

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF MANITOBA

Friday, October 6, 1989.

The House met at 10 a.m.

PRAYERS

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

TABLING OF REPORTS

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, I am tabling today the Second Annual Report 1988/89 of the Victims Assistance Committee.

INTRODUCTION OF BILLS

BILL NO. 5—THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (3)

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James) introduced, by leave, Bill No. 5, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (3); Loi no 3 modifiant le Code de la route.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Edwards: Mr. Speaker, this Bill deals with penalties for those caught driving while suspended, or driving an unregistered vehicle. This Government's initiative in this area, in June of this year, brought in pre-trial impoundments of vehicles. We stated at that time that we supported that initiative. However, vehicles will often be impounded that belong to innocent owners, and those innocent owners will rightfully get their cars back.

* (1005)

We are proposing in this Bill to increase the penalties for those caught by bringing in a minimum fine for those caught driving while suspended of \$500, which is in line with the minimum fine for driving while impaired and setting no maximum fine. Presently that maximum fine is \$1,000.00.

Secondly, we are proposing to increase the fines for those driving unregistered vehicles by bringing in a minimum fine of \$250.00. We raised both of these matters at the committee stage in the drinking and driving initiative brought forward by this Government. However, they were not supported. We look at this time for support from all Honourable Members for this Bill. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

QUESTION put, MOTION carried.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

Day Care Workers Incentives

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): My question is to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson). In an interview aired the other night, the

Minister indicated that she could provide no guarantees to the child care community in terms of salary enhancement at least equaling the level of inflation for the upcoming budget, which we will receive some time in the new year.

Can the Minister tell the House today what incentives she is prepared to offer, if any, to keep child care workers in that profession and guarantee quality care to the children of this province?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, in the last two budgets we have made the commitment of a 25 percent increase to child care in Manitoba. I have made the commitment that we will continue to enhance the salaries of child care workers in Manitoba.

Cost of Living Increase

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the majority of child care workers live in the City of Winnipeg. The inflation rate in this community in the last two years is 8.9 percent. The increase to the child care worker has been 6.6 percent. Will this Minister guarantee the child care workers at least salaries next year equivalent to the increase in the rate of inflation?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, in the last two budgets, salary enhancement grants went up by 35 percent. I have undertaken in a meeting yesterday with the Child Care Advisory Committee to look at the whole funding of child care in Manitoba to improve the system by which we deliver payments toward child care.

Day Care Workers Cost of Living Increase

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the reality is that child care workers are receiving salaries that are among the lowest for people with two years post-secondary training that are, in terms of increases, well below the rate of inflation.

An Honourable Member: No.

Mrs. Carstairs: Yes. Mr. Speaker, will the Minister admit today that the Salary Enhancement Grant is a very small component of the salary paid to day care workers, and the salary paid to day care workers is below the rate of inflation in terms of growth?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I will not allow the Member to put incorrect information on the record. First, day care workers in Manitoba are amongst the highest paid day care workers anywhere in the country—if not first, then second. Second, Mr. Speaker, the increases that they have been getting, in addition

to the 35 percent increase in the Salary Enhancement Grants, there has been an overall increase in funding to the day care centres of 4.7 percent this year, and over 4.5 percent last year, in addition to the Salary Enhancement Grant increase.

So the money has been put in, 45 percent increase, \$13 million additional into day care, Mr. Speaker. We have carried forward a very strong commitment to day care and day care workers, and we are prepared to do more, provided that they sit down and help us to work out the long-term plan of funding for day care in this province.

Mrs. Carstairs: Well, Mr. Speaker, the only thing they will not guarantee is that at least the poor child care worker can meet at least their inflationary increases in costs.

Goods and Services Tax Rebate Indexing

* (1010)

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): With a new question to the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness). Mr. Speaker, the Finance Minister appeared this morning in camera before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance. The in-camera request was not his, the in-camera request was the committee's. Mr. Speaker, in this -(interjection)- well, according to the committee chairman, the chairman has indicated, Mr. Speaker, that they will not meet with politicians in public but will only meet with them in camera which is what I said, if the Finance Minister had been listening.

My question, Mr. Speaker—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

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

Mrs. Carstairs: Mr. Speaker, in his presentation before the task force this morning, he raised not one word about the lack of indexing of rebates to low-income earners in the Province of Manitoba. Can the Minister tell this House why earlier he said indexing was critical and important to this Government, and yet when given the opportunity did not lay that message before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, first, the Government of Manitoba and I requested an opportunity to make a presentation to the federal Standing Committee on Finance. It was requested by that committee that indeed that presentation be made in camera. It was. We presented a six-page brief which we are prepared to make public. I do not know how it is that the Leader of the Liberal Party (Mrs. Carstairs) provincially would know exactly what was said. There were many, many items discussed, upwards of 20 to 25.

I can indicate to the Member opposite that one aspect that was discussed was the inflationary aspect of our

sales tax credit and how indeed we sensed that there should be an element of that provided within the GST proposal.

Food Exclusion

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have the Minister's presentation. The other issue that the Minister did not address at all in his presentation is the commitment on the part of this Government to ensure that food would not be included in this GST. Can the Minister explain to the House this morning why they have not mentioned that food and prescription drugs, according to their policy, would have to be guaranteed to be protected from the GST?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): That is part of the public record. That announcement has been made many times by the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and indeed by myself over the course of the past year as the GST, and before that the national sales tax, was being developed. Mr. Speaker, I do not know the Member's source. Obviously it was a Member on the committee who obviously has by way of some conversation given some incorrect knowledge to the Member. Otherwise she has interpreted his—I say his—words incorrectly.

Finance Minister's Position

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): Well, Mr. Speaker, I am looking at his words, the Finance Minister's words, as presented to the committee in what I have to reflect is one of the softest presentations on GST that I have ever seen. It does not indicate any firm opposition from this Government to the concept of a GST. Can the Minister tell this House today why he believes one bad GST will somehow be better than a bad NST?

Hon. Clayton Manness (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I will let any objective judge come forward and read the presentation and point out indeed where it is that we have not said that we are opposed, that it is unacceptable, that it has major flaws. We have identified many of the areas of major flaws. We made our case very strongly. I was there. The Leader of the Liberal Party was not. If she chooses not to accept my words, so be it. This is a record of indeed what was said plus there was discussion on a whole host of other items.

* (1015)

Savoy Hotel Eviction Notices

Ms. Maureen Hemphill (Logan): Mr. Speaker, the crackdown of the appalling living conditions on Main Street hotels is long overdue. We welcome it.

However, last night, I think all of the people in this Legislature would have believed that there was inhumane treatment being applied when we witnessed and watched with disbelief as city and provincial officials

ruthlessly evicted poor, elderly, and disabled, long-term tenants with no notice, no preparation, and no consideration, as they broke down doors, violated privacy and ordered people to get out in one hour from a place that had been home for many years.

Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson). Was the Minister of Family Services notified that this eviction was going to take place? Is there any procedure in her department to handle such relocation and such sensitive issues and, if not, did she give any instructions to her staff who were involved in the eviction on how evictions of this nature should be handled?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, no, I was not aware of that situation, but I will have it looked into immediately.

Bill No. 42 Hotel Inclusion

Ms. Maureen Hemphill (Logan): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme). Can the Minister confirm that Bill No. 42 that is on the Order Paper, The Residential Tenancies Act, exempts hotels from the provisions and the protection that other tenants receive so that they do not receive this kind of inhumane treatment, and will he bring in an amendment to Bill No. 42 that will include hotels, which are presently home for hundreds of poor, elderly and disabled people?

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Housing): Mr. Speaker, the other day I was to introduce my Bill and give it second reading. It is quite an extensive Bill that covers 124 pages, but because the House had other items they wanted brought forward, I withdrew that Bill. I would like to maybe make the comments on that Bill today when it comes up, and maybe I will answer the concerns of the Member.

An Honourable Member: If it is not in there, what does it matter?

Ms. Hemphill: It is not in there. Will he add it? That was the question.

Savoy Hotel Residents' Meeting

Ms. Maureen Hemphill (Logan): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson). Since the Minister indicates that she was unaware that the eviction was taking place, what steps will she now take to immediately set up discussions with the residents to see where they want to go and what they want to do? For example, they may want to stay together. They may have considered themselves to be a family for many years, and they may want to stay in the Main Street area. What steps will she take to make sure that they are not dislocated and separated, perhaps, and put in geographical areas or situations where they do not want to be?

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Mr. Speaker, since I was not notified of this situation, I would have to take it as notice and carry on the appropriate steps when I find out what those appropriate steps are.

Ms. Hemphill: Mr. Speaker, my last question is to the Minister of Family Services. Since this is Thanksgiving weekend, I would like to know if the Minister would consider taking some steps and some effort to bring these people together for the Thanksgiving celebration, since it is likely and it is probable that they are the only friends and family they have. So will she make some effort to see if they can have some way of celebrating Thanksgiving together?

Mrs. Oleson: Mr. Speaker, yes, I will look into that immediately.

Centre for Disease Control Funding

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). Manitobans have every reason to be wary and suspicious of the federal Government's treatment of this province. Base closures, cuts to VIA Rail and the mass exodus to Edmonton by federal staff is just a small example of how we have been treated.

We now hear concerns expressed that the funding for the Laboratory Centre for Disease Control may be downsized from \$100 million to \$50 million. Has the Minister discussed funding for the lab with the federal Minister, and can he assure us today that there will be no downsizing of the federal Government's commitment to place that lab in Winnipeg with a price tag of \$100 million?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, my honourable friend's preamble is an interesting preamble, being a Member of the Liberal Party that saw the exodus of an Air Canada maintenance base from Winnipeg to Montreal during the Liberal years.- (interjection)- Let us not use those kinds of preambles to deal with the very serious matter for the future of Manitoba in terms of the virology lab.

Mr. Speaker, the last communication that I had directly with the federal Minister of Health indicated to me two things: (a) that the virology lab was on track; and (b) that there was no change in concept contemplated.

* (1020)

Mr. Carr: I will leave the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) all the free rein he wants to defend the federal Tory Government.

Site Guarantee

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): I have a supplementary question to the Minister. It appears that neither Ontario nor Quebec are content with the decision to move the lab site to Winnipeg, and there is now a powerful lobby

in place to try to rescind that decision. What recent guarantee has the Minister received from the federal Minister of Health that the lab indeed will be here in the City of Winnipeg?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, the assurance that I just give to my honourable friend, and I might ask him in the interest of the Province of Manitoba, that he use his substantial influence and his Leader's substantial influence with the Liberal Leaders in Ontario and Quebec of the provincial Governments respectively, to back off and to assure that a commitment that was made to Manitoba happens, and that we do not have Liberal administrations in Toronto and in Quebec City gerrymandering with the decision that is good for the future of Manitoba. I have no influence over those Liberal provincial Governments.

Mr. Carr: It is unfortunate, but even the Minister of Health knows that it is federal Members of Parliament from Ontario and Quebec who are applying the pressure, Conservative Members of Parliament, but that will change soon enough.

Centre for Disease Control Site Guarantee

Mr. James Carr (Fort Rouge): Mr. Speaker, I have a final supplementary question to the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme). It seems as if the location of the lab site is part of this pressure that is being exerted by the Tory MPs from Ontario and Quebec. Will the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) immediately convene a meeting with the mayor of the City of Winnipeg—

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. The Honourable Member for Fort Rouge.

Mr. Carr: Mr. Speaker, will the Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme) immediately convene a meeting of the federal Minister of Health and the Mayor of the City of Winnipeg, and show some leadership on this issue to revisit the question of where that lab will be located? It is his own preference, the preference of the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and of the Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) that that lab ought to be next to the Health Sciences Centre where it belongs. Will he throw a commitment of resources and leadership on the table to have that bad decision revisited?

Some Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs (Mr. Ducharme). Order, please. Order. I have recognized the Honourable Minister of Urban Affairs, not the whole front bench.

Hon. Gerald Ducharme (Minister of Urban Affairs): The Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard) and I met with the City of Winnipeg, and that was the site that was primary. To the Member across the way, the city council, composed of 29 members, made that decision from where they would not accept the site at that location.

Food Banks Government Support

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): I am rather surprised that the Member for Logan (Ms. Hemphill) and the Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson) do not realize that those individuals at the hotel who were evicted are under the jurisdiction of the City of Winnipeg social services.

Mr. Speaker, this weekend many of us will have the opportunity to give thanks with family and friends as we share in Thanksgiving dinner celebrations, but there are many Manitobans who will not be feasting this weekend. They are Manitoba's poor. We know the Winnipeg Harvest provides some 5,000 meals to the poor and the destitute. My question is to the Minister responsible for Social Assistance, which of course includes basic food needs. What support, financial and other resources, does her Government provide to the city's food banks?

Mrs. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): I would have to take first the part of the question about what we give to the food bank. I would have to check with the department on that one, but we do monitor social assistance payments on a continuous basis. Every year they are compared to the cost of living and appropriate increases are made. So there is a continuing monitoring of food prices in the province, particularly in the City of Winnipeg as it pertains to people living in this city, so that the payments reflect what the costs of food are.

Children's Use

* (1025)

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member for Ellice (Ms. Gray), with a supplementary question.

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): If as the Minister indicates, the payments reflect the cost of food, perhaps she could tell this House why 40 percent of the individuals who attend the city's food banks are children.

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): When welfare payments, social assistance payments are made, it is taken into consideration the size of the family, and appropriate payments are made to cover the basic costs of living, which includes, of course, food.

Winnipeg Harvest Day Care Servicing

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

Ms. Avis Gray (Ellice): Obviously, the Minister refuses to see the facts in front of her. My final supplementary to the Minister is: could the Minister indicate to us if she is prepared to deal with the situation where 15 day care centres in the inner city rely on Winnipeg Harvest for food supplements to feed the children?

Hon. Charlotte Oleson (Minister of Family Services): Part of the payments for per diems for child care include

the cost of snacks for children in day care. If she wants to give me the particulars of these particular cases, I would be glad to look into it for her.

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Day Care Funding Premier's Statement Retraction

Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (St. Johns): Today on CBC Radio the Premier made a statement suggesting that this Government's increase to child care centres was more than sufficient. Furthermore, he implied that day care centres were not passing on that increase to day care workers. In doing so, he smeared the entire day care community.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: He has escalated a very serious situation and he has not—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for St. Johns, kindly put her question now, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Yes, my question to the Premier is: will the Premier (Mr. Filmon) now retract a statement that is factually incorrect in stating that money is being passed on to day care centres and not in turn being passed on to day care workers?

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, firstly, the Member for St. Johns has made a very false and spurious allegation in suggesting that I in any way smeared anybody in the day care community. If she is uncomfortable with the fact that I have stated very clearly what increases we have passed along to the day care community and the day care funding, and that is substantially more than anything she ever did when she was in Government. If she is embarrassed by that, then I would suggest that she ought not to use that by trying to twist or misrepresent anything I have said.

I have always said we have made a 45 percent increase in just 17 months and two budgets, \$13 million additional. We have put in not only a 35 percent increase to the salary enhancement grants, but substantial increases as well in the operating funds to those centres.

Under those circumstances, we have shown a commitment. We are willing to work even harder. That is why we have set up a committee of Cabinet, an advisory committee, that met yesterday to work towards the longer term issues of planning for even more increases to the day care community that will also address salary concerns.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Given the fact that the Premier did say on CBC radio that the tremendous increases of this Government are not being passed on by day care centres to day care workers, and given the fact that the only increase to day care centres has been a 24 cents an hour increase to workers themselves, will the Premier now pinpoint, in this House, where he thinks

day care centres are not passing on those funds to day care workers, or will he retract that misinformation and be—

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

* (1030)

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, very clearly, they have had an overall increase in their budgets of more than 4.5 percent each of the last two years, plus increases in salary enhancement grants. Yet the only increases that show up in the figures that are quoted by MCCA are the increases in salary enhancement grants, despite the fact that 80 percent of their budget is salaries and they had an overall increase in their budgets of 4.7 percent and 4.5 percent plus the salary enhancement grants. Clearly, the money that has been given to overall operating increases has not resulted in increases in their salaries.

Therefore, there is a funding problem. When you pour in 45 percent additional funding at the top and at the bottom it does not come out in salaries, there is a funding problem. That is what the whole discussion was about with the representatives of the day care, a funding distribution problem, a 45 percent increase.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Filmon: There is a funding distribution problem within the system, Mr. Speaker, and that is what we are committed to resolve. We are sitting down as a Cabinet committee with all of the representatives of the day care community to solve that problem which was not solved by the former Government, which was created by the former Government.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: The only increase that existing funded non-profit centres received from this Government is 24 cents an hour increase for day care workers. The Premier is not telling the truth.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please; order, please. I would ask the Honourable Member for St. Johns to kindly withdraw that remark.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, either the Minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order! I am having difficulty hearing the Honourable Member for St. Johns.

The Honourable Member for St. Johns, kindly withdraw that remark.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, my concern—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Order. I have asked the Honourable Member for St. Johns to kindly withdraw that remark.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Okay, Mr. Speaker, thank you very much. If I have done anything unparliamentary, I will certainly withdraw it.

Mr. Speaker: I would like to thank the Honourable Member for St. Johns. Kindly put your question now, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. My final question is to the Premier. If the Premier is not misrepresenting the facts then he is so ill-informed that in his honest stupidity he does not realize what is going on in this community.

Mr. Speaker, my final question to the Premier is: given that the only increase to funded day care centres in this province is not 45 percent, but

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for St. Johns, kindly put her question now, please.

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Will the Premier do the honourable thing and correct the record and tell the people of Manitoba exactly what kind of increase this Government is giving to funded non-profit centres in this province?

Mr. Filmon: Mr. Speaker, it is very regrettable that the Member for St. Johns, who is presumably the critic for day care, who presumably has worked with the day care industry in the past as an advocate and supporter, does not know that in addition to salary enhancement grant increases they also got per diem increases that resulted in an overall increase in their funding of more than 4.5 percent each of the last two budgets, substantial increases to the overall funding of each day care centre. She is either unwilling to acknowledge that or is ignorant of those facts. I would ask her, Mr. Speaker, that rather than get up and attempt to foment a dispute between the workers and the Government of Manitoba that she act in a positive sense and try and resolve the issue to the best benefit of all those in day care.

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

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: Yes, I would like to rise on a point of order—

Mr. Speaker: What is the point of order?

Ms. Wasylycia-Leis: —and ask the Premier to once and for all withdraw his silly statements about fomenting this serious issue.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member does not have a point of order.

The Honourable Member for Niakwa.

Some Honourable Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: I have said the Honourable Member does not have a point of order. There is no point of order. I have recognized the Honourable Member for Niakwa.

Urban Native Strategy Duplication

Mr. Herold Driedger (Niakwa): On December 1 of last year our local urban Native community initiated, planned, organized and carried through on a shoestring budget the Unity Conference at which the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) was represented by his legislative assistant. The purpose of this conference was to begin developing a grass-roots Native-driven urban Native strategy. One day later, the Minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Your question is?

Mr. Herold Driedger: Do I not have time for a preamble?

Mr. Speaker: Question, please.

Mr. Herold Driedger: Why then, one day later, on December 2, did the Minister enter into an \$105,000 agreement with a private consultant to duplicate this process which had largely been accomplished by the urban Natives of Winnipeg?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs, and Native Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the reason we entered into an urban-Native strategy because it was a commitment of the Conservative Party prior to the last election, to deal with a major issue that was brought to our attention by the Native community and totally neglected by the previous administration and not acknowledged by the Liberal Party of this province.

Unity Conference Government Support

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

Mr. Herold Driedger (Niakwa): Why then, on the 28th of September, did the Minister indicate by letter that he was willing to co-sponsor this unity conference with the Native community and then, after the conference, reject the process out of hand?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs, and Native Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in no way do I accept the allegations by the critic. In fact, I am somewhat disappointed, given the commitment of his Leader and the Leader of the third Party in this House, that they were prepared to work co-operatively on the urban-Native strategy that has been developed by this Government in co-operation with the total Native community of the City of Winnipeg and other cities within the Province of Manitoba.

Urban Native Strategy Duplication

Mr. Herold Driedger (Niakwa): Mr. Speaker, I was at that conference and it duplicated exactly what the unity process had done. Perhaps a permanent director to the Native Affairs Secretariat is in order at this time.

Why would he not assist a process started by the people, for the people, on their own without having to duplicate it by Government?

Hon. James Downey (Minister of Northern Affairs, and Native Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have to admit I am not aware of who the Member is getting his advice from, or his information from. I have to say that I will be presenting to this House very shortly the total workings of the urban-Native strategy that was developed with the indigenous women within the Native community, with all the urban-Native representatives who have been totally involved over the past year and the continuation of the process. I do not understand where he gets his information from. I think it is totally unfounded and will challenge him at any time when I present that information and the strategy that has been developed from within the total Native community in this country.

Western Sun Vacations Closure

Hon. Edward Connery (Minister of Co-operative, Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday last, the Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) asked some questions about Western Sun Vacations and travellers being stranded. Our department has been in contact with their counterparts in Alberta. Because the company simply closed its doors and did not declare bankruptcy, there has been no trustee appointed and there is no access to the books. Therefore, it is impossible at this time to obtain specific numbers and what province they are from. Our department has discussed this situation with the Manitoba Travel Agents Association, and they say, because it is an Alberta-based tour operator and because we have tour operators here in Manitoba, it is unlikely that any Manitobans were involved.

But, regardless, Mr. Speaker, our department is trying to ascertain if there were any and are prepared to help, and if anybody was stranded the Consumers Bureau is prepared to assist those and, in the interim, for some time we have been reviewing the need for legislation and we have been making consultations. We are concerned about travellers being stranded in this way. We want to take appropriate action.

Brandon General Hospital Haemodialysis Patients

* (1040)

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, patients of the Brandon Haemodialysis Unit at the Brandon General Hospital are required to take numerous medications in connection with their disease, some of which are not covered by Pharmacare. The average cost per patient per month is between \$300 and \$500.00. All other dialysis patients in the province have their medications provided for them free of charge. MHSC has approved funding to provide the Brandon dialysis patients with this medication, but the pharmacy department does not have adequate staffing to follow

through on this service. So, as a result—I have to give you this preliminary to explain the question—

Mr. Speaker: Time is very scarce. Would the Honourable Member kindly put his question now, please.

Mr. Leonard Evans: As a result, these patients continue to pay between \$300 and \$500 a month which is a real burden on them.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. And the question is?

Mr. Leonard Evans: My question to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) is, because the pharmacy department is now overloaded and cannot provide this service, will the Minister look into this problem and request the Manitoba Health Services Commission to provide funding to the Brandon General Hospital for additional pharmaceutical staff?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I know my honourable friend addressed the question to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), but I presume that was an error, that he meant to ask me.

Mr. Speaker, the issue that my honourable friend addresses is twofold. The first part of the issue, namely the making available at no cost, pharmaceuticals to those patients requiring haemodialysis, has been achieved. Within the context of provision of health care, that is the first objective, to provide that kind of quality health care to residents that he has identified and we have achieved that.

Mr. Speaker, the issue of staffing in pharmacy is a larger issue that is under discussion with, not only the hospital administration, but indeed within MHSC.

Mr. Leonard Evans: I would hope the Minister could use his good offices to expedite the resolution of this problem.

Pharmaceutical Consulting Service

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): Mr. Speaker, I would also ask the Minister a question regarding the pharmaceutical department, because I should advise him that the Brandon General Hospital pharmaceutical department provides important consulting services to Westman hospitals. The department has already advised some of these Westman health facilities that they will have to curtail these consulting services, and there is great concern, including the hospital at Hamiota, for example.

Will the Minister ask MHSC to review this matter as well to ensure that the Brandon General Hospital has sufficient funds to continue to provide this needed consulting service?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, let me address the answer to this question in two fashions. First of all, the problem—and we try to resolve problems in the Department of Health—of haemodialysis patients and the cost incurred by them was resolved by this Minister and this department.

The issue of staffing in the pharmacy is part of a larger issue that currently is under review by a peer review committee chaired by Ted Bartman who is the Executive Director of Misericordia Hospital. Those issues are being discussed in a very constructive fashion by the commission, by the board and staff of Brandon General Hospital, and presumably from those reasoned discussions, appropriate recommendations and results will ensue.

I am not here to negotiate with my honourable friend from Brandon East on individual issues that he cares to bring to the House.

Mr. Leonard Evans: Mr. Speaker, I am bringing issues on behalf of people who are unjustly having to pay hundreds of dollars for pharmaceuticals—

Mr. Speaker: And your question is?

Nursing Reclassification

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): My final question to the Minister is regarding RPN nurses at BMHC. Some time ago I wrote to him about the problem of reclassification and the low morale that this was causing. Has the Minister finally looked into this matter and has he been able to address the concerns of the nursing staff at the Brandon Mental Health Centre?

Hon. Donald Orchard (Minister of Health): I believe the issue that my honourable friend is referring to is a review undertaken in 1982 by the Department of Health, the then Minister of Health, in co-operation with the management staff of the Brandon Mental Health Centre regarding some difficulties that were being experienced as early as 1982.

Mr. Speaker, it is my understanding that in co-operation with the Civil Service Commission of Manitoba, who has the independent advice in terms of classification matters in the specific and definitive issues that were raised in 1982 have recommended an equitable solution which conforms and follows Civil Service Commission practices. It is my understanding that resolution is being discussed with management and will resolve probably a long-standing problem.

Goods and Services Tax Cultural Industry Impact

Mrs. Gwen Charles (Selkirk): The federal Communications Minister, Marcel Masse, was reported to have admitted that because of the proposed goods and services tax there would be some winners and losers in the arts and cultural industry.

My question is to the Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation (Mrs. Mitchelson). Can she provide this House with a comprehensive list of all these so-called losers, the anticipated repercussions to the organizations involved and the future of the industry in Manitoba due to the GST?

Hon. Bonnie Mitchelson (Minister of Culture, Heritage and Recreation): I will be really pleased to answer

that question. I do not have a detailed list of each and every organization within the province or within the country that is going to be affected.

I do know that those organizations—and they are very often the smaller organizations, arts organizations, that receive less of 50 percent of their funding from Government—are going to be the groups and organizations that are going to be impacted most. That is because they do not get any other tax breaks of any sort from Government, so they are going to be hit.

I do want the Member for Selkirk (Mrs. Charles) to know, and the Liberal Party, that I led the discussion with the federal Government at the Minister's meeting just over the past two days. I called on the federal Minister to go to his Finance Minister, and to his colleagues in Ottawa, and tell them there is not one province across this country that is supportive of the GST, because of the impact it is going to have on our arts and cultural organizations.

Mr. Speaker: The time for oral questions has expired.

INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Speaker: We have a few guests here, today. I would like to draw Honourable Members' attention to the gallery to my right, where I am informed we have Mr. Frank Bruseker, the MLA for the Calgary-North West constituency of Alberta.

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

NON-POLITICAL STATEMENTS

Hon. Gary Filmon (Premier): Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I might have leave to make a non-political statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable First Minister have leave to make a non-political statement? (Agreed)

Mr. Filmon: I have been informed that the Prime Minister has just announced the Honourable Ray Hnatyshyn will be the next Governor General for Canada.

Mr. Hnatyshyn, a Ukrainian Canadian, who is a lawyer by profession, has a long history of public service that has brought him both recognition and respect throughout Canada. He was first elected to the House of Commons in 1974, served as Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources in the Government of Joe Clark, was Minister of State, Government House Leader and President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada. In 1986, he was appointed Minister of Justice and Attorney General for Canada.

It is my understanding that Mr. Hnatyshyn will be sworn into office early next year. I would ask, Mr. Speaker, that all Members join me in congratulating Mr. Hnatyshyn.

Mrs. Sharon Carstairs (Leader of the Opposition): I join with the Premier to have leave to make a non-political statement.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Leader of the Opposition have leave? (Agreed)

Mrs. Carstairs: I join with the Premier of the province in congratulating the federal Government on the appointment of Ray Hnatyshyn. There are not many who have been associated with the Conservative Party that I have particularly liked over the years, but Ray Hnatyshyn happens to be one of them.

* (1050)

Mr. Hnatyshyn brings a number of positive things to the office of Governor General. First of all, of course, he comes from the Province of Saskatchewan.

While the present Governor General was in fact born in Saskatchewan, many people associate her with the Province of Quebec. It is nice to see, once again, one of our prairie provinces, as with of course the previous Governor General, Ed Schreyer, in recognition of our province, be so recognized in his appointment to the Governor General position for all of Canada.

It is also of importance to this nation as a whole that someone of Ukrainian parentage be recognized in such a high office of this land. I know that this recommendation was put forward by the Ukrainian-Canadian committee who is having their triannual conference here in this city opening this evening. So it will be with great rejoicing, I am sure, this evening that they will greet this celebration, and I think on behalf of all Canadians, and in particular western Canadians, we greet this appointment this morning.

Mr. Speaker: Does the Honourable Member for Brandon East have leave to make a non-political statement?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Leave. The Honourable Member for Brandon East.

Mr. Leonard Evans (Brandon East): I have another non-political statement, Mr. Speaker. I would certainly join with the Premier (Mr. Filmon) and the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) in congratulating Mr. Hnatyshyn on his appointment as Governor General.

The Leader of the Opposition said it very well. He brings a lot of ability and experience to this particular position. He is a very capable person, so I read. I do not know him personally. However, I am very delighted that he is from western Canada. I think it is important that all parts of the country from time to time have an opportunity to be represented in this position. Of course, he comes from a multicultural background, if I may use that, as certainly former Governor General Ed Schreyer did as well, and that is also good.

Being Governor General is very much a ceremonial position. The Governor General plays a role in our Constitution, of course, in opening Parliament, signing important documents, et cetera; but largely it is a ceremonial role, but nevertheless it is a very important role because this country is having a difficult time in

being held together at times. I think it is extremely important that people from coast to coast get to see the Governor General and allow him to be in their various communities with children, with other organizations and so on. So I wish Mr. Hnatyshyn well in his new responsibilities and I am sure we all look forward to seeing him in this province in the not too distant future.

COMMITTEE CHANGE

Mr. Edward Helwer (Gimli): Mr. Speaker, I move, seconded by the Member for Lac du Bonnet (Mr. Praznik), that the composition of the Standing Committee on Industrial Relations be amended as follows: Penner for Ducharme.

ORDERS OF THE DAY

HOUSE BUSINESS

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Mr. Speaker, I would like to inform the House as to the business which this House will be embarking upon today and next week.

Today, we would ask you to call Bill No. 27; Bill No. 42; Bill No. 54, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act, which by agreement will pass the second reading stage today and proceed to the Industrial Relations Committee on Tuesday morning. It is the intention of the Government to go into Committee of Supply Tuesday and Thursday; and, by leave, on Wednesday, the Government will call Bill No. 54 to complete all stages, including the Royal Assent. This is, as always, just a guideline, Sir, and I will be consulting my colleagues as usual, the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) and the Honourable Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), should any changes to this order occur.

So, Mr. Speaker, would you be so kind as to call Bill No. 27, Bill No. 42, Bill No. 54, and the others as listed on the Order Paper, if time should permit.

DEBATE ON SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 27—THE FISCAL STABILIZATION FUND ACT

Mr. Speaker: On the proposed motion of the Honourable Minister of Finance, Bill No. 27, The Fiscal Stabilization Fund Act; Loi sur le Fonds de stabilisation des recettes, standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne—the Honourable Member for Dauphin.

Mr. John Plohman (Dauphin): Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave that this matter remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne?

Some Honourable Members: Leave.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed. The Honourable Member for Dauphin.

Mr. Plohman: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is my pleasure to join in the debate, although I can say it has been rather one-sided on this issue, on Bill No. 27, The Fiscal Stabilization Fund Act. We have been, of course, anxious to hear from other Ministers on the other side of the House as to their position on how this stabilization fund would be administered and would work and function. However, they are obviously unwilling to discuss it further in debate, and so I take this opportunity, in the absence of those discussions, to put forward some positions that my constituents and I, as their representative, feel strongly about that must be addressed by this stabilization fund, once it has been put in place.

Obviously, we are talking of some \$200 million here that was received in windfall revenue by the Province of Manitoba. It is precisely not because of good management, as the Member for Portage la Prairie (Mr. Connery) said it was, or the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs said it was. In fact, it was a matter of good fortune, and I often call the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) the millionaire Finance Minister, because he has inherited a very good fiscal financial situation with regard to the province, contrary to what the Members opposite had stated prior to the last election, contrary to what they continue to say in this House as they throw rhetoric back and forth, and contrary to what the Liberals have said.

As a matter of fact, we have seen many examples, as the Government proceeds to move forward on its agenda, of where the Opposition at that time, now the governing Party, the Conservatives, and the Liberals were wrong with regard to their assertions about the previous New Democratic Government in this province.

The recent, for example, increase at Autopac is another example, where many people are saying, gee, what is going on here. We thought there was a tremendous mismanagement there. The Conservatives and Liberals said this was terrible bungling by the New Democratic Government at the time, that they would clean this up and be able to lower rates. What is going on here?

The fact is, Mr. Speaker, that the rates have continued to increase, because the reality is the Public Insurance Corporation was soundly managed. There were areas for improvement, as there always is, ways to do things better, but there was a good solid base and management and operation of the Public Insurance Corporation in this province. That is why we do have the lowest rates in the country. That is why we continue to have, even with the increases that this Conservative Government have put in place.

The fact is they continue to increase the rates which demonstrates to myself and to many of my constituents that the Conservatives and the Liberals were calling "wolf" at the last election, when, in fact, their alarming statements about the state of the Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation were just that. They were basically erroneous. They were a distortion of the facts.

This is coming to light with each passing day. It is coming to light, as I say, with Autopac. It is coming to light with the issue of the deficit situation, as the former

Finance Minister under the Pawley Government, a Member for Seven Oaks at that time, Eugene Kostyra, the Finance Minister, had put forward a plan that would see a balanced budget within a three-year period. As a matter of fact, he could have achieved that plan even faster than was projected, three years.

If the Minister had chosen to apply this \$200 million that he is putting into the Fiscal Stabilization Fund to the deficit last year, he could have ended up with a surplus. In fact, instead of having an artificial deficit of 152 million he would have had a \$48 million surplus.

(Mr. Parker Burrell, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

That was the reality of what he inherited as Finance Minister when he walked into that office after the April election in 1988. He knows that. He knows his good fortune. He often, I think, exudes the symptoms of that knowledge of his good fortune, as he sits comfortably in the chair, and I often call him the millionaire Finance Minister.

The fact is the situation was very positive and relative to what the Minister and the Conservatives and the Liberals had said financially in this province prior to the last election.

We have now Bill No. 27, a Bill to establish a Fiscal Stabilization Fund and that principle is a sound principle. That is why we on this side of the House have said that we would support that kind of a fund because it does allow for some levelling of the various fluctuations that take place with regard to income and expenditures from year to year, due to unforeseen circumstances in many cases.

* (1100)

If there is a downturn in the economy, the revenue drops dramatically. If there is a high level of unemployment, the revenue could drop dramatically. These kinds of things are a function of the national and international—the global—economy and are not often directly as a result of specific actions taken by a provincial Government.

However, having additional revenue available makes it possible to ease the impact of those fluctuations, and that is an important kind of service to have available, to be able to level the fluctuations, to moderate those fluctuations, so there is not a terrible hardship at any one particular time. In fact, this fund will perhaps enable, if it is used above board and the way that it has been drawn up—to indeed moderate those fluctuations in the interests of all Manitobans.

However, there is also the possibility that the Government could be using this, as we have stated in some instances in the past, my colleagues have stated in this House, use this for political purposes as they approach an election. Governments, particularly Conservative Governments, have been known to do this a great deal, both in this province and across the country and at the national level.

There are all kinds of goodies, we saw this with Mulroney last year, just one year ago—it seems so long ago, but it is only one year ago—that he was promising

the world to everyone across this country. Not one of his promises included some of the things that have taken place, including the GST that we have seen put forward only shortly after the election occurred. Prior to that election, we saw the federal Conservative Government of the Day, under Brian Mulroney and Michael Wilson and Cabinet Members there and caucus Members, putting forward huge promises of all the things that they were going to do in western Canada, in Canada as a whole. Following that election things changed, funds dried up, they suddenly became aware that things were much more difficult financially than they had been led to believe by who else, themselves, before the last election.

You know, you can say that sometimes a Government's coming into office can say, well, we did not really know what the financial situation was, so we made a lot of commitments and promises, but now we cannot carry them out because the previous Government left such a mess for us to clean up.

In this case, in Manitoba, the opposite was true. They said there was a mess before the election, and they came into office and found out there was no mess. Then, with the federal Government, they came into office for a second term and said suddenly there was a tremendous mess there that now, I guess, one has to assume they created partially, and of course the Liberal Trudeau Government before with the huge deficits created. They said we cannot do all of those good things we said we were going to do, so we are going to have to cut back, we are going to have to raise taxes, we are going to have to cut services, and they are going to cut back on UIC benefits, for those least able to afford it. I know the Acting Speaker, now in the Chair, represents a constituency that is hit particularly hard by the changes in UIC that were put in place by the federal Government. No mention made of that during the last election by the federal Government. They said they were going to enhance UIC benefits because the fund was in such good health and there was a surplus and they could lower the premiums and increase the benefits. That is what they said during the last election, the Minister responsible, McDougall, but then what happened after the election, they changed the tune. That illustrates the kinds of things the federal Government did.

In the case of the provincial Government, they inherited a better situation than they said was there, so they are now able to say, well, instead of putting this to retire the deficit completely and actually have a surplus for the previous year's budget, they are going to use some of that money to put into a rainy day fund, which can be interpreted as a slush fund or many other sinister purposes that it could be used for. In fact, it could allow them to misuse it for political purposes, and that is something that we will not stand for in this Party, the New Democratic Party in this House. Although, as I said before, the principle of it is sound, I do not think too many people would argue with that. A lot of people would say, well, it is nice to have some money in the bank. You have loans and mortgages and bills to pay, but it is always nice because of emergencies, the rainy day as we say. It is nice to have some money salted away there to be able to draw from when you

need it. Even if it is, for example, for something that could be seen as a bonus, as a luxury even, in case maybe someone wants to go on a holiday.

In the case of the Government, they have a situation now where it is raining across this province. So what they should be doing is taking some of those funds, which I agree have to be carried forward from 1988, the '88 fiscal year, and they cannot be unless this stabilization fund is approved. They will be lost and it will simply result in a surplus in the budgetary situation for the province in the previous year. So it must come forward through this fund so that the money is still available for the people of Manitoba for these programs. That is why we support it, but we say to the Minister and we say to the Government that there are many, many needs out there that should be addressed to a certain extent by this fund at the present time.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

I could list many of them for the Minister and his colleagues. One of them is the whole day care issue. It is not a case any longer as a result of the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, of the fiscal situation that the minister found himself in that he inherited when he came into office. It is no longer a case that we cannot find the money. That was legitimate during some very difficult economic times right across this country, as Manitoba moved into a recession led by the Lyon Government prior to 1981, led the country into a recession. We had high unemployment, we had high interest rates, and we had dropping revenues. Certainly the province was in a financial squeeze, and the Government of the Day, the New Democratic Government, decided that it was in the public interest at that time to run higher deficits, to use the instrument of public funding to assist in stimulating the economy to create employment and to create economic development. We did that, both short-term and long-term, through the Jobs Fund and other mechanisms.

However, it now is a situation this Government faces that there is additional revenue available. Since that revenue is available, there is an opportunity here for this Finance Minister and his colleagues, and this Premier to in fact instead of insulting the day care workers and the day care community by suggesting in some way that they are not passing on the funding, this exorbitant amount of additional funds that they have been receiving from the Government, that they have not been passing this on to the workers to increase their salaries, they have got all this money to throw around, and somehow they are hiding it or whatever. These are the insinuations that come from statements that the Premier made on the radio this morning, and that my colleague from St. John was asking him to clarify or withdraw.

The fact is that there is a great need for additional funding in this area and even though they talk about a 45 percent increase or whatever it was over the last couple of years, the fact is this is a growing area, a service that did not exist before. It was really established with a sound foundation, a sound basis, by our Government and now as it gets on its feet and begins to serve the people of Manitoba, additional funding is required.

The federal Government pulls out of its responsibilities towards day care. The provincial Government has the responsibility now to ensure that they give this service, and the people that work in the service, the recognition that they deserve for the work that they are doing.

They are being treated with a total lack of respect by this Minister of Family Services (Mrs. Oleson), and here is an opportunity with the stabilization fund to say, yes, we do have—they could even take credit for it—and say, because we took that money and brought it forward through the stabilization fund, supported in this case by the New Democrats, but not by the Liberals, because they want that money to lapse and be lost, we did that because we had the foresight, we are now able to provide this additional funding. They could go forward with that and look like the good guys, but what they are doing now—

An Honourable Member: That would be the easy way out.

* (1110)

Mr. Plohma: The Minister of Finance said that would be the easy way out. The fact is that would be the responsible way, the sensitive way, to respond to desperate needs out there and this Government refuses to do that up to this point. I think they will see the light. They did eventually after they had to be dragged kicking and screaming on the foster parents issue. They did realize that there was a need there and they brought forward some relief for that need and a plan, and the people said yes, okay, we can live with that.

But with the day care workers, they have not got to that point yet. The Premier (Mr. Filmon) is now issuing ultimatums that they either withdraw their threats of walkouts or we will not talk to them, using all kinds of excuses to avoid dealing with the real issues. Now, one meeting he says will not solve it all. It is a long-standing problem, but one meeting will make a big difference in their attitude if they know that the Premier (Mr. Filmon) is genuinely concerned and interested in finding a solution to the problem. That is what he could do by agreeing to such a meeting. It is not under threat. These people are desperate. They are looking for some solutions and this Minister does not have to start bullying, this Premier bullying them around, pushing them around, and try to push them into a corner by his ultimatum that they either withdraw their statement in support for a walkout, or else he will not talk to them.

Now, it is the ultimate in arrogance because there is always a threat in any organized workplace of walkouts, of strike. That exists for many, many employers in this province and across the country, and the management does not say, well, we are not going to talk to you because you are threatening that you might strike. As a matter of fact, often that leads to discussions, meaningful discussions, because they want to avoid it and, of course, it often is avoided because of the serious position that both sides of the negotiating process then take because they want to avoid the shutdown of the workplace.

As a matter of fact, another Bill—we brought in a solution to that through the final offer selection process that is also being debated in this House at this time and I will deal with it at another opportunity, but it does provide that opportunity now because there is the Fiscal Stabilization Fund being put forward and obviously approved by this House, that they can provide to the day care workers the kind of support that they need, and the day cares in this province to the children who are involved and the parents who are depending on the service, many of those people who desperately need that kind of care. It is not a luxury for them.

In most cases the parents who are using the day care system are not two-income families, and even if they are, in many cases the second income is an absolute necessity for them to be able to get by because a single income is just not enough to keep them above the poverty line. They absolutely need the two incomes so it is not a luxury that many of these people have. They are making use of the service because they desperately need it and it has meant a new source of hope for many single parents who otherwise would have to go on welfare and what they would consider a degrading experience for them, because they want to have meaningful careers. They want to develop themselves to their full potential; they want to support their families. So they have that opportunity with the day care system and it should not be looked at as some kind of frill that does not need attention by Government.

This Government must immediately look in a favourable way at dealing with this crisis that they have been responsible for developing in this province. They have been responsible for it, in fact, that crisis. It is not a crisis that was there before. It is one that has developed as a result of their actions and inactions with regard to those people involved. So I say day care is one area that this Minister could immediately commit funds in this Government to alleviating the problems from the Stabilization Fund that we are now discussing here before us.

There are many others as well. There are regional problems that exist in this province. We see tremendous cutbacks at the federal level by a Conservative Government. This Government has an opportunity and I know how distasteful it is to bail out because I did not like to do it. I did not like to see provincial Governments having to pick up federal responsibilities, where they drop the ball that the province has to come in and fill the void, particularly when we are dealing with a have-not province, a province that does not have a lot of wealth and has been treated unfairly by federal Governments over the years, but there is an opportunity.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) constantly says when we ask questions about VIA Rail or about CN, or raise concerns about post offices or whatever that these are all federal issues, and really we cannot do anything about them here. We are just a small little provincial Government, we cannot deal with these things, they are federal.

The facts are that the provincial Government has a great deal of influence, if it chooses to use it, to turn these policies, these negative policies that are harming

our province around, ensuring that in fact there are policies put in place that are in the best interests of the people of rural areas of this province, northern and remote areas of this province. That is not something that this Government is prepared to do. They play lip-service, they send a few letters out once in a while, and say, oh, yes, we do not like these kind of things, but they do not really express their anger, the anger that the people of the province feel. They do not express that.

In other words, they are not representing their constituents. They are not representing the constituency of Manitoba and that is their responsibility of Government. If they will not do it, then we have to do it.

So I say that this Minister and his colleagues, the Minister for Rural Development (Mr. Penner), the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness), the Minister for Economic Development (Mr. Downey), the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Findlay), all have a responsibility to provide and develop programs that are going to assist the rural areas of this province in the absence of programs at the federal level—as a matter of fact, in the presence of negative programs at the federal level, and policies and actions that are causing a great deal of pain, suffering, and hurt to the rural areas, to all areas of this province. We see a total absence. We have a Minister who calls himself the Rural Development Minister—or the Premier called him that, that is not his fault. It seems to people looking at that name that somehow there is some hope here for rural development, that somehow this means that rural Manitoba is going to get greater attention than it has received. There is a total absence of action. They are struggling and fumbling the ball, if they are doing anything, with regard to development in the rural area. There is no strategy there, there is no rural development strategy. There is something about decentralization, and they may have some token agencies or some token branches of Government move a little bit around to make it look like they are actually doing something with that, but in fact there is nothing meaningful coming forward.

Where is this major transfer of Government employees to Dauphin, for example, or Ste. Rose? There is no major development taking place. As a matter of fact, they are dampening the expectations out there by not talking about it anymore. There is a need then, a desperate need by this Government, to come forward in joint effort with the federal Government, who is undertaking exactly the opposite kinds of activities at the present time, to use this stabilization fund to provide support for economic development strategy and development in our rural, northern areas of this province. They must do that before it is too late, because the people of Manitoba, rural Manitoba, are reeling under the onslaught of continual negative programs and policy and cuts by the federal Government. They are seeing it in their rural postal services, with closures after closures of post offices. They are seeing it with the massive layoffs at CN that are taking effect now at the end of October and affecting many communities in my constituency and throughout Manitoba. There is no replacement, there is no consideration for what is

going to happen to replace the work that those families need in those areas.

* (1120)

Then there are the VIA cuts that we just heard about this week and it is only the start. Al Cerilli from Labour says that the cuts, the layoffs, are just the tip of the iceberg. The 230-or-so people to be laid off in Manitoba at VIA Rail is the result of the devastating cuts announced by Benoit Bouchard, the federal Transport Minister, the other day are only the tip of the iceberg. There is going to be much more. It is going to be much more devastating for this province. There are going to be many more people losing their jobs, much more service cut and it is all set in the stages it is going to happen because there is a total lack of commitment by the federal Government to the impact that their Crown corporations have.

It is a different philosophy. They do not believe that Crown corporations should be used as an instrument of economic development and social development in the province and for equity and fairness and regional fairness in this country. They do not believe that that is a function. They believe that Crown corporations are there simply to make a profit or else they will privatize them and get rid of them of whatever. The fact is that they were set up historically to serve a much different purpose and that need still exists. That need still exists.

The railway bound this country together, Sir John A. Macdonald can be said to be the father of the National Railway System binding this country together. But certainly now we have a Conservative Government, not just a Conservative Government, we had a Liberal Government—as a matter a fact, Jean-Luc Pepin, the former Minister who began huge cuts in the VIA Rail a number of years ago, now supports Benoit Bouchard's cuts. He was on the radio the other morning saying how all these things are necessary. He has not changed his position and I noticed the other day the Highways and Transportation Critic for the Liberal Party (Mr. Mandrake) says, well, that is unfortunate what happened with VIA a number of years ago, but that was the old Liberals. We are the new Liberals. The old Liberals are still speaking up, let me tell you, and they sure got an influence there, and Jean-Luc, and Chretien and all these fellows, they are all going to stick together on these things.

Then at the same time, we see the new Liberals here led by the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) saying that she is going to support Jean Chretien, Jean-Luc's buddy, so the new Liberals are certainly tied very closely to the old Liberals. There is no separation. It is all tied together. It is all a continuum and the fact is those Liberals stand for the same thing, these new Liberals, that the old Liberals stood for and that is massive cuts at VIA Rail and that is why we say these major—we see this tough stand—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member for Seven Oaks (Mr. Minenko) will have an opportunity to get his remarks on the record.

Mr. Plohman: I appreciate that you would call order to the House so that these Members, even though they

hear things that they do not like, they have a responsibility as Members here to maintain decorum and to listen to those that are speaking at the time who have the recognition of the Chair, and I know we all deviate from those rules at some time, but there are Members still—the Member for Inkster (Mr. Lamoureux) continuing to talk from his seat, totally out of order, and I would again implore him to maintain decorum and maintain some common sense to maintain a conduct that is becoming of him as a Member here and that would make his constituents proud of his representation in this House.

Now, Mr. Speaker, let me say that because the support that the Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs) has for the old Liberals as the Transport Critic (Mr. Mandrake) said on the record here in the House just a couple of days ago, we have the continuum there. There is no break between the old and the new. It is one continuum, the support lies, the ties lie along that line closely tied together and, therefore we cannot buy this assertion by the Transport Critic (Mr. Mandrake) in the Legislature here for the Opposition Party, that in fact there is something new about the Liberals.

What that means though is that all of this concern that is being shown or what seems to be shown by the Liberals, is put in question as to the genuineness of it because in fact they have taken these decisions prior to the Conservatives. There is no reason to believe they would not do it again. So they can complain about it, but I do not know that the people of Manitoba would believe that they are legitimately putting forward those concerns that they somehow would be different than the old Liberals that led the way and that keep coming out of the woodwork and causing frustrations for the current Leader of the Opposition (Mrs. Carstairs).

So in fact then, Mr. Speaker, we see a large number of cuts taking place at the federal level across this province. We see the impact of the trade agreement which has, in fact, resulted in such cuts as the Campbell Soup plant at Portage la Prairie, the cuts at the Neepawa hog plant. There is going to be a number of huge cuts taking place, Ogilvie Oats. There are many others.

The fact is when the federal Government makes those cuts, the provincial Government has a responsibility to step into that void. If these Members now would have listened, these Liberal Members would have listened to this speech, they would know that what I am talking about in cuts at the federal level or related very closely to the Fiscal Stabilization Fund, because in fact I was demonstrating why there was a need to bring this funding forward, that through this mechanism which the Liberals do not agree with, through this mechanism, so that the current Government can use those funds to alleviate the desperate problems that have been created as a result of federal actions by their brothers and sisters in Ottawa, by their Tory Government. That is why we need to have action, and that is why we need to have this fund.

We say that this fund can be used legitimately to help Manitobans in their best interests of Manitobans. We also say that we have to be vigilant to ensure that this Conservative Party and temporarily in charge, use that word advisedly in this province, do not misuse this

fund. When they do misuse it for political purposes and not in the interests of Manitobans, and I talk about day care and other things that it could be used for, then we will have some serious decisions to be made.

We do not take the irresponsible position of the Liberals in this province and say that this is going to be automatically refused, that this fund should be lost, the previous year, end up with a surplus which in fact could have happened as a result of the previous year's deficit being reduced to 152 million with the 200 million here they could have had a surplus of \$48 million. But that would be lost at that point in time, and that money would not be available to meet the desperate needs that are there now. They are going to get more desperate because the goods and services tax that the federal Government is going to impose on Manitobans is going to mean that there is even more reason for the provincial Government to come forward with economic development plans to assist and social services to assist families, people of the province who are going to be hard hit by that tax. So that is why it is important.

I think that there is great wisdom then for the Liberal Party to reassess their position on this fund in light of that. I know it is difficult politically because their Leader has come out and made these statements about defeating the Government on this. But they should consider this very seriously over the long weekend, the Thanksgiving weekend and think about what they have done here, because if they are dooming this money to be lost, there is no opportunity then to use this. The Liberals should have realized this.

The fact is now they, this Conservative Government, has no excuse not to give some additional funding to those day care workers who desperately need it in this province. They have no excuse not to provide some additional funding for health care in areas that are being reduced. They have no excuse not to build the public health facility and the nursing beds in Dauphin that have been put on hold by this Minister of Health (Mr. Orchard). They do not have an excuse, because the fact is this fund will be available for them to draw upon. That is precisely why we are supporting them. But we will not allow them to misuse this fund. We will make sure that we are vigilant and that Manitobans know about the misuse of this fund if that is what they choose to do in the months ahead once this has been approved by this Legislature.

I point out to all Members of the Conservatives in this House and the Liberals that there is a certain degree of wisdom in establishing a fund such as this which can allow windfall revenues that this Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) walked into last year, not through his good works, not through their good management, but through good fortune and good planning by the previous Government that has brought this opportunity for them, an opportunity that, because of the ironies of fate, has come to the Conservatives in this province, instead of the New Democrats.

In fact, when these Conservatives were making these assertions that there was this tremendous mismanagement in provincial Crown corporations and departments of Government, they were ignoring what

was happening in other provinces and in this country, right across this country, and in all provinces of this country.

* (1130)

They ignored the fact that huge deficits were developed in all provinces because of the recession that was taking place in the country at that time, so that our Government, although being a leader in the areas of job creation was not mismanaging. In fact, while there were some mistakes as there is in every Government, you can ask Conservative and federal Governments over the years the things that they did with regard to aircraft companies at the federal level in Quebec and the funding that was poured in millions of dollars over the years by various Governments. There has always been some areas of failures in the Government level just like there is in the private sector, with private companies, and with individuals. There is always going to be that, everything is not going to be successful.

But, by and large, across the board, viewed in the overall context, the provincial Government at that time, as has now been proven at Autopac and has been shown, as a result of the Kellogg, Ernst and Whinney Reports, that in fact there was no gross mismanagement in the Government of Manitoba, as operations prior to the last election which proved that the Liberals and the Conservatives were certainly overstating, perhaps clearly misstating, the facts on that when they made those assertions in the last election campaign. That will become more and more apparent to Manitobans over the months and years that follow.

The Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) found himself in a tremendous economic and fiscal situation. He was able to use those funds to establish this fund that he is putting forward here, and we say, yes, there is a role for that fund, yes it is raining now, yes we need to use some of those funds now, and here are some of the things you should be doing with it. You should be providing assistance to day care workers, you should be providing assistance to health care and expanding the program for development of facilities that are desperately needed in Beausejour, in Dauphin and across this province.

We know that those facilities are desperately needed and we know that there is a tremendous—as a matter of fact, my father lives in Beausejour and he is getting quite old, but the doctor there told me that of the 35 beds in that hospital, at the time, 28 beds were filled with geriatric patients with people who were in many cases panelled already, or were waiting to be panelled, that should be in personal care homes, 28 of 35 beds, leaving only seven beds for acute care patients. That kind of desperate need is out there, it is out there in Dauphin, it is out there in other communities across this province. We have a stabilization fund which gives the opportunity, which provides the opportunity, for this Government to redress those problems.

So we say they should redress those problems, it is raining now. We say it is raining across this province because of policies by the federal Government, the free

trade implications that this Government said we were going to be so great for this province are hurting us already.

The impact of the GST, which is going to be felt across this province in an unprecedented way like no other tax; the impact of the CN and VIA cuts and the cuts in the military, the military base at Portage la Prairie; the impact of the cuts at the postal service at Canada Post; the impact of the changes at UIC which are hurting the poor and unemployed the worst in this province, that are hitting them the hardest.

All of these federal policies and programs are impacting on this province and there is an opportunity for this Government now to redress those concerns, to turn that around for Manitobans, to be the good guys. They have that opportunity. The Liberals do not want Manitobans to have access to these funds. I am saying, Mr. Speaker, that must happen and we will continue to pressure to ensure that the Government uses this fund responsibly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: By leave, this matter will remain standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock). The Honourable Member for Niakwa.

Mr. Herold Driedger (Niakwa): Mr. Speaker, by leave, if we could continue leaving, if I may speak in the Member for Osborne's place.

Mr. Speaker: It has been agreed upon, yes. The Honourable Member for Niakwa.

Mr. Herold Driedger: Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker. I, too, would like to put a few thoughts on record with respect to Bill No. 27. Having listened to the comments of the previous speaker and some of the others that have taken some effort in preparing their notes with regard to their support for Bill No. 27, and then railing against it and stating that they would do things differently, I hear the term "convoluted logic."

I feel that convoluted logic applies quite well here. Me thinks that the NDP doth protest too much. They appear to be clothing themselves in two types of robes, raiments of one sort and raiments of the other. All we need to do is look forward to what they might have done had their term been allowed to go the full four years. They would have had not only the \$200 million in mining revenues and the excess in the federal transfer payments and also their own tax grabs to spend. I cannot conceive what wondrous works they might have been able to endow upon this province.

At any rate, Mr. Speaker, I do have a few comments I wish to put down with respect to this Bill because I feel that when you speak on the principle as we do in second reading, we should be thinking rather clearly through what we intend to leave on the record. It has been said that these support or non-support by our Party for this Bill will lead to all kinds of dire and disastrous results; but I cannot buy that, Mr. Speaker. Actually I think when you take a look on principle, we see that by the very act of tabling the Bill we have here the out-picturing, the development of Governments simply by the act of achieving that status of

Government, begin on the very day that they achieve that status to become what they had fought against just moments before.

One can also truthfully say that Governments, no matter what their political stripe—and I realize that this is a charge that will be some day labelled against me as well, but I think I believe this statement firmly, and therefore I am going to put it on the record—become small “c” conservative the day they take office because on that day they have to start protecting what they have achieved.

The accuracy of this can be clearly demonstrated by examining very briefly the nature of three very momentous turnovers in history: the overthrow of the French monarchy in 1789; the overthrow of the Russian monarchy in 1917; and the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979.

An Honourable Member: And the overthrow of the NDP Government in . . .

Mr. Herold Driedger: I will be coming to that. All three of these were autocratic regimes best characterized by tyranny, denial of individual rights, imprisonment, torture, and indiscriminate execution of critics of their regime. Mr. Speaker, after a brief interlude of struggle, a time for the wielders of power to secure their hold on the reins of power, the nature of the new Government under the tutelage and leadership of the new wave, the new Government, for the citizens in that country nothing had changed.

The replacement Government became autocratic, characterized by tyranny, the suppression of individual rights, imprisonment and torture, and so on, and so on. What had happened? Very simply that the Government in their desire to consolidate power sought to protect themselves by wielding power in such a way as to hold on to power by any method available. Were they true to their principles? No, Mr. Speaker, they became what they had fought. Thank God we live in a free democratic society because we change our Governments through freely held and contested elections.

Why do I raise these examples? Obviously there is an analogy to our present circumstances here. What happened in our case, Mr. Speaker, what happened? A Government was suddenly overthrown. I cannot say violently overthrown, but I cannot conceive of a democratic act more sudden, more traumatic, more revolutionary than the unexpected defeat of a Government on a budget debate. The resulting budget turned Manitoba politics on its end. A Government was defeated, the Government Party became a rump Opposition, and out of nowhere a veritable revolution in Manitoba politics, Mr. Speaker, Official Opposition emerged which had not been on the scene before.

* (1140)

Now we have a new Government, but what do they do? Are they true to their principles? We all remember if we look back to the last Tory Government we had, the hacking and the slashing by the Lyon Government,

and if we look forward to see what happened in Ottawa when Mr. Mulroney, the Prime Minister, took office the same thing occurred. The Tory Government true to their principles. Did this happen in Manitoba? No, Mr. Speaker. The Tories became what they had fought. How can we prove that?

The 1988 throne speech was an absolute tribute to social consciousness. Hardly what you would think as a product of a conservative mind. In fact, it was such a tribute to social consciousness, no one in this House could vote against it. Being a new Government, this was allowed to occur.

Next, in 1988, the '88 budget was a replay, a reprise. For those of you who are not familiar with musical terms, reprise is a return of a refrain, the return of a musical statement, the return, the duplication, a repeat, a carbon copy that the Conservatives had so sanctimoniously defeated a short time earlier.

An Honourable Member: The same score.

Mr. Herold Driedger: The same score, as I am told. The same score, same piece of music, the same budget.

The 1989 throne speech, Mr. Speaker, which promised more for everybody, which promised motherhood and apple pie for everybody, setting the stage as it were, but by now a Tory Government should have been able to start achieving some sort of direction, some sort of eye on the future that they wish to carve, an eye on the path that they wish to walk. Did they follow along something like this? No, they introduced the 1989 budget, a good news budget, a lower taxes budget, they reduce deficit budget. They even managed to pay down some of the debt budget, just the kind of budget that a good Government would like to fight an election on.

Something was wrong. Michael Wilson was wrong. Brian Mulroney was wrong. We had a federal election and a negative impact of the Free Trade Agreement and subsequent plant closings were wrong. Base closings were wrong in the subsequent Wilson budget. Talks about the GST and now we talk VIA cutbacks. What was wrong, Mr. Speaker, is that in Ottawa, Tories were acting like Tories, shades of things to come here in Manitoba should this Party be permitted to indulge its true right-wing philosophies.

I tell you, if we had friends like those in Ottawa, we would not need enemies. No provincial Tory would want to associate with negative vibes like that, so what do you do? Like any good magician, you look for a rabbit, a rabbit to be pulled out of an apparently empty hat. Some sleight of magic, Mr. Speaker, magic not principle. What kind of magic did they conceive? The same kind of magic that the previous NDP administration had conceived. The previous NDP administration created a Jobs Fund, a fund which, if I may quote from Hansards of the day, was called a “fraud” fund, because this was to provide a discretionary tool to be disbursed by Cabinet for maximizing political credit through the provisions of jobs, jobs and more jobs.

Now, Mr. Speaker, do not put words into my mouth. I am not against job creation, if job creation is

meaningful and long term, if job creation is done by industry, by business, but do not create meaningless tasks just to deflate unemployment figures.

Now, I ask you, if you have available to you such a tool, a tool that is not directly accountable to the Legislature, then you have a tool with which you can build and design public image at will. It becomes, as David Stupich, the B.C. NDP Finance Critic, said, or the B.C. BSF, the Budget Stabilization Fund, and it seems that in this country, if you can, discretionary funds are all the rage when Governments tend to look at ways they can manipulate events near election time. What David Stupich said is that BSF was really a B.S. fund and he did not mean budget stabilization.

So you have had now to look at, as a discretionary fund, the NDP Jobs Fund, the Social Credit Budget Stabilization Fund and now our own Progressive Conservative Fiscal Stabilization Fund, discretionary funds that put too much discretionary power in the hands of Cabinet. What discretionary control over a \$200 million Fiscal Stabilization Fund means is that a Government can produce any numbers that it wants in an election year simply by making a journal entry.

It is a shell game, Mr. Speaker. Rather than the "now you see it, now you don't," Manitoba taxpayers are being asked to close their eyes to a real budget surplus and, presto, by an act of financial prestidigitation the Tories have a device with which to manipulate the deficit or a device to spend on goodies near an election year. You have a, "now you don't see it, now you do scenario."

Rather than the financial Stabilization Fund, Bill No. 27 should be called the financial Manipulation Fund, all in the name of showing a good fiscal record. The Government can make its budget deficit reduction action look like an efficient downward curve on a graph in order to depict deliberate Government action on a pro-active basis, gradually bringing spending under control. That is the image you can create with this fund.

A real graph showing the real events, the real finances of this province would show a dramatic surplus following a large deficit, followed by another large deficit, and this would not make the Government look efficient. It would call the very Government's fiscal management into question.

We only need to look at last year's Health Estimates to demonstrate this. The Government spent \$42 million less on Health than they had indicated they were going to do. When questioned by us on this, they say this is due to good spending control. I have to disagree, Mr. Speaker.

Last year's 1988 budget was introduced very late in the year. Departments were not authorized to spend, delaying action was the rule. Hold on for another month was the watchword, and I tell you, being prevented from spending is not good spending control. At the end of the year, monies you have been prevented from spending do show up as additional funds available to be utilized otherwise.

Such is the method of building up a surplus fund. Add to this the unexpectedly large revenues through mining taxes and federal equalization payments, and

suddenly you have a Government lucky enough to be awash in money. It is what you do with this that I question. I do not question your good fortune. I do not deny you your good fortune. In fact, I would very much have liked to be in your place, but we would have done things differently than you.

For instance, people on social assistance, people who are disadvantaged, people who are disabled, when they have a little bit of extra dollars to spend they inject dollars into the economy. When you help people who cannot help themselves, you actually help them achieve, and you help the economy. I would have said use part of this slush fund to inject dollars into the system.

On the other side we hear that when you reduce the deficit, you reduce the taxes, you reduce the interest payments you have to pay, and this helps us all. In that respect they are true, it does help us all. People who are disadvantaged, people who are unable to cope in these present times pay a disproportionate price for your deficit reduction. In that respect, we need only to take a look at the GST scenario which is presently being touted as the 7 percent solution. By reducing the proposed GST 9 percent to 7 percent the low income people who are on a \$24,800 a year income would end up paying \$400 more in taxes than they would have under the 9 percent solution. Simply, that does not make good sense. What happens is you have the disadvantaged paying a disproportionate price.

* (1150)

When that Government on the opposite side was in Opposition, they talked about balancing the budget and paying down the debt, Keynesian economic theory. Keynesian economic theory, very well and forcefully enunciated by the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak) simply put, states that a Government runs a deficit when times are tough and runs a surplus when times are good in order to pay down the debt.

In Opposition, this Government talked about the need to cut the deficit and to get rid of the debt. Therefore, now when you are in Government you have two responsible options: one, you pay down the debt which would fit your own ideological principle, vis-a-vis debt; or two, you use the windfall revenues to make capital investments such as in hospitals or chronic care facilities.

These do not pose a great strain on operational budgets when windfallen, because when windfall revenues end, particularly if the capital project is well selected, these will permit the uses thereof to lower operational costs. For example, preventative health care delivery systems, or chronic care facilities to reduce the high cost of acute care delivery, this would reduce operating costs in the future and therefore have been a much better way of taking care of spending this \$200 million surplus, as you say. Two hundred million dollars was actually a \$48 million surplus; part of this is borrowed money.

Now, if you had done this, that would have been forward thinking and progressive, and in keeping with the need to present a socially responsible face for your NDP supporting partners, you chose neither. You chose

instead to play accounting games to make yourself look good near an anticipated election time. It is interesting to see the mental gymnastics used by the NDP in speaking on the principle of this fraud/slush fund.

The question I ask myself, when I listen to this kind of mental gymnastics is: how many angels can dance on the head of a pin, Mr. Speaker? That is the question that comes to mind when we try to follow the convoluted logic that allows the Member for Flin Flon (Mr. Storie) to criticize the establishment of the financial Stabilization Fund as "a political fund, a slush fund," any of the other euphemisms you could tie to that amount of money available to the Executive Council, basically on a whim, power to the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) by Order-in-Council to spend prior to an election.

Then we proceed on the same kind of logic. If, for example, "The Bill allows the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) three months before an election to infuse \$50 million into the health care fund, then I oppose this legislation. If on the other hand, he can take \$10 million and put it into an employment training program two months before an election, then I oppose this legislation." In other words, this was in opposition, but then in the same breath, the same Member bestows altruism and sainthood upon the Minister of Finance in saying, "I respect the Minister of Finance enough to know that the Minister of Finance's intentions now are as pure as the driven snow with respect to the fund." Then, Mr. Speaker, following it with absolutely crass political motivation in the next, "And there are some other Members of the Executive Council whose motives, quite frankly, are suspect from time to time,"—obviously recognizing that when he was in Government, the NDP had a similar toy to play with. The same critical comment applies, it is a mirror image.

Bill 27 gives the same powers to the Finance Minister as the Jobs Fund gave to the previous Government, and that is at the heart of why I oppose this particular Bill. It is the lack of accountability and the ability to make the disbursements from the proposed financial Stabilization Fund without any guiding parameters that places me directly in opposition.

If passed as it currently stands, we in this Legislature will be authorizing the establishment of a fund that will give this Government a blank cheque to spend up to \$200 million on absolutely anything in any year of its choice without adding a penny to the province's annual deficit.

Creative accounting to create a Filmon slush fund, shades of the NDP Jobs Fund. Both funds were created to be spent by Order-in-Council to address the particular politically acceptable, philosophy correct, image building project needed at the moment by that particular Government. What you want is what you get. You have these people creating this, you have the creation of a fund to be disbursed by whatever Order-in-Council comes to mind. By their fruits, shall you know them, Mr. Speaker, by their funds, shall you know them! Two peas in a pod. What has changed?

We have had a coup, Mr. Speaker, the Government has changed faces. Once again we see that once elected

the Government spends its creative energies in remaining elected. Sometimes this will be of benefit, because sometimes Governments do have principles, sometimes Governments are forward-looking and are making correct choices, but sometimes not. In this instance, I have maintained it is not.

When a Government ceases to function with the welfare of the people in mind, then one must oppose it with all the strength that one can muster. When a Government takes power without the welfare of the people in mind, you must oppose it as well. We have here on the other side a Government that wanted power only, that wanted to get rid of the NDP only, that did not really have a vision, that did not really have a direction in which it wanted to go. No, instead you have a situation where simply we want power and now that we have it, we want to stay here.

The financial Stabilization Fund was not established with the welfare of the people in mind, but rather with the welfare of the Government. I can see the conspiratorial glee around the Cabinet Table when the implications of the windfall revenues made themselves manifest. The Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) on September 21 lectured us on this side saying that the financial Stabilization Fund money, when brought into the budget, will be accounted for and, therefore, by definition could never be used for the terrible purposes we on this side of the House see in this slush fund.

He would do well to remember the NDP's notorious bridge to nowhere. This bridge was not an election promise. It was not an unaccounted for bridge. It showed up clearly in the Highways and Transportation capital budget, Mr. Speaker. It was not any of the negative things the present Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) thinks he says we say the slush fund is for, but then what was this bridge for—certainly not to provide a link between two centres—certainly not to bridge a river because traffic being backed up on either side.

No, the bridge to nowhere was built to provide jobs, work, and even entertainment for all at taxpayers' expense in the former Premier's riding. Perhaps he was building his own monument to posterity, his own Tower Eiffel, or that present day memorial to VIA, the CN Tower. Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) aptly described Government spending money for future elections when he says, "The Stabilization Fund is a management tool to arrange our affairs well into the future," and from Government sides the Minister of Northern Affairs (Mr. Downey) says, what is wrong with that. Well, the whole thing is what is wrong with that is that you take a look at the fact that this money is spent without legislative approval.

Let us look at the flip side of the coin, the accusation of what dire things are forecast by defeat of Bill 27. It is said that the Liberals are voting against tax cuts when they vote against the financial Stabilization Fund and that is patently untrue. If the Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) wants to lower taxes, he will do so. If he wants to raise them, he can do that too. If his forecasts are wrong, he can bring it in a mini budget. If he wants to tie different parts of the budget together,

that is his prerogative. If he chooses, he can untie these same parts of the budget as well. It is his choice, but of course, he will choose whatever suits Government best. Once again, it is choice, choices, choose, choosing. So depending upon the polls and predictions for us on this side, it is a question of will he or will he not.

* (1200)

The NDP accuses us of hypocrisy of being against improving the lot of the people when we speak out against the subterfuge fund. But the tie that binds the financial Stabilization Fund to the tax cuts is a tie of the Tories being with a finger on the knot being held by the NDP.

The Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) in his former life was an accountant. With respect to Bill No. 27 he accused us of really not addressing the aspects of the Bill. Now he suggests, and I will use his analysis regarding planning for the future expenditures, he refers in his address, property taxes, income taxes, are all costs in the future that we must budget for. Then he goes on to say, but what about buying a new car? You cannot buy a new car out of one year's savings. What you do is you borrow dollars and pay monthly. But interest is added on first. You pay interest as you go and that is the same with the fund. You cannot have it both ways. Accounting by his profession and by his professional standards would say that last year the budget had a \$48 million surplus.

If the financial Stabilization Fund came in with the words \$48 million instead of \$200 million written into it, then all of the Government argument and logic holds. However, that is not the case. The financial Stabilization Fund is \$200 million.

If this \$200 million is real money, then the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) has had to borrow \$152 million to create a \$200 million savings account, because this is what we are led to believe, when on page 5 of the budget paper C, he shows interest earnings of \$20 million a year, simple interest on \$200 million at 10 percent. According to that the \$200 million is a real account.

What about the borrowing costs on the \$142 million? We all like to talk about the family situation. If I buy a car I can pre-borrow so my account can be used at my discretion, as the fund will be used at the Government's discretion, but borrowing costs would cancel the savings interest, so this is really no benefit.

If it is not good for the family, why would it be good for Government? It seems to me what the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) has done is create a \$200 million line of credit to be used when necessary at the discretion of Government, at the discretion of the Minister.

Spending this line of credit, as referenced in Section 4 of Bill No. 27, regulations governing use of this line of credit, as referenced in Section 7 of Bill No. 27, all authorized by Order-in-Council, unsupervised spending authority. Such spending authority vested in the hands of Cabinet suggests the freedom to spend that can be defined only in the most generous of terms. Slush fund comes to mind.

The Minister of Energy and Mines (Mr. Neufeld) goes on to say that this fund is accountable. Section 8, Bill No. 27 refers the accounts and transactions to the Provincial Auditor, and voila! the financial Stabilization Fund is accountable. He criticizes the former NDP administration Jobs Fund as being a true slush fund, there was no accountability. This fund too, was audited by the Provincial Auditor.

Accountability is not defined by referring anything to the Provincial Auditor. All he is mandated to do, the Provincial Auditor, is determine whether spending followed established accounting guidelines. He can indicate something may have occurred which crosses the line for proper accounting procedure, but this is not accountability. If the Jobs Fund was not accountable then the financial Stabilization Fund is not accountable either.

Accountability is defined by accountability to the Legislative Chamber. That is the problem with the financial Stabilization Fund. It is not accountable to the Legislature.

If the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) had said we will table in this House the Estimates of the financial Stabilization Fund, we will table ahead of time so we can go through the exercise we do here, to question, to policy and things of that nature, then once again my argument is no longer as valid as it was before. That is not the case. The spending of the \$200 million is authorized at the discretion of the Minister, at the discretion of the Government. That is why we say the slush fund and that is why I personally will vote against Bill 27.

Mr. Speaker: By leave, this matter remains standing in the name of the Honourable Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock)—The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

Mr. Jim Maloway (Elmwood): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am very pleased to stand today to put a few words on the record regarding this Bill which we in our caucus have decided to support.

We have concerns that have been put on the record by some of our previous speakers as to what this Bill is all about and where it could potentially take us, and I did want to certainly deal with that, but the Member for Niakwa (Mr. Herold Driedger) made some very interesting comments in the first part of his speech, and I did want to comment on some of them.

He had suggested that Governments when they first get elected tend to become conservative very, very soon thereafter—small c—become conservative because they have something to protect.

This of course is very true. No matter what stripe a Government seems to be, no matter where it is, it tends to become, after sometimes a very short period of time but in the long run, very, very inward looking, very, very protective and very, very conservative. We have seen that in all Parties in this country and indeed around the world.

So, it is healthy in a democratic society to have changes in Government periodically, and perhaps it is

very healthy to have minority Government situations. We have found that certainly over the years in the NDP when we had a minority situation in Ottawa in 1974, we managed to pass some very, very critical crucial and very, very good legislation that we got out of that minority Government. We think that minority Government did more for the country than subsequent majority Government that was elected. There are some advantages in having a majority Government situation so that a Government can pursue a mandate that it feels it has.

There are conversely many, many instances where a minority Government can really be more sensitive to people and can provide a better form of Government. The Member for Niakwa (Mr. Herold Driedger) did detail the Governments will try to hold on to power by any method. I think that is certainly true, but it only can last for so long because I think the public sense that. They sense when they have been robbed.

People still remember Pierre Trudeau in the federal election decrying wage and price controls and running around the country saying to poor, old Stanfield that they are going to freeze your wages. One year later he did exactly the same thing. That has stuck with him and I think people remember that to this day. People also remember Mr. Sacred Trust himself, Brian Mulroney, who said that we will have nothing to do with free trade during leadership campaigns or elections or at any other time, that it would mean a sell out of the country. What did he do? Just right after being elected in his first majority Government, he proceeded to get us locked into this free trade, a very bad Free Trade Agreement.

Furthermore, he promised that seniors' pensions would be a sacred trust. What did he do there? No sooner he was elected that he tried to de-index senior citizens' pensions until the pensioners erupted and caused him to hold back, but he has held back only until the next opportunity. The next window arises and he will attempt to jump through it. He is attacking the universality of all of our social programs. They tried to, with all their legions of PR people that they have on staff, suggest that perhaps that is not what they are doing.

* (1210)

In fact we know it is basically a grand design that they have to chip away at universality to meld Canada, the whole Canadian economy into the North American economy. Ultimately, I suppose a political union will just become sort of a de facto reality because we know that the State of Hawaii got into a free trade agreement with the United States many, many years ago. After ten years when they tried to pull out of the agreement, well, actually, when the Americans tried to pull out of the agreement, the Hawaiians begged to be taken over, and that is exactly what happened to them.

Right now, to the Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger), I often wonder what would happen if the Americans threatened to get out of the Autopact in eastern Ontario, where people have now become dependent on that Autopact and have gotten used to

their two car garages and their good material lifestyle. As to whether or not if threatened with the choice of joining the United States and keeping that Autopact, or losing the Autopact and staying independent, as to how it would breakdown in an election as to whether they would vote to give up the Autopact and remain a free and independent country.

So that is a problem in world politics as to how close one aligns oneself with a close neighbour like the United States militarily and economically. We have for the last hundred years and longer resisted that assimilation after many attempts, militarily and otherwise, by the United States to annex Canada.

Now we have essentially almost a fifth column, if you like, operating within the country in the name of the Conservative Party, a Party that historically was opposed to free trade and fought elections on free trade and won them. In fact, it is ironic that now the Conservative Party would fight an election free trade and win. Historically it has always been the Liberal Party who have been the free traders in the House. So it is certainly worth commenting I think that perhaps the Prime Minister is really a Liberal in disguise and that the Liberal Leader is really a Conservative. It is curious that the roles seem to be reversed.

But in any event, Mr. Speaker, regarding the Liberals in this House, I have said before that they would improve with time, and I think they are getting the hang of it, so to speak, a little more so now. They are more relaxed, they are certainly taking a lot more time on their speeches than they used to, if the previous Member who spoke was any indication of it, and that is probably good.

A new group developing I think should have some kind of ideology backing them and should be somewhat idealistic. The problem with liberalism is that it is essentially a bankrupt ideology in the latter part of the 20th Century. You know that in the last some years, there has been a global trend toward right-wing conservatism and various shades of it and various shades of social democracy or socialism. The Liberals have found themselves squeezed between those two forces.

When you couple it with a collection of—I guess because of the nature of the election, I think it would have been beneficial for the Liberal Party overall had they come back, if they in fact were going to come back, in fact there is an ideological role for them. If they were to have come back over a period of elections by perhaps half-a-dozen seats at a time, but by jumping from one to 20, basically, in a kind of a fluke situation, what they have done is they have taken a lot of retreats with them. Retreats I mean in the best political sense, but people who have been with other Parties, and they are really a mishmash with no real clear position on a lot of things.

I think that in fact may hurt them in the long run that in fact the Liberal Party may look back 20 years from now and say, you know, it is too bad that we were so successful in that one election, that we got those 20 seats, that perhaps we would have been better off in the long run had we grown in a more consistent rate. That is something that may in fact happen.

Mr. Speaker, therefore, the ideology and the idealistic responses that we should be getting from that Liberal bench are not really there because, other than a handful of Members, the Member for Fort Rouge (Mr. Carr) has been a long-time friend and a long-time ideologue of liberalism in the latter part of the 20th Century and others over there who are young and bright. Other than that small handful, they really have problems trying to present a consistent position and a consistent image to the public.

So I would still have to say that as an ideology, they are still fairly bankrupt and of course their only hope—I guess, pragmatic politics will indicate that what they are likely to do is try to say that they are going to be a better government than the current Government. Of course, that may not be hard to do. Where the current Government is going, no one is really sure. One wonders why they are apparently at 46 percent of the vote, according to one recent poll. I mean it certainly cannot be the things that they have been doing because they really have not got around to doing very much. They have done a lot of posturing here and posturing there, but they really have not actually come forward with any amount of legislation.

I think they are going to get ready for an election. I mean, we know that minority Governments do not last all that long and there probably will be an election fairly soon, but I do not think they are really that confident in an election. You recall the last couple of elections, their leader managed to blow sure things two times in a row, two times in a row. Last time they went into the election with approximately 50 percent in the polls and they managed to blow that in 40, 45 days. I do not think that they would trust if they were 60 percent. They are at 47 right now. If they were at 60 percent in the polls, I still think they would be reluctant to go in because they have a two-time loser in terms of an election situation. I do not know how many points they want to be spotted. They are going to need at least 60 percent plus before they can be assured—

Mr. Speaker: Order. Order, please. I would like to remind the Honourable Member for Elmwood (Mr. Maloway) that we are debating Bill No. 27, The Fiscal Stabilization Fund Act and that it is a principle of the Bill under consideration. The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

Mr. Maloway: With respect to the Bill No. 27, I did want to get back to that. As I had indicated before, we find ourselves in a position of having to support this Bill and time will tell whether or not that was a good move or not. There is nothing inherently wrong with the idea of a stabilization fund but the worry that we have of course is whether or not it could be used for blatant political purposes in advance of an election and in an attempt to buy votes. We would not want to see that happen. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Manness) has indicated that cannot happen because one can only draw from that fund once a year.

Mr. Speaker, I notice that the Liberals are becoming somewhat frustrated with their current position. I think they have read the book on how to be a Government in two or three easy steps. They have watched this

crowd and felt, well, they are not doing much so we can certainly do more, and now they feel they are ready to govern.

In many respects I feel we should have given them the opportunity right off the pin, 16 months ago. I can assure you that after two or three months they would have devastated this province and we would have seen the end of the Liberal Party. They would be down to no seats. We have done them a favour on this side of the House. We have done them a favour in allowing them to develop in Opposition and hone their political skills and get ready to fight another day.

* (1220)

If they were to look at the recent polls too, they certainly have no cause for great celebration over there. It looks as though they would be reduced substantially in terms of a seat-by-seat basis. They would certainly lose a few seats to the Government the way - (interjection)- well, you certainly would, to the Member for Transcona (Mr. Kozak), you would lose a few seats to the Government at their current level in the polls and you would probably lose a couple to the NDP. That Liberal zest for an election that was so apparent in the last 16 months is somewhat faded a bit, is somewhat tarnished, and I do not see them as exuberant about getting out there knocking on doors as they were just a few months ago. They are quite willing to let things develop a little bit.

Well, the Liberal Caucus is now interested in my constituency of Elmwood and I welcome them to come in and try. They certainly do not have a very good past history. They managed to sink their Party to a low, to the low point where they did not have signs in the 1986 election, when they could not find a candidate. It was the second lowest Liberal vote in the entire province in my constituency. Currently if the polls are any indication, they are back down to where they were in 1986.

Now, Mr. Speaker, back to the Bill at hand. I have attempted to address the Bill. When I get into the Bill the conversations start around me and I get back into discussing the political situation and I get people's attention. I think we want to stick with a winning combination, and it is very clear that people are more interested in hearing what I have to say about their particular current political problems than they are about hearing what we have to say about the Bill.

I had indicated to you that we were a little unsure of whether this Bill might turn into a slush fund, but the Finance Minister (Mr. Manness) has assured us, and we have to accept what he has said, that in fact this will not become a slush fund, and he has promised the people of Manitoba that as well. If this fund were to become in fact a slush fund, then he and the Government would have a severe image problem to overcome having made a deliberate misrepresentation to the people of Manitoba. I do not believe that they have done that.

In fact, if this was going to be - (interjection)- well, you know the Opposition feel that it is their duty and their right to jump on everything and blow things totally

out of proportion, and perhaps that is what they have done in this instance, but there is nothing inherently wrong with having a stabilization fund. There is nothing inherently wrong with that at all. What is wrong with that concept is if it gets to the point where they in fact use it on a slush fund basis, and as I had indicated, the assurance is there that this can only be drawn on once a year.—(interjection)— Well, the Minister of Finance would like to discuss politics again. I certainly would like to get back there too, but the Speaker is quite attentive this morning, and I have not had the opportunity of straying too far.

Now, Mr. Speaker, the Liberals made a lot of promises last year during their election campaign, and just to indicate to you how financially responsible, how much responsible they would be, before the election campaign, they promised something like 259—these are the Party that wants to—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The Honourable Member is discussing what Bill?

Mr. Maloway: The Bill for the Stabilization Fund, Mr. Speaker, Bill No. 27, I believe.

Mr. Speaker: That is what I thought. Right. The Bill for The Stabilization Fund Act. I would ask the Honourable Member for Elmwood to be relevant in his remarks. The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

Mr. Maloway: Mr. Speaker, as I had indicated, the Bill is one that we support, and we do not see a big problem with it, but on a whole the fund is a good idea. Once again, we would have preferred—I mean the Liberals once again have stated regarding Bill No. 27, they have stated that they would prefer to have this money lapse. They would prefer to have this money drop back into the deficit. We have said that the fund should be used for a rainy day, and my Leader has said that it is raining now, that this \$200 million should be used for day care and should be used for other very needy causes and purposes at this juncture. Basically what the Liberals are opposing here, what they are suggesting, is that this fund, this \$200 million, should merely lapse into last year's deficit.

So they are certainly worshipping at the shrine of deficit reduction, which one would have thought that the Government would be quite interested in pursuing, but to deal with some of the Liberal Party's positions regarding Bill No. 27, The Stabilization Fund, they have shown a very, very irresponsible tact in promising to spend \$259 million in election promises last year, and since the election last year, they promised to spend another \$450 million.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is totally irresponsible—totally irresponsible—a total of \$714 million, and that is supposedly a sign of a responsible Party. I just cannot fathom that. I just cannot fathom that at all. Now the deposed Liberal Finance Critic, who is now the Critic, I believe, for the Treasury Bench, has tried to put some order into their—

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

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): Mr. Speaker, on a point of order, the hour is approaching 12:30. There are a couple of items of business to be dealt with. We certainly would not like to infringe on the Honourable Member for Elmwood's (Mr. Maloway) right to speak. However, we would propose to stand Bill No. 42, and move on to Bill No. 54 today if there were leave on the part of Honourable Members to sit some few minutes past 12:30.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent to extend the hours? Agreed? Agreed then. The Honourable Member for Elmwood.

Mr. Maloway: How many minutes do I have, Mr. Speaker?

Mr. Speaker: Ten minutes. The Honourable Member for—19 minutes remaining—Flin Flon, on the same point of order.

Mr. Jerrrie Storie (Flin Flon): If the Bill would remain standing with the remaining time we could directly proceed, with leave, to the introduction of Bill 54.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Member would have 19 minutes remaining. Is there leave to remain standing in his name for those 19 minutes? Agreed? Agreed.

SECOND READINGS

BILL NO. 54—THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (5)

Hon. Albert Driedger (Minister of Highways and Transportation) presented Bill No. 54, The Highway Traffic Amendment Act (5); Loi no 5 modifiant le Code de la route, for second reading, to be referred to a committee of this House.

MOTION presented.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Speaker, let me first of all express my appreciation for all Members of the House for accommodating the situation. I will try briefly to outline what is happening with this Bill and why we are trying to move it through so that it can get into committee for Tuesday morning. I will put my notes on the record first.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to report to the House that the implementation of the program to fight impaired and suspended driving passed by the Legislature last June has proceeded smoothly, and with the passage of this Bill it will be possible to proclaim the legislation for November 1. This Bill arises from the thorough review of the procedures that resulted from the design of the forms and the training of personnel that has gone on through the summer months and into September. As well, there is one amendment that arises from a court decision that places in jeopardy the existing provisions to fight suspended driving.

I understand that the Opposition Parties who were given copies of this legislation—and I believe they do have them—and an explanation of it by my colleague,

the Minister of Justice (Mr. McCrae), last week have agreed that the Bill can be debated today and passed on to committee for consideration on Tuesday, with the committee report next Wednesday and third reading and royal assent next Friday. On behalf of the Government, I wish to thank them for their co-operation and will, as I indicated, try and keep my remarks brief.

Members may recall that when Bill 3 was being discussed in committee we advised we anticipated being able to proclaim the legislation within 90 days. In fact, within that period of 90 days the administration of my department and the Department of Justice have made tremendous progress, and I believe it is only appropriate to express our thanks to the officials involved. During that time, the forms were designed, regulations were developed and adopted, and training sessions were held for designated magistrates and police officers in Winnipeg, The Pas and Brandon.

The amendments today flow from those training sessions where the participants were consulted and given draft copies of the forms. The changes are threefold and in no way affect the principles that have already been adopted by this Assembly by passing Bill 3.

First, references to the person charged are changed to references to the driver. This occurs six times and requires six amendments. Because criminal proceedings are totally separate and apart from administrative proceedings, it is inappropriate to refer to the person charged. The roadside suspension form may very often be filled out in advance of the criminal information being sworn, so there might not in fact be a person charged at the time the officer is handing out the forms.

(Mr. Mark Minenko, Acting Speaker, in the Chair)

A second change in the legislation arises from the requirement in the Bill passed in June for the police to keep track of the impoundments. It became obvious that having the various police departments handling the paperwork would mean there would be no central control, leaving the Government with no ready statistical base to monitor how the program is proceeding.

* (1230)

The Department of Justice has rearranged its internal staff so that all of the impoundments will, from the beginning, be tracked on a computer so that the department will be able to follow up automatically on those impoundments on which there has been no action after the 30 days specified by law to determine why the car has not been returned to its owner.

Moreover, having this central source of statistics, we will be able to monitor whether the program is working effectively throughout the province. For example, if a pattern develops that there are fewer impoundments in one area than could be expected, given its population, the department can then seek an explanation. Similarly, if a higher-than-average percentage of cars is being returned at hearings, the department can again obtain an explanation.

While the foregoing amendments are not crucial to the implementation of the plan, they will certainly make

it operate smoothly. There are, however, two amendments absolutely required to make the plan function. In the Bill passed in June, there was reference to a hearing before the registrar to determine whether a person's blood-alcohol content was over .08 at the time the charge was laid. In fact, there are many circumstances, in particular where a blood analysis is used, where the time the charge is laid is irrelevant. It is necessary that the legislation be changed so that the reference is to the time the incident occurred. Without that change, many administrative licence suspensions would be ineffective.

Finally, there was a court decision last June, a copy of which was provided to the Opposition one week ago by the Minister of Justice, that dealt with the inconsistent usage in The Highway Traffic Act of expressions like driving while disqualified, driving while suspended, and driving while prohibited. A search of The Highway Traffic Act by Legislative Counsel office has revealed literally hundreds of such references, and it is impossible to rationalize the terminology without a major study of the use of each of those words. Accordingly, the Government has chosen to take the advice given by the judge in that case and to make an amendment so that the use of any of those words in any document would be synonymous. We expect legislation will be brought forward in the future to address the problem of inconsistent wording, but it is a major project and could not possibly be ready until 1990.

Mr. Acting Speaker, a clause-by-clause explanation of the amendments has been prepared by officials to expedite consideration of these amendments in committee. Again, I want to thank Members of the House.

It is with regret that we are using this approach, because when we brought forward the legislation, and because we were breaking new ground with it, we anticipated some problems. The consultation process that I referred to here suggested that we bring forward these amendments. In order for us to proclaim it for November 1, I ask the co-operation and indulgence of Members opposite, and I thank them for their co-operation to this time. Thank you.

Mr. Paul Edwards (St. James): Well, the incompetence of the Government on this particular initiative is just astounding. We waited 15 months for an initiative to come forward on drinking and driving. It finally came forward. At that time there was the same argument that is being made now, that we had to move forward with this very, very quickly. It was very important to get everything in working order for the coming fall and Christmas season in which generally more charges are laid for drinking and driving.

At that time, we got to the committee stage, and in the committee stage this Minister and this Government brought forward no less than 15 amendments to a 16 section Bill. That is what this Government did; that is how unsure they are of this initiative; that is the kind of incompetence that this Government represents in this whole area. We supported this because this is an important initiative, but the fact is we expect competence from the Minister and from this

Government on a piece of legislation that comes into this House. Fifteen amendments at committee stage on a 16 section Bill is absolutely incompetent, and now we are sitting here, we have got another 19 section Bill dealing with an original piece of legislation that had 16 sections. They should get it together before they come to this House. They had 15 months to do it, and they did not do it.

Mr. Acting Speaker, the fact is that this is an exceptionally important area for this Government to have moved in, and we are going to support the speedy passage of at least the majority of these amendments, specifically because we recognize that the public in Manitoba should not have to suffer for the incompetence of this Government in this area, and we are going to do everything within our power, as we did at the committee stage, to improve this Bill, because the fact is it has been ill-thought out from Day One.

(Mr. Speaker in the Chair)

Mr. Speaker, specifically on this piece of legislation, as I have said, the majority of these are in fact things that should have been thought of ahead of time. They have not been, they are coming forward, they do not substantially affect this Bill, and for that reason we are certainly not going to oppose them getting into the law. However, there are some problems and some questions that we are going to ask at the committee stage.

Specifically, at this point, I want to reference the Section 15 of this Amendment Act, which indicates that the Registrar may only review certain things, and they take out the "Registrar shall review" those things, and I understand from the document which has been provided by the Government that they see that as expanding the things that a Registrar can look at. In fact, what it does is it indicates that the Registrar does not have to consider those very important things which are itemized in the Bill. Better wording could be drafted to do what the Government says it wants to do, and I will be suggesting that wording at the committee stage which should be inclusive of the things that are listed in the Bill but also broaden the things that a Registrar may look at. Certainly the things that are in the Bill the Registrar should look at and the word "shall" reflects that intention.

Mr. Speaker, there are also some questions with respect to the distinction which is being drawn between a person charged and the driver, and not necessarily to oppose those changes, I have some questions which I will want to ask at the committee stage. I do not want to see this Bill further weakened in respect of its ability to withstand a constitutional challenge. That has been my desire all along is to strengthen this piece of legislation because the worst of all possible worlds would be to have this legislation go forward and be struck down by the courts. The fact is that the absolute unsuredness of this Government on this piece of legislation does not bode well for this legislation as it is going to inevitably wind its way through the courts. I am absolutely astonished at the number of amendments this Government has had to put through on a piece of legislation it had 15 months to work on.

Mr. Speaker, with those comments, I will end comments at this time. I will be looking forward to

answers at the committee stage on the matters that I have raised and other matters, and in that, specifically Section 18 of this, deals with the fees which will be charged. I am still unsure with respect to what those fees will be. I asked that at the committee stage last time, no one was able to tell me what the fees would be and I will certainly be looking forward to those answers at the committee stage.

With that, we will concur to passing this on to the committee stage with the specific caveat that this type of incompetence on the part of the Government in having to deal with legislation in a rushed form and this many amendments and not only at the committee stage but after the Bill has in fact come into place is totally intolerable. The people of Manitoba deserve better. They deserve more competent Government. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Jerry Storie (Flon Flon): Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the comments by the Member for St. James (Mr. Edwards), and I have to agree with much of what he said.- (interjection)-

The fact of the matter is—the Attorney General yells from his seat, an experienced Member like myself. Mr. Speaker, amendments are not unusual to legislation. The drafting of legislation is a complex, time consuming and difficult process. We all appreciate that. The fact of the matter is that this Government did have a considerable length of time to consider the kind of legislation they wanted to bring forward. They brought forward legislation which in principle was supported by I think all Members of the Legislature.

I think the issue that is attempting to be dealt with in this legislation is an important one. We all want to deal more successfully with the problem of drinking and driving. We do not want drivers who have been drinking on the roads. We want to give the police the authority and the tools to make sure the rest of the driving public is protected. We do not want to see lives lost because of drinking and driving. What we have seen, Mr. Speaker, beside the introduction of a noble concept, is bureaucratic, administrative, ministerial bungling on a scale unprecedented in this Legislature.

* (1240)

I may associate myself with those comments of Members opposite because we sat through, I was one of the Members who sat through, the dozens of amendments that were introduced at the time this Bill was dealt with back in June. Subsequently the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) has learned and has been told that there are loopholes in this Bill which will inevitably almost lead to a constitutional challenge. There are administrative problems with the Bill and now we are seeing some subsequent amendments. Well, that is not too bad. Okay, they made some mistakes. They were critical of our Government when we made mistakes. We are critical of them when they make mistakes, that is fair game.

What did they do instead of taking some slow and thoughtful and progressive steps to correct their

mistakes? Did they do that? No, instead on September 29 we get a letter, the Justice Critic gets a letter saying, oh, my gosh, there are all these problems, we have to have an immediate response, we have to have an immediate Bill. I can tell the Minister responsible for this piece of legislation that there are problems in this Bill. The amendments are going to create their own set of problems, and I do not think the Attorney General (Mr. McCrae) has thought them through.

The Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) talked about the specifics of the Bill and the need to eliminate references to the person charged instead of the driver. In reading between the lines, Mr. Speaker, I can see what we are into here. We now have the Attorney General in effect responsible for impounded cars. I can see the Attorney General getting up at ten o'clock answering the phone, listening to someone bellow, where is my car? Why do you not release my car? This is a nightmare.

The Attorney General, when he introduced this legislation with his colleague the Minister of Highways (Mr. Albert Driedger) did not contemplate getting the Attorney General involved in releasing impounded cars in the middle of the night. He has not talked about what this is going to cost additionally.

The fact of the matter is that this piece of legislation has turned into a nightmare. What was a good idea has been bungled into an administrative and probably a judicial nightmare. Mr. Speaker, we are prepared to let this go to committee, but I want it clearly on the record that the timing of this Government could not have been worse.

They have continually brought legislation forward which is not well thought through. It is continually incumbent upon the House Leaders and Members of this Legislature to stand up and speak without having adequate time to peruse the legislation and contemplate the consequences. Mr. Speaker, that is mismanagement. It is mismanagement of the time of this House. We are now trying to deal with this Bill after the normal hour of adjournment. It is mismanagement of the administration of this legislation. It is mismanagement on a global scale and we have seen it, Mr. Speaker, on too many occasions already in this short-lived Government.

The fact of the matter is that we want better management of this House and the affairs of this House, and the Attorney General who is also the Government House Leader, is not showing the necessary leadership neither in terms of the legislative package of the Government nor in terms of the co-operation needed to make this House work. I am quite irate at the way this is being done, Mr. Speaker.

The fact of the matter is that the intent of the legislation is good. We will go to committee and see what happens at committee, but I can predict without any fear of contradiction that the amendments that are being introduced are full of loopholes again because the necessary thought has not been put into them. It is creating a problem and I hope if this legislation goes forward that the Attorney General is bothered every night by someone who has an impounded car. It will serve him right.

Mr. Speaker: The Honourable Minister of Highways and Transportation will be closing debate.

Mr. Albert Driedger: Mr. Speaker, just a few comments. I have to admit to some degree that some of the criticism that came forward is warranted—

An Honourable Member: Albert, can I speak on this?

Mr. Albert Driedger: No, you cannot.

Justifiably so that when we pass legislation here, I hate to see a rush on these things, however, Mr. Speaker, I think that circumstances have changed a little bit.

First of all, I want to indicate that we are breaking new ground. Normally, to develop this kind of legislation would take a year and a half according to the bureaucratic system. I am not a lawyer, I cannot indicate that, but what we have tried to do in co-operation with all Members of the House, and I think all Members in this House especially with a minority Government have to have a desire to make the thing work. We tried to move this thing forward as fast as we could. The issue is important and everybody agrees with the principle of what we are doing. After we passed the last legislation, we went out and consulted. We found out that there were problems with it. I am not saying it is airtight yet, but I think it is good enough. It is good legislation to go forward with. I think the people in Manitoba want us to do this, and I want to thank all Members for allowing this thing to move forward

Some Honourable Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Albert Driedger: Final comment, Mr. Speaker, I know we are past the hour and that also shows co-operation. If Members want to work together to make something work, it can happen here. I want to thank the Members once again—

An Honourable Member: Hear, hear!

Mr. Albert Driedger: Shut up! Mr. Speaker, we want to allow as much time as possible in the committee to listen to the concerns that are brought forward.

Mr. Storie: With your indulgence, would the Minister permit a question?

Mr. Speaker: Is there leave? The Honourable Member for Flin Flon.

Mr. Storie: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I appreciate the Minister's words, I think they were thoughtful and quite appropriate.

My question to the Minister is: given his interest in hearing from the public, would the Minister be willing to put off the committee hearing until at least Thursday, so that those people who want to comment on the appropriateness of this Bill could have some time? I think it is a little unfair to talk about wanting public input. We are rushing this through, we all acknowledge that we are doing that. Then having the committee

meet on Tuesday to deal with that, I think it is a little unfair to the public.

Hon. James McCrae (Government House Leader): Speaking for the Government side and as Government House Leader, I recognize the Honourable Member for Flin Flon is not the House Leader for his Party. He may be standing in today for whatever reasons. Generally, I think his colleague, the Member for Thompson (Mr. Ashton), and the Member for Osborne (Mr. Alcock) would agree that discussions between House Leaders are not usually conducted during the sessions in the Chamber.

The Honourable Member raises a question about the setting of committees, the matter has been discussed already. I hesitate to get into those types of negotiations in the Chamber. The committee hearing is set for Tuesday to consider Bills referred. If this Bill should pass today, then the Bill would be referred to that committee.

HOUSE BUSINESS

Hon. James McCrae (Minister of Justice and Attorney General): While I am on my feet, Mr. Speaker, I might

announce that the Standing Committee on Economic Development will sit next Thursday morning, at 10 a.m., to continue and hopefully complete—I understand complete—consideration of the Annual Report of Manitoba Mineral Resources.

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

BILL NO. 54—THE HIGHWAY TRAFFIC AMENDMENT ACT (5) (Cont'd)

Mr. Speaker: Is the House ready for the question? The question before the House is second reading of Bill No. 54. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Honourable Members: Agreed.

Mr. Speaker: Agreed? Agreed and so ordered.

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

I would like to take this opportunity to wish everybody a great Thanksgiving weekend.