not finished, it is not over, and there will be progress in the future, but we cannot solve the problems that we were saddled with when we first took over Government.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, some of the comments that the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) made were quite true. In fact, I know of people who access the day care system that have a total family income of \$150,000.00. They cannot pay any more than \$13.40 per child to occupy a day care space. That does not cover the full cost of keeping that child in that space, and I really question whether the general public was asked whether that family that was making \$150,000 a year, if they paid a little more towards the care of their children, if they paid the full cost, I am not talking about a day care centre making a profit, I am talking about a day care centre recovering the full cost of keeping that child in that space, that money could be well utilized to increase the salaries of day care workers in this province. I do not think there is anyone who would disagree that a family, with that family income, should at least be paying the full cost of operating or keeping open that day care space in the Province of Manitoba.

* (1640)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), some of the comments that she made indicated that, yes, there is a means test, and that means test was put in, was implemented by, and a so-called dirty word, by the New Democratic Party. In fact, anyone that does get a subsidy under the \$13 in this province, has to go through a means test and has to prove that they are not able to pay any more and they are put in a level or a scale depending on what their ability to pay is.

I have said on many occasions before that there are many families out there that do just want quality care for their children and if, in fact, the cost of that space, the actual cost of that space, was \$18 or \$20 per day, my goodness, they would be glad to pay that, and they can afford to pay that, in some instances, to ensure that their children are well looked after. That is the money that could be used to increase the salaries of our day care workers.

My goodness, we can go out for an evening of entertainment, my husband and I, and leave our children at home with a sitter, and we pay \$15 to go out for that evening, and we are glad to pay it to have our children looked after; but when you are expecting to have qualified, trained, skilled, day care workers looking after your children during the day, and you can afford because your total family income is in the triple numbers, you should be paying. I think the general public and those that require and cannot afford to pay would gladly see those who can afford it pay the full cost, pay the cost not so that a profit could be made on that space, but so that those who could not afford it can be subsidized and those day care workers that are looking after those children can, indeed, be paid better salaries.

Those are the kinds of things we have to be looking towards for the future, those are the kinds of discussions we need to have with people working within the system, with those that are accessing the system and need it for their children, and with those families out there that are paying taxes on a regular basis to support day care.

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): It is with some sadness and regret that I rise to participate in this very important debate today. With sadness because I believe that we are faced with a crisis in the child care system of our province and with regret because the resolution to that crisis is going to require leadership, leadership which we do not see from Members opposite.

Let me say to begin, Mr. Deputy Speaker, that this is not the crisis of the making of any one person or of any one Government. The crisis is a product of changing values in our society, of changing lifestyles which have been adopted over the last number of decades. Women have found that they can achieve satisfaction in their own lives by following and pursuing their own careers and their own dreams. Women have chosen their professions. We have more women who now graduate as lawyers, as doctors, as dentists, as architects. Women have taken their rightful place as leaders in the entrepreneurial sector as managers and as corporate executives, and these are places which have never been the natural home for women for centuries. So society has changed dramatically over the past number of years, and we have not coped very well as Governments in adapting our own policies and our own priorities to conform with those inexorable trends that we sometimes have difficulty accepting and with which we do not cope very well.

The Members of the New Democratic Party like to talk about the system that was created under their tenure of office. They say that two years ago we had a model system for child care and today, 16 months later, we have a crisis. We did not go from the model of yesterday to the crisis of today because of any action or any inaction of one person or of one Government. The issue that we have to deal with is how this Government is coping with the crisis, a crisis that has been here for many months.

First of all, we have to look to see that the Minister responsible in this portfolio understands the problem. There is no evidence that this Minister or this Government has any understanding of the problem at all, because the position they have adopted is to be the adversary of the child care community. The role of the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) is to be advocate, but the Minister has become adversary. I was interested in listening to the remarks of the Leader of the New Democratic Party who talked about partnership and the necessity of Government's reaching out to those in our society with whom we must become partners.

It is a bit laughable to hear that from the Leader of the Party who was the adversary of the medical profession when they were in office, who chose professionals and other managers and workers in this society one by one as they sought the road of

confrontation and not of compromise. This Government, believe me, is no better. With the New Democratic Party it was a crisis in the relationship with the physicians. With the Progressive Conservative Party it is a crisis in the relationship with nurses who felt it necessary to march on this Legislature, and now of child care workers. So the sanctimony and the self-righteousness that we hear from the previous Government about forging partnerships with this community rings hollow in the light of their legacy, and this group across the way is doing no better.

We do not propose to have magical solutions to these difficult problems either, but we do say that the first step down the road to a solution is to talk to people, to consult with them, to ask them what their opinions are. What did the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) do when she was invited to a child care meeting? She did not show up. That is not consultation. What did she do? She sent some secret reporter to let her know what was said at the meeting, but she did not have the courage, not only of her convictions but of the principle of consultation, to show up herself. The critic for the Liberal Party, for the Official Opposition, had the courage to show up at that meeting and to answer questions honestly from the child care workers who were gathered at that meeting, but the Minister was nowhere to be found.

So you begin to cope with the problem by talking to the people whom the problem affects the most. In that regard the Minister of Family Services of this Government has failed miserably. The Minister has alienated her entire constituency, she has alienated parents, she has alienated child care workers, she has alienated the Family Day Care Association, she has alienated everybody and made adversaries of them all.

Now, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) in his remarks said that the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) is fomenting a strike, and hands over the power to this one lonely Member of the Legislature, the power and the wisdom to wave her magic wand and to rile the troops behind her with political vigour and strength. With all due respect to the Member for St. Johns, who like me is a parent of young children, she does not have that power. What is more, by saying that she has, the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) has insulted all the child care workers in the province, because what he has said by implication is that they do not have minds of their own, that they cannot see what is in front of them, that they need the leadership and the steering and the manipulation and the legerdemain of the Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) in order to come with what they believe to be a solution to this problem.

The Member for St. Johns can talk a blue streak in this House and give preambles which are a tad too long, but, Mr. Deputy Speaker, she is not that powerful, neither is anyone. The implication of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) is, first of all, to impugn motive and second of all to give her far more power than she deserves.

We also have the coping ability of the Minister to try to evaluate standards. Well, we have learned how effective the Minister has been at evaluating standards.

We saw the closure of Raggedy-Ann over the summer which came far too late. We now see that there are political staff members, on behalf of the Minister, making phone calls—and we make no accusations here except to question the propriety of those calls. We were not tapping the phones, we do not know what was said, but we question the propriety of it.

Then there is the whole issue, Mr. Deputy Speaker, of what are individuals in our society worth, and this is the philosophical question that does not lend itself to simple solutions. It is very difficult to put a price tag on what anyone is worth in our society, but sometimes inequities speak out at you. They are so dramatic, so stark in comparison that you know that an injustice is being done.

We know that child care workers in this province are paid far less than zookeepers. Think about that for a minute. Without the necessity of qualification an individual can apply for a job at the Winnipeg Zoo and among their responsibilities are to clean the cages of the monkeys and the deer and the antelope and the rabbits and the guinea pigs. I am not diminishing the importance of that role in our society because I, too, am a lover of animals, but it speaks volumes to anyone looking at this objectively, that those who look after children deserve more than those who look after animals.

The Deputy Premier (Mr. Cummings) in Question Period today refused to answer questions about 15 percent and 24 percent salary hikes for political staff in the Premier's Office. There they are in the fast track, they have to do something with horrible injustice because these people earning \$60,000 and \$65,000 a year earn more, but no, the child care workers, responsible for the care and nurturing of our children, are on the slow track. Twenty-four cents an hour is all we can afford this year, but senior positions in the Premier's Office can go up by \$7,000 and \$8,000 a year. Mr. Deputy Speaker, that, to me, screams injustice and inequity.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, let me conclude by saying that the care and nurturing of children in our society is among the most important obligations that we possess.

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs): I wonder if the Honourable Member would submit to a question, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

Mr. Carr: Mr. Deputy Speaker, when I am finished in about 30 seconds I would be delighted to answer a question from the Member for Arthur (Mr. Downey).

Let me conclude by saying this is a crisis that was not made overnight and will not be solved overnight, but we have to look rationally down the road to appreciate the work of child care workers in our society. In order to achieve that goal we have to have a Minister who has the qualities of leadership and of vision. In my humble view, she has neither. Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker.

* (1650)

Mr. John Plohma (Dauphin): I am pleased to join in the debate today on this very important issue. The

Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr), who spoke before me, mentioned that in his opinion the crisis that we are discussing here today was not created by this Government, it is just a matter of how they have been coping with this crisis. I actually disagree with what he is saying there fundamentally because in fact there has always been a great demand and a need over the last number of years for a good child care system to be put in place and that is what our Government did. However, there was not a crisis. The crisis has developed since this Government has come into office and it is a fundamental crisis based on a lack of confidence and mistrust of this Government's policies and intentions and direction in the child care area. It can come from the kinds of action or inaction of the federal Government in this issue, the Conservative Government with the pull back by Jake Epp and the federal Government on their child care program for the country.

It comes from many different happenings over the last number of months by this Government, various steps or non-decisions that they have made. It includes much more than the salaries as a major issue that the child care workers are rallying around at this point in time. It deals with such things as a harassment by political staff, by political operatives, as the Premier (Mr. Filmon) said yesterday when he talked about my colleague for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) as being a political operative.

If anybody is a political operative, the one that he has installed in the Minister of Family Services' (Mrs. Oleson) office is the political operative. The harassment by that individual of civil servants and others from that office is certainly one that does not lead to confidence in the system by everyone from the parents to the child care workers to all observers of the scene here in Manitoba.

We see the issue of the investigation or non-investigation, the dragging of the feet by the Minister with regard to the Raggedy-Ann Centre after the complaints were registered as early as last fall, almost a year ago, and certainly of January of 1989. That has led to a lack of confidence in the Minister's intentions and ability to take action, and a sincerity and willingness to take action when it involves a profit-making day care centre in this province.

There is the lack of support for parents wishing to convert some of these centres where their children no longer can attend, to a non-profit centre. The lack of action and programs and mechanism put in place, infrastructure, so that can happen very quickly and smoothly, the funding that is required to do that, the infrastructure, the staffing, the support to ensure that can take place quickly and smoothly, that is lacking in the system as well.

So there is much more than the issue of salaries, being a very important issue, because it certainly tells those workers in the child care system in this province that they are not worth a great deal. Now, they blame that, both the Liberals and the Conservatives, on the former Government. The fact is, it is our Government, our former Government, who put in place the regulations and the infrastructure and established the child care system that has become known as the best in Canada, and some say the best in North America.

Now, you cannot at that point in time put in all of the funding. You have to get the process established, you have to get the system established, and then you move quickly to ensure that all of the other angles are covered, that all the people in the system are treated fairly. That is what this Government inherited when they came in at that point in time, into this Government. They inherited the best system, but they also inherited a system that required additional funding as it goes up and running, and meeting the needs of parents and children across this province.

(Mr. Ed Mandrake, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

They cannot say at that point that they were inheriting a system that was in crisis, and I make that point emphatically. In fact that crisis has developed as a result of the actions and inaction of this Government in office here, because of their lack of sincerity, their preoccupation with providing Government taxpayers' money for profit making in the child care system, one that is supported by the Liberals on this side. We heard the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), the Member speak in defence of the profit-making child care system in this province.

One of the fundamental problems with this Government's policy and one that also leads to mistrust is the fact that they are prepared to continue to put taxpayers' money into profit making at the expense of care for children. That is what the Raggedy-Ann child care investigation epitomized, exemplified so well in this province, the folly of that Government's policy to fund because there is an incentive.

The Liberals support that system. I cannot understand why they would support that system, because there is an incentive in that system to cut corners on care for children to make profits. That means that they do not put in place the proper staff-to-child ratio that is required under the regulations. They do not provide the proper nutrition and proper programs because they are not able to make the profit that they would like to make. That is what our greatest criticism has been of that system. We believe that it should be a non-profit system that is available universally to all people, all parents in this province. That is the goal that we are working towards in this province, but we see a deviation from that except for the Minister of Culture (Mrs. Mitchelson) when she said that she could not define, as the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards) could not define who is rich, and who should, therefore, have to pay the full cost of child care in the province. They will have to struggle with that one as long as they believe that is a system that should be put in place in this province.

* (1700)

The fact is, she said that they should not have in place a system that would allow for profit, as I heard her say, and I thought that was something that was a revelation for the Conservatives on that side. I would hope that is something that might catch and be pursued by all Members of that Party. She said not so a profit can be made on that space, but the rich should pay the full cost, but not so a profit could be made. So,

I understood her to be saying then, in fact, that maybe she is now not supporting the profit-making child care, at least when it comes to the situation where the "rich" have to pay the full cost.

There should be no profit making there for anyone sitting in between insofar as running a profit-making day care centre in this province. So I find that quite a deviation at odds with what the Member, Minister for the Status of Women (Mrs. Hammond) and the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) have espoused and the Premier (Mr. Filmon), but it looks like a small breakthrough. We may be seeing a move there but we would like to at least have the Liberals come inside in that issue and agree that it is in fact a waste of taxpayers' money and an inefficient use of taxpayers' money to have child care being used by operators to make profit, while they cut corners in meeting the regulations that are put in place.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I can say that what we have here is a Government that is paranoid about the civil servants who work for them. They do not trust them, particularly in this department, in Health. They, therefore, take steps that make things much worse. They see a New Democrat or a Liberal around every corner in the department. The fact is those civil servants who are there, by and large, are trustworthy, hardworking people, who want to support the Government of the Day and the policies that are put in place. This Government undermines those people by making such decisions as having a person like Mary Humphrey transferred, who has done an excellent job in establishing the system we have in this province used as a scapegoat for the Minister; having a political operative installed in the Minister's office to harass civil servants who want to ensure that the regulations are carried out the way they are supposed to be carried out.

The private operators, as well as the non-profit sector, are meeting to the "T" all of the regulations that are put in place equally across the board. It is that kind of action by this Government and this paranoia that they have, the lack of trust of the people working in the departments that is causing a serious problem and a crisis in child care in this province, one that we have to address and we are addressing in this House.

Mr. Harold Gilleshammer (Minnedosa): I am pleased to be able to join in the debate today on this topic. I would be the first to admit that I am not well versed in the child care system in Manitoba and I have found the debate interesting and the briefing notes that I have had to look at are interesting.

In my original speech in the House I suggested that in this time of minority Government that this was a good opportunity to work together on a number of issues. I think now is the time that we can work together on an issue.

Previous speakers have indicated that there is a crisis looming and it appears to me it is a crisis that is being provoked by opposition Members. There were a number of comments made today about salaries and the low salaries that are paid to child care workers, and certainly an admission by all Members that that is an area that

needs to be addressed. I raise the question, what were child care workers paid last year, and the year before, and the year before that, that I submit to you that this is not a new situation, that we have to address this salary issue and we have made some steps towards that. I think it is rather unfair for Members to bring in salary comparisons with zoo keepers, other Government workers and school teachers. I am aware of the education system, that the salary scales have been put in place over a number of years based on the training that school teachers have and the years of experience that they have. Through negotiations, these salaries have been improved to the point where now they are very competitive with other salaries in Canada. It takes time to do that. It takes some organization on the part of the workers. It takes some negotiations, and I am confident that over the years the salary range paid for child care workers will greatly improve. I think we need some time to do this. We need some co-operation from Members opposite to work together to put these solutions in place.

So what were they being paid in previous years? Has their pay decreased? To listen to some Members, it would sound like the issue of pay for child care workers is a brand new one. I submit to you it is not a new one. It has been with the child care workers for some time, and we do need some time to address this situation. I am sure, given that time and the commitments that were made here by the Premier yesterday and other speakers, that over the next few budgets that issue will be addressed. I think it is a time when Opposition Members should co-operate with the Minister, with the Government, and we can work together to find a common solution to this problem.

The provoking of confrontation, which seems to me is happening by the words of some of the opposition Members, is not going to solve this problem, and it is not going to make it any easier to solve. The Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) made the comment that there are no magical solutions, and I agree with him. I think we have to work together, be creative, put our minds to this task, and I think the solutions will come forward.

The Member for Fort Rouge also said that you cannot put a price tag on people. I agree, yet he is trying to make comparisons with zoo keepers and people working in the education system and people who are working in the child care system. Give us the time to find those solutions, to be co-operative, to find solutions that would be agreeable to all of us and we can help the child care workers of this province.

Members opposite are giving us the impression that this is the first time in 16 months they have been critical. I would submit to you that there are people who have been critical from Day One and, instead of working co-operatively, they have been provoking confrontation and making those solutions that much more difficult to find.

Certainly there are discrepancies across the province, and in the rural areas, the accessibility of day care is a problem that I think we need to address and one that we will be looking at.

There was an article in the Brandon Sun this last week that parents of children in day care in the Brandon

area have different priorities and different concerns about day care, and I think we have to address them too. I think it would be well taken by opposition Members to know that there is a different attitude toward day care in different parts of the province, and I think that is an attitude that they should become familiar with.

Again, working co-operatively, I think we can find solutions to the day care problems. Manitoba's record is something we should look at and some of the facts that I am aware of is that Manitoba ranks first in Canada on the number of day care spaces available per child. We have heard from previous speakers that Manitoba has made an excellent start in the day care system. I think our Government is quite prepared to enhance that, but I think we need time. We need two or three more years to address some of these problems. Manitoba ranks second in Canada in spending per child, and I think it is important that Manitobans realize we are spending money on day care. Certainly salaries is one of the things that will be addressed in subsequent budgets.

I would simply close by saying that our commitment is very strong to day care, that an additional amount of money has been put into that budget this year and the commitment was made yesterday very clearly by the Premier and by other Members of the Government that these problems will be addressed in the next few budgets. I feel confident that the people of Manitoba who are using the day care system will be quite satisfied with those solutions. Thank you, Mr. Acting Speaker.

* (1710)

Mr. John Angus (St. Norbert): Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this debate. I, too, agree that the debate is a serious one and that it needs to be addressed. I trust, Mr. Acting Speaker, that by having the emergency debate and by having all Parties agree to discuss the importance and relevance of the issue that there will be some collective wisdom put on the table and sorted out and some new directions given to the Cabinet, in general, and to the Minister responsible, specifically.

Mr. Acting Speaker, I was encouraged when there were references made to day care and to the types of day care systems we have had in throne speeches and in budget estimates. I was perfectly prepared to give the new Government ample opportunity to address and to put their political will into power. I was also encouraged when they set up a task force to tour the province and to try and specifically identify the problems.

I made representation at those task force hearings. I brought what I hoped were reasonable and common-sense ideas in relation to, partially, the problems as I saw them in trying to identify the problems and hopefully some solutions that they could entertain, aspects of the solutions to the problems that may help the committee make their recommendations.

I became discouraged when the committee reported and it seemed to fall flat. It seems to me that I do not

have the privy of sitting in Cabinet. But if you, as a Cabinet group, set up an independent group of people and you appoint those people and you charge them with the responsibility to go out and do their homework—you have appointed them because you believe they have a certain amount of expertise, you believe they have a certain amount of capabilities and you trust to a certain degree their judgment and respect their input—when the report comes back it would seem to me, Mr. Acting Speaker, that you consider it and that you sit down and you map out a plan.

It seems to me that what is happening is unfortunately a few fundamental management errors in the Government side. I do not believe that the people in the day care centres are totally unreasonable. I feel that they are suggesting to themselves, and amongst themselves, that the only way they can get any attention is not through good management, not through good management principles, but through a pro-active media relationship campaign, one that apparently is designed to strike terror into the hearts of politicians and will make them react.

It is really unfortunate that a game plan cannot be put together over a period of time that suggests to the day care centres, to the administrators of those day care centres, look we know that you want more money, we have a list of your demands or your requests on the table. We have certain constraints. We are prepared to sit down with you and agree mutually to a fundamental plan that will allow us over a period of time to help us both accomplish our specific end objectives, we as Government, a specific end objective that is going to provide a quality day care to as many people as legitimately require it, who are prepared to pay legitimate sums of money to help their children be provided this care, whether they are what are called "latchkey kids" or whether they are single parents that have to go to work.

(Mr. William Chornopyski, Deputy Speaker, in the Chair)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, it seemed to me that did not take place, that there were some autocratic decisions made. Perhaps it was time constraints, perhaps it was a quickness, perhaps it was not thought through entirely, but the decisions that have been made are not good to basic management principles. Basic management principles suggest that we start with an end objective, a goal, and that we work cooperatively and develop a strategy to try and accomplish that.

I think the Government is creating inadvertently, not intentionally I would not suggest, but they are creating a feeling of helplessness amongst the volunteer boards, the volunteer people that are contributing their time, the volunteer parent boards that are trying to make things work.

There is a sense of uselessness. They are giving ever-constricting budgets, less and less money to work with, more and more regulations and educational programs are being undermined and taken away, and yet regulations call for those types of people. There is very little motivation for these volunteer boards or for these people to participate actively, to try and help solve the problem.

I honestly believe, just in discussions with the day care centre operators in my area, that if the Government had been willing and prepared to sit down and communicate with them that these are the things that we can work together on. These are the constraints that we have, these are the things that we are going to try and do. There would have been less of a sense of anarchy developing in the day care system, less a radical approach required and a more calming and collectively positive initiative towards working out the problems.

I think that a story—I would just like to share with the Legislature—which melts the coldest heart. My constituency office is located in a large shopping center, and the other night a lady was coming home just between 5:30 p.m. and 6 p.m. when I was closing up the office. I have seen her walk by before. She usually walks by with two little kids, one on each arm, and she has a backpack on her back and a backpack sort of slung over her arm and they usually have lunch pails. So I stopped her and I told her who I was, which did not bring great rounds of applause, unfortunately. I could not understand that, I made the mistake of telling her that I was her local MLA. Notwithstanding that, I asked her if she was just coming home from work, and she said, yes. I asked her if her kids were in a day care center, and she said, yes. I said are you concerned? She said, I am very much concerned, Mr. Angus, I cannot afford to lose my job. I was touched.

She is one of the walking wounded and one of the victims of this particular circus that we are perpetrating here because of a lack of management, because of a lack of genuine goals, because of a lack of consideration, because of a total lack of sensitivity to the issue. We are really trumpeting on individuals who are generally trying to help themselves. I am talking about a poor single mother who has a job and is going to be threatened by the system if she has to stay home and look after her kids.

We do not appear to be working towards giving one iota of concern towards the parents in this particular group. We are talking about shaving bucks, and about who set up the better plan, and who did not set up the better plan, or is it not wonderful all the wonderful things that were done. Nobody is dealing with the grassroots of the problem. That is the fundamental of management. If you want to get these day care centers back on the road, you want to get them back, and we all do—we all have to be working in the same direction. We all want the same conclusion. We are coming at it from perhaps different angles, but we all want to see these day care centres work well. We want the parents who genuinely need it to be able to participate. We want the volunteer staffs to be able to work properly within those structures. We do not want those Governments to be chintzy; we do not want them to be short-sighted; we do not want them to terminate the model that was set up by not employing reasonable management principles.

If I can deliver any sort of a message from this emergency debate, the message that I would like to deliver to the Government in this particular instance, to the Minister, to the First Minister and to all the Cabinet

Ministers is to take a few minutes and sit down, and negotiate with these people a reasonable settlement and a reasonable long-term plan, a reasonable long-term plan that will bring some sense back to the people that they are working towards something, so that it will give some relief to the parents who do not have to feel threatened by the system, so that we can all take a deep breath and say how do we sort this problem out.

I urge the Government not to take a long time. They cannot afford the answers that are coming from the existing Minister or the Government. The messages that are being sent are shutting the door. They are saying wait until next year. We are all headed for a crisis. We are all painted with the same brush, as politicians and as decision makers. We are all headed for the same end result. If we do not look at this problem collectively and constructively, we are going to destroy this very system we want to preserve.

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): I do not like to contrast approaches unnecessarily, but I think it is necessary for me to contrast the approach in the debate today taken by the Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus), for example, in contrast his contribution which I regard today as being a helpful contribution, contrasting his contribution with that of the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr), his Leader, the Honourable Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs), the Honourable Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer), perhaps the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis), although I cannot claim to have heard everything she had to say. If everyone is sincere, and we have heard that word used, then why are we talking about monkeys in the zoo if we are sincere? I do not understand how that can be seen as to be a sincere approach.

I am not used to saying congratulatory things about contributions made by the Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) because very often he and I disagree, but I listened to the tone this afternoon of his comments, and I listened to the tone and content, the comments, of other Honourable Members who should know better on an issue who like this, who talk about monkeys, and the deer and the antelope, and I listened to the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) and the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Doer) virtually tearing each other apart to try to display who it is that is most opposed to this Government and who it is that cares the most about day care workers in this province. I must say I was more impressed with the contribution made by the Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) this afternoon.

* (1720)

I have to wonder -(interjection)- and I hear my colleagues on my side of the House heckling me gently, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and I can assure the Honourable Member for St. Norbert that I am feeling well and I will not make a habit of this, because as I say, I do disagree with him so often, but I think, on a matter like this it is time perhaps for everyone, and I say this particularly to Honourable Members on the opposition benches, let us tone down the rhetoric if we really care,

and I have no reason to think that anybody in this room, in this Chamber, does not care about children in this province. Most of us have them, I assume, many of us use the services. I do not include myself, but I say many Members of this Legislature use the services of day care, child care services, so let us cut all the you know what, cut all the rhetoric and stop playing politics with an issue that is as important as this one.

I have to ask if the Liberals and the New Democrats are so concerned about this issue and so concerned about people as they say they are, so concerned about workers as they say they are, and so concerned about children as they say they are, then why are they kicking and scratching and pulling each other's hair out to see who can get the most coverage in today's media or yesterday's media or tomorrow's media on an issue like this? I think it is unfortunate that this is being politicized in the way it is.

It is a difficult problem. We know day care workers in this province are not paid enough. I stood on the steps of this Legislature a year ago and told them that, I agree, you are not paid enough, and this Government is committed to that principle, this Government understands that. Just as the day care task force has set a level of salary that should be achieved, I think, also most reasonable people in this province will also understand it is not a goal that can be reached in one year.

For the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) to compare the salaries of zookeepers, the salaries of political aides and the salaries of day care workers in the way he has is to bring himself down, in my estimation, from the level that I had placed him. It is to bring himself down in the estimation of other people in Manitoba, and I would say to bring himself down in the eyes of his own constituents. I say to the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge, who has been around here not quite as long as I have, and I do not speak as anyone who knows everything because I do not, but I do say, handle these issues a little differently, they are important. There is a time for playing politics and there is a time for a little more in the way of statesmanship and I think maybe this is a time when statesmanship would be more appreciated by the people out there who really do see this as a very, very important matter.

It is interesting too to note the shift of emphasis on the part of the New Democrats and the part of the Liberals too, from the provision of day care spaces in this province for children. In years past the cry was for more spaces, and we still need more spaces and we probably will need more spaces a year from now, but that has been the cry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, and other issues as well are involved, that being quality of care, that being the treatment of the workers in the system. All of those things are important, but somehow the emphasis has changed this time around and we do not hear anything from, for example, the Honourable Members in the New Democratic Party or the Liberal Party about those things, about parents who are out there.

The Honourable Member for St. Norbert (Mr. Angus) spoke eloquently about a parent in need of affordable

day care and the access to day care, and those are the people that we should be concerned about too. Of course, we should be concerned about any segment of our society whose remuneration for a day's work is not adequate or not fair. We understand that. This Government has never said otherwise, this Government has never said that it was not in a position to work with these people either. So I sense there is a little more politics in this whole issue today, yesterday in Question Period, than there was a real caring attitude on the part of Honourable Members opposite.

The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) sits in his seat and shakes his head in disagreement with me, but when I hear a responsible Member of the Legislature, a Deputy Party Leader referring to monkeys and deer and antelope and comparing issues like that with the care of children, and then talking about political operatives and political aides and the amount of money they make and comparing salaries and comparing apples and oranges.

I hear the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) do those things and it brings my own respect for him down. Now that respect no doubt will come back because I know the Honourable Member for Fort Rouge well enough to know he knows when he has done something wrong, and he knows how to correct those things, too, because he is a politician and he knows the proper way to behave, ultimately. There are times when I think that we should not be exploiting issues like this in the way that we do. That is not to say that it has never been done by Honourable Members in other political Parties, including my own. So whenever I give these little lectures, Mr. Deputy Speaker, it certainly is not from one who has never made a mistake in his life because I certainly have.

I do have to wonder about that shift in emphasis, and I say the shift in emphasis has a lot more to do with garnering political brownie points than it does to caring about an affordable quality day care system which provides more spaces and fair and equitable working conditions and remuneration for those who are employed in the system. I ask the question that if political brownie points was not their concern—and I am not at all convinced about this—if it was not, then why indeed was a debate not worked out between representatives of the Parties, i.e., House Leaders, respecting bringing forward the consideration of the Estimates of the Department of Family Services. Such a debate would have allowed a wide-ranging debate on this and many other matters.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Very quickly, before I finish, Mr. Speaker, I see in today's Winnipeg Free Press that the Leader of the Opposition is prepared to shut down the Department of Family Services on this issue. I say that is a dangerous way to proceed and is a dangerous position to put forward because, in addition to day care services, the Department of Family Services funds and provides for very many, many other services for needy people in our society. It smacks of a bit of irresponsibility to suggest that somehow we are going to shut down the whole Department of Family Services by voting against the budget for that department over this particular issue.

No opposition party needs to bring more attention to this matter. It is one of the main issues of debate in this province. I can tell you that from my own discussions around the province, but I hear it from my part of the province. I hear it in the City of Winnipeg, too, that this Government has gone a very long way in the last year and a half toward improving the circumstances of child care workers in this province. This province has a long way to go and no one has denied that. This province has work to do in terms of working with people in the industry. No one has denied that and no one is saying that responsibility will not be carried out by this Government in a caring way and in a way which ultimately will enure to the benefit of workers, to the benefit of needy parents and to the benefit of children who so desperately need proper conditions in which to grow up.

So I just give Honourable Members that short lecture. I am sure they will not listen to anything I have to say, but I do say I am a little disappointed in the demeanour and the approach of some of the Honourable Members in this Chamber today, as compared with the demeanour and the approach of other of our Members.

* (1730)

Ms. Maureen Hemphill (Logan): I would like to respond, first of all, to the point that was just made and say, on behalf of my Party and all the Members of Party, that I think nobody will be more delighted than we are if it turns out that there is a way found, by the Government, to resolve this issue in a way that will not have us continue on this path that seems to be taking us toward a very difficult situation on a walkout by professional care givers who, although they have only been a profession for a short period of time, are like others in the health care and the education field. They only do this when they are really pressed to the wall. They only do this when they feel there is no other alternative. They only do this when they feel that the issue is so critical to both themselves and the operations and the quality of care that they are giving and because of the messages they are getting from the Government they feel that they have no other choice.

If we find a resolution to it we will call a press conference and congratulate you. I think both Members of the Opposition will find a way out of it by communicating with them about what your intentions are. If you want to know why we seem to be in this position, when you believe that you have given a reasonable amount of money to the day care system, and I will admit that you gave \$500 at one point and you gave another \$550, and within a six-month period, you gave a thousand dollars. If you had taken that step and said this was the beginning and now this is what we intend to do in the next fiscal year and the next fiscal year and the next fiscal year, then I think we would not be in this position today. I think that even if you were not able to meet the 24,000 necessarily in the three years, but maybe it took four, maybe you said over a four-year period, we do not think we can quite make it. But this is our intention.

If the agreement by the Government is that they are not getting enough money and they must get more

money, what are you going to do, not today, or not tomorrow, but over the period of the next few years to let them know what your intentions are so that they can deal with that reality, instead of the message that the \$1,000 is all the money there is in this fiscal year and no indication of what your intentions are in the next fiscal year? Over 45 percent of the women are in the work force today, and 58 percent of mothers with school-age children are working. In the inner city, one out of every three mothers is a single parent with preschool children.

These figures are just telling the story that our day care system is an absolute necessity for us to be able to continue to give adequate care for our children, because while some of those mothers are choosing to work in a career and some of us in this Chamber have made that choice, others do not have the choice. The single-parent mothers who are out there by the thousands do not have a choice, and the only way they are going to get out of that dependent cycle is to have day care that will allow them to take education and training to lead to a job, so that they can be independent and care for their children for the rest of their lives.

We know that a lot of the women, even in two-parent families, they may still have below the poverty line the combined wage, and that they are living to put bread on the table, shelter, and a roof over the head, and that they need good day care to take care of their children.

We need good people to look after them. We decided a long time ago that they were going to be trained. We could have made the decision that you did not need any training to work in a day care system, but we did not decide that. We decided the care of children at the early developmental stages required trained people who understood child development, who understood how to look after and take care of children, so we brought in a requirement that they had to have day care training. They have met that requirement, for many who were in the field without the training, at great cost to their time and their energy—and even financially.

So now they are trained and they are becoming a profession. They are going to be and they are a new emerging profession. They are entitled to be respected and treated that way. Why would we want to continue to train them at great cost to the taxpayer and to the provincial budget and then having them leave the profession the way they are leaving now and go into other fields where the pay is better because they cannot afford to live on this wage, because many of them have children too and are providing a living for their family? They cannot do it on the wages that they are getting.

So how much is it costing us, and why are we not looking at that? How many are leaving the profession because they cannot live on what they are getting? How much did it cost us to train that person, and how much will it cost us to train someone to take their place, let alone wait for the two years that is going to be required for them to receive training? So we cannot afford to have them leaving the profession.

We must make a commitment to increase the pay, and we must make it over a period of time. Only this

Government can communicate what their intentions are in a way that I think will head off the crisis that we all see looming and that has caused the decision to make it a public issue.

Why are we running out and talking in the halls to the press, and why are we debating it here? Because the Government has taken a position that is not acceptable and because we are trying to raise the public awareness and the public understanding, and we are trying to put pressure on the Government to change their position by speaking about it and by trying to make them understand something they do not seem to understand right now. It is not the importance of moving tomorrow to 24,000, as I have said, but the importance of undertaking a commitment to move towards significantly enhanced salaries for these people.

I want to show some sympathy in this area because I was the Minister of Community Services in the previous Government. Everyone has talked about what a difficult portfolio it is, but I can tell you, you have to have lived it, you have to have been there to really understand it. The daily issues that come before you, for every one we hear about there are 50 that we do not hear about publicly or in this Chamber, and the whole department deals with the quality of life and actually with many life and death issues for our most vulnerable people, our elderly, our handicapped and our children. I feel a lot of sympathy for the pressure that this Minister is under. I can say that I do not believe she has been given the support and help she needs to manage what I believe is the most difficult department in all of the Government, because of the importance, as I said, of the issues.

I worked personally with Mary Humphrey and I do not know what her politics are because I never asked her and because it did not matter. She was seen by me and everybody that worked with her to be one of the most professional, one of the most credible, one of the most capable and one of the civil servants with one of the highest levels of integrity that I have been privileged to work with.

I cannot imagine what the justification is in the minds of the Members opposite to have handled somebody who has been so committed to a job, to the people of Manitoba and the children of Manitoba in such an arbitrary and unfair manner. I can only suggest to you, if you believe you have information that suggests that is justified, ask again and you find out why that move was made, because I cannot believe there is anything that would justify the removal of a civil servant of the quality of Mary Humphrey.

It is a loss to the day care system and it is a loss to, I think, the civil service and to the belief that we all want to foster, that we want good people regardless of their politics in the civil service. I think we do. You had one, and you are treating her badly.

I was looking at the job description of the child care worker II and III. It is really a very extensive, very comprehensive, very important job description that shows the complexity of the work they do and how important it is. I do not have to belabour that because I think everybody has said that they should get more money. So, the only question is when.

When the question is raised, why are they compared to zoo keepers, it might look a little dramatic. I was talking to a day care worker today who said it is really depressing to go into the coffee shop and have the waitress, and we need waitresses and many waitresses are providing a living wage for their family and their children, but make more money than they make when they are required to have two years of professional training to look after the children.

I think that while the pay equity law has not moved into the private sector, it should be something that is taken into consideration when you are dealing with a group like this. The question of apples and oranges is the whole purpose of pay equity, to be able to compare apples and oranges so when somebody is being paid, and particularly women in their fields of work, a lot lower than other people in comparable jobs, this has to be compared, not totally, but it has to be compared to nurses and it has to be compared to teachers. Then some steps have to be taken to improve it, and the steps need to be taken by this Government by giving a message about what you intend to do in the next fiscal year and the one after that, and the one after that. Then I think you may be able to resolve this problem.

* (1740)

Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, this discussion today, as it has gone on for several hours now, has covered a wide range of topics all within the field of day care. We have been lectured at trying to be political politicians. We have been accused of being out to be power grabbers. We have been looked at as wanting to claw back. There are many, many discussion points going on, and I think it is proper that in this last half-hour we set back the tone into what the real topic should be, and that is what the worth of a worker is and how much training has to be rewarded in order to make the whole system accountable and sensible.

I think one of the issues that has been lightly discussed is the fact of pay equity, the fact that women and children are always looked down on the bottom of the list historically, and that in this new field of day care, we are running into this historical background and today's presence in a head-on collision with this Government. I think that one of the key problems that we are objecting to is that this Government, this Tory Government has to be brought into the future, to see that women and children are important, women and children are valuable, women and children are worth something in their estimate.

When we compare them to the increases given to staff members of the Government, we are not saying that staff members are not worthy of their increases but we are saying where are your priorities? Often the male institutions are given their raises, the ones who are accountable in the male institutions. The people who carry the papers and do the phone calling in the institutions and make the decisions are more important than those who look after our children, who create their moral values, their standards, who educate them into the training of what tomorrow will be.

We are saying that one is more important of a larger increase than the other, especially at a time when those

who are suffering in their pay level, trying to create an environment for the future which are our children, who are trying to develop a presence in a newly founded area of day care, that they are not worth supporting. Indeed this Government will say oh, well, we did give them 24 cents an hour, we have supported them, we have given them increases and that. But that is only enough that they hoped would keep them quiet. It has not kept them quiet because they see the future. They have struggled hard to be educated to go where they are going and they want to be recognized, and it is time for them to be recognized.

So I agree in that they would have been understanding if a procedure and policy had been mapped out for their future, to say that in so many years we will bring you up to a level of acceptance in your field, but we did not get that from this Government nor this Minister. We got a Minister who will not even talk to them, who is in many ways creating problems by, at least in appearance, sending spies, as is indicated by the profession, into meetings, by firing people that they have grown to believe in, to be able to be supported by, by restructuring a whole Government department so that it is not accountable to the people who it is there to serve. We have a Minister who does not understand the concept of what they are trying to put forward, who does not offer any alternatives, who does not say I agree or I disagree, but who says I will avoid you and hope you go away, I will give you 25 cents, throw a quarter on your plate and keep you quiet.

Well, we are finding time and time again it did not work with the foster parents, it is not going to work with the day care workers, and there are other groups that are going to come forward and say this is not working anymore, we are worth more.

Society is changing and it is changing in ways that hopefully we will be able to adapt. This Government is putting in its claws, its toenails and fingernails and saying we are going to stay in the past and not come into the future.

There are problems in day care. There are problems in many areas, and certainly in the rural areas where you cannot find day care accessible to the people. There are not alternatives to parents who wish to stay at home with their children. There are not alternatives to middle income people who cannot afford to work and cannot afford to stay home. They are caught up in the struggle of what to do. We are not offering them alternatives. I suppose by recognizing it as a profession, day care gives importance to the raising of children, no matter what the environment is and what the choices by the parents of how those children shall be raised.

We have to recognize that the future of our children is changing. The parents, I believe, most do feel that one parent would like to be able to stay home, all things being equal, that they would like to be able to keep up their employment opportunities, would like to keep up their standard of living and would like to be able to stay at home. Those possibilities are becoming more and more limited and this Government is not doing anything to offer any hopes that the possibilities in the future will be any different. They are putting up more problems, more blockades in front of parents who are

trying to make choices, rather than helping them make those choices.

At the present, the one opportunity we have is to get our children in day care. We have public day cares and we have private day cares. I believe you go to the one usually that is nearest to you, that you can find a spot, that you can get your child in. If you have to pay more, you will pay more because that is all you have available to you. You make these choices, but they are not options. I do not think that any parent should have to choose between what is expedient and what is best for their child.

So by having this Government not support wage increases, by having this Government mismanage the department, we are insulting the largest aspect of our community, the one that is most vital to our future, the one that indeed is our future. If we do not see a change in this Government, then I think that we are all looking for a sad next few years. If it comes to taking a vote, as the Government House Leader (Mr. McCrae) says, then I think this Government has to be responsible for the future through this department. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) is very weak when he allows a person who cannot understand the department, who cannot cope with the department, has been proven over the year to remain in that department without help, without admitting that the struggles that she is undergoing, she is not capable of seeing through to an end that will work out in a compromise.

This Government is stubborn and it is standing on its issues rather than looking for the future of our children and that to me is a sad day. So this debate has gone on for the whole afternoon, and we hope that this Government has realized that we are willing for a compromise. Let us hear our future from this Government. Let us see this service be supported in a means that will support our children and in a means that we can all stand proud.

* (1750)

Hon. Jack Penner (Minister of Rural Development): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure for me to rise in the House after the long break that we have all enjoyed and the beautiful summer that we have seen. It allowed me even to spend a few days back in my constituency and out on our farm. This summer even allowed me to make a few rounds on the combine, believe it or not. I was very pleased to be able to do that.

This issue that we are discussing here today, day care, is of course a very close issue to my heart. Many people in the rural parts of Manitoba, in the smaller towns, and villages, those who farm especially this country have for many years voiced their support for some mechanism that would allow the younger men and women that very often have to earn another salary to support their families, would allow them to get out and do just that. The agricultural community has for many years voiced support in putting in place some mechanisms to support or allow mothers or even the father to take a job and help support the farm and its operation.

I believe that the criticism that has been levelled by the Honourable Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) is

unwarranted. I believe that this Government probably has done more in the past short while than the previous administration has done in the past eight years.

The Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) had the gall to get up in her chair and criticize the way we had dealt with the child care issues. I would suggest to the House here and the Honourable Members present that I concur with some of the criticism that she levelled because the criticism she levelled, she levelled at her own administration when she was in power. If she had been as serious as she says she is about caring for the children, surely in a space of a year and a half that has transpired since they were in power. The situation has not changed that much. Had she been as serious as she professes to be, then surely she would have made the changes while she was in a position to do so. I take the words that she uttered as being not only somewhat hypocritical but utterly hypocritical.

I believe that the support that Manitoba is giving to the day care centres, and we have figures to show that, they are only second to Ontario in the amount that we designate toward child care in this province. I believe that the \$197 per child that has been designated toward day care is a substantial amount and is well recognized by most of the community in Manitoba as being a substantial amount and probably being an affordable amount that most people would condone.

When I look at the ability to earn incomes in some parts of this province, and I compare that ability with the amounts of money that we pay to child care workers, to day care workers, \$17,500 a year, it is probably substantially higher than many other people, whether they be men, women in the work force, are able to earn at this time. I am surprised that the Honourable Member for St. Johns (Ms. Wasylycia-Leis) has not raised, in her address, that similar concern for all those other people because I think it is imperative that we, when we sit in the Chambers here, to look at the total and make sure that when we address those kinds of issues that we do not discount one against the other. It is important that we recognize those people that are unable to care for themselves and that we balance properly amounts of money that we raise through taxation, and it is the people of Manitoba's money that we spend, and there is only one way that Governments can raise those kinds of dollars.

I know the opposition Party does not quite understand, even though some of them have been power for many years, does not understand what is implied by raising more tax dollars to support the system. It is important that we sometimes reserve some of those funds that we do raise via the tax dollar, if and when that is allowed.

But getting back to the day care issue. I think that the amount of money this administration has expended in day care over the last year and a half is not only a substantial commitment to the day care and to the children of our province, but it is a phenomenal amount compared to the amount that was spent by our previous administration. We created 345 new spaces in day care, 345 new spaces. Last year we heard the day care people tell us, we need more spaces. We addressed that issue.

Now we hear them saying we have to address the issue of salaries and wages. Well, I want to say to you that I think it is important to recognize that we need to be careful when we address this whole issue and consider this whole issue, that we do not allow ourselves to put in place salary schedules that will be to such a degree that there will be no competition because there needs to be competition in this place, as well as in other areas.

I want to say to you, to the Members of this House, that those mothers that are on the farms and have for a long time waited for some ability to have their children cared for while they take jobs to support the farm need to be recognized, that action needs to be taken. It is critical that we address and allow for some flexibility, not only in the farm community but also to those people that are on shift work, that they are able to properly have their children cared for, whether it is at night or during the day.

Those are some of the things that we think is important to address and addressed they will be, as the Premier has quite clearly indicated lately. It is important that we make improvements, that we provide the training to those young people that want to make a career in caring for our children, and our children are our most important asset that we have in this country.

So I want to, Mr. Speaker, thank you for allowing me a few minutes to voice my concerns on this issue for I find it hard to accept the criticisms that I have heard, not only of our Government but of the Minister. I want to say to you that I think the Minister has done an honourable job in impressing upon her, not only her Cabinet colleagues but all of those of us who have to make those kind of decisions, of the need to expend the kind of dollars that are required.

I think the Premier (Mr. Filmon) also clearly stated that there will be another year and there will be another budget. Those kinds of issues that we have not been able to address in this budget will be considered during the next series of budgets.

So, again, Mr. Speaker, I thank you for allowing me a few minutes to address this issue of day cares.

Mr. Steve Ashton (Thompson): Very briefly, Mr. Speaker, I want to put on the record my very real concern about the failure of this Government to deal with the crisis in child care. I want the record to state quite clearly one of the proudest things as a New Democratic Member of this Legislature for me is the situation we developed in terms of child care, the best system in Canada when we left office.

The key thing for the record is let the Government not say it has not got the money. Let us not just talk about political staff in the Premier's Office. They were left with the books in excellent shape. They have several hundred million dollars more in extra revenue today. I say, Mr. Speaker, let them not say there is not money for child care workers in the child care system in this province. That is not true. Let them demonstrate a real priority for the child care system. Listen to our calls for something better than 24 cents an hour and do

some justice for the day care workers, because I do not believe they are getting justice from this Government at the current time.

Mr. Speaker: The hour being 6 p.m., this House is adjourned and stands adjourned until 1:30 p.m. tomorrow (Wednesday).